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# Traffic improvements planned for several intersections

by Judith Hruz  
Editor

Traffic and safety improvements along Olney's main thoroughfares are in the works, according to state transportation officials.

Jonathan Brown, assistant engineer for traffic for Montgomery County with the State Highway Administration (SHA), laid out a plan of changes for intersections along Georgia Avenue (Route 97) and Olney-Sandy Spring Road (Route 108) during the Sept. 9 meeting of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA).

GOCA has a Transportation Committee that monitors traffic, pedestrian and road issues in the community.

Motorists and pedestrians have long complained about traffic at several key crossroads in Olney town

center.

A very recent study of the intersection of Olney-Sandy Spring Road and Village Center Drive has found challenges do exist for motorists and pedestrians.

"We have great strategies to improve the safety of Maryland 108 and Village Center Drive," Brown said.

SHA plans to install an exclusive left-turn arrow for traffic heading east on Olney-Sandy Spring Road and wanting to turn onto Village Center Drive.

A flashing left arrow – known as a "permissive left turn" – currently allows traffic to stop, look for a break in the traffic and proceed when able. The change will feature a solid, non-flashing red left-turn arrow or solid, non-flashing green left-turn arrow, meaning motorists will no longer be

able to make a left turn on "an open gap" in traffic, Brown said.

SHA also plans to install signs warning of pedestrians, especially for the roads crossing Olney-Sandy Spring Road.

In addition, SHA will install a "Leading Pedestrian Interval," which will allow pedestrians a few-second head start in crossing the street before motorists can turn left. The head start will allow pedestrians to enter the crosswalk with the idea that if the pedestrian is there, the vehicle will have visual contact, Brown said.

The timeline for when the changes would be made was uncertain at press time.

Although not yet planned, SHA would like to the driveway from the

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## Traffic *(Continued from page 1)*

CVS shopping center across the street, which aligns with Village Center Drive, to be one-directional as an entrance only, thus not allowing traffic to exit that driveway onto Olney-Sandy Spring Road.

Brown said that will take "a lot more coordination" with the shopping center owners before that idea would happen.

Highway officials also studied the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Queen Mary Drive near Olney Elementary School.

The intersection becomes "quite congested" in the morning and at school dismissal time, said Brown, and residents would like to see safety improvements.

He said two work orders have been issued for that intersection, one of which is for the installation of two "Don't block the box" markers at the crossroads, which would require vehicles to stop before or after the intersection. That work is likely to be implemented in the fall

or winter.

SHA will also replace some of the signs with yellow backgrounds with fluorescent safety signs, which Brown said are more visible. Plans also call for trimming foliage to increase sight lines and new pavement markers. That should be implemented by the end of the year, he said.

A third area of concern is speeding and loud vehicles traveling on Georgia Avenue between Queen Elizabeth Drive and Gold Mine Road, but Brown said the area needs to be studied further.

In the same area, turning onto Georgia Avenue from Owens Road is difficult at certain times of the day.

Although some residents have asked for a traffic signal at that intersection, Brown said the state would have to complete a traffic study to see if all requirements for installing a light are met. If a traffic light were to be installed, it could take two to three years, he said, so SHA could consider interim measures in the meantime.

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