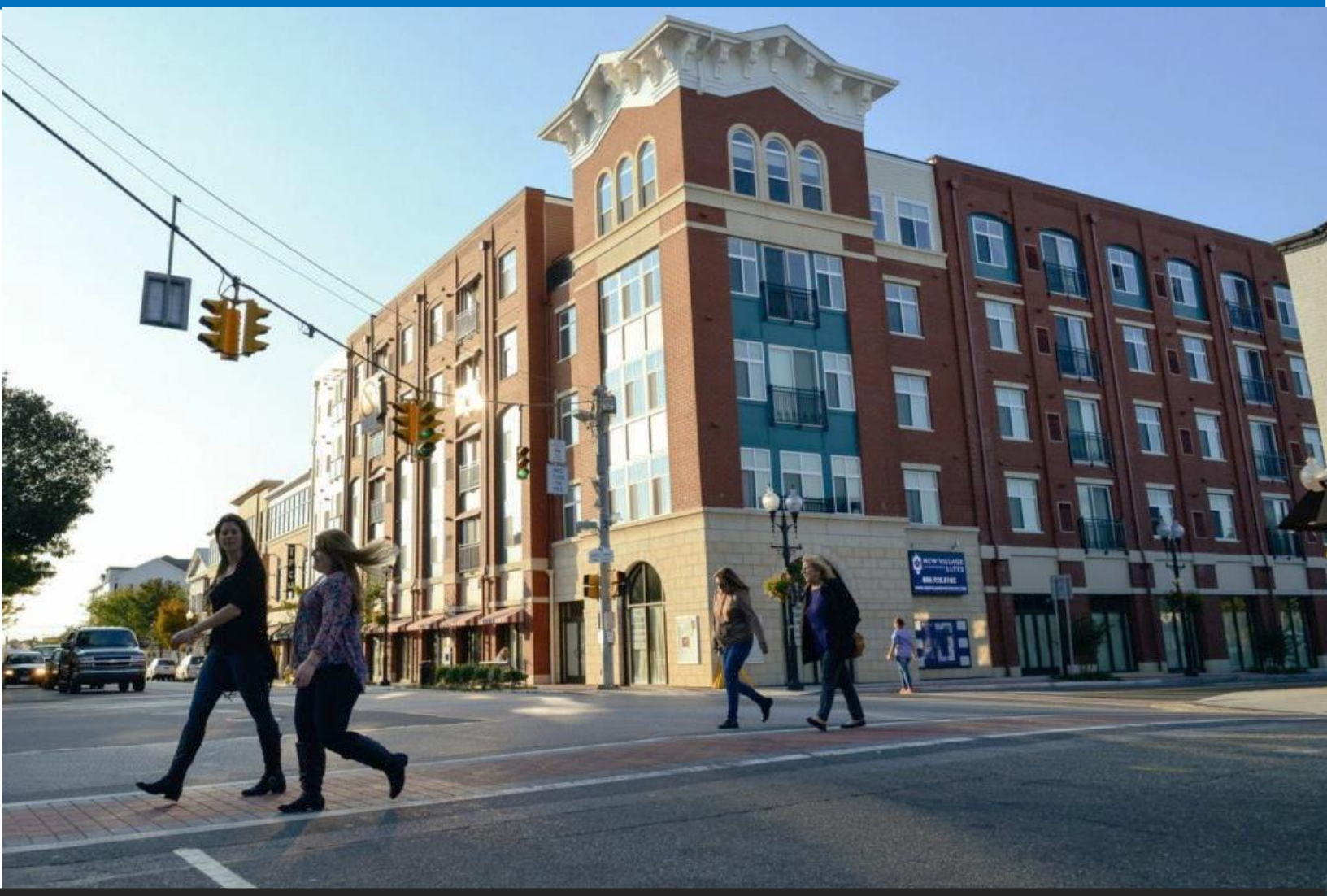
New York Coalition for Transportation Safety| October 2021



# PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ON LONG ISLAND

Recommendations from an observational study

**OBSERVATION RESULTS Straight Path Road & Long Island Ave., Wyandanch, Nassau County**

May 26, 27, 6/2, 2021 Time of Observation: 9:00AM – 10:00PM, 11:30-1:00PM, 4:30PM
The observers were asked to note traffic volume and the number of pedestrians, bicyclists, and trains during morning, afternoon, and evening hours and to note any behaviors by pedestrians or bicyclists that was not within the purview of NY State Vehicle & Traffic Laws or otherwise risky.

Physical Description This is a complex intersection that features a LIRR Station, tracks that cross the main road and a three way traffic signal. Crosswalks do not line up with curb cuts and traffic signal is partially blocked by posted commercial signs.

