



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**

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**To:** Dave Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director  
David Godfrey P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager

**Date:** November 30, 2006

**Subject:** Background and response to pedestrian accident at NE 60th Street 108th Avenue NE intersection

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Council review the background information and identify next steps for staff to take.

BACKGROUND:

This memo is divided into three parts; a) information about the November 15th pedestrian collision in the crosswalk at the intersection of NE 60th Street and 108th Avenue NE b) a brief background on in-pavement flashing lights. c) Next Steps – a description of measures to be taken immediately and in the near future.

*The November 15th Collision*

At approximately 5:00 PM a group of four young people were crossing 108th Avenue from east to west. The first two pedestrians crossed successfully. The third pedestrian was brushed by a vehicle headed southbound. The driver of that vehicle stopped south of the crosswalk. The fourth pedestrian paused to look at the stopped car and was struck by a southbound vehicle. The fourth pedestrian (age 14 years) suffered minor injuries such as scratches. The driver of the vehicle was 21 years old. Police investigation indicated that the vehicle was traveling at approximately 17 mph. Weather conditions were heavy rain and wind. Figure 1 is a depiction of the accident. The crosswalk at this location has in-pavement lights but they were not functioning at the time of the accident. As described at the November 21 council meeting, the in-pavement lights were repaired on November 20, 2006.



Figure 1. Schematic representation of November 14, 2006 pedestrian accident at NE 60th Street and 108th Avenue NE.

*More about in-pavement flashing lights at crosswalks*

In 1997, Kirkland became the first city outside of two or three cities in California to install flashing lights in the pavement in advance of crosswalks. Since that time the number of installations in Kirkland has grown to 30. The idea of installing flashing lights at crosswalks has become more popular over the last 10 years and has been officially approved by the traffic engineering community. There is no body of research that conclusively demonstrates the relative effectiveness of various enhancements to pedestrian crosswalks. Limited research done by Kirkland and other agencies has shown that the lights are effective. Overall, the citizens of Kirkland have been very receptive of flashing crosswalks. Still, some pedestrians feel that the lights are ineffective or that they should be supplemented or replaced with overhead lights.

Maintenance of flashing crosswalks is challenging. Kirkland's original vendor was Light Guard, the "inventor" of in-pavement lights. Most of our installations are Light Guard brand. The original head design which was placed in Kirkland proved fragile and has been revised several times. Although the latest version is more durable than earlier versions, it still suffers from relatively frequent failures. Compounding maintenance problems is Light Guard's delay in filling parts orders.

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For several years all new flashing crosswalk installations have been FlightLight brand. When properly installed, these units are proving more durable than LightGuard units. However, proper installation is relatively difficult and installation defects are hard to correct.

Recently, in-pavement lights were out of service for some time on Central Way. This was due primarily to the inability of the contractor to receive parts from the manufacturer, Light Guard. At NE 60th Street/108th Avenue NE, the lights were not functioning because wiring had been damaged by an overlay project. The NE 60th location has been repaired and the Central Way locations are scheduled to be operational by mid-December.

#### *Next Steps*

In addition to the collision at NE 60th Street and 108th Avenue NE, there have been two other collisions involving young people in and outside of crosswalks in the last year. In addition, there has been recent news coverage about pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries in Seattle.

Under the leadership of its Council, the City of Kirkland has been a state and national leader in pedestrian safety. In order to further enhance this work, staff will return in early 2007 with specific steps in the following areas: a)maintenance of flashing crosswalks b)pedestrian flag supplements, c)public education d)enforcement.

In addition, we intend to propose an internal city structure to continually monitor, review, adapt and improve pedestrian safety measures utilizing input from Public Works, Police and other city departments.