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Report TSD-239-76
A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT ANALYSIS
IN OTTAWA COUNTY


# TRAFFIC and SAFETY DIVISION 

TRANSPORTATICN EHPARY MBCHGAN DEPT. STATE:UGHWAYSG TRANSPORTATION LANSING, MICH.

## MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE HIGHWAYS

# Michigan Department <br> of <br> State Highways and Transportation 

Report TSD-239-76
A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT ANALYSIS

IN OTTAWA COUNTY

JOSEPH L. MESZAROS

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Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation
in cooperation with
The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
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## INTRODUCTION

The Highway Safety Act of 1966 was enacted by the Congress of the United States in order to promote highway safety. Highway safety standards were then developed to assure the orderly implementation of the Act.

Purpose
Highway Safety Standard 4.4.13, Traffic Engineering Services, is one of those standards. The purpose of Standard 4.4.13 is
"to assure the full and proper application of modern traffic engineering principles and uniform standards for traffic control to reduce the likelihood and severity of traffic accidents."

One of the goals of this standard is identifying specific locations which have a high accident experience as a basis for establishing priorities for eliminating or reducing accidents.

The State of Michigan is involved in the above activity on the state trunkline system. Many city and county agencies, however, lack the financial and technical prerequisities necessary to pursue similar programs. To improve the overall evaluation of the accident picture in Michigan, the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation requested and received through the office of Highway Safety planning in the Department of State Police, a federally funded project entitled "Traffic Engineering Services for Cities and Counties".

Under this program the Departments' personnel will provide the expertise for each participating city and county. A traffic engineering evaluation of the factors contributing to traffic accidents and recommendations to correct these conditions will be made.

Scope
The intent of this program is to improve traffic safety on all Michigan streets and highways by expanding the traffic engineering evaluation of factors causing accidents, and by providing uniform standards for traffic control to reduce the frequency and severity of traffic accidents.

Study Procedures
The study procedures for this project involve a review of high accident locations. The Department of State Police, also operating under a federal grant, is responsible for identifying and locating the high accident locations to be studied. After the basic data is collected at these locations, the Department of Transportation conducts an accident analysis and technical evaluation from which remedial recommendations are formulated.

Funding
The implementation of the proposed recommendations is the responsibility of ottawa County. Financial assistance may be obtained through the Highway Safety Act of 1973. (Appendix 1) This Act was established to provide funding for implementation of safety improvement projects aimed at the elimination or reduction of traffic accidents. Further information on this program may be obtained by contacting the Local Government Division of the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation.

Study Area
Ottawa County is located on the west side of the state (Figure 1). It is bordered on the north by Muskegon County, on the east by Kent County, on the south by Allegan County, and on the west by Lake Michigan.

The road system in ottawa county, according to the TwentyThird Annual Progress Report as compiled by the Local Government Division of the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation, is made up of 100.55 miles of state trunkline, 373.24 miles of county primary roads and 1091.83 miles of county local roads, for a total of 1565.62 miles of roadway (Figure 2).

## FIGURE I



STUDY AREA


## TRAFFIC ENGINEERTNG ANALYSIS

Collection and Analysis of Field Data
The Department of State Police examined their records and transmitted to the Traffic and Safety Division of the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation a list of 16 high accident locations (Figure 3) on the county road system. An automated system of locating accidents on local roads has not yet been established on a statewide basis; therefore, the high accident locations for ottawa County were determined by manually extracting and compiling those locations with the highest number of accidents in the period 1971-1973.

The sixteen high accident locations accounted for 348 accidents during this three-year period. Traffic volumes on the County Primary Road System in Ottawa County vary from moderate in outlying areas to heavy around the city of Holland. It is understandable then that the high concentration of accidents will be in the area around the city of Holland (Figure 4).

The second portion of the data collection, which is the responsibility of the Department of State Highways and Transportation, involves the following basic steps: 1) conducting a field investigation at each location; 2) preparing collision diagrams and physical condition diagrams for each location; 3) obtaining traffic counts and conducting speed studies where necessary; 4) preparing a warrant graph and capacity analysis for signalized locations; and 5) conducting skidometer tests at locations where wet and skidding accidents occur.

