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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Installation of temporary signage and barricades for safety improvements on Four Mile Road begin week of December 9, 2019

WEST HARTFORD, CONN. (December 3, 2019) – The Town of West Hartford's Engineering Division plans to test, and if successful, construct an intersection safety improvement at Boulevard at Four Mile Road. New signage and barricades will be installed during the week of December 9.

"The Boulevard at Four Mile Road intersection has experienced an alarming number of angle crashes in recent years," said Town Manager Matt Hart.

"Over the past five years, we've seen more than 30 motor vehicle accidents and 11 in 2019 alone. Almost exclusively, these crashes involve a northbound or southbound motorist attempting to cross Boulevard. The motorists attempting this maneuver are either not stopping, not coming to a complete stop, or not stopping long enough to safely cross the intersection," said Mr. Hart.

Town staff from Public Works, Engineering and Police have evaluated many years of crash reports to understand the crash history. Surprisingly, speeding on Boulevard was not a prevalent contributing factor as indicated in the crash history reports. Staff also visited the intersection at various times of year to review its characteristics.

Following significant analysis of all the data, the installation of semi-diverters was proposed as the best method to improve safety and overall intersection effectiveness while being the most responsive and cost effective to implement.

"Semi-diverters would restrict any Boulevard traffic from turning onto either block of Four Mile Road, but more importantly, would restrict northbound and southbound Four Mile Road motorists from proceeding straight across Boulevard onto the next block of Four Mile Road," said Town Engineer Duane Martin.

(more)

The semi-diverters would function as a barrier in each outbound lane of Four Mile Road at Boulevard, effectively turning Four Mile Road into a one-way street for the last 100 feet approaching Boulevard. Northbound and southbound Four Mile Road motorists must turn left or right at Boulevard, while Boulevard motorists must continue eastbound or westbound.

Beyond each semi-diverter, Four Mile Road opens back up to two-way traffic. No turn restrictions are planned at the intersections of Four Mile Road and Sedgwick Road or Four Mile Road at Ellsworth Road.

"We feel strongly that semi-diverters will be effective at reducing or even eliminating angle crashes since they prohibit the Four Mile Road straight maneuver that is involved in the high crash frequency at the intersection," said Mr. Martin.

In 2017, a semi-diverter was installed at the Boulevard at Whiting Lane intersection, which has significantly improved that intersection's safety. The annual crash rate at Boulevard at Whiting Lane decreased from ten to two crashes per year, and the two crashes were motorists disregarding the signage and semi-diverter.

Town crews plan to install temporary signage and barricades on Four Mile Road to during the week of December 9th, 2019 and will leave them in place through the winter. Any permanent measures would not be constructed until 2020, and only after a thorough evaluation of crashes and traffic patterns is conducted.

"We recognize the proposed semi-diverters will change travel patterns and this may be inconvenient to nearby residents. We will monitor traffic patterns and crash reports and recommend additional safety measures as needed. We appreciate the public's understanding as we move forward with this important safety improvement," said Mr. Hart.

Questions regarding these improvements may be directed to Town Engineer Duane Martin at (860) 561-7539 or duanem@westhartfordct.gov.

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