



Grand Avenue Complete Streets Project: Q&A

The following addresses some of the most frequently asked questions by the community regarding the Grand Avenue Complete Streets Project. Should you have any additional questions, please contact the Department of Public Works at 516-571-9342.

1. Why is this project being done?

First and foremost, Nassau County wants to improve public safety along Grand Avenue in Baldwin. The Grand Avenue Complete Streets Project seeks to implement feasible traffic calming measures to improve the safety and accessibility for all modes of transportation including motorists, pedestrians, transit riders and cyclists. Presently, the project corridor of Grand Avenue between Stanton Avenue and Merrick Road, exhibits factors that warrant public safety improvements. One of the most widespread issues throughout the corridor is the extent of speeding by drivers. In 2017, Nassau County evaluated driver speeding along the project corridor. Out of three locations evaluated, all had high numbers of speeding drivers. Depending on the location and direction of travel, **46.5% to 83.8% of drivers were found to be speeding.**¹ Additionally, the project corridor has a notable history of collisions. From 2011 to 2014, **736 collisions occurred within the corridor**, with 25% resulting in injury.² These statistics and first-hand observations by our traffic engineers are a few of the reasons why the County is looking to improve traffic safety along the corridor.

2. Which recommendations from the traffic study have made it into the final design?

As of October 2018, 60% of the project design work has been completed. The following recommendations are included in the final design:

- a.) **Road Redesign:** The purpose of this traffic calming measure is to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety. The road redesign also creates an opportunity to reallocate the excess roadway width to other purposes such as bicycle lanes or wider shared travel/parking lanes. The recommendation is to turn two small segments of Grand Avenue from two lanes in either direction, to one lane in either direction with a center left-turn lane. This would free-up the fourth existing lane, which would be modified into bike lanes (Option 1) or wider shared travel/parking lanes (Option 2) on both sides as shown on the next page. The overall roadway width (curb to curb) would remain the same. **The road redesign will not encompass all of Grand Avenue.**

¹ Nassau County's Traffic Consultant LiRo Engineers, Inc. conducted spot speed analyses on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at three locations (northbound and southbound) along the project corridor. Each location had a sample size ranging from 159 to 215 vehicles.

² Data Source: New York State Department of Transportation.



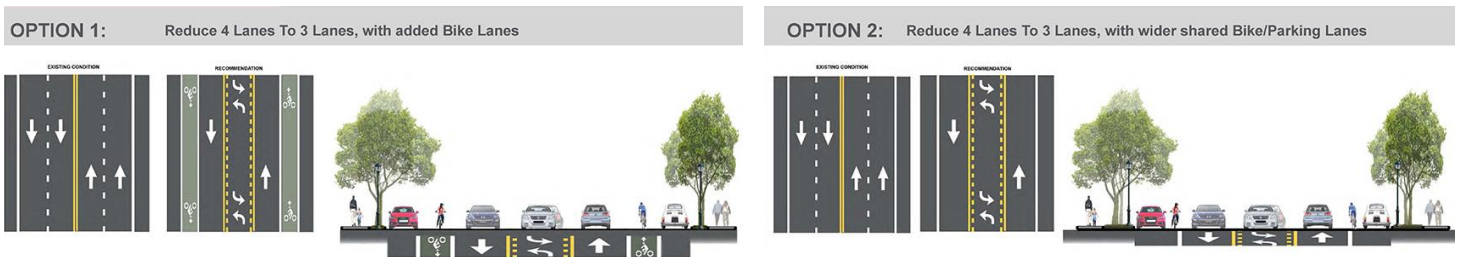
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The road redesign limits are as follows:

1. South Segment: Begins ~400 feet north of Merrick Road and continues to ~480 feet south of Sunrise Highway. The total stretch of the south segment is ~1,200 feet or 2/10 of a mile.
2. North Segment: Begins at Smith Street and ends at Florence Street. The total stretch of the north segment is ~1,100 feet or 2/10 of a mile.

It is important to note that the number of lanes along Grand Avenue at the intersections of Merrick Road and Sunrise Highway would remain to maintain existing capacity.

Significant safety benefits resulting from a road redesign may include the reduction in rear-end, left-turn, and sideswipe accidents and an overall reduction in the severity of accidents.



- b.) **Curb Bump-outs & New Crosswalks:** Extensions of the curb or bump-outs at certain intersections are proposed to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance and make pedestrians and motorists more visible to one another, improving safety and operation. They would also create a road narrowing perception to motorists to curb speeding. The bump-outs would also provide more space for pedestrians, bus shelters and other street furniture, and would help beautify the corridor. Several new crosswalks and curb bump-outs are recommended throughout the study corridor. Curb bump-outs would be designed to allow for safe turning of automobiles, trucks and emergency vehicles at intersections. Curb bump-outs would **not** result in any significant loss of on-street parking.
- c.) **Traffic Light Synchronization:** The timing of traffic lights throughout the study corridor would be optimized and better synchronized to improve the flow of traffic along Grand Avenue. New traffic and pedestrian signal heads would be installed at certain locations. These improvements will enhance level of operation throughout the entire project corridor (reference Q1).

