

**West – Emerald – Osler Feasibility Study  
Alternative Improvement Options  
June 11, 2009**

**Public Meeting Comments**

After attending the meeting and reviewing the handout information, I would favor Option No.1. It is preferred over Option No. 2 because the pedestrian crossing is more centrally located and having a signal at Emerald Drive could cause traffic problems at Osler. Also there should be no problem with Emerald alone stopping for West St. since the sight distance both North and South appears to be very good. Roundabouts have the advantage of slowing traffic, but provide no signal protection for pedestrians. To realign Emerald Drive to intersect Osler Drive would cause a problem since this intersection would be too close to Osler Drive and West Street.

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Most of the traffic on NB West St tends to stay in the right lane in the morning. They are turning into Osler, Martin, Hillside, the school, and then Aurora Ave. The congestion in this lane is bad. Driving the left lane and then trying to get over at Aurora is difficult. Is there any way to add right turn lanes at these locations to help flow along West?

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I believe either option 1 or 2 would work for the school district. The practice fields that will be going in at the garden plots will have our athletes walking to practices and never driving. We will only use the fields for games a couple Saturday mornings in the fall and maybe 3 or 4 in the spring for Lacrosse so our traffic will not impact that area much at all (as the traffic study showed). The stop light at Osler will help the hospital and that should be the main concern. Our students will not walk all the way down there to cross but instead will probably cross down at the light at the school on west and Hillside so whatever you do at that intersection should not be based on school use.

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I have lived in the West Highlands subdivision for 15 years and use the West/Emerald intersection at least 10 times a day at varying peak/off-peak hours. I attended the Open House last night and have some follow up comments on the options.

- Option 1 - Install Traffic Signal at West St. and Osler Dr. (remove stop sign on West St. at intersection with Emerald)

The vehicles on West St. coming from the Hobson West neighborhood/Rickert Drive area already approach at a high rate of speed. Allowing them to continue further through the Emerald intersection will just magnify and increase this effect. The result will be that West Highlands residents and pass through vehicles will be forced to take risks, similar to what occurs now on Osler in turning left or right onto West St. This will

involve a lot of seniors, minivan moms/dads and new high school drivers. This will be far worse than the Osler traffic that attempts to turn onto West.

- Option 2 – Traffic Signal at West St. and Emerald Dr.

This is the most palatable of all the options. If the lights are programmed for optimal traffic flow during the peak hours, this would help. I don't know if this would help the Osler traffic during peak hours. I would make some additional suggestions for this option to work:

- Remove the left turn option from Osler onto West St. completely. I suggest installing a curbed center to force right turn only onto West St. from Osler. Those who need to go left onto West St. should be diverted to Martin Avenue and the existing Martin Ave./West St. traffic signal. The hospital could install signage directing vehicles to the proper street just as it does for vehicles exiting the parking garages and hospital property.
- Remove the left turn lane from West St. onto Osler completely. Install 'NO LEFT TURN' signs approaching this area as are in use all along Washington St. in downtown. Signs prior to Martin Ave. would direct the use of Martin Ave. to access the hospital property. Emergency vehicles would be exempt from this, obviously.

- Options 3 and 4 – Install Roundabouts or Re-align Emerald to Osler

Both options, to me, seem deeply flawed and costly. The roundabouts will cause more accidents and confusion than will help the situation. The re-aligning of Emerald will exacerbate the backups on Emerald.

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It doesn't seem traffic is severe enough to warrant these changes.

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None of these will solve the problem. Too many cars cutting through from S to N or N to S. Eliminate cars for HS Students. Just before school is absolute worst.

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Nothing needs to be done. These options all make the problem worse.

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Nothing needs to be done (none of these options will significantly improve the situation enough to make it worthwhile!) \*Too many H.S. students driving to school\*

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If a stop light is put at either Osler or Emerald you must keep stop signs at the other. Way too dangerous to remove Emerald stop sign.

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Impossible to make left turn onto Emerald from West unless there would be a light. Osler Drive really needs to have right out only enforced! Roundabouts would be confusing – Can't see high school kids yielding!

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The public doesn't understand how well good roundabouts work so it probably will not be rated highly, but it would provide the best solution with the best flow of traffic.

