

New stop sign makes busy intersection safer, police say

By Garrin Marchetti
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NORTH ANDOVER — As the North Andover Mills Complex continues to develop into a bustling downtown destination, drivers are being asked to slow down and stop before heading to their favorite restaurant, business or shop.

The North Andover Police Department and the Division of Public Works recently created a three-way stop at the intersection of High, Elm and Water streets to help prevent future motor vehicle accidents in the busy area.

A new stop sign on Elm Street was put in place by DPW workers on July 29, according to North Andover Police Lt. E.J. Foulds. A police message board has been placed on Elm Street reminding drivers of the sign.

The Elm Street sign joins two previous installed signs on Water Street to complete the new three-way stop. All three are located right before drivers enter the heart of the mills complex, comprised of the East Mill on Water Street and the West Mill on High Street. Each sign has a smaller sign attached at the bottom of it now which reads “3-Way Stop.”

While installing the signs was not a reactive decision, it was still a necessary one according to Foulds, who noted “one accident is one too many.”

“There weren’t a lot of accidents recently, but there have been many over the years,” Foulds said Tuesday. “When we’ve had them, they’ve been on the more serious side, either in terms of property damage or bodily harm.”

According to Foulds, the intersection had 12 reported motor vehicle accidents during the five-year period before the new sign was installed. Before rivers coming from four different directions were left proceed with serious caution.

So far, the signs have proven successful; in the nearly three weeks since they’ve been installed, there have been no reported accidents at the intersection, Foulds said.

“People have complained about the area before, and we felt we could correct the problem with some signage,” Foulds said. “So far, we feel like it’s had a positive impact.”

The mills complex, once home to the Davis and Furber Machine Shops for over 100 years, has become a major source of economic development for the town, another reason police wanted to improve upon driver safety in the area.

The East Mill has several popular restaurants, including Jaime’s Restaurant and Stachey’s Pizza, as well as residential apartments and small businesses. The West Mill once housed large companies Schneider Electric and Converse Inc. before both moved out within the last year. The mill already has several new tenants and hopes to duplicate the success the East Mill by adding more apartments and restaurants in the coming years.

Residents already flock to the mills complex daily, and as more businesses move in there, the number of visitors can only be expected to increase. Police hope the new three-way stop will eliminate any potential accidents before they occur.

“The town is doing a lot of improvements in that area, so we felt it was necessary to improve the safety there as well,” Foulds said. “The residents were already pretty cautious, but the signs will make the area much safer for drivers.”