The analysis portion involves the examination of the summarized facts and field data from the viewpoint of a highway traffic engineer. Special attention is focused on the effect the highway environment may have had on the accident. Thus at each high accident location, individual accident reports were reviewed in detail and collision diagrams were prepared in order to identify accident patterns and to locate the accident in relation to the geometrics of the intersection. This analysis results in the formulation of remedial recommendations at each location presented in the form of a condition diagram.

## County Wide Recommendations

Clear Vision Areas
In order to provide ample sight distance at intersections, the corners of these intersections must not be overgrown with foliage nor have other obstructions. Although sometimes buildings or other permanent obstacles create inadequate visibility, most of the time removable objects such as trees, signs, or parked vehicles prohibit adequate sight distances. It is therefore recommended


that ottawa County not only establish a program to create clear vision corners at all intersections, but also begin a maintenance program to insure that all corners are kept clear of obstacles.

Estimated Costs
Since final construction plans are not available, the lump sum of $\$ 7.50$ per square foot of pavement has been used in estimating the construction costs. The costs for all other recommendations are based on Department unit prices and using Department personnel for the work.

## High Accident Locations

After our analysis of the 16 high accident locations was completed, engineering recommendations were formulated for 4 of these locations. This report will discuss in detail only these four locations. The high accident locations and the average accident rates for each location during the study period (1971-1973) are as follows:

## Location

Accidents
Average Accident Rate
( $\mathrm{ACC} / \mathrm{MV}$ )
*1. River Ave. and Douglas Ave.
52
*2. River Ave. and Howard Ave.
*3. River Ave. and Lakewood Blvd.
*4. Baldwin St. and Cottonwood Dr.
5. Ottawa Beach Rd. and 152 nd Ave. 19
6. 96 th Ave. between Quincy St. and Riley $S t$.
7. Baldwin St. and $20 t h$ Ave.
8. James St. and 136 th Ave. 16
9. Lakewood Blvd. and Division Ave. 15
10. Port Sheldon $S t$. and $48 t h$ Ave. 15
11. Riley St. and $3.36 t h$ Ave.
12. James St. and Beeline Ave. 14
13. Lakewood Blvd. and Beeline Ave. 14
14. Bauer Rd. and 48 th Ave. 13
15. Lakewood Blvd. and 120 th Ave. 13
16. Port Sheldon St. and 40th Ave. 9.1
*Locations discussed in the body of the report

Operational Analysis:
River Avenue and Douglas Street form a right-angle intersection operating under traffic signal control. The right-of-way assignment is based on a 60-second cycle with a 65-35 percent split favoring River Avenue. Yellow clearance intervals of 7 percent ( 4.2 seconds) are provided.

Accidents:

| Type | 1971 | $\underline{1972}$ | $\frac{1973}{}$ | Total |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Right-Angle | - | 5 | 10 | 15 |
| Rear End | 5 | 4 | 6 | 15 |
| Head On-Left Turn | - | 7 | 2 | 9 |
| Turning. | - | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| Misc. | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 6 | 18 | 28 | 52 |

The miscellaneous accident types included three side swipes and one improper backing. The accident rate was $1.8 \mathrm{ACC} / \mathrm{MV}$. Seven of the right-angle accidents involved northbound River Avenue traffic (violators) which failed to stop for the traffic signal.



NORTHBOUND RIVER AVENUE


SOUTHBOUND RIVER AVENUE


EAStBOUND DOUGLAS STREET


WESTBOUND DOUGLAS STREET

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Type
Estimated Cost

1. Erect overhead Lane-Use Control signs on each approach on River Avenue.
2. Apply pavement markings including pavement arrows to aid in defining the operation of each lane.
3. Provide a 2 percent (1.2 seconds) all
red interval for River Avenue which will help alleviate the right-angle accident problem at this location.
4. Interconnect this signal with the signals along River Avenue at Howard Avenue and Lakewood Boulevard to provide progression. (Figure 9) This should reduce the rearend pattern.
5. Erect an illuminated case sign over the 400.00 intersection designating the permitted left turns.
6. Change the signal placement, unless specia phasing is anticipated for northbound to southbound left turns, for this location as shown in figure 8.