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Best solution – (Traffic Signal at Emerald)

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I live on Emerald and see no problem with the traffic flow. I travel on West St. every day at different times. There is only about 30 min. in the morning, when school is in session, that there is a slight back. Traffic lights would only create more congestion at that time. In my opinion, only the people making a left from Osler onto West have a problem...they can use Martin Ave or Washington. No left turns should be allowed from Osler onto West. All of the proposed alternatives create an inconvenience to the residents of the West Highlands. It seems absolutely ridiculous to implement any of these ideas to 'help' traffic that is only a slight issue for 30 min a morning, during the week, during school. It seems whoever came up with these ideas does not care about the people who live in the subdivisions in the area. Traffic signals are horrible ideas because they would back traffic up in places that normally move at a steady pace. The only places I experience back ups are at the existing lights. As for roundabouts... have you ever used one?! As I posted on the board, many small towns in Ohio, where I lived for a while, have roundabouts. On a daily basis I saw confused motorists and many, many dangerous situations due to people not using them correctly. Alternative 4, realigning Emerald is the worst idea of all. There is nothing to say except that. Are you here to serve hospital employees or taxpayers? Don't waste time or money making the 'improvements'. If it ain't broke, don't fix it! Judging from talking to other residents...there is nothing bad enough to warrant these changes.

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Our perspective is from improving the safety of pedestrians and the flow of traffic on West St. We feel that only Alternative 2 solves this problem.

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People at Emerald/West never stop. They zoom through the stop sign every day. I walk to NCHS. I basically dodge a car a day. There absolutely needs to be a traffic light at West/Emerald.

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This will not help pedestrian and bike. No one pays attention now! How are Emerald residents going to get out of subdivision? Martin Ave has a stoplight, why can't the hospital use that?!

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Alternative Suggestions:

1. During peak hours-allow right only onto West St from Osler
2. Direct hospital traffic (except emergency vehicles onto Osler – sensor/gate activated only) onto Martin Ave. Martin has lights at both ends and Martin could be expanded to handle flow.
3. During peak hours have traffic light activated at Osler

Option #1: Traffic from West St would go faster and/or accidents would occur with residents turning from Emerald onto West. How would residents turn left on West St?

Option #2: Of the options given, this is the most preferred. Consider not allowing left turn from Osler onto West St either during peak hours or at all times. This traffic should go to Martin where there are traffic lights on both ends.

Option #3: Terrible idea. West St traffic would go faster, potential for accidents to occur increases.

Option #4: Another terrible idea. Resident traffic would be backed up on Emerald worse than currently. It was a bad idea during the Martin Mitchell property discussions and it still is...

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None of the above. It isn't necessary to spend this kind of money or any money. Make Osler no left turn onto West St. Residents should not be inconvenienced 24/7 for a peak time minor back up that doesn't last more than 45 min. in the morning. I've traveled this for over 28 years and live on Emerald. These options are not acceptable and need to be totally rethought. Who are you pleasing... hospital employees or tax payers that don't seem to have a say in how tax money is spent. The worst idea of all is realigning Emerald. Obviously they don't care if Emerald waits for Osler. Please open your eyes and consider the no left turn off of Osler. Traffic coming from the hospital can get on Martin Ave and make their left on West from Martin Ave.

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- Alt 1- removing stop sign would make it hard to get out on Emerald
- Alt 2 – Make Osler right only
- Alt 3 – Don't like at all – speeding will be worse
- Alt 4- don't like

It seems like a lot of this problem has to do with Edward Hospital traffic. They keep adding more facilities and traffic and we (tax payers) will pay the price. Funnel traffic onto Martin where they can get to Washington or West. If you must have traffic coming out on Osler, have blinking lights during non rush-hour.

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This is a good method of getting feedback – through an open house.

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Alts 1 & 4 are unappealing. Our household would see alt 2 & alt 3 as reasonable. Our only objections with alt 3 are the following... #1 – We feel lights and stop signs are safer for the safe crossing of many children. We question whether yield signs will give us the peace of mind. #2 – Two roundabouts in such a close proximity seem to be cumbersome for vehicles. We fear that at peak times West Street would back up causing problems in traffic flow for residential areas whose only egress is West Street. Are 2 roundabouts necessary? Would one at Emerald and West suffice to direct traffic and create gaps for Osler?

