

Crosswalk comes to town

For the first time in more than a century, the small Upper Bucks borough has need for a pedestrian crossing.

After 120 years in existence, Richlandtown has finally gotten its first crosswalk.

The pedestrian crosswalk was installed this summer in the Upper Bucks borough at Main and Cherry streets, near a popular ice cream stand, to help control traffic and improve safety.

Now officials are looking to install more striped crosswalks at other busy intersections.

"It's something that needs to be done," said Mayor Carl Raub III.

Traffic through the quarter-square-mile town, sliced in half by Route 212 (known as Main Street within the borough), has increased over the years as trucks and passenger cars have tried to circumvent Route 309 and find alternate routes to Hellertown, Bethlehem and beyond.

The situation was even more pronounced this year as many motorists sought to avoid driving through Coopersburg since Route 309 was under major construction.

Speeding has also become a factor in Richlandtown and Pennsylvania State Police troopers, who patrol the borough, have increased their radar presence, said Raub.

Officials also worry about school bus safety since there are several stops throughout the borough.

"We're trying to be proactive rather than reactive," said Borough Manager Joe Geib.

The intersection of Main and Cherry streets was chosen as a test case. It's a popular spot, especially in the summer, because Grida's ice cream stand attracts a lot of people.

"I think in general people are more aware (of pedestrian traffic with a crosswalk) as opposed to when it's not marked," said Raub.

Future crosswalks could be installed at Main and Church streets near St. John's United Church of Christ and at Main and Union streets near the Phoebe Richland nursing

care center.

The cost of installing crosswalks, including the necessary signage, varies depending on style and material. Special paint or plastic with glass beads is used for nighttime reflectivity.

Most intersections, however, can be outfitted for less than \$1,000, said Geib.

Richlandtown paid \$350 for the ladder-style striping at Main and Cherry streets, plus another few hundred dollars for the signs.

When asked what he thought about Richlandtown finally getting its first crosswalk, a feature most towns have had for years, Geib said, "Compared to other places possibly things may be a little slower on the uptake around here. But we're keeping the small town charm around."

Hilary Bentman can be reached at 215-538-6380 or hbentman@phillyBurbs.com