Operational Analysis:
River Avenue and Howard Street form a right-angle intersection operating under traffic signal control. The right-of-way assignment is based on a 60-second cycle with a 65-35 percent split favoring River Avenue. Yellow clearance intervals of 7 percent (4.2 seconds) are provided.

Accidents:

| Type | $\frac{1971}{}$ | $\frac{1972}{}$ | $\frac{1973}{}$ | Total |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Rear End | 11 | 3 | 3 | 17 |
| Right-Angle | 4 | 4 | 3 | 11 |
| Head On-Left Turn | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| Turning | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Misc. | 20 | 12 | 11 | 2 |

The miscellaneous types include one backing and one side swipe accident. The accident rate was $1.43 \mathrm{ACC} / \mathrm{MV}$. Ten of the right-angle accidents involved southbound River Avenue traffic (violators) which failed to stop for the traffic signal.
RATE: 2.1 ACC./M.V. 1.4 ACC./M.V.

| LEGEND | MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE HIGHWAYS TRAFFIC AND SAFETY DIVISION |
| :---: | :---: |
| Stop \& Go Signal Stop Sign $\quad \mathbf{S} \longmapsto$ Flashing Beacon Yield Sign $Y \vdash$ | Location RIVER AT HOWARD <br> HOLLAND TWP. <br> ottawa co <br> FIGURE 10 |
|  |  |



NORTHBOUND RIVER AVENUE


SOUTHBOUND RIVER AVENUE
Figure 11


EASTBOUND HOWARD STREET


## RECOMMENDATIONS

Type

1. Erect overhead Lane-Use Control signs on River Avenue and the west leg of Howard Street.
2. Apply pavement markings including pavement arrows to aid in defining the operation of each lane.
3. Provide a 2 percent (1,2 seconds) al1 red clearance interval in the signal timing for River Avenue. This will help alleviate the right-angle accident problem at this intersection.
4. Interconnect this signal with the signals on River Avenue at Douglas Avenue and Lakewood Boulevard to provide progression. (Figure 9) which will reduce the rear-end accidents.
5. Provide a right-turn lane in the southwest quadrant with a control radius of 50 feet. This will permit more turning maneuverability as vehicles turn right from the west leg of Howard Avenue and turn left from the east leg of Howard Avenue and aid in preventing side swipe accidents.
6. Install new panel with the legend "Leftturn lane" in existing case sign for River Avenue traffic.

Total

Estimated Cost


Operational Analysis:
River Avenue and Lakewood Boulevard form a right-angle intersection operating under signal control: The right-ofway assignment is based on a 60-second cycle with a 60-40 percent split favoring River Avenue. Yellow clearance intervals of 7 percent ( 4.2 seconds) are provided.

Accidents:

| Type | 1971 | $\frac{1972}{}$ | $\frac{1973}{}$ | Total |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Head On-Left Turn | 2 | 5 | 3 | 10 |
| Right-Angle | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| Turning | 1 | 3 | 4 | 8 |
| Rear End | - | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Misc: | 1 | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| Total |  |  |  |  |

The miscellaneous accident types included three improper bakings, two ran off roadways and two side swipes. The accident rate was $1.9 \mathrm{ACC} / \mathrm{MV}$.


| LEGEND | MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE HIGHWAYS TRAFFIC AND SAFETY DIVISION |
| :---: | :---: |
| Stop \& Go Signal Stop Sign $\boldsymbol{S} \downarrow$ Flashing Beacon Yield Sign $Y F$ | Location RIVER AT LAKEWOOD <br> HOLLAND TWP. <br> OTTAWA CO. FIGURE 14 |
|  |  |



NORTHBOUND RIVER AVENUE



EASTBOUND LAKEWOOD BLVD.


## RECOMMENDATIONS

Type

1. Erect overhead Lane-Use Control signs on each approach on River Avenue.
2. Apply pavement markings including pavement arrows to aid in determining the function of each lane.
3. Interconnect this signal with the other signals on River Avenue at Howard Avenue and Douglas Avenue to provide progression (Figure 9) which will reduce the rear end accidents.
4. Erect an illuminated case, with the legend left-turn lane, for north and southbound River Avenue.


