

CITY OF NEWARK
Newark, Delaware

Traffic Committee Meeting
June 18, 2019
3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Lt. Dennis Aniunas, Mark Farrall, Tim Filasky, Marvin Howard, Dave Gula, Tom Parkins

Motion by Lt. Aniunas, seconded by Mr. Farrall, to move Agenda item # 5 to be the first item discussed.

1. Demonstration to consider omitting the signal phase at Woodlawn Avenue.

Mr. Buckley said this item is a follow up from the November 2017 special council meeting. A suggestion was made by council members and constituents to restrict the green time from Lumbrook and Stafford during peak traffic hours. Mr. Buckley said during the University of Delaware fall semester, DeIDOT would conduct a demonstration to review the benefit of eliminating a green light for Woodlawn Avenue during the peak hours from 3:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Additionally, DeIDOT would review independent travel time data from a 3rd party source. Also, volume data and closed circuit tv monitoring cameras will be utilized. The data would provide a traffic capacity and throughput analysis along Library Avenue and Capitol Trail.

Mr. Buckley said the demonstration would consist of a combination of drums, cones and message boards along with the assistance of the Newark Police Department during the demonstration.

Mr. Parkins asked how long to perform the testing phase. Mr. Buckley said a couple of days one week and decide what to do with the additional 12 seconds. Perform test another week and adjust the timing.

Mr. Filasky asked how that affects northbound Library Avenue, left turn onto Cleveland Avenue bottleneck. Mr. Buckley said they will be cognizant of this and wait for the students to return to analyze. Mr. Buckley said the current lynch pin is on Cleveland Avenue; west of Paper Mill Road due to the high pedestrian volume.

Mr. Buckley said at this time DeIDOT is seeking approval from the Traffic Committee to perform the pilot demonstration. Mr. Buckley said future discussion will be held for long term improvements. (ie: signage and regulations)

Mr. Farrall asked if DeIDOT has discussed the preventative measures to warn motorists the light isn't turning green. Mr. Buckley said this is still to be determined at this time. One option is a permanent sign notifying motorists of the omitted signal.

Mr. Parkins asked if the 3:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. timeframe could be adjusted. Mr. Buckley said they can change the timeframe; however, data reflects travel times spike around 4:00 p.m. The goal is for the switchover to occur in advance of the start of the peak time.

Mr. Hamilton asked to see his portion of the video during the 2017 special council meeting. Due to technical difficulty, Mr. Buckley read the comments from the meeting. Mr. Buckley read the comments as follows:

- Mr. Hamilton said, "They just told you they're willing to shut off their exit from 4 to 6 p.m."
- The 1st public comment was, "Why not just make that a red light at Woodlawn from 4 in the afternoon to 6. You can't turn left, and the rest of the time let us turn left."
- The 2nd public comment was, "But out of the general day you're talking maybe 3 to 4 hours out of the day where this is a failure. That's what this is all about."
- City Council member comment, "Time of day solution, concrete doesn't move. I don't understand why we can't gate this during the rush hours and let them go during the other times. I'd still like to look at a time of day some type of gating system."

Mr. Gula said without data it's often difficult to make decisions. Mr. Gula said the demonstration provides an opportunity to obtain the data for all parties to make an informed decision.

Public Comment:

Mr. Klatchko said he lives on 1 Halifax Road. Mr. Klatchko asked if there is a formal proposal for the data collection/experiment. Mr. Buckley said they would make it accessible to trigger the light with cones and drums. The police department will be available from a safety aspect. The proposal is to rely on the traffic data collectors that is available to the public that you can get on your cell phone. Mr. Buckley said DeIDOT is ready except for getting a closed-circuit traffic monitoring camera installed over the next three months at Woodlawn Avenue and Cleveland Avenue. Mr. Filasky said DeIDOT would provide Public Works and Wastewater Department with a plan for installing the cones and drums. Mr. Filasky confirmed a mailing with notification will be sent to the residents. Mr. Buckley said anecdotal information from the residents.

Mr. Klatchko asked if they will be able to enter the neighborhood at the intersection. Mr. Buckley confirmed the entrance to the neighborhood will remain unaltered.

Mr. Klatchko asked if there will be any changes to the pedestrian crossing. Mr. Buckley confirmed the pedestrian crosswalk will remain unaltered.

Mr. Ruckle suggested DeIDOT consider the option of skipping a cycle during rush hour in the morning. Mr. Ruckle said if the light is eliminated this will depreciate property values by \$25-100 million dollars. Mr. Ruckle said if the light is eliminated, this is a safety concern with a railroad that transports chemicals and residents need every way in and out of the city. The trains transport chemicals and gasolines that have exploded and wiped out several towns across the country. Mr. Ruckle said from a safety standpoint it shouldn't be about the seconds were gaining were talking about lives. This is a significant cost of human life. Mr. Ruckle said his neighbors aren't in favor of this.

