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COUNCIL MEMBER
DISTRICT 9

City of Virginia Beach

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Dear District 9 Resident:

I am writing this letter to provide some background concerning a project to install a traffic signal and a crosswalk at the intersection of Independence Blvd. and Wakefield Rd./Paul Revere Rd. There will be a community information meeting on this topic from 5pm-7pm on December 4th at Independence Middle School (flyer enclosed).

The topic of a traffic light at this intersection originally arose in 2021/2022 - before I was elected to serve on the Council. The Thoroughgood Civic League made a request to our Traffic Engineering Department to evaluate that intersection due to safety concerns. Enclosed you will find a copy of the analysis that was prepared by our Traffic Engineering Department following their evaluation. Also enclosed is an updated crash analysis, bringing forward the crash data through July 31, 2024. There has been a total of 32 crashes at this intersection since 2016. A considerable amount of them (nearly half) involved broadside collisions and injuries.

The project was met with opposition from an adjoining neighborhood, and working with their then-current council representative, direction was given to cancel the project. The Thoroughgood Civic League was never informed that the project was cancelled.

Fast-Forward to 2023 ... shortly after I was assumed office, I attended a Thoroughgood Civic League meeting and someone asked, "what ever happened to that traffic light?" I let them know that I would investigate the situation, and here we are.

When I learned there were people who objected to the project, I went into the neighborhood on foot to knock on doors and get a better sense for the concerns. Although I did meet a few people who did not support the project, I met many others who felt the opposite, including parents of school children who attend Independence Middle School who liked the idea of creating a safe option to cross Independence Blvd. We frankly don't have enough options to safely cross that busy north/south corridor.

Following my efforts door-to-door, I scheduled a meeting with residents from the objecting neighborhood. I brought the City's Traffic Engineer, and the Principal of Independence Middle School with me (she and her staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the traffic light). Unbeknownst to me, the Principal brought with her a teacher from the school who had been severely injured in a broadside collision at that intersection who still walks with a cane. We did our very best to present the facts about the dangers of the intersection and the reasons why a traffic signal was the recommended solution.

Importantly, Traffic Engineering considered other alternatives besides signalization, but they involved either closing the median or restricting turns. These are not workable solutions given the fact that there is 10 times the amount of traffic coming in and out of Wakefield than the opposing side of the intersection. There are also over 100 homes within just 500 feet of the intersection, and Thoroughgood (a neighborhood with over 1100 homes and 2 schools) is served by just 4 ways in and out of the neighborhood.

I've also enclosed some pictures that demonstrate some of the dangers of doing nothing. The first picture shows four cars in competing positions (I've seen as many as 5 or 6 at a time). The other picture shows a fire truck straddling the intersection with its tail-end in the northbound travel lane. School buses, delivery and landscaping vehicles frequently find themselves in the same situation.

The main concern I've heard about adding a traffic signal has been the fear of increased cut-through traffic (from southbound Independence) onto Paul Revere – a concern I completely respect and understand. It's important to realize, however, **that there is no right-turn-lane onto Paul Revere from Independence southbound, so it would be extremely unlikely for additional traffic to turn onto Paul Revere. Each car in the right (southbound) lane, beginning with the first car, and every car behind it, would have to make a conscious decision to use Paul Revere as a cut-through to Haygood (while many are also traveling to points south/I-264, etc.).**

Another concern has been that adding a light in this location would contribute to additional stoppages of traffic on Independence. Traffic Engineering has confirmed that they have the capability to sync with the signals at Ewell and Haygood so that drivers won't have to stop more than they ordinarily do now.

I've heard people mention that residents and IMS parents should just simply head north to Ewell Rd. to make a left turn at the existing traffic signal. For the many residents who live near Wakefield/Independence and for IMS parents heading to points south, that would involve traveling up to a mile north, only to return south along Independence to the intersection that they were just closest to. Traffic is already being pushed to Ewell and I've fielded complaints from residents living along that street about speeding and traffic volume. People currently sit through multiple light cycles during peak hours trying to exit the neighborhood because IMS bus traffic (and the elementary school bus traffic) has been directed to that intersection while exiting out of the neighborhood to points south.

Probably one of the most important things to realize is that the decision of where to put a light (or not) is not something that politicians decide. The process is data-driven, and involves a request being made from a neighborhood, an evaluation of the intersection, and if it meets the warrants, a traffic light is installed.

