

## West Waukesha Bypass Pedestrian Safety

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The proposed changes for the intersection of Rolling Ridge Drive and Meadowbrook Road have raised concern about pedestrian safety at the intersection, particularly for students who attend Meadowbrook Elementary School and must cross through this intersection to get to the school. While the concerns are understandable, statistics show that because of the location and characteristics of the intersection, along with the time of day students would be crossing through, the potential for a pedestrian crash is reduced.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in the year 2011, there were 4,432 pedestrians killed in traffic crashes in the United States. This is a 7 percent decrease from 2002 and equates to a rate of 1.42 pedestrian fatalities per a population of 100,000. In the state of Wisconsin, there was a rate of only one pedestrian fatality per a population of 100,000. Of the total number of pedestrian fatalities in the United States, just a little more than a quarter of them, 27 percent, took place in a rural setting, and only 19 percent of them occurred at times when the pedestrian was at an intersection. Overall, a majority of the pedestrian fatalities, 70 percent, took place between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. Children, age 15 and younger, accounted for only 6 percent of the pedestrian fatalities in 2011 (US DOT, NHTSA, *Traffic Safety Facts, 2011 Data*. August 2013).

*A Review of Pedestrian Safety Research in US and Abroad* (Publication number FHWA-RD-03-042, Federal Highway Administration, 2004 ) reviewed pedestrian safety research and found that the presence of a traffic signal with pedestrian signals at an intersection greatly helped to improve the safety of an intersection for pedestrians. This review also found that providing raised medians on multi-lane roads can substantially reduce pedestrian crash risk. The presence of crossing guards for trips to and from school, were also found to help provide a much safer crossing for pedestrians. The proposed intersection of Rolling Ridge Drive and Meadowbrook Road will incorporate all three of these provisions. The sidewalk and multi-use path along Meadowbrook Road will also exist on the widened Meadowbrook Road and enhance safety for its users.

The statistics provided suggest that pedestrian fatalities are greatly reduced at rural, signalized intersections similar to the intersection of Rolling Ridge Drive and Meadowbrook Road. They also suggest that the majority of pedestrian fatalities occur between hours when students would not be walking to or from school. These statistics, along with the pedestrian safety measures that are already or will be in place, suggest that pedestrian safety will not be compromised by the proposed improvements in general and specifically at Meadowbrook Elementary School.