Mr. Ruckle asked if U-turns would still be permitted on Kirkwood Highway at Woodlawn Avenue. Mr. Buckley confirmed that will remain unaltered.

Mr. Ruckle said from a cost standpoint would like DeIDOT to consider skipping a cycle prior to performing the demonstration which he anticipates will cost the city approximately \$25,000. Mr. Buckley said this is not one of the signal phasing options they are proceeding with at this time. Mr. Ruckle said he is running for Senate in District 9 and won't give DeIDOT the money if this isn't considered.

Mr. Hamilton said he is in favor of trying many options and is most favorable of simple approaches. Mr. Hamilton said this approach wouldn't cost the city much. Mr. Hamilton said Mr. Ruckle asked if this was possible and the answer was were not looking at this now. Mr. Hamilton suggested trying the simple approach first and asked Mr. Buckley if this option was physically possible. Mr. Buckley said he would need to look into this.

Mr. Buckley said the concern is what message do you display to a motorist that states you will get every other cycle. Mr. Buckley said it is more conventional to omit a signal phase with a definitive time period. Mr. Buckley said at this time if round one of the demonstration is to try and figure out how to skip a signal cycle and collect the data then they could look into this as well. Mr. Buckley said with the new signal computers he's unsure if it's possible to program every other cycle.

Mr. Hamilton is in favor of meetings held if there is a project that creates an impact on the neighborhood. Lt. Aniunas said all future Traffic Committee meetings will be held in the city council chambers.

Mr. Tillman said he resides on Trout Stream Drive. Mr. Tillman asked where the data comes from and if it is available to the general public. Mr. Buckley said the data is available to anyone that's interested. Mr. Buckley said the majority of the data is in an excel spreadsheet and the Bluetooth data is a csv file. Mr. Buckley said the data measures throughput and the number of vehicles.

Mr. Buckley said an accusation was made in the past that DeIDOT was massaging data. Mr. Buckley said wasn't true and DeIDOT strives to be as transparent as possible.

Mr. Tillman asked if there was 12 seconds to reallocate would it go to northbound Library Avenue. Mr. Buckley said the plan is to try this first. Mr. Tillman asked if DeIDOT plans to try different iterations during the test period. Mr. Buckley confirmed this.

Mr. Tillman asked who makes the final decision. Mr. Buckley said DeIDOT plans to work with the city and is here to help.

Ms. Hughes asked if the "No Right Turn on Red" from Cleveland Avenue has been initiated and if not asked when this will take place. Mr. Buckley said DeIDOT is working on a combined work order to include installing an overhead sign next to the traffic light this summer. Mr. Buckley said if the turn restriction is imperative, the City of Newark Public Works can lawfully install the sign.

Lt. Aniunas said based on the alternate phase suggestion, he agrees it is best to walk before you run, however, if a cycle is omitted, he envisions many traffic violations as a result.

Mr. Farrall asked due to timing if it would be possible to perform both suggestions in the Fall. Mr. Buckley said they would obtain before data, try skipping a cycle and the following week mockup the demonstration with cones and drums. Mr. Buckley anticipates this process to take 4-6 weeks to complete.

Mr. Filasky said he agrees with notification; however, he is concerned the notification will cause motorists to use the other exit to avoid waiting for two cycles. Mr. Filasky said they will review if there is an increase in traffic at Anna's Way based on anticipating that this may occur.

Motion by Mr. Gula, seconded by Mr. Filasky, motion to skip a green cycle at Woodlawn Avenue and perform a demonstration at Woodlawn Avenue during the University of Delaware Fall semester.

Motion Passed:

Vote: 5 to 0

2. Request to restrict parking on the North side of Country Club Drive; East of Stamford Drive.

Mr. Filasky said this request was received by Councilmember Lawhorn due to a line of sight issue resulting from parked cars on the North side of Country Club Drive upon exiting Food Lion.

Mr. Filasky said the Public Works and Wastewater Department performed sight distance calculations at this location. Based on the calculations, sight distance failed and proves to be a safety concern. Mr. Filasky said currently there is not a parking restriction and recommends restricting parking at this location based on the results of the data.

Mr. Farrall asked if contact was made with Fairfield Apartments. Mr. Filasky said they spoke with Fairfield Apartment management that stated the on-street parking isn't needed as they have enough parking for their residents.

