

Left-turn signals touted for driver safety

BY JEFF COUNTS
STAFF WRITER

This week, AAA Michigan officials reported the results of a multi-year study of 13 intersections in Detroit that showed left-turn signals provide "a real safety advantage," according to Dick Miller, manager of Community Safety Services at AAA.

And Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss couldn't agree more.

The study found that adding left-turn signals helped decrease accidents by 30 percent; reduce injury accidents by 51 percent; and slash head-on left-turn accidents by 69 percent, Miller reported.

Goss said his city's experience with installing dedicated turn lanes and signals at three heavily trafficked intersections - Nine Mile/Orchard Lake/Grand River, Grand River/Orchard

have a left-turn signal - and changing those intersections is a goal of Redford Supervisor Kevin Kelley and Livonia Mayor Jack Kirksey for the coming year.

"We talked to Robert Fianno at the Conference of Western Wayne County Government, and he's going to make roads a priority," Kelley said, which includes adding left-turn arrows and lanes.

"We're hoping to sit down with him before the end of the year to discuss the issue," Kirksey said. He added that Livonia would be willing to put money into making the improvements, as long as the county would pay it back later.

"It costs about \$55,000 to improve each intersection," he said, adding that Livonia wants to make the improvements as soon as possible because safety is at stake. But that won't be too soon for Walters. "I've seen three

accidents there in the last two years," she said. "During rush hour, three or four cars will run the red light to make a turn."

Death paid a call at the intersection Aug. 16, when a 14-year-old died when the car in which he was riding was broadsided by a truck.

One attorney in the case said it was "a nightmare situation where you have two people go through a light and they collide because neither one is paying close attention."

The youth was riding in a car driven by his 69-year-old grandmother, who police determined was not at fault. The driver of the truck, a Redford man, pleaded no contest to negligent homicide charges and is awaiting sentencing.

Kelley said creating left-turn lanes and adding those turn arrows can help prevent such accidents.

"We get a lot of requests

for left-turn lanes," he said. Neither he nor Leo Snage, Redford's Public Works director, knew exactly how many major intersections in the community don't have such left-turn signals. But Snage pointed out the Five Mile and Inkster roads intersection: "I'd like to see that one improved."

"I'd love to have every major intersection in Redford with a left-turn lane and signal," he said. Goss wouldn't mind seeing a left-turn light at one of the city's busiest intersections - but physical conditions won't allow it. He said the intersection of Grand River and Farmington Roads would be an ideal candidate, if enough space was available.

"What you have to have is a dedicated left-turn only lane," he said. "The way it is now, that wouldn't work."


Staff writer Joni Hubred also contributed to this article.

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