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Plan 1 is the best solution to this traffic issue. The light can be programmed to allow cars out around the three shifts. That is after all, the issue here. I don't want a light at Emerald because I shouldn't have to wait if I want to turn left. Why should residents of The Highlands or Hobson West be any more inconvenienced? Roundabouts work well in Europe, but are unfamiliar here and would cause MORE traffic problems due to confusion. We have a lot of elderly people in the Highlands and I predict there would be a lot of accidents. Plan 4 is horrible and should not even be considered! Why should residents of the Highlands be re-routed to join hospital employees and visitors to get out of our subdivision? Furthermore, we don't want them in our neighborhood! They're crazy and dangerous enough at Osler! My husband has almost been hit on his bike, my kids and I have almost been hit walking to and from the park, and I've been close to being hit in my car whilst driving by. **NO EDWARD TRAFFIC IN OUR NEIGHBOORHOOD!** Being a neighbor of Edward has been kind of a pain in the ass with the traffic problems, construction noise, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Be sensible, choose plan 1, and let's not strain the relationship any further. Thank you for your consideration.

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Due to NCHS traffic in the morning on Emerald, removing the stop signs on West St. would be a very bad idea. Alternative 1 with no change to the Emerald/West intersection is the best and cheapest solution for Edward Hospital traffic. Alternatives 3 & 4 are completely insane.

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I live with my wife [on Magnolia Lane] since 2003. We frequently use the intersection of West and Emerald to travel north and west as well as north and east (north on West and east on Martin to Washington). Using this route is more efficient for us even when we travel north and east because of the left turns and the traffic backups that occur on Gartner at Washington. Using this route is safer than trying to turn north onto Washington from Robin Hill (no light) at almost any time of day. The following is my opinion of the 4 proposals presented for the West St. intersections with Emerald and Osler.

Alternative 1 – Emerald Stop Sign at West and traffic light at Osler.

This is the best solution for simplicity and cost effectiveness.

Pro:

- Maintains water retention east of West St.
- Improves Osler traffic access to West St.
- Enhances traffic flow and safety on West St.
- Protects the residential neighborhood by discouraging external traffic.

Con:

- Makes Emerald to SB West ST. less easy.

Alternative 2 – Emerald Light and Stop at Osler

This is just a backward alternative.

Pro:

- Maintains water retention east of West St.

Con:

- Does not improve Osler traffic access to West St.
- Does not protect the residential neighborhood. It will invite external traffic to use Emerald as a short-cut.
- Does nothing to improve traffic flow or safety on West St.

Alternative 3 – roundabouts on West at Emerald and Osler

I've used roundabouts and they are extremely effective in the proper setting. This is neither the proper setting, nor the proper scale at which to implement this solution. Don't even consider it.

Alternative 4 – “Re-align” Emerald Dr. with light at Osler and West St.

This is simply the worst and most expensive option. It will make a real mess of things.

Pro:

- I can't think of one.

Con:

- Expense.
- It will create congestion and accidents at Osler. (esp. due to NB Emerald traffic attempting to turn left onto Osler clashing with WB Osler turning onto Emerald and gridlock due to traffic stacking on Osler due to traffic signal)
- It will invite an unnecessary increase in traffic flowing onto the hospital campus due to the aforementioned congestion (NB Emerald will turn E on Osler to avoid difficult left turn)
- It will invite unnecessary and unwelcomed traffic into the residential neighborhood from the hospital campus (Osler traffic will short-cut onto Emerald instead of waiting for light at West St.)
- It will decrease water retention capacity.

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After viewing the alternatives I do favor the roundabout at Emerald and West and repeated at West and Osler. But I have concerns. I typically find that automotive traffic control in Naperville does not favor pedestrians and I think that the roundabouts are more prone to allow car movement but hinder pedestrian access that is needed. Would it make sense to do the roundabout at Emerald and West but to install a light at West and Osler to allow those travelling on foot to cross to the other side of West freely? Roundabouts are great for car movement; I fail to see how pedestrians effectively fit into the equation. And what about bike traffic? That is a route many kids and teens use to travel to the sports fields nearby. How will they be protected from the onslaught of fast moving traffic?

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Install a hefty sized Right-In-Right-Out like the Washington Street entrance/exit for Edward Hospital parking garage just south of Martin.

South of the intersection you could install a right turn lane.  
North of the intersection you could install a merge lane.

Minimal cost and traffic disruption. If necessary expand the triangle to allow a thru lane for ambulance only to have a left turn onto Osler.