

## Stretch of Smithtown road to get safer for pedestrians

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**A stretch of road in** Smithtown considered dangerous to pedestrians will undergo safety improvements agreed to by state transportation officials, the town announced Tuesday.

The improvements were discussed at a meeting last week between state and Smithtown officials, who have been requesting Department of Transportation help in making Main Street safer. The 1 1/2-mile strip of road consists of Routes 25 and 25A and reaches from the [Nissequogue](#) River to Route 111. Residents and officials have complained about the road for years, citing fast-moving cars and a high number of pedestrians attempting to cross in the downtown area.

Town Supervisor [Patrick Vecchio](#) said he arrived at the Friday meeting with a list of improvements derived from suggestions by residents and the town's traffic director. He said he was "pleasantly surprised" when DOT officials showed up with their own list mirroring many of his items.

Some of the agreed-upon improvements are barriers along Main Street's south curb between [Lawrence](#) Avenue and Landing Avenue and upgrading buttons on crosswalks that trigger traffic lights to change, allowing pedestrians more time to cross.

"I'm pleased that they at least took our suggestions and are using them," Vecchio said. "I certainly think that the barriers will be an additional help in preventing jaywalking."

DOT spokeswoman Eileen Peters said only that the meeting had taken place, but said no measures had been finalized.

State Sen. [John Flanagan](#) (R-East Northport), who had pushed for the meeting, confirmed the improvements, saying the DOT has been responsive and helpful.

"One of the important upsides to this is that the more we talk about this, the more people will pay attention," he said. "A lot of these things can be done relatively quickly and ... because you're not talking about major cost, that makes it easier to get some of this stuff done."

Vecchio and Flanagan said they did not know the price tag on the improvements, but said they should be finished by the summer.

According to the DOT, 33,000 vehicles travel each day along Main Street, which has a posted 30-mph speed limit. The DOT reported 359 crashes along the road from 2003 through 2008, 16 of which involved pedestrians.

Pedestrian Courtney Sipes, 11, was killed on Nov. 24 when she was hit by a sport utility vehicle while crossing East Main Street. On Jan. 2, Charles Doonan, 65, of Flushing; and Mirtha Rotkowitz, 61, of [Sunnyside](#), were crossing one block from where Sipes was killed when they were struck and injured.

Flanagan said the DOT was already undergoing a review of the area for a separate program, but that "anytime you have a human tragedy, it makes us all refocus, so what I think this did was enhance some of the timing on it and refocus it with a little more detail."

## Changes slated for Main Street

According to Smithtown Supervisor [Patrick Vecchio](#), the following changes are planned for Main Street in Smithtown:

Installing a 3- to 4-foot-tall barrier along the south curb of Main Street from [Lawrence Avenue](#) east to Landing Avenue

Upgrading buttons on crosswalks that trigger traffic lights to change, allowing pedestrians more time to cross

Replacing the walk/don't walk electronic signs with countdown signs

Putting in new signs to more clearly identify the school zone along Main Street

Installing additional "No Right on Red" signs

Widening a crosswalk at Lawrence Avenue to make it easier for pedestrians to reach the curb on the other side of Main Street

Review the timing cycle of the traffic lights along Main Street, which the state DOT said it would do, Vecchio said.