

**Will the proposed “traffic cameras” pose a privacy concern?**

The proposal for the intersection incorporates video detection to help smooth traffic signal timing. These systems do not take still photos, are not web cams, do not zoom in, and do not record traffic violations. They are not designed for any type of enforcement activity. The Town currently uses video detection at several signalized intersections throughout the Town of Greenwich. They are sensors to detect vehicles waiting at the intersection. The cameras relay the data to the traffic signal box, which can adjust signal timing to manage movement through the intersection. This can reduce idle time at the intersection, improving air quality and traffic flow.

**Why is this intersection being handled separately from those in the 2012 Town Wide Traffic Study?**

Since this intersection was a safety concern, a study was commenced in 2007. Given the amount of information we already had about the intersection, DPW felt it was not necessary to spend tax dollars on studying this intersection again in the 2012 Study.

**How does a project get selected for the CTDOT Local Road Accident Reduction Program?**

DPW first had to present the project to the Southwest Regional Planning Agency (SWRPA). SWRPA, made up of 8 municipalities, evaluated it against other potential projects, including several in Stamford and Norwalk. The project was deemed the top priority for the region, and moved on to the CTDOT selection process. At that point CTDOT reviews the project against applications from across Connecticut, and selects the grant winners. The CTDOT visited this intersection many times, reviewed the accident data, and felt that this location warranted the grant.

**Who is paying for this project?**

As grant winners, the Town will receive 90% of the project’s construction and inspection cost, estimated at \$314,000.

**Who will benefit from this project?**

We strive to balance the needs of all users of intersections, from persons who may go through them daily to those who may be new drivers or visiting the town, and striving to safely navigate our Town’s streets. We work with emergency services, including Police, Fire and GEMS as we pursue potential traffic improvements. We believe this redesign will create a safer and more comfortable intersection, benefiting all who use it.



**TOWN OF GREENWICH  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**INTERSECTION AT  
NORTH STREET  
AT  
PARSONAGE ROAD  
&  
FAIRFIELD ROAD**

*Frequently Asked Questions*

**April 2014**

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DPW began designing potential improvements to the North St / Parsonage Rd / Fairfield Road intersection many years ago. The intersection has a history of accidents, and certainly generates strong feeling about how it should be addressed! We have seen evidence of this as a result of our March 27, 2014 public meeting about the current design alternative. We have received many good questions about the project, and are pleased to see the community so engaged in their neighborhood. In the following, we provide background and answers to the questions we have received to date. Given the interest in this project, we are holding another public meeting on April 29, 2014 at Town Hall, 7 p.m., Town Hall Meeting Room.

**Why did the Town decide to improve this intersection?**

This intersection has a documented history of repeated accidents. For the 2005-2012 period, there are 30 accidents on record – these figures do not include accidents not reported to the Police Department. Compared to other North Street intersections that see the same volume of traffic, this accident rate is much higher.

DPW had begun study of the intersection back in 2007. That work was not finalized for several reasons, including staffing levels resulting from 2009 layoffs and our concerns that the proposed solutions really weren’t going to solve the identified issues. Then, in 2012, DPW found a grant opportunity, the CTDOT Local Road Accident Reduction Program, which seemed an ideal match for this intersection. DPW’s Chief Engineer, who has extensive experience in traffic and transportation engineering, began working on the project with experienced in-house staff. The Town was awarded the grant based on the CTDOT’s review of the concept plan submitted.

**What does DPW look at when designing intersections?**

We look at turning movements, traffic volumes, sight distance, signal phasing, queue space, intersection geometry, accident data and harmful events, general intersection setting, local traffic generators, road classifications, regulatory standards, pedestrian use, bicycle routes, and other factors. We use models to simulate traffic movements and flow through an intersection. We can calibrate our models with existing conditions and then use them to forecast the various scenarios we evaluate. This allows us to evaluate multiple options.

**What are the issues with today’s intersection?**

Today’s intersection has several aspects which create potential hazards and reduce its effectiveness. It consists of 3 separate intersections; the “level of service” (LOS) goal (time spent waiting in the intersection) as set by the Town and the state is not met; sight distance for the northbound spur onto North Street does not meet standards. Because the intersection is unconventional and does not meet common design standards, it can confuse those who are less familiar with this specific location. This in turn can lead to more accidents.