**Observation Results Straight Path and Long Island Avenue:**

Day 1 12:10 to 1:10PM

| Straight Path: | |
|---|---|
| Number of Motor Vehicles Observed | 1,039 |
| Number of Pedestrians Observed | 105 |
| Number of Cyclists Observed | 17 |

| Long Island Avenue | |
|---|---|
| Number of Motor Vehicles Observed | 460 |

**Observed Behaviors – Positive & Negative**

28 pedestrians did not use a crosswalk
4 electric scooters were observed
A motorized wheelchair did not use the crosswalk
5 people crossed the street on a diagonal over the train tracks
Pedestrian island was frequently used on Long Island Avenue

Day 2 8:40-10:10AM

| Straight Path: | |
|---|---|
| Number of Motor Vehicles Observed | 1,013 |
| Number of Pedestrians Observed | 57 |
| Number of Cyclists Observed | 14 |

| Long Island Avenue | |
|---|---|
| Number of Motor Vehicles Observed | 621 |

**Observed Behaviors – Positive & Negative**

6 pedestrians did not use a crosswalk
4 electric scooters were observed
5 trains were observed
Only one person used the bus stop on Long Island Avenue. The buses are rarely used.

Day 3 4:35 – 6:05 PM

| Straight Path: | |
|---|---|
| Number of Motor Vehicles Observed | 1,753 |
| Number of Pedestrians Observed | 72 |
| Number of Cyclists Observed | 34 |

Long Island Avenue
Number of Motor Vehicles Observed 1,124

**Observed Behaviors – Positive and Negative**

30 pedestrians did not use a crosswalk
14 electric scooters were observed
An all-terrain vehicle (ATV) was observed on Straight Path
5 trains were observed

## Analysis: Identification of Risks Observed:

Pedestrians used the railroad tracks on Straight Path as a crosswalk, which is dangerous due to oncoming motor vehicle traffic and trains.
Drivers were getting stuck in the middle of the intersection and on the railroad tracks because they were attempting to make it through the intersection when the light turned yellow.
Wheelchair users were crossing over the tracks for easier access to the stores on Merritt Ave.
The crosswalk timer was not long enough for pedestrians walking slowly across Long Island Avenue.
Motor vehicles on Long Island Avenue turning right onto Straight Path, would make the turn while the train was still passing. There would then be congestion in the middle of the intersection because the motor vehicles would be waiting at the level crossing signals until the train passed.
Not all school buses were stopping at the train tracks for the appropriate amount of time.

**Recommendations Based On Observations:**

1. Updated crosswalk signals should be implemented for improved visibility.
2. Two pedestrian signals are ineffective on Straight Path
3. Adding a left turn only signal could help to control the flow of traffic.
4. Remove any structures including telephone poles or other objects that could block the crosswalk signals
5. Pedestrian signal is blocked on Straight Path
6. Adjust the angles of the crosswalk signals to the crosswalk itself in order for pedestrians to have a clear view of the signals when crossing the street.
7. Do not allow drivers to drive all the way up to the railroad tracks when light is red in order to reduce cluster and chaos throughout the intersection
8. During school hours there was an abundance of school buses that caused traffic congestion in the intersection due to traffic laws requiring school buses to stop at train tracks for 10 seconds.
9. Inquire about a more efficient way for school buses to stop before train tracks to reduce back-up of traffic.
10. More lights should be added to improve visibility at night.
11. Increase the time on the crosswalk signal. Older walkers did not have sufficient time to cross Long Island Ave.

There is a pedestrian island located on Straight Path next to Sun River Health Martin Luther King, Jr.. Once passing through the intersection, the pedestrian island is discontinued. The island was correctly used by pedestrians while observing the intersection. It may be beneficial to build an additional pedestrian island on the other side of the intersection on Straight Path.

The above analysis of risks and recommendations based on the 3 days of observations will be presented to Wyandanch. This is a very high crash location and has recently undergone some engineering redesign

and elements of the redesign (blocked crosswalks, curb cuts and crosswalk alignment) may not yet be finished with construction.

Photographs of this site are available upon request.

**OBSERVATION RESULTS: Wellwood Ave. & 27A, Lindenhurst, Nassau County**
July 13 and July 23, 2021 Time of Observation: 12N – 1:00PM, 6:30-7:30PM

This location was chosen because it was recently reengineered to improve safety and create public space for pedestrians. Roadway and parking was removed and replaced with a picnic area with tables and a gazebo. Wellwood Avenue is the main business district through Lindenhurst. It runs for about 10 blocks and includes a section that runs underneath the Lindenhurst LIRR Station, which is elevated at this location. In the vicinity of the intersection is a bicycle rental facility (similar to Citibike) that was implemented in the Spring of 2021. The area underneath the LIRR Station is dedicated to East/West Parking for approximately six blocks. The intersection was manned with Code Enforcement staff at the evening observation but unmanned during the day. This was a very large train station and the parking was extensive for riders, thus the Code Enforcement Officers during rush hour.