Additionally, since our staff evaluated the intersection, recommended a light, and the project was cancelled, it creates a potential liability risk for the city for failing to follow that recommendation.

I hope this information helps you to understand all perspectives involved. If you have questions, or if you are interested in learning more, please plan to attend the community information meeting on December 4th from 5pm-7pm at Independence Middle School.

Thank you,

Joashua Schulman
District 9 Councilmember



OPEN HOUSE

OPEN HOUSE DECEMBER 4 5-7 PM

The City of Virginia Beach will be hosting an in-person Open House for the Independence Blvd. and Wakefield Dr./ Paul Revere Rd. Traffic Signal Project. The meeting will be held on at **Independence Middle School** located at **1370 Dunstan Lane**. Representatives from the City of Virginia Beach will be available to provide information and answer questions on the traffic signal installation.

Comments Contact:
Wesley Parker, P.E., PTOE
Project Manager
City of Virginia Beach
Public Works/Engineering
484 Viking Drive, Suite 200
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
wesparker@vbgov.com
Written comments from the open house may be received up to January 6th, 2025.

Individuals having physical, hearing or visual impairments and require special assistance to participate in the meeting should contact the Virginia Relay Center at 1-800-828-1120 (TTY: 711) and ask them to call the City Clerk's Office at (757) 385-4303 at least 48 hours in advance.

The City of Virginia Beach is looking for your feedback on the installation of a traffic signal and crosswalk at the intersection of **Independence Blvd. & Wakefield Dr. / Paul Revere Rd.** An in-person meeting will be held on **December 4** from **5-7 pm** at **Independence Middle School**. The purpose of this project is to enhance motorist operations and safety as well as provide safe pedestrian and cyclist connectivity across Independence Blvd. for nearby residents and members of the Independence Middle School community.



