

# Intersection to get left-turn light

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By late spring or summer, it should be a lot easier for motorists to make their way through the often-bottlenecked, crazy-quilt intersection where northbound Orchard Lake Road, Grand River and Nine Mile come together in Farmington.

Farmington city officials recently were notified that the Michigan Department of Transportation plans on installing a left-hand-turn arrow at the twisting, convoluted intersection. The signal will enable more

cars to turn at a time from northbound Orchard Lake to westbound Grand River and minimize the need for drivers - trying to reach the second leg of Orchard Lake via Shiawassee - to cut through nearby residential streets such as Floral, Lilac and Violet.

"The problem we've had," said Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss, following Monday night's city council meeting, "is because there's such a back-up of cars trying to turn left onto Grand River, instead, they're cutting through on streets like Floral ... With this left-hand-

turn phase, we'll alleviate that (back-up)."

Farmington Mayor Mary Bush said the signal will "be an improvement to the intersection, make it a lot safer and help traffic flow smoother."

The signal will enable more drivers per sequence to make the left-hand turn from northbound Orchard Lake to westbound Grand River. Now, they must wait for turning cars from westbound Nine Mile (on the opposite side of Grand River).

Goss said it might take up to six months for the signal to be installed by the state.

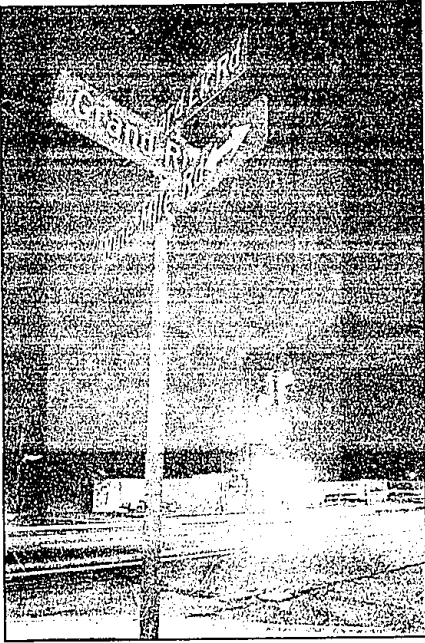
In September, the council heard recommendations from Robert DeCorte of the traffic and safety board (which Goss is a member), urging physical changes to the three-way intersection.

It was suggested at that time that right-hand flare lanes be added on eastbound Grand River at Orchard Lake, for motorists turning south, and for traffic on westbound Nine Mile to turn onto westbound Grand River.

But Goss, Monday, said flare lanes won't be part of the upcoming improvements.

The signal is expected to also enhance safety. There were 21 accidents at the intersection between 1994-96, with seven of those occurring on left-hand turns, according to a Farmington Hills-funded study by Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said it will be a plus to eliminate drivers cutting through Floral, Lilac and Violet streets, which he called "a problem for years and years for those residents."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BASKES

**Bottleneck:** State transportation officials say the Orchard Lake, Nine Mile and Grand River intersection will get a left-turn light.

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