

FAQs about Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB)

What is an RRFB?

A Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, or RRFB, is a pedestrian-activated warning device that consists of yellow LED rectangular flashing lights that draw attention to the crossing and provide information to approaching traffic that a bicyclist or pedestrian is trying to cross the street. Once the RRFB is activated, the rectangular-shaped beacons will begin to flash in an alternating, irregular pattern that is similar to emergency flashers on police vehicles.

What are the safety benefits of an RRFB?

RRFBs are low-cost safety improvements that have been proven to enhance pedestrian safety at uncontrolled, mid-block crosswalk locations. The top three benefits of an RRFB are:

1. Improved "yield to pedestrian" compliance from motorists;
2. Increased visibility and awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists who wish to cross the street; and
3. Clearly communicates with approaching motorists that there may be someone in the marked crosswalk when the beacons are flashing, reducing the threat of a rear-end crash for motorists who are yielding to a crosswalk user.

Why is installation of a RRFB at the Southwood Drive recommended?

UDOT and Murray City want to improve the safety of the pedestrian crossing at Southwood Drive (6320 South). This location serves the South Cottonwood Regional Park "Wheeler Historic Farm" and is located approximately mid-way between the traffic signals at 5900 South and 6600 South. The major concerns that have been expressed include the following:

- A lack of yielding to bicyclists and pedestrians from motorists;
- Safety concerns related to bicyclists and pedestrians having to cross 4 active lanes of traffic; and
- Concerns from motorists of being rear-ended if/when they yield to pedestrians.

The installation of the RRFBs will address all three of these concerns. They will provide a clear warning to approaching traffic in all four travel lanes because RRFBs will also be placed in the new median. The yellow flashing lights will alert drivers to the crossing and remind drivers of their requirement to yield to all crosswalk users.

Studies have found that RRFBs have been able to improve the rate at which drivers yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk from 10-20% to 70-85%. To view these studies and to find more information on the safety of RRFBs, please visit the FHWA Safety web-page on RRFB units: <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/resources/techsum/fhwasa09009/>

RRFBs are dramatically more effective at increasing driver yielding rates to pedestrians than traditional overhead beacons.

For Motor Vehicle Drivers:

Who am I supposed to yield to at a crosswalk? At marked crosswalks such as Southwood Drive, drivers are legally required to yield the right-of-way to any path user who is in the marked crosswalk. This includes bicyclists and pedestrians.

What am I supposed to do when I see the flashing lights? If you see flashing lights as you approach a pedestrian crossing, watch carefully for bicyclists and pedestrians who may be trying to cross the road. If you see someone who is waiting to cross, make eye contact and slow down your vehicle to communicate that you're going to yield the right-of-way. Once the person has crossed your path and is safely out of your lane of travel, you may continue slowly through the crosswalk.

For Pedestrians and Bicyclists:

What do I do once I push the button? Push the button to activate the flashers, look in the direction of approaching traffic to determine when, or if, it is safe to enter the crosswalk. Before entering the crosswalk, be sure that approaching traffic in both lanes of travel have seen you and are slowing down or stopping to allow you to cross. Continue to watch traffic as you cross the road until you are safely across the street.

Can I still cross the road if I don't push the button? Yes. It is not required for you to push the button and activate the RRFBs. Use of the RRFBs is optional and dependent on your comfort level to use them. If traffic is light on SR-71 (900 East), it may not be necessary to use the RRFBs at all. It is recommended to use the RRFBs for all crossings as it provides additional safety benefits.

