



Department of Transportation
Two Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02903

August 23, 2024

Colin K. Kennedy, MPA
City Manager
City of Newport
43 Broadway
Newport, RI 02840

Dear Mr. Kennedy,

Thank you for meeting with RIDOT on Thursday August 15, 2024 to provide the City an update on Admiral Kalbfus Road in Newport. As you are aware, the City Council passed a Resolution to RIDOT at its October 25, 2023 meeting requesting the following improvements:

- Upgraded traffic signal equipment at the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus and Hillside Avenue
- Install “No Turn on Red” signs on the traffic signals at Admiral Kalbfus at Hillside Avenue
- Permission to include speed and red-light cameras at the Admiral Kalbfus at Hillside Avenue intersection
- Traffic signal at Admiral Kalbfus at Sagamore Street
- Weight-restriction on vehicles on Admiral Kalbfus Road

Within the next several weeks, our Maintenance forces will be installing backplates with retroreflective borders on all the signal heads at the intersections of Admiral Kalbfus at Hillside Avenue and Admiral Kalbfus at West Main Road/Broadway. Backplates improve the visibility of the signal face and typically reduce the number of crashes at intersections by approximately 15%.

The “No Turn on Red” signs have been installed on all approaches to the Hillside Avenue intersection, including on the traffic signals where applicable.

Speed and red-light running automated enforcement is the responsibility of the municipality to administer. The State is responsible for approving the vendor’s equipment (if not already approved from use in another RI municipality) and reviewing the required certified report from a Professional Traffic Engineer stating that the traffic signal and intersection has been inspected and is free from deficiencies in accordance with RIDOT’s Rules and Regulations Concerning Operation of these systems. Also, being a State roadway and intersection, a Physical Alteration Permit to be issued by RIDOT would be required.

The State Traffic Commission (STC) approved a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) at the Sagamore Street crosswalk crossing Admiral Kalbfus Road, which consists of two rectangular-shaped yellow signals, each with a LED-array-based light source that will be activated by push buttons. RRFBs flash with an alternating high frequency when activated to enhance conspicuity of pedestrians at the crossing to drivers. RIDOT is programming this work along with permanent speed feedback signs to be included in a future safety contract. We will update the City as soon our RIDOT Project Management Division has an approximate timeline for installation.

Lastly, the request for the weight restriction on Admiral Kalbfus Road, specifically commercial motor trucks with a gross rate rating of 26,000 lbs., or more, is still under study by RIDOT and the STC. During the August 15th meeting,

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RIDOT showed the City a potential option of restriping the roadway to provide 10-foot travel lanes and buffered 5-foot bike lanes along the corridor. This roadway modification falls in line with the recently completed "Ride Island Bike Plan" by Bike Newport, where it identified Admiral Kalbfus Road as cross-town connector for bike travel. If this option was implemented, truck restrictions would also be recommended to the STC for approval due to the 10-foot travel lanes.

Benefits of this option include: the narrowed lanes and bike lanes creating a traffic calming effect on vehicular travel; continuing cycling improvements along this roadway from the Pell Bridge Interchange Ramp Improvement Project up to West Main Road; and effectively decreasing the pedestrian crossing length in terms of exposure to motor vehicles with the reduction to 10-foot travel lanes.

Potential Impacts of this option include: the increased risk for sideswipes or side view mirror hits between opposing motorists due to the narrower lanes; the need for increased enforcement of the truck restrictions; and rerouted truck traffic using adjacent residential City owned streets to get to their destination.

Although Admiral Kalbfus is a State road, changes to the configuration would likely have an impact on City roadways and RIDOT wants the City to recognize this issue if it was to support the striping change. We formally request that the City reviews the attachment and provide RIDOT with a written response whether the City is in favor of the restriping of Admiral Kalbfus Road to provide 10-foot travel lanes and buffered 5-foot bike lanes and the accompanying weight restriction. If approved, the striping changes can be completed through an on-going Statewide Striping contract. Please note that based on our discussions at the meeting, RIDOT will look for opportunities to enhance the existing truck route signage in the area.

Sincerely,

Sean Raymond, P.E.
Managing Engineer – Office of Safety
Rhode Island Department of Transportation

cc: The Honorable Xay Khamsyvovong, Mayor (City of Newport)
Captain Ryan Duffy, Police Chief (City of Newport)
William R. Riccio, Jr., Director of Public Services (City of Newport)
McCarthy, Pristawa, Raymond, King; City File