

KEEPING THEM MOVING: Sgt. James Valkoun waves through traffic entering the roundabout opening yesterday at the intersection of Toll Gate and Centerville Roads and Gilbane Street. Valkoun said he redirected several confused drivers, some of who attempted to cross into oncoming traffic rather than circle around to where they needed to get.

WARWICK BEACON PHOTO

Posted Thursday, August 25, 2016 1:58 pm | 225 views

By Kelcy Dolan

Living in Apponaug, for the past several months my commute to work on Warwick Avenue has changed in some way almost daily as the circulator project makes progress. Any day there could be a difference in any of the five areas slotted for a roundabout.

It has been exciting to live through the transformation, being able to better picture the final product as each day goes by. Although it can be frustrating when other drivers are unsure of where to go, can't read the signs or don't understand which light is theirs in front of Café Tempo, for the most part I would argue traffic flow has been better than expected with the nonstop construction.

Yesterday morning, the first of five roundabouts opened completely, located at the intersection of Route 117 (Centerville Rd.), Route 115 (Toll Gate Road) and Gilbane Street in front of Café Tempo. Even though the roundabout is open it will continue to change as the Department of Transportation prepares to open the Veterans Memorial Extension, which I am most excited for in the entire project.

For more than a week a large sign warned drivers that on Wednesday, August 24 the roundabout would open. The day before I was unsure of how it would look the next morning; I assumed on my drive to work that I would be stuck behind a line of cars, all of them trying to navigate the new system. I woke up with the slightest apprehension not knowing what to expect.

Lo and behold, as I came from Toll Gate Road, before my worries could even surface, I was already through the rotary and heading towards City Hall. I was pleasantly surprised at how smooth the transition was from a hectic intersection with stoplights, to a roundabout without signals.

Over the next few weeks I am sure there will be motorists who don't know how to maneuver through the nonstop roadway, but for the most part I already see the benefit and reasoning behind choosing to make the switch. As work progresses on the Apponaug Circulator, the drive will be a little different every morning, but yesterday my commute was quicker.