INTERSECTION ANALYSIS

INDEPENDENCE BLVD

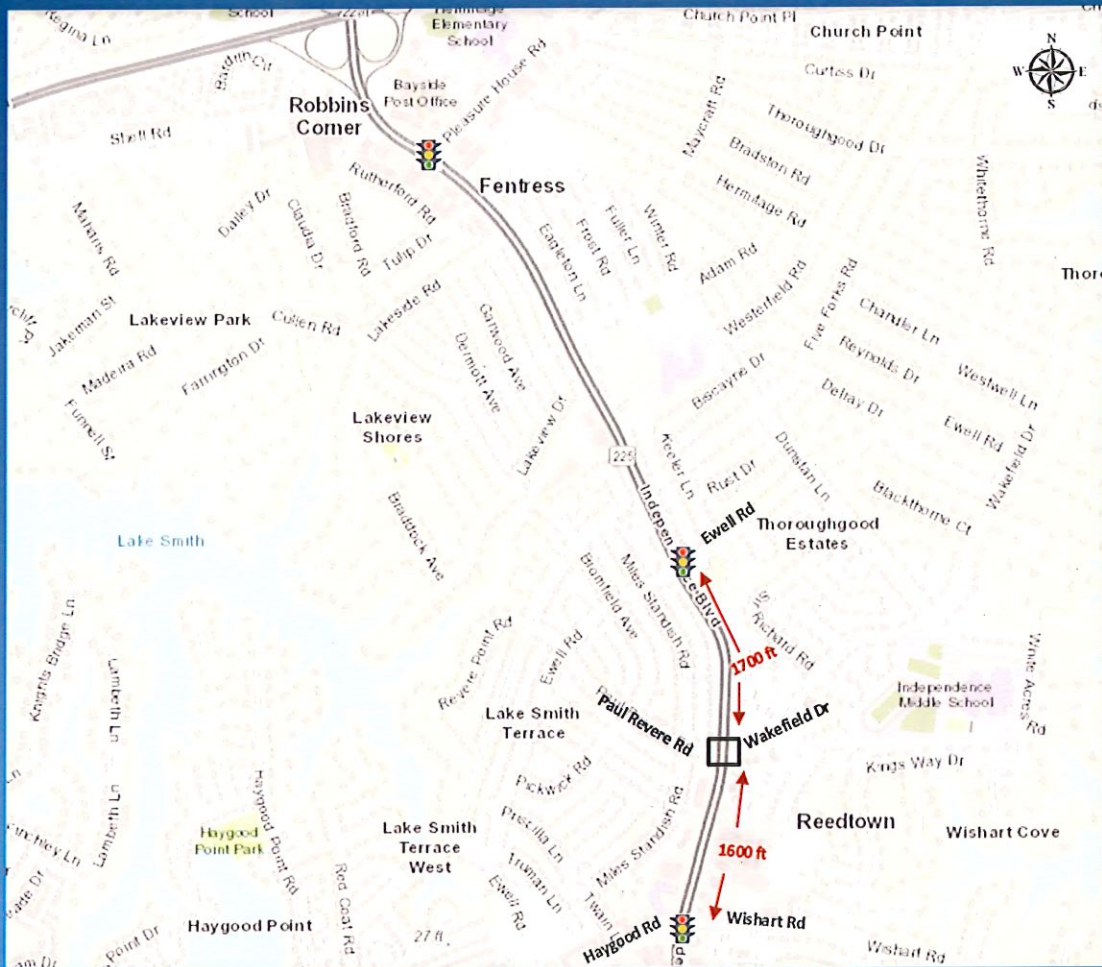
AT

WAKEFIELD DR/PAUL REVERE RD

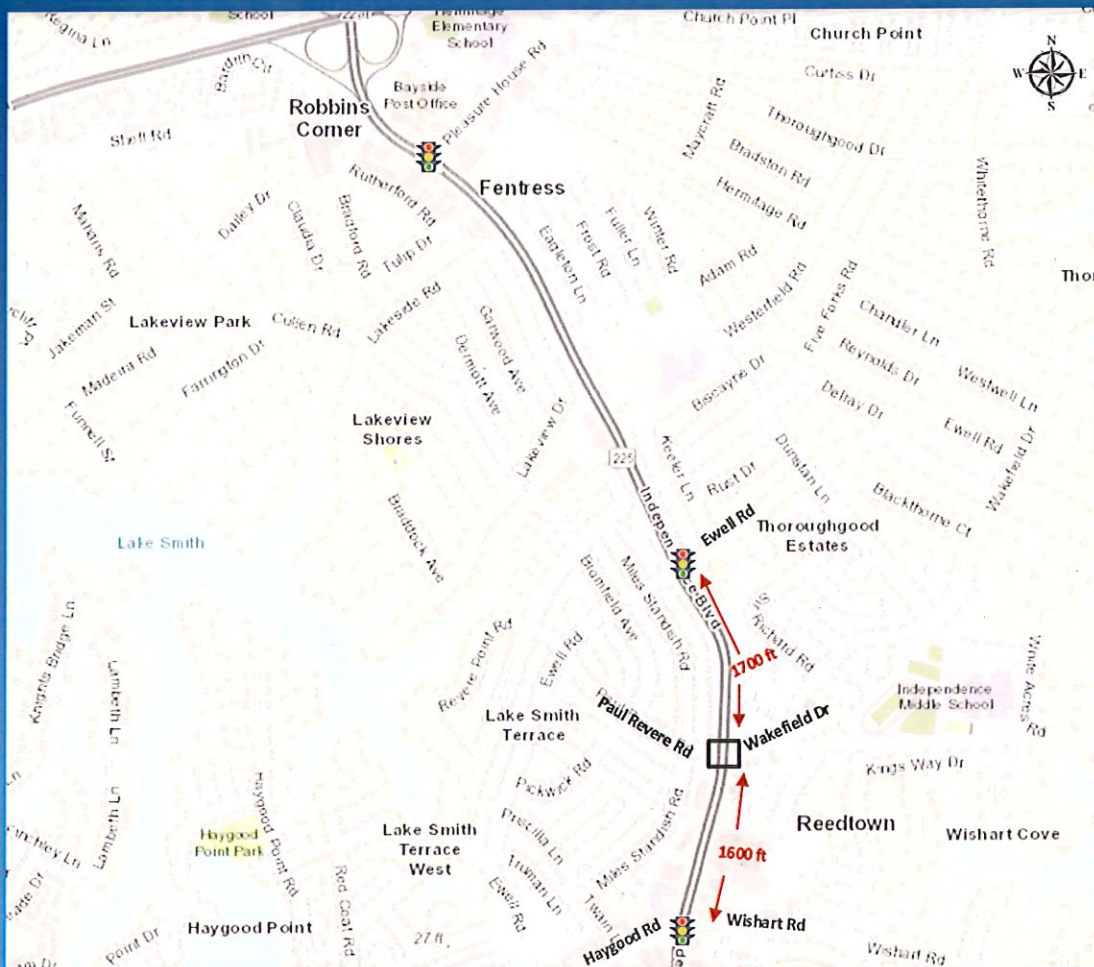
OUTLINE

- I. Review Location
