

CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware

TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING
March 18, 2013
3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Chief Paul Tiernan, M/Cpl. Paul Keld, Marvin Howard, Roy Simonson, Tom Parkins

Absent: Charles Zusag
Lt. Bill Hagrove
Dave Gula

Guests: Matt Buckley, DeIDOT/WR&A (Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP)
Mark Luszcz, DeIDOT
Albert Porach, Newark resident

1. PRESENTATION BY DELDOT REGARDING THE 2012 HAZARD ELIMINATION PLAN FOR SR 2/SR 72 (CAPITOL TRAIL/LIBRARY AVENUE) BETWEEN DELAWARE AVENUE & CLEVELAND AVENUE.

Mark Luszcz introduced himself to the committee as the Chief Traffic Engineer with DeIDOT. Mr. Luszcz said annually DeIDOT performs a ranking of the worst crash locations in the State of Delaware and this intersection was rated on the list of top 10. Mr. Luszcz said there have been many discussions back and forth for the past fifteen years between the City of Newark and DeIDOT as to what could be done at this intersection.

Mr. Luszcz said this intersection has surfaced again as a location with traffic problems and safety concerns and feels DeIDOT has a solution to significantly improve both.

Matt Buckley said he works for a consulting firm based out of Wilmington, DE called Whitman, Requardt & Associates. Mr. Buckley is also one of DeIDOT's traffic consultants.

Mr. Buckley said previously in 2005 a proposal was submitted to DeIDOT to convert the Cleveland Avenue intersection at Capital Trail by forcing Woodlawn Avenue into a right in/right out movement commonly known as a "Florida T", that would have enabled traffic to flow continuously eastbound on Kirkwood Highway/Capital Trail. Mr. Buckley said after researching this recommendation, DeIDOT felt it would be very impactive to the neighborhood.

Mr. Buckley said now seven years later, traffic conditions were studied throughout the area to find a solution that would be better solution for the community.

Mr. Buckley said a primary concern was the high crash statistics resulting from the left turn movement from Capital Trail turning onto Cleveland Avenue; including u-turn movements heading toward McDonald's. Mr. Buckley said statistics show there is an average of 10 crashes a year at this location which normally consist of serious angular crashes, also known as "t-bone crashes". Mr. Buckley said as a result of the congestion, another concern is the significant clusters of rear-end crashes occurring on westbound 273 in particular the right turn movement onto Capital Trail in front of the Toyota dealership and east on 273 at Marrows Road westbound.

Mr. Buckley said the proposal is to convert NB SR 2/SR 72 through lane at Cleveland Avenue/Woodlawn Avenue to a shared left turn/through lane which would enable motorists to turn left or continue through.

Chief Tiernan asked if the merge sign located in the island from Capital Trail turning onto Cleveland Avenue would be removed or if a yield sign or stop sign would be installed. Mr. Buckley said the current movement consists of a free lane indicating motorists heading westbound or southbound can continue to drive around the corner. Mr. Buckley said most often when there has been a conflict the right turn motorist had yielded. Mr. Buckley said Delaware drivers are not familiar with this type of movement. Mr. Buckley said the proposal is to install pedestrian accommodations and a hard yield at this location.

Mr. Luszcz said by making the middle travel lane a choice lane the signal will be changed to a split phasing which would allow one side to get a green light when the other side has a red light and vice versa. Mr. Luszcz said this type of phasing will help to alleviate the congestion. Mr. Luszcz said if the proposed changes are approved it would be possible the improvements could be implemented within a year.

Mr. Buckley said there are a few other small improvements to be made. Mr. Buckley said during peak travel times, the eastbound Cleveland Avenue travel lane queues up past Enterprise Rent-a-Car. This is primarily related to their currently being two left turn lanes onto eastbound Capital Trail. The recommendation is to make an exclusive right turn only lane.

Mr. Buckley said to help with traffic flow at 273 and Cleveland Avenue the recommendation is to switch the signal phasing at 273 and E. Main Street to a lag left turn phase as well as extend the left turn lane.

Roy Simonson asked if the traffic signals have adaptive controllers at Capital Trail turning onto Cleveland Avenue that would adjust the timing of the cycles based upon volume heading into town on Capital Trail. Roy Simonson said at certain times of the day there are opportunities to make a left turn on a green light.

Mr. Luszczyk said almost all signals have detection however the newest technology being implemented is responsive technology which is a form of adaptive technology that not only varies the green timing but also adjusts the cycle length. The responsive technology adjusts based on volume and would modify based upon inbound and outbound traffic patterns. Mr. Buckley added that typically right now they are not changing the left turn control during different times a day, and if they went with the split phasing it would be an arrow only approach which they have had a lot of success with in terms of safety. Mr. Buckley said his personal experience has been motorists perceive most traffic heading eastbound Capital Trail as making a right turn onto Cleveland Avenue and left turn motorists have a hard time deciphering whether they are going to turn right or go straight. Mr. Luszczyk said for left turn crashes this intersection is rated within the top 10 in the state.

Mr. Luszczyk said there is currently funding in DeIDOT's safety budget to complete the project. Mr. Buckley said more than likely they would reconstruct the traffic signal and would need to confirm that it is state property where the poles will be placed and if not would need to contact the property owners. Mr. Luszczyk expects to have the design completed by the Fall of 2013 and under construction by this time next year.

Tom Parkins said he has driven this intersection thousands of times and feels this is the most sensible suggestion he has heard and believes the success will be a matter of signal timing. Mr. Buckley and Mr. Luszczyk both agreed. Mr. Luszczyk said after the project is complete he would appreciate any feedback.

Mr. Buckley said with the split phasing and lag left turn it is much more predictable from an engineering standpoint.

Tom Parkins suggested performing the final cut over when the students are out of town to first educate the general public. Mr. Luszczyk said they are always conscious of the school year when performing improvements in the City of Newark. Mr. Buckley said if the timing works out they may be able to coordinate the switch over by winter session of 2014.

Tom Parkins asked heading outbound on Cleveland Avenue how the existing right lane turning left onto Capital Trail would be blocked off. Mr. Buckley said they would enlarge the island. Tom Parkins said there is no pedestrian traffic at this intersection. Mr. Luszczyk said DeIDOT's current practice is to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians whenever improvements are made even at locations where there is the most modest potential for pedestrians.

M/Cpl. Paul Keld asked if a jersey barrier could be installed on Library Avenue to prevent jaywalkers from crossing the street to access the library/bus stop. Mr. Luszczyk said jersey barriers are approximately 42" wide and would need to include crash cushions making the width 50-60" wide and this location may be too narrow for this type of installation. Mr. Luszczyk said this was beyond their area of expertise, however he would find out what could be done at this

intersection. Mr. Luszcz said most time the jersey barriers are just disregarded most of the time. Chief Tiernan said the library parking lot is used as a parking lot for commuters that use the bus stop across the street.

M/Cpl. Keld said there was a pedestrian hit crossing the street at this location. Mr. Buckley said there is new technology that DeIDOT could explore for this location.


MOTION BY M/CPL. KELD, SECONDED BY MARVIN HOWARD, TO ADOPT THE DELDOT IMPROVEMENTS FOR SR 2/SR 72.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5 TO 0.

There being no further business, Chief Tiernan called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION BY TOM PARKINS, SECONDED BY MARVIN HOWARD, TO ADJOURN.

MOTION PASSED. VOTE: 5 TO 0.



Paul M. Tiernan, Chairman