The daytime observation was very quiet. Traffic volume was confined to Wellwood and vehicles turning onto Wellwood from Route 27A from both left and right. In one hour we observed approximately 50 vehicles and a like number of pedestrians.

Bicycle traffic was fairly extensive with 15 an hour cyclists crossing Wellwood from North to South. We believe this is due to the fact that the Atlantic Ocean is approximately 2 miles south of this intersection and people were renting bicycles to ride to the beach after they deboarded the LIRR. It should be noted that bicycles are banned from sidewalks in Lindenhurst business district. Signs indicating this are featured once or twice on each block. There were no bicycle lanes in this area and the engineering firm that redesigned the area noted that local business opposed bicycle lanes because they result in a loss of parking.

The evening observation was very busy. The intersection reconstruction created a "Town Square" at this location. People congregate to use the picnic tables and listen to music from the gazebo. There are numerous restaurants and foot and vehicular traffic was very heavy. It would have been extremely difficult for pedestrians to cross East to West without the assistance of the Code Enforcement Officers.

**Observed Behaviors Positive & Negative**:

15% of Pedestrians crossed Street as light was changing.
25% of Pedestrians crossed significantly outside the marked crosswalk.
6 of 15 bicyclists did not obey traffic signal.
10% of pedestrians were using or looking at cell phones despite 5 pedestrians escorting young children.
Pedestrians entering the roadway underneath the elevated LIRR crossed Route 27A wherever they exited the staircase from the train and not at the intersection. This created significant conflicts between pedestrians and motorists who were parked underneath the station.

One major problem for this location was only apparent at the evening observation. Young people on ATV's, dirt bikes and scooters raced in the middle of Route 27A, particularly around Wellwood Ave, particularly from 7PM to 8PM. There was no compliance to traffic laws as regards the use of these vehicles. Speed was evident and the people riding these devices literally occupied all lanes of the road. ATV's and dirt bikes are banned from NY State roadways but they were numerous at this location.

**Recommendations Based On Observations:**

Enforcement of all traffic laws by police department
Pedestrian education regarding NY State Law pertaining to crosswalks and pedestrians
Safety education for young people riding ATV's and dirt bikes on the streets.
Education regarding use of cellphones while crossing the street.

**OBSERVATION RESULTS – Lawson Blvd. & Atlantic Avenue, Oceanside, Nassau County**

| | |
|---|---|
| July 22 & 23, 2021 Time of Observation: | 9:00AM–10:00PM |
| | 11:30-1:00PM |
| August 26, 2021 | 4:30PM-5:30PM |

Physical Description This is a six lane roadway featuring an intersection with a red light camera, two turn arrows (east onto Lawson and west onto Atlantic and a right on red permitted for vehicles turning right onto Atlantic Avenue, and a railroad crossing on Atlantic Avenue approximately 100 yards west of the signal that stops traffic in both directions approximately twice an hour with more frequent stops during rush hours.

Traffic Signals in all Directions
Red Light Camera
Countdown Signals
Clearly Marked Crosswalks
Curb Cuts in poor condition
No Bicycle Lanes
Close proximity to Long Island Railroad Station and bus stops

This intersection was chosen because of its high traffic volume and proximity to a LIRR Station. It was observed at three different times of day and at no time was there any break in the traffic volume. Pedestrian traffic was much higher in the morning and evening due to people entering or exiting the train. Bicycle riders also used the train and carried their bikes until they reached the sidewalk. Approximately 5 Scooter riders and a like number of bicycle riders were present after 4:30PM.

Not one single person or cyclist was observed disobeying the traffic signal. The crossing is so dangerous to anything other than cars that it is almost impossible to safely make it across the street. Pedestrians were observed walking to the next marked crossing, which was not an intersection, to cross north or south as this is a 6 lane street. The east to west crossing was easier to navigate because it was a 2 lane street and no vehicles have turning arrows.

This entire situation was made much worse in the past year as the Village of Oceanside has permitted apartment complexes to be built on the north and south side of Atlantic Avenue and has promoted the opening of a new supermarket immediately adjacent to the train station. Each of the apartment complexes houses at least 1500 people and the buildings are separated from the roadway by a single sidewalk. All apartment parking is under the buildings. The complexity of the intersection has encouraged all people who live there to drive the two blocks to the supermarket because they are afraid to walk.

We approached the County, that is not responsible for permitting this housing to be built, to see if there is anything that can be done. They are looking into the train schedules, counting traffic and otherwise reviewing our data. Unfortunately, for the purposes of studying pedestrian and bicyclist behavior, this was a poor location to investigate. We chose it because of high volume traffic,3 bicycle fatalities in the past 2 years and public transportation availability. Speed cameras would be a godsend.