- II. Intersection Crashes
- III. Traffic Signal Warrants
- IV. Alternatives To Traffic Signals
- V. Recommendation

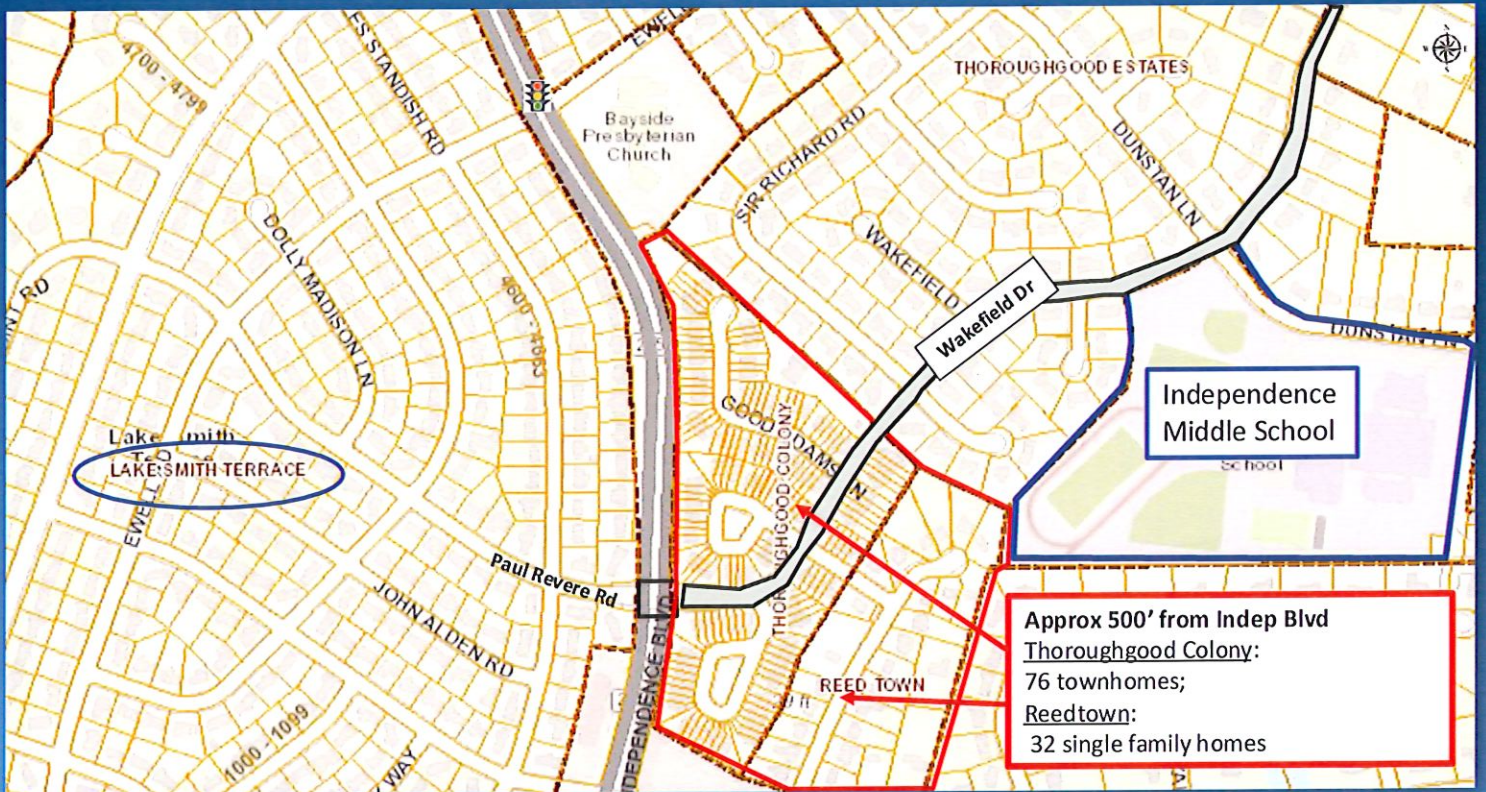
INDEPENDENCE BLVD at WAKEFIELD DR/PAUL REVERE RD



