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Walk Safe Long Island's Annual Lowell Wolf Memorial Scholarship

I am currently a senior at Shoreham-Wading River High School, located at 250B Route 25A in Shoreham. I recently studied the intersection of Route 25A and Defense Hill Road for purposes of this traffic observation. Overall, this is a safe, well-planned intersection with several safety measures already in place; however, I did notice some areas which could be improved to increase pedestrian, as well as driver safety.

The entrance to Shoreham-Wading River High School, situated just east of the William Floyd Parkway entrance and exit, is located on Route 25A, a heavily-traveled Long Island roadway. Cars coming off of William Floyd Parkway and heading east are instructed to merge into oncoming traffic about 100 feet prior to the entrance to the High School. In addition to merging traffic, motorists contend with an existing bicycle lane that narrows just before the high school entrance's turning lane, as well. Pedestrians who arrive at the intersection will find marked crosswalks, pushbutton stations on both the north and south sides of Route 25A, as well as Yield to Pedestrian signage approximately 30 feet in advance of the crosswalks.

There are two main issues that I observed at this intersection during peak times throughout the day. In the morning from about 6:50 a.m. to 7:20 a.m., there is an increased amount of traffic as teachers, staff and students arrive at the high school. There are not many bicyclists or pedestrians in the intersection at this hour, however, traffic coming from the east, attempting to make a left turn into the entrance of the high school is greatly increased. In fact, many motorists coming from the east choose to turn right onto Defense Hill Road, opposite the high school entrance, to avoid having to wait to make a left hand turn. This causes an increase in traffic on Defense Hill Road, with cars then crossing the intersection at a green light, and backing up motorists who are trying to make a left out of the high school driveway after dropping their students off at school. This high turning vehicle volume could be problematic if there were more pedestrians attempting to cross the intersection at this time.

The other issue at this intersection occurs later in the day from around 2:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. as students and teachers are leaving campus. There are many more pedestrians at the intersection at this time. The North Shore Rail Trail, linking Port Jefferson to Wading River, runs parallel to

Route 25A and is a popular trail where members of the school's track teams like to train. Students are often waiting at the intersection to cross 25A to access the trail on Defense Hill Road after school, just as many students and staff are trying to exit the campus and turn either left or right. Defense Hill Road is a Dead End with no outlet; the majority of people leaving the high school are going either east or west, rather than straight onto Defense Hill Road, creating high turning vehicle volume once again. I believe a leading pedestrian interval—during which turns across the crosswalk are prohibited—would give runners, pedestrians, bicyclists or students walking home from school, the additional time to cross the street before a left- or right-turning vehicle would enter the intersection. There does not seem to be any drawback to changing this pedestrian signal but the benefit could reduce conflicts between pedestrians and turning vehicles, potentially saving a life.



