

Alpersn, Phil

From: SHA D3TrafficTeam [SHAD3TrafficTeam@sha.state.md.us]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 4:08 PM
To: Alpersn, Phil
Subject: MD 355 (Rockville Pike) at Cedar Lane

Dear Mr. Alpersn:

This is in further response to the safety concerns raised by members of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Integration Committee regarding the various active and planned BRAC transportation projects in Montgomery County including at the subject location. The State Highway Administration's (SHA) District Three Traffic engineering staff is providing an update on the status of these issues.

The BRAC Integration Committee (BIC) members emphasized the importance of encouraging multimodal transportation by improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists through these BRAC projects. The SHA appreciates and shares the BIC members' dedication to promoting multimodal transportation and the safety of all roadway users including pedestrians and bicyclists. The various planned and active BRAC projects are intended to advance these two goals with the final product while striving to provide adequate accommodations for all roadway users in the temporary work zones. In this context, the BIC members raised four broad issues relating to the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists in the temporary and final conditions at BRAC project locations.

It should be noted that there are multiple active and planned BRAC transportation projects in the Bethesda area with SHA being the lead agency on certain projects and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) on others. As such, SHA may be in a better position to provide information on certain issues while MCDOT may be in a better position on others.

One issue raised by the BIC members was accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists through active construction zones. For each BRAC project that affects pedestrian and bicyclist facilities, a temporary traffic control plan is developed which considers the needs of these roadway users. The temporary traffic control plan attempts to reduce impacts to these facilities when practical. When project needs require these facilities to be disrupted, closed, or relocated, the plan calls for temporary traffic control devices (e.g., signing and pavement markings) to be provided which warn and guide these users as they navigate through the work zone. For instance, if it is necessary to close a particular crosswalk, the plan provides signing and pavement markings to detour pedestrians along alternative routes. At active work zones, we may add to or adjust the signing and pavement markings called for in the plans to a certain extent in response to safety and operational concerns that emerge in the field.

Specifically, on the MD 355 at Cedar Lane project, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations during construction have been provided. One such instance involves the crosswalk on the east leg of Cedar Lane that has been closed in the last two phases of construction. During this time, signing was provided to detour pedestrians using crosswalks on other legs that

the Cedar Lane and Wilson Drive intersections. In the current phase of construction, the east leg crosswalk is scheduled to be reopened. However, the drainage work along northbound MD 355 south of Cedar Lane will continue to prevent pedestrians from traveling along the east side of MD 355 between Cedar Lane and Wilson Drive. As such, pedestrians traveling along that section will continue to be detoured to the west side of MD 355. We are pleased to inform you that the pavement markings for the crosswalk on the north leg of the MD 355 at Cedar Lane intersection will be refreshed within the next 60 (sixty) days, weather and scheduling permitting.

At the end of the previous phase of construction, SHA opened a new pedestrian bridge located southwest quadrant of the intersection of MD 355 with Cedar Lane. This pedestrian bridge allows pedestrians and bicyclists to travel between the south side of W. Cedar Lane to the shared use path along the west side of MD 355. Due to construction activities near the southwest corner of MD 355 at Cedar Lane (e.g., roadway widening and drainage work), the pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along the west side of MD 355 between Cedar Lane and Wilson Drive will likely need to be detoured to this new pedestrian bridge for a considerable portion of the remainder of this project. Detour signing guiding pedestrians to the bridge will be provided as needed. Pedestrian lighting for this bridge is currently under construction. Improvements to the temporary intersection lighting for all four corners of the intersection of MD 355 at Cedar Lane are also underway. In addition, we will install an overhead "Turning Traffic Yield To Peds" sign facing westbound Cedar Lane at MD 355 and maintain it for the remainder of the construction project. This sign should emphasize to westbound right-turning traffic that they must yield to pedestrians crossing the north leg of MD 355.

The MD 355 at Cedar Lane BRAC project is expected to be completed by the end of 2016, weather and schedule permitting. We will strive to provide adequate accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists within this active work zone at all times.