A detailed street map of the area around Independence Blvd in Wakefield, MA. The map shows Independence Blvd running vertically through the center. To the left of the road are neighborhoods like Lakeview Park, Lakeview Shores, and Lake Smith. To the right are neighborhoods like Church Point, Thoroughgood Estates, and Reedtown. Key streets shown include Wakefield Dr, Paul Revere Rd, Haygood Rd, and Wishart Rd. A red box highlights the intersection of Independence Blvd and Wakefield Dr, with a red arrow pointing to it and the text '1700 ft' above it. Another red arrow points to the intersection of Independence Blvd and Paul Revere Rd, with the text '1500 ft' next to it. The map also shows various schools, parks, and local businesses. A compass rose is located in the top right corner.



INDEPENDENCE BLVD at WAKEFIELD DR/PAUL REVERE RD



INTERSECTION CRASH REVIEW



Independence Blvd. at Wakefield Dr./Paul Revere Rd. CRASH DIAGRAM 2016 – 2020 (5 Years)

Paul Revere Rd.

Wakefield Dr.

Independence Blvd.

SYMBOLS	CRASH TYPES	NOTES
Moving Vehicle Backing Vehicle Non-Involved Vehicle Pedestrian Parked Vehicle Fixed Object Fatal Injury	Rear-End Head On Side Swipe Out of Control Left Turn Right Angle	

INTERSECTION: Independence Blvd. at Wakefield Dr./Paul Revere Rd.

PERIOD FROM: 1/1/16 TO 12/31/20 BY JDW DATE 4/22/21

5 Years of Crashes 1/1/16 to 12/31/20

YEAR	TOTAL CRASHES
2016	6
2017	3
2018	5
2019	3
2020	3
Total	20
Avg	4

TRAFFIC SIGNAL WARRANTS REVIEW

MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES (MUTCD)

- Sets the national standards governing all traffic control devices & brings uniformity to the roadway.
- Plays a critical role in improving safety and mobility of all road users.
- Is the law governing all traffic control devices
 - Non-compliance with the MUTCD ultimately can result in a significant increase in tort liability.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL REQUEST PROCESS

- 1) Request received from citizen(s) that initiates a review.
- 2) A preliminary review of location determines whether there is the potential to meet MUTCD traffic signal warrants based on land use (typically 8 hours are needed to exceed threshold volumes).
- 3) If potential exists, the intersection is videoed for traffic counting purposes:
 - a) Initially, the peak hours are counted and a cursory review is performed to determine if further evaluation is needed.
 - b) If peak hours meet signal warrants, then additional hours are counted to determine if there will be 8 hours that will meet signal warrants.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL REQUEST PROCESS

- 4) After the City Traffic Engineer approves the need for a traffic signal, then an Initial Project Proposal is submitted for funding through the Traffic Safety Improvement (TSI) CIP. It is reviewed and approved by the TSI committee for funding.
- 5) Topographic survey is initiated.
- 6) Traffic signal design is prepared.
- 7) Once there is at least a preliminary signal design, civic leagues are advised of the impending improvement.
- 8) After traffic signal plans are finalized, construction begins.
- 9) Entire process takes 1-2 years.

Side Street Volume Comparison

Entering Independence Blvd:

Wakefield Drive vs Paul Revere Road

	WB Wakefield ALL	EB Paul Revere ALL
Time (1hr Interval)	VOLUME (VPH)	VOLUME (VPH)
6:00a - 7:00a	76	5
7:00a - 8:00a	123	15
8:00a - 9:00a	142	11
9:00a - 10:00a	131	18
10:00a - 11:00a	81	9
11:00a - 12:00p	65	10
12:00p - 1:00p	47	8
1:00p - 2:00p	58	10
2:00p - 3:00p	82	9
3:00p - 4:00p	63	7
4:00p - 5:00p	174	8
5:00p - 6:00p	111	10
6:00p - 7:00p	80	10

