

Garfield Street Traffic Changes- UPDATE

Pilot Project: On September 12th Saco's Traffic Safety Committee voted unanimously to implement the "No Left Turns at Garfield Street" that was recommended in the recent Saco Rt. 112/ Exit 36 Area Traffic Study. The North Street/Garfield Street intersection was identified as the highest crash location in the study area. The City implemented the suggested left turn restrictions and monitored its effectiveness from October 15th to November 15th.

During the trial period traffic counts were monitored and recorded on Shadagee Road, Tasker Street, Garfield Street, and Louden Road. Traffic signal timing at Industrial Park Road was monitored and adjusted to accommodate the new turning movements and traffic flow changes.

Observations: The overall assessment of the trial period was that it was successful in creating the desired safety improvements, and Rt. 112 traffic flow and efficiency seems better as well. Observations in traffic counts and travel pattern changes include:

- Zero accidents were reported at this location.
- Over 1700 left turn movements were removed from this location.
- Garfield, Shadagee, and Tasker Street traffic volumes are now similar to each other.
- 30% of the Garfield cut through traffic has moved out Rt 112 to Louden Road.
- There is an overall 25% volume reduction of vehicles that now seek alternate routes outside the study area.
- Several cars drove illegally around the center median during the first weeks of implementation requiring additional police enforcement action and signage.

Results: Based on the overall effectiveness of the turning restrictions the City will maintain the current center median through the winter. The Traffic Safety Committee will review the data at their next meeting in January 2020 and determine the permanence of the no left turn restriction at the Garfield Street intersection. If approved, city staff will ensure that these travel patterns are incorporated into the Exit 36 ramp modification designs that are underway by the Maine Turnpike Authority, with construction projected to begin as early as 2022.

