

Child Safety Is a High Priority for Evergreen Legacy Fund

Submitted by Anne Vickstrom
Photos courtesy of Linda Kirkpatrick

Anyone who has lived in Evergreen knows this is a special place. The natural beauty of the mountains, trees, animals, lakes and streams is what draws people here. After coming to know the individuals who make it a thriving community, residents understand it's more than just a pretty spot – it's a place to be preserved, protected and improved for the future. Since 2012, the Evergreen Legacy Fund has patiently and painstakingly worked to do just that.

The organization is run by a voluntary committee of local residents working to improve the appearance and infrastructure in our community. Coming this summer is an exciting example of the work Evergreen Legacy Fund does: construction of a sidewalk that will begin on Hatch Drive in front of Wilmot Elementary School and travel down Buffalo Park Road to Evergreen High School, creating a safe space for students and residents to travel by foot or bike. Paved shoulders and a crosswalk are also part of Phase One of the three-phase project that will eventually connect to Highway 73.

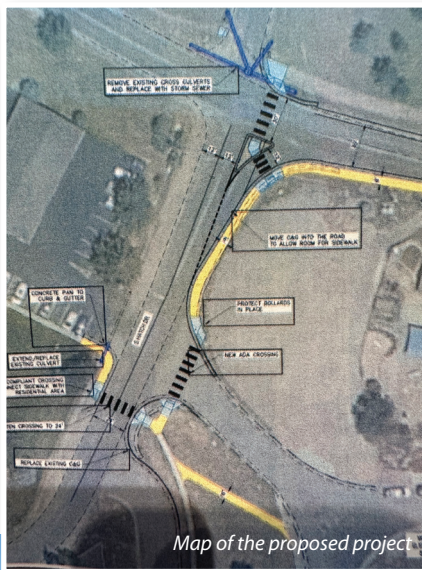
"The crosswalk will be moved to the intersection of Hatch Drive and Buffalo Park Road to better control traffic as drivers interact with grade-school students," says board member Eric Gill of Bear Paw Stanbro Property Management, who has worked closely with the Jefferson County engineering team. "The project will be completed and maintained by Jefferson County, as all of our infrastructure projects are within the county's right-of-way."

Gail Riley, owner of Highland Haven Creekside Inn and a founding member who served on Evergreen Legacy Fund's board for 12 years, asked rhetorically, "How could we not provide safety for kids at schools? 'Unsafe' in this area is an understatement – add walkers, bikers, joggers. [When this project is completed,] my grandchildren, unlike my children, will glean from our hard-fought efforts."

"Through multiple community forums 10 years ago, residents urged Evergreen Legacy Fund for this to be a priority," says Linda Kirkpatrick, executive director, noting that the process of setting priorities,

designing improvements and working with outside entities is complicated. "Things move slowly -- maybe only one project a year can be completed. It took six years to get county approval on a list of 17 projects and another four years to bring the Hatch/Buffalo Park project to fruition."

With cooperative efforts and financing, including grants, the Evergreen Legacy Fund is able to make subtle improvements to our community. Completed projects of which Evergreen Legacy Fund was a part include: crosswalks at the Bergen RTD and Christ the King Church, the Evergreen Lake North Trail traveling along Highway 74 and Evergreen Lake, the Evergreen Lake Connector Trail that glides folks from the lake to downtown, two murals at the dam and in the pedestrian tunnel beautifying blank spaces, Lower Meadow Drive River Walk that extends safe pedestrian and vehicle travel to the eastern end of town and adds five parking spaces to Main Street and curb-to-curb paving of Main Street. To learn more, visit www.evergreenlegacyfund.org. ■



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