The second issue raised by the BIC members was clear pathways connecting residential areas and the business district to the Medical Center Metro station. Considerable improvements are planned for pedestrians traveling to and from the Medical Center Metro station as part of BRAC transportation projects, particularly the MD 355 BRAC Crossing project led by MCDOT. This BRAC Crossing project will construct a shallow underpass serving pedestrians and cyclists to enable safe and efficient passage under MD 355 at South Drive connecting the Navy Entrance and the National Institute of Health. As part of this project, pedestrians and cyclists on the east side of MD 355 near the Navy Entrance will be provided with direct access to the Medical Center Metro Station without needing to cross the south leg of MD 355 at South Drive. For more information regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact MCDOT.

The MD 355 BRAC Crossing project will also incorporate several pedestrian-related intersection improvements designed by SHA. These pedestrian improvements include the construction of pedestrian ramps compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for all the marked crosswalks at the intersections of MD 355 at South Drive, MD 355 at Jones Bridge Road, and MD 355 at Woodmont Avenue. In addition, all the existing signalized crosswalks at these intersections will be provided with Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) and Countdown Pedestrian Signals (CPS). This APS and CPS equipment will assist disabled pedestrians through the intersection.

As part of the MD 355 BRAC Crossing project, we are pleased to inform you that a new signalized crosswalk with APS and CPS equipment will be provided on the north leg of MD 355 at Jones Bridge Road, where none exists today. The MD

355 BRAC Crossing project is tentatively scheduled for completion in the fall of 2018. In addition, we are also planning to have an overhead "Turning Traffic Yield To Peds" sign installed facing northbound MD 355 at Jones Bridge Road. This overhead sign should emphasize that right-turning traffic should yield to the pedestrians crossing the south and east legs of the intersection. We expect this overhead sign to be installed within sixty (60) days, weather and schedule permitting.

The MD 355 at Cedar Lane BRAC project led by SHA will also improve pedestrian pathways to the Medical Center Metro station farther to the north. As part of this project, APS/CPS pedestrian signals with ADA ramps will be constructed for all marked crosswalks at the existing signalized intersections of MD 355 at Cedar Lane and MD 355 at Wilson Drive. In addition, this project will construct a new traffic signal with APS and CPS at Cedar Lane and Elmhirst Parkway. At the intersection of MD 355 and Wilson Drive, the marked crosswalk on the north leg will be relocated to the south leg to avoid pedestrian conflicts with the heavy eastbound left-turning traffic from Wilson Drive.

The third issue raised by the BIC members was the request for state-of-the-art lighting along MD 355 at signalized intersections and shared use paths. The BRAC transportation projects include several lighting improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists in the final condition. For example, the MD 355 at Cedar Lane BRAC project will provide LED luminaires on all four corners of the intersection as well as luminaires for shared use path along the west side of MD 355 between W. Cedar Lane and Wilson Drive. The MD 355 BRAC Crossing Project includes the installation of luminaires for the same shared use path along the west side of MD 355 between South Drive and Jones Bridge Road.

In the near term, it is our understanding that MCDOT and Pepco have a project planned to upgrade the existing lighting illuminating the crosswalk on the south leg of MD 355 at South Drive. For more information on this project, please do not hesitate to contact MCDOT.

The fourth issue raised by the BIC members was the request for improved crosswalks with signalization, signing, pavement markings, and pedestrian timing. As was previously described with respect the second issue, all signalized crosswalks included within the limits of these BRAC projects will have pedestrian ramps compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as APS/CPS pedestrian signals. The signing and pavement markings for these signalized crosswalks will be in accordance with the most recent SHA and MCDOT standards. Both SHA and MCDOT are working together to provide appropriate pedestrian crossing times for all crosswalks during and after construction.

In closing, SHA fully appreciates and shares the BIC members' overall concern for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. We will continue to work to promote the safety of these and all roadway users in the temporary and final conditions at these BRAC project locations.

Thank you again for sharing the BIC Committee's concerns. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at 301-513-7465 or 1-800-749-0737. I will be pleased to assist you.

Sincerely,

David Murnan

Team Leader—Traffic (Montgomery County)



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