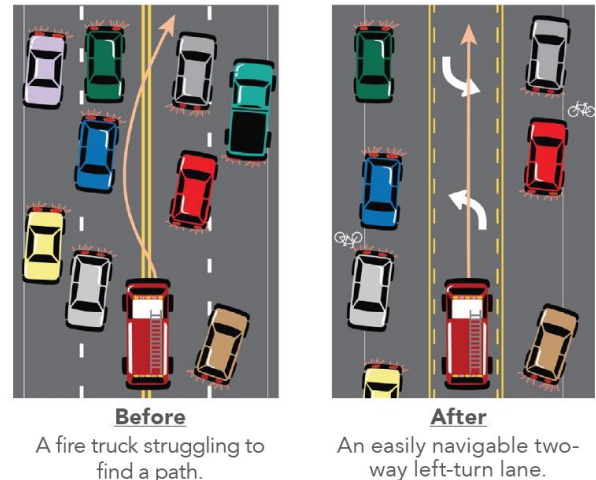


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3. Have the local police and fire departments been consulted on this plan? How will the plan impact emergency response?

The project team has met with emergency response officials at the Nassau County Police Department and Baldwin Fire Department to discuss this project in detail. After meeting with these stakeholder groups, the County's engineers and planners remain confident that the proposed plans will benefit Baldwin.

It should be noted that it is well documented that road redesigns such as the one proposed for Grand Avenue, generally have positive impacts on an emergency vehicle's response time. The Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), both state that three-lane roadways can improve emergency response by allowing emergency vehicles to bypass congestion by using the two-way center left turn lane as a predictable path.^{3,4} Additionally, the wider through lanes and shoulder areas allow traffic to yield to approaching emergency vehicles more quickly. The conceptual drawings to the right by the FHWA illustrate this scenario.



4. How will traffic congestion be addressed?

The optimization and synchronization of traffic lights will help motorists to traverse more efficiently along Grand Avenue. Combined with the road redesign in the downtown area, drivers will be able to maintain safer, more consistent speeds throughout the corridor. The road redesign will allow for sufficient "stacking" at Sunrise Highway and Merrick Road intersections to prevent traffic from backing up further on Grand Avenue. Additionally, clearing clogged travel lanes of left-turning traffic, will improve overall operations.⁵

The traffic analysis performed by the County found that travel time during typical rush hours along Grand Avenue from Merrick Road to Seaman Avenue would only increase by less than 60 seconds, and in some cases decrease slightly, when compared to leaving the roadway the way it exists today.

³ Link to the Institute of Transportation Engineers' *Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares* publication: <https://www.ite.org/pub/?id=E1CFF43C-2354-D714-51D9-D82B39D4DBAD>.

^{4,5} Link to the Federal Highway Administration's "Debunking Road Diet Myths" publication: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/resources/fhwasa16074/fhwasa16074.pdf.



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5. How will this plan impact parking?

The number of on-street parking spaces along the project corridor will largely remain the same. Wider parking lanes will be provided in certain road redesign segments.

6. Why add a bike lane?

Out of all of the public comments we received from our initial public outreach, the request for bike lanes was mentioned most frequently. With the space gained from the road redesign, bike lanes can be constructed in a portion of the downtown area of Baldwin. Studies show that those who bike and walk to businesses spend more money than those who drive!

7. How will this project be paid for?

The project is proposed for inclusion in Nassau County's Capital Plan which funds many infrastructure and community revitalization projects throughout the County. The County has been awarded \$4.7 million in U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Surface Transportation Earmarks to help fund the construction of this project. It is critical that the County progress the project to the construction phase by Summer 2019 to preserve the USDOT Earmark funding.

8. How was the community involved in the planning process?

Planning began with the commissioning of a traffic study in 2014. A public input meeting explaining the study and its goals, was held on February 24th, 2015. More than 80 people were in attendance. The public was asked to provide input on the types of improvements they would like to see in the study corridor. The draft recommendations (based on the engineer's findings and the community's initial input), were presented at a public meeting on November 18th, 2015. In May of 2016, the final report was submitted to the County and published on the



County's website. Upon commencement of the Design & Engineering Phase of the project in 2017, the County's Department of Public Works and LiRo Engineers have met regularly with County and Town officials as well as representatives of local community groups, including the Baldwin Civic Association and the Baldwin Chamber of Commerce, to gather feedback and address questions about the final design.



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9. How will this project promote economic development in Baldwin?

The County is investing in infrastructure improvements in Baldwin that will complement and enhance the ongoing downtown revitalization efforts being conducted by the Town of Hempstead and other community organizations. Investing in safer streets has been proven to result in positive economic impacts for the surrounding community. Creating a safer and more accessible Grand Avenue corridor will send a clear message that Baldwin is a priority for reinvestment and business development. It is likely that the local real estate community will take note of the improvements as clients more frequently inquire about properties along the corridor.

10. Is this project being coordinated with the Town of Hempstead's proposed zoning overlay district(s)?

Yes. The project team has met with officials from the Town of Hempstead to discuss coordination of the Town's zoning proposal with the County's project plans. The traffic analysis conducted as part of this project accounts for traffic growth along the entire project corridor.

To view the Grand Avenue Complete Streets Traffic Study
Final Report and Appendices, visit:

<https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/4257/Grand-AveBaldwin-Complete-Streets-Traffi?activeLiveTab=widgets>



For more information, please contact:

The Nassau County Department of Public Works at 516-571-9342.

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