Motion by Mr. Filasky, seconded by DC Farrall, to restrict parking on the North side of Country Club Drive; East of Stamford Drive.

3. Request for a handicap parking space on Wilbur Street next to Herman's Quality Meat Shoppe.

Lt. Aniunas said it was brought to his attention by Mr. Howard that this item was resolved prior to this meeting. The recommendation is to remove this item from further discussion.

Motion by Mr. Gula, seconded by Mr. Howard, to remove the request for a handicap parking space on Wilbur Street next to Herman's Quality Meat Shoppe from the agenda.

Motion Passed:

Vote: 5 to 0

4. Request to install a stop sign at Aylesboro & Whitherspoon Lanes.

Lt. Aniunas said Mr. Filasky advised municipal code, Section 20-213, lists a stop sign on Whitherspoon Lane, however it was installed in the wrong location on Aylesboro Lane. Mr. Filasky said they will remove the stop sign from Aylesboro Lane and install on Whitherspoon Lane.

Public Comment:

Ms. Horton asked if the stop would be removed from Aylesboro Lane. Mr. Filasky said it makes less sense to have a stop sign on Aylesboro Lane with it being the main road.

Ms. Horton asked if the stop sign on Aylesboro Lane could remain there. Mr. Filasky said this could be discussed, however it would require a code change. Mr. Filasky said it would take approximately two weeks to relocate the stop sign to Whitherspoon Lane.

Mr. Farrall said if the decision is to install a stop sign on Aylesboro Lane, procedurally it would need to be advertised. Ms. Horton understood and said she prefers a stop sign on Whitherspoon Lane.

Ms. Horton said a stop sign is needed at the entrance coming into Marrows Court from the townhouses. Mr. Farrall suggested installing the sign in the proper location and if necessary, in the future revisit if a stop sign is needed on Aylesboro Lane.

Lt. Aniunas said from a traffic perspective in using stop signs to control speed they will generally fail at some point in time. Ms. Horton said she is concerned from a safety standpoint as many elderly residents cross the road at this location. Mr. Filasky said coming from the townhouses traffic that now turns left on Aylesboro Lane more than likely will now turn left from Farnsworth Road where they don't have to stop.

5. Discuss the temporary removal of the "Right Turn on Red" restriction at Chapel Street and E. Main Street intersection.

Lt. Aniunas said DeIDOT has no opposition to this item.

Lt. Aniunas said concern is the heavy pedestrian traffic at this location and the potential conflict created due to Main Street being one-way and motorists looking left as pedestrians are crossing from the right.

Mr. Farrall how much are we gaining by approving this. Mr. Filasky said with the restriction it creates a traffic bottleneck.

Mr. Gula suggested replacing the sign with "Yield to Pedestrians in Crosswalk" for right turns. Mr. Filasky agreed with the suggestion.

Mr. Farrall said if the argument is Main Street has been reduced to one lane, North Chapel Street has one lane also. Mr. Farrall asked if the reason for the request is due to an increase in traffic on southbound North Chapel Street at Main Street due to the construction. Mr. Filasky said he is unsure whether this would make a difference on southbound Chapel Street. Mr. Gula said it's not a good shortcut to go down South Chapel Street turning onto New Street to Center Street. Mr. Gula said he feels this request is beneficial if it keeps motorists from using New Street as a shortcut.

Mr. Parkins said his perception is pedestrian traffic crossing Chapel Street is higher than pedestrian traffic crossing Main Street. Mr. Filasky agreed.

Motion by Mr. Filasky, seconded by Mr. Howard, to remove the "Right Turn on Red" restriction at the intersection on Chapel Street at E. Main Street and install a "Yield to Pedestrians" that would conclude after E. Main Street construction has been completed.

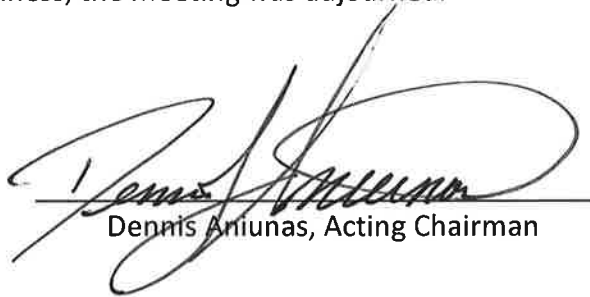
Motion Passed:

Vote: 5 to 0

Public Comment:

Mr. Tillman complimented the Traffic Committee members for running a good meeting. Mr. Tillman suggested providing nameplates for members of the Traffic Committee to be displayed to the public.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Dennis Anunas, Acting Chairman

Any supporting documents pertaining to this meeting will be held on file at the police department.