

Overview of Some Anthem Parkway Safety Problems (By Bob Frank):

As most residents know, our special Anthem (not just SCA) traffic flow control problems are due to combinations of (1) compound curves, (2) occasionally steep hills, (3) high walls forcing drivers to encroach onto the parkway before being able to see both ways, (4) no merging/turning lanes in the median so one can not cross half of the parkway before committing to the other half, (5) high village monument signs blocking the views at some intersections, (6) attractive landscaping features with trees and shrubs that often severely restrict lines-of-sight, and (7) high speed (normally between 45 and 55 and often rolling to exceed 60 mph on steep hills).

This combination of factors needs a balanced plan. In response to some previous questions, Henderson officials (City Council Members as well as Police Dept Chief and other City Officials) have previously stated the following:

1. The 45mph speed limit on Anthem Parkway is a function of the parkway design, standard traffic rules, average speed of actual traffic, safety experiences on the parkway, and in response to the majority wishes of the citizens of this community. So, the posted speed limit is not likely to be reduced unless there are specific points requiring attention.
2. New speed bumps are rarely approved in Henderson because of the high hazards presented to emergency health, safety and fire vehicles. This applies to gated communities as well as to public streets.
3. It appeared to be a surprise to City Council Members when they learned that Del Webb/Pulte had not been required to be consistent with providing adequate sidewalks around both sides of the Anthem Parkway, and they are looking into what could be done to correct those problems--at City expense--during the next decade. The speed of the sidewalk construction plans will probably depend upon how much citizen pressure is received.
4. One or two parkway/beltway interchanges may be declared eligible for traffic lights in the future. Scotts Valley is one that is sometimes mentioned as one possibility. However, we are told that the highest frequency of accidents around the Parkway is at traffic light interchanges, so we are advised to expect that the severity of accidents may increase when traffic lights are installed.
5. Simple crosswalks on the Parkway will NOT be installed by Henderson because they say that experience proves pedestrians get the false illusion of having some kind of protection while in the crosswalk, but parkway drivers are unlikely to slow down until it is too late to avoid an accident. In other words, safety officials seem to believe that it is better for pedestrians to be highly fearful at the crossings and to move as quickly as possible to the other side. And, if one can not cross in less than 20 seconds, the person should not attempt it.

Of course, all of the above ignores the obvious problems of a senior community like ours where residents live on both sides of the parkway and they are encouraged to do daily exercise by walking. But, the danger comes since there are inadequate sidewalks on the parkway, and since residents are not often capable of RUNNING across the wide streets.

It often takes a typical senior and/or handicapped person more than 30 seconds to cross the parkway. But, parkway line-of-sight and speed factors do not give someone much more than 15 seconds to avoid danger from both directions. So, I have proposed the flashing lights and warning sign options to provide more time to pedestrians. If there are better and cheaper methods, let's hear about them! We need to advocate the most cost-effective solutions available.

For those who would like to caution me that such electronic traffic control devices can be expensive, I am motivated to remind them that the City of Henderson has a really good deal with SCA. We pay normal property taxes and the city has less than average obligations to serve our citizens. We need to be reasonable, but not ignore safety issues. I believe that safety and peace-of-mind for our 10,000+ SCA 'elders', plus another 10,000 or so other Anthem-area citizens are worthy of very serious considerations. The Anthem Parkway traffic problems get worse every day. It will be a tragedy to wait until more of our citizens are killed or injured before doing something about the obvious.

Since it is an election year it is a particularly good time to communicate our urgent needs to those individuals who are asking for our votes at the local, county and state levels. How about you getting involved? It is your family and/or neighbor lives at stake. We all share the responsibilities for taking action on this vital matter. Please post your comments on <http://www.blog.Anthemvoice.org> and/or send email to bobfrank@cox.net with your comments, pro and con. Thanks! **Bob Frank, SCA Director, June 15, 2008**