MUTCD TRAFFIC SIGNAL WARRANTS:

- Warrant 1 - Eight-Hour Vehicular Volume
- Warrant 2 - Four-Hour Vehicular Volume
- Warrant 3 - Peak Hour Volume
- Warrant 4 - Pedestrian Volume
- Warrant 5 - School Crossing
- Warrant 6 - Coordinated Signal System
- Warrant 7 - Crash Experience
- Warrant 8 - Roadway Network
- Warrant 9 - Intersection Near a (railroad)Grade Crossing

APPLICABLE MUTCD TRAFFIC SIGNAL WARRANTS:

Warrant 1 - Eight-Hour Vehicular Volume

Condition B – Interruption of Continuous Traffic

- Large main street (Independence Blvd)
- Small side street (Wakefield Dr/Paul Revere Rd)
- Needs to meet minimum for 8 individual hours
- Allows for **30% reduction of warrant minimums** if speed exceeds **40 mph**
 - Independence Blvd 45 mph – **30% reduction applies**

APPLICABLE MUTCD TRAFFIC SIGNAL WARRANTS:

Warrant 7 - Crash Experience

- Adequate trial of alternatives has failed to reduce crash frequency;
- If 5 or more correctable by a traffic signal crashes per year, then allows for an additional **20% reduction on Warrant 1**

Crashes Correctable by a Traffic Signal				
<u>INDEPENDENCE BLVD & WAKEFIELD DR/PAUL REVERE RD</u>				
<u>Year</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Angle crashes</u>	<u>Rear End crashes</u>	<u>Correctable w a Traf Sig</u>
2016	6	2	2	5
2017	3	1	0	3
2018	5	2	1	4
2019	3	1	1	2
2020	3	1	0	2
	20	7	4	16
<u># years</u>	<u>Average Crashes/yr</u>			<u>Correctable Crashes/yr</u>
5.0	4.0			3.2 < 5/yr
				no reduction in warrant

TRAFFIC SIGNAL WARRANT ANALYSIS

N INDEPENDENCE BLVD and WAKEFIELD DR

WARRANT 1: EIGHT-HOUR VEHICULAR VOLUME

CONDITION B: INTERRUPTION of TRAFFIC

Speed Limit > 40 MPH - 70% Threshold Applied

Time (1hr Interval)	Independence Blvd	2-lane MAJOR	WB Wakefield (Lts & Thrus Only)	1-lane MINOR	Meets Warrant?
	VOLUME (VPH)	70% > 630 vph	VOLUME (VPH)	70% > 53 vph	
6:00 - 7:00*	1,501	YES	56	YES	YES
7:00 - 8:00	3,068	YES	94	YES	YES
8:00 - 9:00	3,696	YES	110	YES	YES
9:00 - 10:00*	2,133	YES	116	YES	YES
10:00 - 11:00*	2,033	YES	68	YES	YES
11:00 - 12:00*	2,000	YES	62	YES	YES
12:00 - 1:00*	2,074	YES	42	NO	NO
1:00 - 2:00*	2,412	YES	50	CLOSE	CLOSE*
2:00 - 3:00*	2,565	YES	69	YES	YES
3:00 - 4:00*	3,204	YES	43	NO	NO
4:00 - 5:00	3,850	YES	134	YES	YES
5:00 - 6:00	4,694	YES	91	YES	YES
6:00 - 7:00*	2,534	YES	66	YES	YES

* from ADT count 10/30/2018

VPH = vehicles per hour

Posted speed limit 45mph

85th percentile 48mph

10 hrs

10 hrs > 8 hrs

WARRANT
MET

SUMMARY:

- Wakefield Dr (east side) has a concentration of over 100 homes within 500 ft of Independence Blvd.
- Traffic signal warrants meet on one side of the intersection, in this case the east side (Wakefield Dr) meets the warrants due to the higher number of residences near the intersection.
- Wakefield Dr exceeds traffic signal warrants for 10 hours which is greater than the required 8 hours:
 - indicates substantial and consistent utilization throughout the day.
- The warrants were met considering only the left turns and through movements:
 - provides a conservative result since right turns were not even considered.
- Spacing between other signalized intersections is acceptable ($>1/4$ mile*):
 - greater than 1,320 feet either direction to the nearest other traffic signal

*1/4 mile spacing allows for good signal coordination

ALTERNATIVES

- A. Do Nothing
- B. Close Median
- C. Construct restricted access median
(no lefts/thrus from side street)
- D. Signalization

DO NOTHING

ADVANTAGES

- Flow on Independence Blvd is not interrupted.

