Opinion

Safety improvements needed for N. Main St.

Ethan Woodfill, Opinion Editor | March 6, 2020

Advertisement

Every weekday around 12:15 p.m., hundreds of Allegheny students cross North Main Street toward the Henderson Campus Center for the lunchtime rush. This horde of students often causes a few minutes of standstill in traffic traveling in both directions on Route 86, which connects Meadville to Cambridge Springs.

According to an article published by Meadville Tribune, a multi-vehicle accident occurred around 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 25, near the intersection of North Main Street and E. College Street in the area of Brooks Walk. The incident damaged a utility pole and a light pole. Thankfully, it doesn't seem as though anybody was seriously injured, but this event prompted me to wonder, as I often do, what is wrong with this stretch of road?

I realize that more often than not, college students like myself can be ignorant of their surroundings. Yes, sometimes we're looking at our phones and yes, we definitely could be better about looking before we cross the street.

But I have experienced numerous occasions where a vehicle is a few intersections away, and I've determined that I have enough time to cross. But many times, that car will not slow down, or, in interesting cases, will actually speed up, forcing me to stop in the middle of the road for fear of being hit.

Multiple accidents involving students have occurred over the years, but not enough has been done to address this issue.

In 2015, Hannah Morris, '17, was fatally struck by a vehicle outside North Village II. Following this tragedy, the college installed new lighting on both sides of North Main Street in 2017. According to an article published by The Campus, the school worked with The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to create short and long-term plans to improve the safety of campus crossings. It included a raised intersection to improve visibility as well as vegetation medians.

The school also sent a letter to the Meadville City manager in 2015 requesting a speed limit study.

Aside from improved lighting, which I have found makes it harder to see students entering the

street, none of these projects have occurred five years after Morris' tragic death.

How does it make sense that, in school zones, the speed limit is strictly enforced at 15 mph, but for Allegheny's busy crossings, it is a barely-enforced 35 mph?

Tractor-trailers barreling down from the north cannot come to a quick stop if a student is negligent. Last spring, a truck swerved into the Odd Fellows lawn to, thankfully, avoid hitting a student. Even more thankfully, there were no children from the Meadville Children's Center playing on the lawn, as they often do.

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> ***— Ethan Woodfill, Class of 2022***

This is a huge safety issue, and the college needs to do more to work with PennDot to find a solution. It is shocking to me that more students have not been hit. Signs that say "State Law: Yield to Pedestrians" are obviously not enough to combat careless speeding through campus.

In the interim, students and drivers must work
g through campus, I always consider using an alternate
ghland Avenue, both of which tend to be less busy with
must drive on North Main, there are often cars tailgating
me, even when I am heading the 35 mph speed limit. Drivers should slow down driving through the six or so crosswalks; no one will get to their destination any quicker if a student is hit.

Also, most students cross near the top of the hour, which is when most classes end. If possible, avoid driving through campus at these times.

As pedestrians, we must be more vigilant when crossing. Look both ways and do not cross if someone is driving too fast, especially if it is a 40,000-pound tractor-trailer. Just like drivers can yield when we negligently cross, we can wait for a car that's speeding through a crosswalk.

Please, look both ways.

crosswalks N Main St PennDOT safety

About the Writer

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