



SECTIONS

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FRAMINGHAM

By John Swinconeck G L O B E C O R R E S P O N D E N T 1 3



BILL GREENE/GLOBE STAFF / FILE 2012

Students and other pedestrians on the campus of Framingham State University, which is adjacent to Route 9.

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State transportation officials are recommending numerous changes to an area of Route 9 where a Framingham State University student was killed last year, including posting signs, adding a crosswalk, and improving lighting.

The Department of Transportation's Framingham Road Safety Audit also recommends that the university amend its shuttle bus service to provide transportation for students to the north side of Route 9 near Maynard Road or to adjacent retail stores.

University spokesman Dan Magazu stated that Framingham State will do what it can to help implement the audit's recommendations, and that may include a change in its shuttle service.

Colleen Kelly, 21, of Melrose, was hit on the highway in December 2012 while crossing to get to Maynard Road near campus around 10 p.m. The student had reached the divided median, but was struck by multiple vehicles when she attempted to cross the rest of the road.



There was no crosswalk at that spot.

According to the road safety audit, prepared by Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates Inc., there had been “numerous vehicle crashes at a nearby on-ramp and traffic signal, and multiple vehicle/pedestrian incidents over the last three years.”

The audit is intended to identify potential safety improvements as part of a design process for reconstruction of the area.

It comes as planners are deciding the future of the Route 9 corridor. The MetroWest Regional Collaborative and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council will hold its last public meeting Monday on their plan to make the highway a more pedestrian-friendly and bike-friendly route surrounded by compact, mixed-used developments.

The two groups are working with the towns of Framingham, Natick, Southborough, and Wellesley.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Morse Institute Library in Natick.

Regional planners had suggested moving buildings closer to the street with parking in the back, eliminating sprawling parking lots in favor of compact garages and public green space, and constructing buildings that span Route 9 to create pedestrian connections.

Planners had also proposed reducing the number of access roads and parking lots in the Framingham Centre historic area near the university, and replacing pavement with retail space to create a shopping village.

The Route 9 safety audit examined an area adjacent to the Framingham State campus on Route 9 from Winter Street to the High Street offramp and Edgell Road onramp. According to the audit, 59 crashes occurred in that area between February 2010 and January 2013, with 24 resulting in personal injury. Five collisions involved pedestrians, including that which resulted in Kelly’s death. Hers was the only reported fatality in the audit.

A pedestrian bridge spans the highway near Vernon Street, and Magazu said that both the dean’s office and campus police regularly remind students at the beginning of the semester and throughout the year to use it.

“Students do use it. A lot of students use it. It’s just a matter of not every student using it,” Magazu said.

If students are in a rush, he said, they may opt not to use it, instead crossing about 1,000 feet down the road from the bridge.

The report states that Road Safety Audit team members observed “pedestrians attempting to cross Route 9 in the project area are not fully attending to traffic as they cross, sometimes using a smartphone or headphones. There is signage along Route 9 facing north and south to indicate to pedestrians that they should not be crossing in this location; however, many do so regardless.”

Pedestrian bridges can be valuable if they are used, said Bruce Leish, director of the MetroWest Regional Collaborative. Leish is also a participant of the Route 9 MetroWest Smart Growth Plan.

The audit suggests that pedestrians may not be using the bridge because the stairs leading up to it are in disrepair, that it may be unsafe at night, and that it’s too out-of-the-way.

“I tend to not like pedestrian overpasses where you have to climb a ramp,” said Leish. “People tend not to use it. . . . People get antsy and charge across the road.”

According to the audit, students may be crossing the road to reach private, off-campus apartments and businesses in the area. However, the audit states that motorists on Route 9 have no indicators, such as signs or warning lights, that pedestrians may be crossing the road.

Blocking off access with a raised median may not be effective, Leish said. The road is bisected by a railroad, and emergency vehicles exiting Framingham Fire Station One, located between Maynard Road and the Route 30 offramp, also cross the highway in that area.

Leish agreed with the audit’s recommendation to install a pedestrian-activated crosswalk in the area, as well as to install signs warning motorists that pedestrians may be in the area.

“Motorists who are coming west from there are coming from a high speed grade separation,” he said. “There’s no visual cues to tell them this is a place where people are crossing. You need signage, and pedestrians need an actuated crossing. It takes a lot longer to cross that road than they think.”

The report also suggests that the town install additional street lighting to improve night visibility, possibly in the center of the median.

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As a Shrewsbury-based society marks its 50th anniversary, young and old celebrate the growing Indian community.

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STORY 1 OF 14

The Carlisle Board of Selectmen say that the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School superintendent’s contract shouldn’t be renewed.

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STORY 2 OF 14

A proposed hunting ban in Weston’s town forests failed with a show of hands by residents at a crowded Town Meeting.

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Three Conservative synagogues have decided to reinvent religious education for grades kindergarten through fifth and create a new school.

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STORY 4 OF 14

Facts on three Conservative synagogues reinventing Jewish education

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STORY 5 OF 14

Dover has become the fourth town in the state to raise the age to buy cigarettes to 21, based on an effort to keep tobacco away from children.

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STORY 6 OF 14

Protestors gathered to rally around Concord teachers who say they have been bullied into silence by the school administration.

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STORY 7 OF 14

A committee launched by Bedford residents and others made the dream of turning a 17th century mill site into a park come true.

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STORY 8 OF 14

Framingham Town Meeting members rejected a resolution that recommended more money for an adult English as a Second Language program.

Currently living in Greece, I only recently learned that Newton’s Charles River boathouse will change radically (“River boathouse operator loses bid for contract,” May 5). Though half a world away, my heart lies with the boathouse. It was a home during my teenage years. I, along with countless others, owe many of my professional and leadership skills to Larry Smith and staff. When evaluating this change, the public should know how important Charles River Canoe and Kayak has been for the area’s youth.

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STORY 10 OF 14

I am deeply saddened to read in the Boston Globe (“River boathouse operator loses bid for contract,” May 5) that the Newton franchise of Charles River Canoe and Kayak is passing to new management.

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STORY 11 OF 14

Story Musgrave will return to his native Massachusetts on May 22, lecturing at Framingham State University at 7 p.m.

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STORY 12 OF 14

Things to do west of Boston May 24-Aug. 31

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STORY 13 OF 14

A search committee to find an interim leader for the Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School recommended three finalists for the position.

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STORY 14 OF 14

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