



## Parents seek traffic calming measures at Bellevue, Upper Mountain



*Concerned with young children walking home from school or nearby Anderson Park, parents are asking the town to implement traffic calming measures at Bellevue and Upper Mountain avenues.*

*COURTESY GOOGLE MAPS*

**By Kelly Nicholaides**

*for Montclair Local*

Dozens of vehicles will pass through the intersection of Bellevue and Upper Mountain avenues before motorists allow pedestrians — many of whom are students — to cross, a resident told the Mayor and Council on Nov. 27.

“It’s dangerous. A lot of families moved to this area and are required to cross this intersection to get to school or to Anderson Park,” said resident Jeremy Schneider, who recently moved to Upper Mountain Avenue with his family and brought his son with him to the meeting. “A yellow pedestrian sign [alerting motorists to yield to pedestrians] is ignored. You may wait for 30 cars to pass before someone stops to let you cross. It’s only a matter of time before there’s a tragedy. The current situation doesn’t work. Maybe you can put up flashing signals in the crosswalk for more visibility. Crossing that intersection when it’s pitch black at night is even more dangerous with people getting off the trains.”

The Montclair Police Department accident data for the intersection includes eight accidents in 2017 and six in 2018 at Upper Mountain and Bellevue avenues; and 11 accidents at North Mountain Avenue in 2017 and four in 2018.

Township manager Tim Stafford said the police chief has assigned the matter for more attention.

“I’ve been out there, so I know what it’s like. I will follow up,” Stafford added, noting that a RRFB (Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon) or flashing pedestrian crossing sign could be placed at the intersection. Beginning in

2015, the township has installed 19 RRFBs throughout Montclair at Grove Street, Bloomfield Avenue, Walnut Street, Claremont Avenue, Orange Road, Valley Road, South Fullerton Avenue and Bellevue Avenue at Woodman Road.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, RRFBs reduce pedestrian involved crashes at unsignalized intersections by increasing driver awareness. They provide a lower cost alternative to traffic signals. One study found that the device resulted in increased yielding to pedestrians, from 18 percent without an RRFB to 81 percent with it. However, an evaluation over a one-year period found that “there was little to no decrease in yielding behavior over time.”

Cost of a RRFB system is approximately \$10,000-\$15,000 for purchase and installation of two units—one on each side of the street. The units can be activated manually by a pedestrian or passively by a pedestrian detection system, according to the Federal Highway Administration.

According to the Montclair Pedestrian Safety Committee, which formed in 2013, there were 479 crashes resulting in pedestrian injury and eight fatalities, from 2003 through 2014. Fifty five percent occurred at intersections. In 2016, there were seven pedestrian accidents involving individuals ages 18 and under in Montclair.