



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800

www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

To: Marilynne Beard, Assistant City Manager

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

Date: September 20, 2007

Subject: CORRESPONDENCE FROM MS. SARAH JOHNSON

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of response to Ms. Johnson, who wrote to express her concern with the intersection of Kirkland Way and Railroad Avenue.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The intersection of Kirkland Way and Railroad Ave is shown below with arrows that depict the conflict to which Ms. Johnson is referring.



Sight distance at this intersection is limited by the curve in the roadway and by the railroad bridge abutment, however it is adequate. There are some intersections, and this is one of them, that "feel" more constricted and less safe than they actually are. These intersections are typically characterized by a lower than expected accident rate. Again that is the case here as there has been only one collision of the type described by Ms. Johnson in the past 7 years.

Memorandum to Marilynne Beard

September 20, 2007

Page 2

The Public Works and Police Departments will continue to monitor this intersection for changes that warrant action.

Substantial improvements to the intersection including reconstructing the railroad over pass and provision of sidewalks and bike lanes are planned in a \$6.1 million unfunded CIP project.

119 Cedar Street
Kirkland 98033
September 2, 2007

To: Kirkland City Council
Chief of Police, City of Kirkland

Re: Dangerous intersection (Kirkland Way and Railroad Avenue)

Dear people:

For 15 months, I have lived just up the hill from a very dangerous intersection--the corner of Railroad Avenue and Kirkland Way. Almost daily my husband and I have returned to our home heading west on Kirkland Way and have made the left turn onto Railroad Avenue, just before the railroad overpass. Try as we might, we and other drivers making this turn cannot really see the oncoming cars headed east on Kirkland Way, no matter how much we slow down or how alert we are, until we are basically in the path of those oncoming cars. Our safety making this turn really depends on the perfect driving behavior of those driving east on Kirkland Way.

I am very well aware that the city has posted signs on Kirkland Way in both directions, asking for slower speeds and warning of blind driveways. But I am writing to tell you that the signs are not working!!!! Many drivers headed east on Kirkland Way drive much faster than the speed limit. I would like very much to see a blinking light or a mandatory stop sign (or something else to make sure people aren't driving fast) on Kirkland Way at or just before this intersection.

I also think that traffic in this area may be increasing. There has been a fair amount of new housing built in this area this year, and this is a popular pathway to Everest Park, where not only locals but many out-of-towners travel to our city's great softball fields.

Please investigate this. I am sure there must be ways to make this a safer intersection.

Thanks for considering this issue.



Sarah Johnson
119 Cedar St, Kirkland
425-822-6959

October 3, 2007

DRAFT

Ms. Sarah Johnson
119 Cedar Street
Kirkland, Washington 98033

Dear Ms. Johnson:

Thank you for your letter regarding the intersection of Railroad Avenue and Kirkland Way. The physical alignment of the streets and the presence of the railroad bridge make this a unique intersection.

The Public Works Department has studied this intersection extensively over the past few years. It turns out that sight distance is adequate for westbound left turning vehicles, although it sometimes “feels” different to drivers. Records indicate only 1 westbound left turn/eastbound through accident in the past 7 years.

The railroad bridge is a limiting factor in being able to substantially improve the sight distance and to improve pedestrian passage on Kirkland Way. Ultimately, we'd like to reconstruct the bridge and we will continue to look for funding to do that.

Staff from the Public Works Department will contact you to discuss possible measures for reducing speed. At the same time, the Police Department will notify the traffic officers and the patrol supervisors that this is an area where extra patrols, public education and enforcement are to be deployed.

If you have any further questions please contact Sgt. Mike Murray (mmurray@ci.kirkland.wa.us or 587-3400) in the Police Traffic Division or Iris Cabrera (icabrera@ci.kirkland.wa.us or 587-3866) in Public Works' Transportation Engineering Division. Thank you again for you bringing your concerns to our attention.

Sincerely,
KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

James L. Lauinger
Mayor