DISADVANTAGES

- Residents of Thoroughgood Colony/Reedtown/Lower Thoroughgood Estates continue to access Independence Blvd without the benefit of a traffic signal.
- Significant volumes of left & thru movements on Wakefield Dr at Independence Blvd already, enough to warrant a traffic signal.
- Potential liability situation for the City since a traffic signal was determined to be warranted.

CLOSE MEDIAN

ADVANTAGES

- Flow on Independence Blvd is not interrupted.

DISADVANTAGES

- Diversions to Ewell Rd –
 - Forces Thoroughgood Colony/Reedtown/Lower Thoroughgood Estates residents to divert out of their way to go south on Independence Blvd (.7 miles to make a U-turn, 1.25 miles to go through Thoroughgood Estates).
 - Increases traffic NB & SB directions in Thoroughgood Estates streets of Dunstan Ln and Ewell Rd.
 - Increase congestion at Ewell Rd because more signal timing is allocated to Ewell Rd phase as well as the NB & SB left turn phases on Independence Blvd.
- Lake Smith Terrance loses direct access to Independence Middle School.
- Will impact emergency vehicle access.
- Could impact school bus routings.

CONSTRUCT RESTRICTED ACCESS MEDIAN

(No lefts/thrus from side street)

ADVANTAGES

- Flow on Independence Blvd is not interrupted.
- NB & SB left turns off of Independence Blvd can still have access.

DISADVANTAGES

- Diversions to Ewell Rd –
 - Forces Thoroughgood Colony/Reedtown/Lower Thoroughgood Estates residents to divert out of their way to go south on Independence Blvd (.7 miles to make a U-turn, 1.25 miles to go through Thoroughgood Estates).
 - Increases traffic NB direction in Thoroughgood Estates streets of Dunstan Ln and Ewell Rd.
 - Increase congestion at Ewell Rd because more signal timing is allocated to Ewell Rd phase as well as the NB & SB left turn phases on Independence Blvd.
- Lake Smith Terrance loses direct access to Independence Middle School.
- Will impact emergency vehicle access.
- Could impact school bus routings.

SIGNALIZATION

ADVANTAGES

- Allows interruption of traffic on Independence Blvd for Thoroughgood Colony & Thoroughgood Estates traffic to go SB on Independence Blvd.
- Would allow bus traffic from Independence Blvd a direct access to Independence Middle School without having to up Dunstan Ln to Ewell Rd.
- Would allow easier access for Lake Smith Terrace to Independence Middle School.
- Reduces congestion at Wakefield Rd & Dunstan Ln during school opening and closing hours.
- Would allow pedestrians/bicycles to cross Independence Blvd with a signalized crossing, including HRT transit users to the bus stops at Paul Revere and Wakefield.
- Reduces frequency/severity of certain types of crashes, especially right-angle crashes.

DISADVANTAGES

- Increases delay & congestion on Independence Blvd.
- Could increase rear-end crashes on Independence Blvd.

RECOMMENDATION:

SIGNALIZATION

REASONING:

- Intersection meets traffic signal warrant.
- Doesn't restrict access to the neighborhood on the east side of Independence Blvd.
- Does not increase diverted traffic in Thoroughgood Estates, in fact, decreases existing diversions.
- Provides better access to Independence Middle School
- Provides pedestrian accommodation across Independence Blvd including HRT transit users.
- Does not impact emergency vehicle access.

