

Project Update for Hampshire Pike @ Oak Springs Drive

Prepared by Jim Fuller, PE – City Engineer - Dec. 18, 2008



The Hampshire Pike corridor from Lion Parkway to the Williamsport Pike intersection is considered to be one of the major traffic and pedestrian safety problem areas in the city. Two schools (Whitthorne Middle and Baker Elementary) have direct connections to this road and when student drop off and pickup trips are combined with the normal daily traffic, a great safety concern arises for the students and local residents that live in the area. Hampshire Pike also receives the traffic coming from Central High School and Oak Springs Drive which includes the YMCA, Wyndham Estates and The Lakes of Columbia Apartments. Per recent traffic counts, the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for this corridor of Hampshire Pike is over 14,000 vehicles per day.

Since many city and county leaders, local residents and parents were concerned about the children's safety, a consultant was approved by City Council to study this area and obtain recommendations for improvements. Due to the magnitude of the problem, a phased plan of correction was implemented.

The first phase (completed in 2007) moved the "Y" intersection of Williamsport Pike west a few hundred feet to create a perpendicular intersection with Hampshire Pike. This allowed a desired distance between Oak Springs Drive and the new intersection for the installation of future traffic signals and created a safer intersection design. This work was accomplished by a \$100,000 Safety Grant received from TDOT and additional funds approved by the City Council.

The second phase will be the realignment of College Park Drive with Oak Springs Drive. The design drawings have been completed and approval from TDOT is expected before the end of December. This realignment will create more efficient and safer traffic movements and will allow for the installation of a future traffic signal at this location. If Right-Of-Way (ROW) dedication from the County can be obtained, construction work could begin the first quarter of 2009.

Following close behind this work, is the first phase of a \$250,000 Safe Routes to Schools Grant (SRSG) the city received this past year. This grant will pay for the installation of a traffic signal at the realigned intersections of Oak Springs/College Park Drives and Hampshire Pike. Other items included in the estimate to apply for this grant, include sidewalks along the front of Whitthorne Middle School down to Lion Parkway, a pedestrian crossing at the proposed intersection mentioned above and a sidewalk down Oak Springs Drive heading toward the YMCA. Due to the fact that this is a Federal Grant, the design and approval procedure will be a slow process but the improvements that have been proposed will be well worth the wait, hoops and hurdles that the city and citizens will have to encounter.

Many packed room meetings have been held with local residents, city, county and state officials during the planning stages of this endeavor. When the final work is complete, all the people involved can be proud of a project that required their joint efforts to become a reality.