

## Traffic lights getting upgrade

Timing system will be tweaked in an effort to reduce accidents

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POSTED: May 28, 2009

Fine-tuning of traffic signal timing along the Greene and Pike streets corridors in Marietta could reduce accidents, ease rush hour congestion and even increase gas mileage, according to a report filed with Marietta City Council's streets and transportation committee Wednesday.

"We look at existing conditions like traffic control, signal timing, and traffic volume, then create a new signal timing plan," Ed Williams with TEC Engineering of Cincinnati told the committee members.

The city has contracted with TEC to perform a study of signal timing along the Ohio 7 corridor in Marietta that includes Greene Street from Second Street to Pike Street, and Pike Street to the County House Lane intersection near the Wal-Mart complex.

"Currently the timing system runs according to traffic volume," Williams said. "Detectors in the road count the number of cars over a period of about seven minutes. That number is averaged out and compared to a set threshold figure, then the computer bumps the signal timing up or down accordingly."

To provide better traffic flow along the Ohio 7 corridor, Williams recommended setting traffic signals at 80-second cycles along Greene Street, but at 120-second cycles from the Pike Street intersection to County House Lane.

"Successful results from adjusting the signal timing would be like adding another lane to the corridor, but at very little cost," said city engineer Joe Tucker.

Williams said the study has also revealed a lot of traffic problems revolve around the Williamstown Bridge intersection with Greene Street, especially during the noon rush hour, and suggested the long-term possibility of adding a right turn lane onto the bridge as well as similar lanes east and westbound at the Third and Fourth streets intersections.

Another TEC Engineering study of the Greene Street section of the Ohio 7 corridor alone showed average daily traffic totaled 28,585 vehicles in that area. Williams noted a previous 2005-2007 safety study by the state indicated 123 accidents occurred at Greene Street intersections during the study period.

"That translates to 19.65 accidents per million entering vehicles at intersections," he said. "To put that in perspective, the recommended target for most areas is for accidents per million entering vehicles."

Williams said 52 of the 123 mishaps occurred at the Greene and Fourth streets intersection, 48 occurred in the Greene and Third streets intersection; and 23 occurred at the Williamstown Bridge intersection. He said more than 50 percent of the accidents were rear-end crashes.

Tucker said two of the Greene Street intersections were among the worst in the city.

"There's a safety problem at those intersections which sets us up for possible funding from a state transportation safety grant for improvements," he said, adding that the grant only requires a 10 percent match from the city.