



# Mount Vernon

*An Innovative Community; Authentically Hometown*

## Martinsburg Road School Zone Extended

*Part of ongoing, multi-pronged effort to improve safety for children in area*

MOUNT VERNON, February 16, 2024 – The City of Mount Vernon, working with Mount Vernon City Schools, the Knox County Career Center and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), has expanded the school safety zone on Martinsburg Road.

Beginning on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, the enforceable school speed zone was extended to 300 feet south of the school property line along Martinsburg Road, or just below Parrott Street on the south, to 150 feet north of the crosswalk at Pine Street on the north. The speed limit in the school speed zone, during applicable hours when school is in session, is 20 mph.



*An expanded school speed zone has gone into effect along Martinsburg Road in the vicinity of Mount Vernon City Schools and the Knox County Career Center.*

About 28 households in that area have children who attend either middle school or high school, and in September of last year an 11-year-old boy was struck by a vehicle while crossing Martinsburg Road. A month later the boy's mother and other parents in the area brought their safety concerns to the attention of the Mount Vernon City Council.

While the residents' efforts raised the visibility of the issue for the City's elected officials and others, the City was already at work on a multi-stage plan to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety on and around Martinsburg Road at that time, and these improvements are ongoing. The expanded school safety zone is one step in that process.

"The safety of our residents – and certainly our children – will always be a top priority for the City of Mount Vernon," said Mayor Matthew Starr. "I'm very

pleased that we have been able to work together with the schools and the state to get this school safety zone expanded relatively quickly. But of course we're not finished. There's still much work to be done to improve conditions for the schoolchildren there."

In fact, the City has plans to add six crosswalks in the area and construct new sidewalks, while the Police Department's traffic officer will continue to focus on speed enforcement along Martinsburg Road in the vicinity of the schools. Some of these improvements will require state approval, as grant monies could be involved.

Specifically, the City plans to apply for two ODOT grants to improve pedestrian safety for students from Mount Vernon Middle School, High School and the Knox County Career Center. If awarded, the grant funds would be used to replace and add sidewalks on Martinsburg Road; Pine, Parrott, South Main and South Division streets; and Yellow Jacket and Success drives.

In addition, controlled crosswalks need to be added to Martinsburg and Newark roads, South Main and South Division streets, and Yellow Jacket Drive. Programmable, flashing school speed zone lights also remain to be installed along Martinsburg Road, to indicate to motorists when the speed limits are enforceable.

“The goal of the project is not only to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety for students, but to provide opportunity for alternative modes of transportation in this neighborhood as a whole,” said Assistant City Engineer Quentin Platt.

“When residents approached me last year regarding the challenges for students walking to school, I was glad to discover our Engineering Department had already done a significant amount of work studying the problem,” said First Ward Council Person Jay Mahan.

“I am grateful for their work and pleased that we are starting the process to make this area safer for students and other pedestrians.”

### END ###

#### **ABOUT THE CITY OF MOUNT VERNON:**

The City of Mount Vernon is an innovative community with an authentic hometown feel. The City is dedicated to providing modern services with an emphasis on continual improvement, customer service and equitable laws that support our citizens and visitors, while retaining and attracting investors in our community. Home to 17,000 people, Mount Vernon is the county seat for Knox County and boasts historic buildings and districts as well as business and professional, educational and recreational opportunities through many adaptive reuses of the community's infrastructure and spaces. The City has strong ties to higher education, with Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Kenyon College and Central Ohio Technical College operating satellite locations in the historic downtown. Located 40 miles northeast of Columbus, Mount Vernon is near the geographic center of Ohio and has connections all over the globe.

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