**What is a “Level of Service” and why is it important to address?**

A “Level of Service” (LOS) is the grading system that reflects the amount of time one waits at an intersection. The shorter the wait, the better the grade, with an A being the best. The Town’s goal is to maintain a Level of Service (LOS) of C or better. To obtain the grant for intersection improvements, we also needed to create a LOS C or better for every peak hour situation. Peak hours mean times of the day like rush hour.

**How will the new design improve this intersection?**

The new design will go from 3 intersections to 1 intersection. The Town will be able to maintain a LOS of C and better for all peak hours. Signal timing will be revised so cars will not have to wait as long to proceed, in turn creating less pollution and less braking. The intersection will see a 65% increase in green space, with new landscaping donated by Greenwich Green and Clean. We believe the proposed design creates a safe and comfortable intersection.

**What about my right turn on to North Street? How will that work now?**

Today, the turning movement from the Fairfield Road Spur onto North Street does not have the sight distance required by law for a vehicle to turn safely. In the proposed design, right turns will be controlled by the traffic signal. Those turning right will be able to do so when the east/west signal is green AND when the southbound North Street traffic have their green arrow to turn left on to Fairfield. As we plan to use video detection at the intersection, this will also help traffic flow during low volume conditions.

**Will school buses be able to make the right hand turn from Fairfield Road onto North St.?**

We use special software to simulate the movement of vehicles large and small during intersection designs. In this proposed plan, school buses will be able to make the turn comfortably in and out of Fairfield Road without encroaching on the other lanes. The goal is for cars and SUVs to be able to turn as directed by the traffic markings and for school buses and larger vehicles to utilize the cobblestone area when heading northbound.

**What will happen to traffic queues?**

We observe traffic queues today at this intersection at certain times of day. Sometimes these are created by the unconventional geometry of the intersection itself. There is no design that will eliminate traffic queues – they are created by the traffic volumes in this area. By redesigning the intersection, creating the turn lanes, and adjusting the traffic signal timing, we create a more balanced and an improved LOS for the intersection.

**How are traffic counts used to forecast traffic flow?**

When evaluating intersections, DPW typically conducts traffic counts during AM peak (this includes both school and rush hour traffic), mid-day peak, and PM peak (evening rush hour) to record the number of vehicles passing through the intersection. These data are input into a traffic simulation program to model and calibrate existing conditions and to forecast future conditions. After listening to several residents, DPW also completed traffic counts during school dismissal times, which falls between mid-day and PM peak hours. The model with the new design did not show increased queuing and maintains the LOS C or better performance.

**Will the new design reduce the space for pedestrians and cyclists to pass?**

We obtained helpful feedback from residents at our public meeting, who noted that pedestrians use the southeast “corner” of the intersection, walking towards Greenwich Country Day School. We reviewed our proposed plan and can maintain the grass strip width for such transit. We believe that by creating a controlled, signalized intersection with reduced points of conflict, cyclists will have a safer and more comfortable ride as they navigate this location.

**Will the new design include traffic markings on the pavement?**

Some residents were concerned about the look and feel of pavement markings. We are reviewing the design with CTDOT and believe we can remove and/or reduce the pavement markings, using signs where appropriate.

**How will the traffic signals differ from what is out there now?**

Currently there are 8 traffic signals located at this intersection:

- 2 for vehicles traveling on Parsonage Road eastbound – this will remain the same.
- 2 for vehicles traveling on North Street northbound – this will remain the same.
- 2 for vehicles traveling on Fairfield Road westbound – One of these will be converted to a green right turn arrow.
- 2 for vehicles traveling on North Street southbound – this will remain the same.

**How will the new design maintain the “New England” feel of the intersection?**

We all like to see as much green as possible along our roadways. The proposed plan increases green space at this intersection by 65%. Greenwich Green and Clean, who currently landscape and maintain this area, have graciously agreed to continue this for the Town. The cobblestone pavers chosen for the area will be consistent with driveways in the neighborhood. Should the neighborhood be interested, it would be welcome to take advantage of Green and Clean’s program to have the decorative white wood street signs installed at this intersection, also.