BALDWIN STREET AT COTTONWOOD DRIVE AND SCHOOL STREET
Operational Analysis:
Baldwin Street, Cottonwood Drive and School Street form a right-angle intersection operating under traffic signal control. The right-of-way assignment is based on a 70second cycle with a $64-36$ percent split favoring Baldwin Street. Yellow clearance intervals of 6 percent ( 4.2 seconds) are provided.

| Type | 1971 | $\underline{1972}$ | $\frac{1973}{}$ | Tota1 |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Right-Angle | 1 | 5 | 6 | 12 |
| Head On-Left Turn | - | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| Sideswipe | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Rear End | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Misc. | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Total | 6 | 11 | 18 | 35 |

The miscellaneous accident types included three improper turns, one improper backing and one involving a pedestrian. The accident rate was 2.2 ACC/MV.

A recent traffic count indicates that 95 percent of the vehicles on the east leg of Baldwin Street, between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., are in the curb lane. A capacity analysis indicates a deficiency on this leg.


| LEGEND | MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE HIGHWAYS TRAFFIC AND SAFETY DIVISION |
| :---: | :---: |
|  | Location BALDWIN AT COTTONWOOD \& SCHOOL GEORGE TOWN TWP. <br> OTTAWA CO. |
| Fatal $\longrightarrow 0$Iniury <br> Skidding <br> Jackknife <br> Overturned <br> Backing$\longrightarrow$ |  |



EASTBOUND BALDWIN STREET


WESTBOUND BALDWIN STREET
Figure 19


NORTHBOUND SCHOOL STREET


SOUTHBOUND COTTONWOOD DRIVE
Figure 20

## RECOMMENDATIONS

## Type

Estimated Cost

1. Prohibit the left turn from westbound
$\$ 400.00$
Baldwin Street between 3 p.m. and
6 p.m. This will alleviate the congestion and capacity problem experienced at this intersection. Install an overhead case sign with the legend "No Left Turn Between 3 p.m. - 6 p.m." and a postmounted sign for the far left-hand corner with the same legend.
2. Provide a 2 percent ( 1.2 seconds) all red interval in the signal timing for each roadway. This will help alleviate the right-angle accident problem.
3. Apply pavement markings, including center lines, lane lines and pavement arrows, at this intersection.
4. Change the signal placement, unless special phasing is anticipated for the eastbound and westbound left turns, for this location as shown in figure 21.


## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of State Police submitted 16 high accident locations for Ottawa County to the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation. After an indepth study of these locations, we formulated recommendations for four of them. The recommendations are as follows:

Location Location Description Number

1. River Avenue at Douglas Street \$6,668.00
2. River Avenue at Howard Street \$27,025.00
3. River Avenue at Lakewood Boulevard \$5,100. 00
4. Baldwin Street at Cottonwood Drive and School Street \$2,575.00

## Recommendation

Erect overhead Lane-Use Control signs on River Avenue. Apply pavement markings. Provide an all red interval to follow the River Avenue yellow clearance interval. Interconnect this signal with the signals along River Avenue at Howard Avenue and Lakewood Boulevard. Erect an illuminated case sign and change signal face placement.

Erect overhead Lane-Use Control signs on River Avenue and the west leg of Howard Street. Apply pavement markings: Provide an all red interval to follow the River Avenue yellow clearance interval. Interconnect this signal with the other signals on River Avenue at Douglas Avenue and Lakewood Boulevard. Construct a right-turn lane in the southwest quadrant with a 50-foot control radius. Add left-turn panel to case sign.

Erect overhead Lane-Use Control signs for each approach on River Avenue. Apply pavement markings. Interconnect this signal with the other signals on River Avenue at Douglas Avenue and Howard Avenue. Erect illuminated case sign.

Prohibit the left turn from westbound Baldwin Street between 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. Provide an all red interval for both roadways. Apply pavement markings. Change signal placement.

APPENDIX I

HIGHWAY SAFETY ACT OF 1973


The projects eligible for consideration for funding under Section 209 are:

Loc. \#1
Loc. \#2
Loc. 非3
Loc. 非4
River Avenue at Douglas Street
River Avenue at Howard Street
River Avenue at Lakewood Boulevard
Baldwin Street at Cottonwood Drive and School Street


[^0]:    "The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the State or U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration."

