

Second phase of Spartan Road traffic-calming project set to begin in Olney

Safety improvements to include crosswalks, bike lanes

by Terri Hogan

Staff Writer

Construction could begin as early as next week to make safety improvements to Spartan Road between Md. 108 (Olney-Sandy Spring Road) and Appomattox Avenue/Windsor Hill Drive.

The 2005 Olney Master Plan designates this stretch of roadway as a business district street, allowing streetscapes consistent with the mixed-use town center zone on the west side of the street, and the residential use on the east side of the street. The planned improvements will bring the road up to the designated standard.



photo by Jim Smith -Work is expected to begin next week to make safety improvements to Spartan Road, north of Md. 108 in Olney. Turn lane striping, medians, curb bump-outs at intersections, and a new crosswalk will be installed to make the road safer for pedestrians.

In the fall of 2011, representatives of the Greater Olney Civic Association, the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee and the Olney Chamber of Commerce met to prioritize potential project requests for the county. The Spartan Road project was at the top of the list and the first phase, on the section between Md. 97 (Georgia Avenue) and Md. 108 (Olney-Sandy Spring Road) was completed last summer.

This second phase provides the same style of lane markings, traffic calming, and pedestrian crossing, designed to make for a safer driving and walking experience in and out of the town center and neighboring residential communities.

The county's Department of Transportation evaluated traffic conditions along Spartan Road and determined modifications that would enhance traffic and pedestrian safety.

"The county engineers provided an excellent design that addressed the issues," said Jim Smith, chairman of Olney's advisory committee on transportation. "It was received with enthusiasm during our meeting on May 28."

According to plans, the project will include the installation of new concrete median islands and a marked crosswalk along Spartan Road, including associated curb, gutter and sidewalk modifications by the crosswalk necessary to ensure compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Permanent signs and roadway markings also will be installed.

"There will be a nice pedestrian crossing between the tennis courts at Environ and the opening between the buildings of Fair Hill Shopping center near Grill Marx restaurant," said Smith. "Striping will be used to achieve bike lanes on each side of Spartan Road."

This phase of the project is scheduled to begin as early as June 10 and is expected to take about four weeks to complete, weather permitting.

Work will be scheduled between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The road will remain open at all times during construction, although the project will require temporary lane closures and temporary parking restrictions.

Seifu Kerse, area engineer for the county's Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations, estimated the cost for the second phase of this project is \$120,000.

A third phase of street improvements is underway for a stretch of Morningwood Drive between Md. 97 and Golden Springs Court. The design details for this project have not yet been finalized.

Smith said the community's main objective on this stretch is to slow down westbound traffic at a bend in the road.

"This area, at the dead-end of North High Street, is a place where many people choose to cross," he said. "The wide road and the short sight distance around that bend on Morningwood create pedestrian safety concerns that we would like to address."

The county proposed a design that would have added some traffic calming features at the bend, but determined that a crosswalk was not appropriate at that location. The plan called for a crosswalk near Golden Springs Court, which would have eliminated a great deal of on-street parking.

After discussing the plan at the advisory committee meeting and with representatives of the Homeland Village Homeowners Association, Smith said the town supported the portion of the plan that calms traffic around the bend, but rejected the location of the crosswalk at Golden Springs Court.

Smith said once plans are finalized, work could begin on the Morningwood project later this summer.

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