



Traffic Calming to Enhance Pedestrian Safety



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

Problem

Despite being a small village, being located just east of New York City resulted in gridlock and speeding vehicles.

Background

Over 30 percent of the population in Great Neck Plaza is over 65 years of age. This results in a higher proportion of slower-moving and slower-reacting pedestrians. It was therefore necessary that the city take additional measures to create a safe pedestrian environment.

Solution

The Village pursued a program to calm traffic, enhance the visibility of pedestrians, and improve crosswalk safety. Several techniques were employed to accomplish these goals. A roundabout was installed at a busy intersection of two streets adjacent to the Long Island Rail Road Station, the busiest commuter railroad in America. Contrasting pavement color was used to designate the crosswalk area, curb extensions were used to shorten the crossing distance, and decorative fencing was used to direct pedestrians to the crossings. Additionally, “splitter” islands created medians on the approaches to the roundabout, allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Illuminated pedestrian crossings overhead warn motorists of the presence of pedestrians in or entering a crosswalk. The bright Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) are activated by a pressure sensitive pad installed in the sidewalk handicap ramps. In addition, overhead speed awareness devices were installed on the four main roads leading to the central business district. The devices consist of a radar gun and digital readout of the actual speed of approaching vehicles.

Preliminary plans included reducing one major roadway to a two-lane road with landscaped median and left-hand turning lanes at intersections. It was hoped that these changes, along with resurfacing and high-visibility crosswalk markings and countdown pedestrian signals, would decrease traffic congestion, illegal u-turns, and pedestrian crashes.

The project included a comprehensive public outreach program to obtain community consensus for the completed improvements. The village worked closely with the Parking and Pedestrian Safety Committee throughout the planning and design phases. A public information meeting was held to obtain feedback on various alternatives, and a village newsletter and media releases informed the public about ongoing progress.



A roundabout installed to improve pedestrian safety.



Before



After

Traffic Calming to Enhance Pedestrian Safety — Great Neck Plaza, NY

Funding was provided primarily through the New York State Department of Transportation's Local Safe Streets and Traffic Calming grants. Additional funding came through the Nassau County Department of Public Works, and several municipalities including the Village itself. Total costs were estimated at \$1,580,000, including planned and yet to be completed improvements.

Results

Results are not yet available for the project. However, since traffic accidents in the area involving pedestrians are typically severe, even a slight reduction in the number of accidents is considered significant.

Contact

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Image Source

Institute of Transportation Engineers Pedestrian Project Award Application. L.K. McLean Associates, Inc.
<http://www.ite.org/awards/pedproject/GreatNeck.pdf>

