

Mineral Point and Midvale intersection

I live in the 4400 block of Woods End, about a half a block from this intersection. I frequently drive through or pass through it on foot. Other than long rush hour backups on southbound Midvale, things work fairly well. The walk lights come on automatically and there is about a three second delay between signal sequences. I feel comfortable as a pedestrian.

I recently learned that the crossing guard will be eliminated due to low numbers. In conjunction, a decision was made to change the current eastbound and northbound regulations from "No turn on red when crossing guard present" to no turn on red at all. Taking into account the school schedule for hours and days, this is changing from a current approximate 85% of the time permitted turn to 0%.

I spoke with pedestrian bicycle staff at Traffic Engineering. Apparently, this is not in response to a problem or data but somewhat of a default decision. I believe there will be three results. Motorist drive time will be increased as vehicles sit idling, an impact already seen in rush hour southbound traffic on Midvale. It is not unusual to sit through multiple light sequences there because traffic does not clear in the time available. The existing southbound no turn on red clearly adds to that back up. This additional idling contributes to increased emissions, something one would think to be a concern to all of us. Lastly, this intersection is frequently used for emergency-vehicle responses from fire station 9 as well as for numerous out of town agencies bound for U W Hospital. I recently witnessed a very challenging response through the intersection by Madison Fire at PM rush hour. The increased congestion will make that passage even more difficult.

In summary, I fail to see how this action is in response to a safety need. Given the increased congestion that will result, it may actually have the opposite impact for vehicles and pedestrians. If there still is a perceived need during school hours, then post specific regulations as such, limiting the restriction to hours and school days. This could be done for a trial period if need be. Thank you for your consideration.

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