

New Signage at the Intersection of Parkview and Aspen Drives

As most of you know, stop signs and a crosswalk were removed last year along Parkview Drive at its intersection with Crestview Drive and Aspen Drive following the installation of utilities and other improvements along Parkview. For many, this was a welcome change for those wishing to move more quickly through that stretch of the road without having to slow down or stop at the stop signs. Unfortunately for those that either travel by foot through that intersection – whether it be to access nearby trails, visit friends, walk their pets, or travel between home and the nearby school bus stop, it has created what is potentially a very dangerous intersection. The “hump” in the road as one ascends and then descends through that intersection makes visibility by motorists traveling along Aspen of pedestrians crossing the walkway very difficult to see until it is almost too late. Children, of course, are the most difficult to see because of their height, which combined with the traffic that no longer has to deal with stop signs, can lead to a deadly encounter.

Nearby and other concerned citizens of Summit Park began contacting the Summit County Public Works Department (SCPWD) beginning in early 2012 to express their concern. In response to numerous inquiries, the SCPWD conducted a traffic survey to assess the situation and the need for additional signage to protect those that use the intersection. The response back from the SCPWD this past summer indicated that the intersection, like several others in the County, is challenging for several reasons, including:

- The Parkview/Crestview intersection is on a rural mountain road with no existing pedestrian amenities;
- Vehicle traffic proceeding through the intersection does not have to stop;
- The stop signs there previously had a low-level of compliance did not meet Federally required warrants (ie, standards) for stop signs at this location
- The 85th percentile speed through the area is approximately 35 MPH (actual speed limit through this area is 25 MPH).

Kevin Callahan, SCPWD's Director, recognized that these factors make it difficult to provide “perfect” conditions for pedestrian passage across Parkview. He further indicated that a painted crosswalk was not possible because of the following concerns:

- The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control devices (MUTCD the federal rule book for traffic sign installation which we must follow) discourages crosswalks except at controlled intersections;
- Studies have shown that motorists, even in low speed neighborhoods where there is significant pedestrian traffic often do not yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and that painted crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections are not safer than unmarked areas;
- Children may mistakenly believe that if they are within a painted crosswalk, they will be safer and therefore may not be as vigilant as adults in crossing the street.
- Because of its location and road conditions, a painted crosswalk would not be visible to either pedestrians or motorists, so it would not be an effective safety device.

For those reasons, whereas no painted crosswalk would be installed, the following four elements were adopted by the County to address safety concerns:

- Pedestrian Ahead signs posted prior to the intersection on each approach along Parkview;
- A digital readout sign noting driver's speeds on the downhill approach to the intersection to notify motorists to slow down for pedestrians;
- the installation of poles and pedestrian crossing flags at the intersection; and

- A safety training program in conjunction with the Sheriff's office or Health Department to teach kids how to safely cross a rural intersection.

It is yet to be determined whether these measures will prove useful in preventing deadly encounters between vehicles and pedestrians. Nevertheless, we urge all residents and visitors to Summit Park that use pass through this intersection to be especially vigilant to those that might be crossing it, and foremost to observe the posted speed limits within our community.