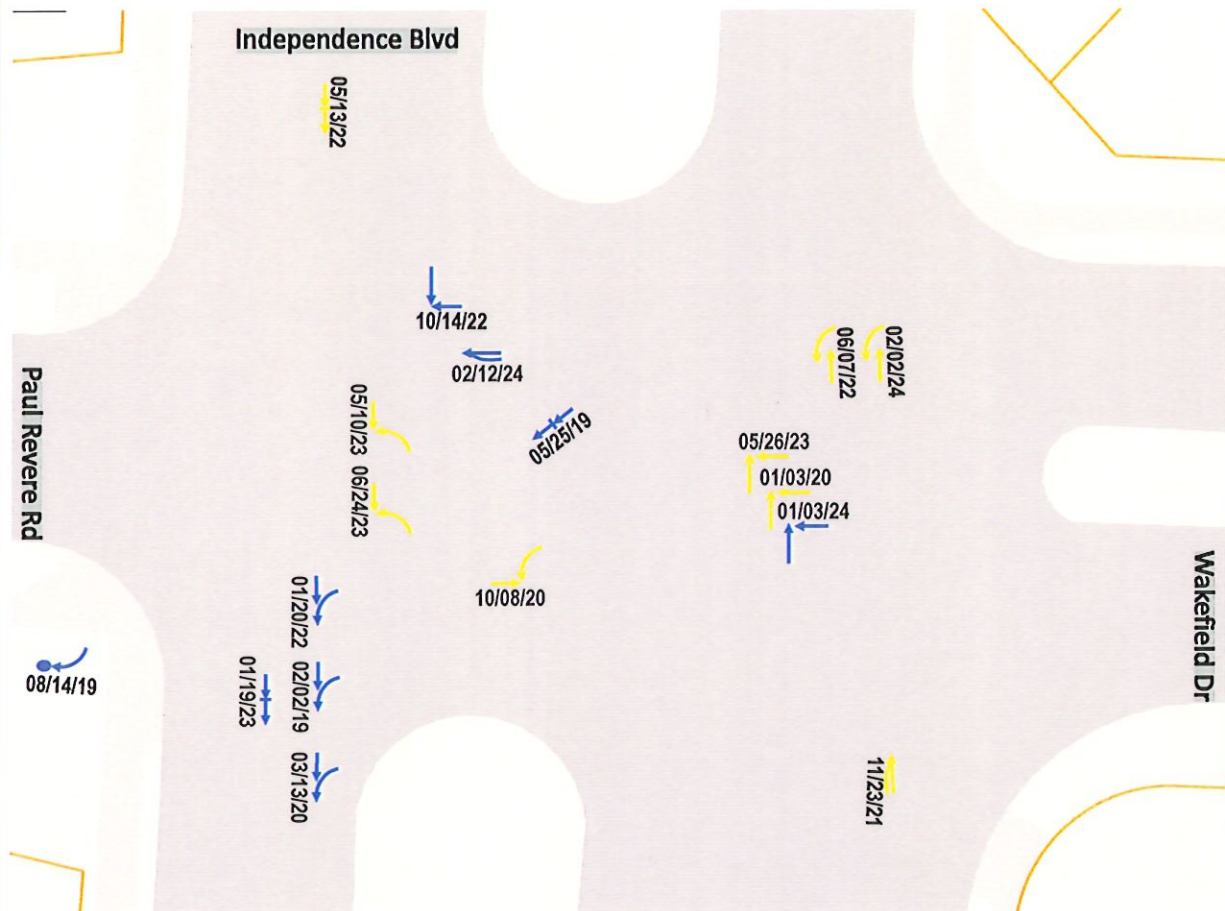
Schedule for Traffic Signalization:

- Project approved as a Traffic Safety Improvements (TSI) project on 8/6/20 & funding for design allocated.
- Topographic survey of intersection completed November 2020.
- Design to be performed in-house; anticipate 6 months to design.
- Once design is complete, signal poles will be ordered (6 mos for delivery).
- Construction by Annual Services & City forces.

QUESTIONS?

CRASH DIAGRAM

Wakefield Dr. at Independence Blvd.
1/01/2019 – 07/31/2024 (5 Years, 7 Months)



SYMBOLS	CRASH TYPES	NOTES
Moving Vehicle Backing Vehicle Non-Involved Vehicle Pedestrian Parked Vehicle Fixed Object Injury Crash Fatal Crash	Rear-End Head On Side Swipe Out of Control Left Turn Right Angle	Crashes 2019 – 3 2020 – 3 2021 – 1 2022 – 4 2023 – 4 2024 – 3 (Thru July 31 st , 2024) Total – 18

INTERSECTION: Wakefield Dr./Paul Revere Rd. AND Independence Blvd.

PERIOD FROM: 01/01/19 TO 07/31/24 BY Jamarr Waples DATE 10/29/24



