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From: Sarah K. McIntee [mailto:sarah.katherine.mcintee@gmail.com]

Sent: Sunday, November 08, 2009 7:06 PM

To: Public Works; Carolina North; EngineeringWebMail; planning;
bikeped_transportation@ncdot.gov ; Town Council

Cc: mark mcintee

Subject: A third "almost killed" report for the Estes Dr Caswell intersection for 2009

My husband and I were walking home from University Mall tonight (Sunday dusk) and we crossed Caswell Rd, school side, then crossed Estes Dr. going south. We always use the crosswalks, and we walk across WITH the walk light.* This would be the THIRD "almost killed" report we have had to make for 2009.

All three of these happening occurred at dusk. We, for safety, wear light colored clothing and carry at least one flashlight or LED lantern. Mark had a dark shirt, but my sweat shirt was white. People should see us, but they sometimes don't. We are scared that one of these days, we will really get hit by someone.

PLEASE DO SOMETHING to increase visibility for pedestrians at this intersection.

At about 5:40 PM tonight, we were crossing Estes at the Caswell- Estes intersection, in crosswalk, with the walk light, when a blue Prius with a handicap mirror hanger drove out of Caswell Rd to turn left on to Estes (toward MLK). We think this gentleman lives on Granville because he has almost hit me on the corner of Granville and Caswell in the past, in broad daylight. May this fellow should not be driving any more? He didn't even seem apologetic in his gestures, just stunned.

If we hadn't be both yelling and the Prius vehicle relatively quiet, I don't think he would have heard us, and I would be not here writing this note to you all.

We were two thirds across the street inside the crosswalk and we both yelled as he continued forward, eventually hearing us and stopping 5 feet between us and his front bumper (yes, it was just 5 feet). He didn't seem to know where the yelling was coming from. He would have squarely got us both flankside.

We could have been killed.

I have mentioned for the previous two "almost killed" reports the tree vegetation was obscuring the view of the traffic lights from tall vehicles like vans and pickups, but also, the visibility is poor for the speed that people drive on this road. They drive 40 mph, when they can get away with it. That is way too fast to see over the hill and around the bend in time to stop.

In this case, the driver was not going fast, but should have clearly seen us, but didn't. This driver has a vision issue, not as much a speed issue. Older people lose their night vision. There was not enough light for the driver to see us, even though we were right in front of him.

We need more light at this intersection. I have suggested several times that crosswalks be painted solid white so drivers can see the silhouettes of walkers in a crosswalk at night. I have also suggested putting rumble strips on the approach to a cross walk to alert the driver that a crosswalk is ahead. A crosswalk sign is not enough. In this case, a rumble strip wouldn't have done any good, but a white crosswalk might've helped this driver to see us.

I am grateful that I am, once again, not writing this from a hospital bed. Our concern for safety at this intersection is for real. This intersection has had many cases of people, especially children, almost getting hit. It has been like this for the 25 years we have lived on Caswell Rd. The shot of adrenaline and cortisol through my body will probably keep me awake all night, though. For some, it might give them a heart attack.

Every year we spend millions on making the roads safer for cars, whereas the naked pedestrian gets a pittance for attention. Chapel Hill cars are like the Paloma bulls running through the streets while the pedestrians run for their lives.

*PS, BTW: This light will not change for a cyclist. I have sometimes had to wait a few minutes for a car to come out of Caswell. The induction system in the road does not sense bikes. I have to either, get off my bike, walk over 12 feet to hit the button, walk back and remount, and get across the street before the light changes again, run a red light to get across the street, or wait for a car to come. Could we get the buttons on the street corners, so this is not just an obstacle race?

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