

A letter in opposition of discontinuing the adult student crossing guard at Raymond Road and Gilman Road for Orchard Ridge Elementary school

TO: City of Madison Transportation Commission

CC: Alder Yanette Figuera Cole, District 10; Meadowood Neighborhood Association; Kevin Luecke, City of Madison; Vanessa Cruz, MMSD Assistant Director Transportation & Logistics; Principal Duy Nguyen;

May 28, 2026

Dear Members of the Transportation Commission,

My name is Shayna Hetzel, and I live on the south side of Raymond Road. My children attend Orchard Ridge Elementary.

Because Orchard Ridge is a walking-only school without MMSD transportation, crossing guards are not optional for many families — they are essential. I strongly urge you to reject the recommendation to eliminate the crossing guard at Raymond Road and Gilbert Road.

From a parent's perspective, this intersection is simply not safe for children to cross independently. While I understand the City uses specific criteria to evaluate crossing guard locations, I ask you to also consider the perspective of families and children who cross this intersection frequently.

Raymond Road is an extremely wide and busy roadway. Children and families crossing here must navigate multiple traffic lanes, bike lanes, and a large median, what effectively feels like a seven-lane crossing. Cars frequently accelerate after the Whitney Way stoplight, making speeding common and creating difficult visibility for both drivers and pedestrians.

The intersection is especially challenging during school arrival and dismissal times, when traffic is heavy with both commuters and parents driving students to school. This location also serves more than just Orchard Ridge families. Within a short distance are St. Maria Goretti School and church, as well as the United Church of Christ, making this a heavily used neighborhood crossing point for vehicles.

There are also significant visibility concerns. Because Raymond Road runs east-west, drivers are often facing direct sunlight during both morning drop-off and afternoon dismissal. In winter months, snowbanks and mature trees further limit visibility — especially for small children. My own 4-year-old is barely taller than the hood of many SUVs and trucks on the road today.

A crossing guard also provides something that traffic studies cannot easily measure: a trusted adult presence. That presence helps children feel safe, assists younger students in making good decisions, and can deter inappropriate or unsafe behavior. Within the last year, there was

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at least one incident involving an adult attempting to engage children from a vehicle near the Orchard Ridge Elementary school route.

For a relatively small investment in the city budget, this crossing guard provides an enormous benefit to neighborhood families and student safety. Decisions about school crossings should not rely on a pre-set uniformed numerical threshold that may not reflect the realities of a smaller neighborhood elementary school.

Please prioritize the safety of children and families who depend on this crossing every day, and do not eliminate the crossing guard at Raymond Road and Gilbert Road, which is on the June 3, 2026 agenda.

Thank you for your consideration.

Shayna Hetzel

Parent of Orchard Ridge Elementary students; Meadowood Neighborhood resident