



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LOTTERY ▶	OBITUARIES ▶		
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68 BLOCKS ▶			

Metro

Peril at Brandeis road where 3 were struck

Winding Waltham street limits sight lines of crosswalk and reaction times for drivers

By **Matt Rocheleau** | GLOBE STAFF FEBRUARY 04, 2014

-  ARTICLE
-  GRAPHIC
-  COMMENTS (4)



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One student said the walking bridge on the Brandeis campus can lull drivers into thinking pedestrians will not be crossing the street.

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WALTHAM — The busy crosswalk where three Brandeis University students were struck by a car Sunday evening presents dangers for both pedestrians and drivers, police and students said Monday.

“It’s not the safest area, so you have to really be careful and look both ways if you’re trying to cross there, especially at night,” Waltham police Sergeant William Gallant said a day after the students were seriously injured. One remained hospitalized Monday.

Neon yellow signs warn drivers in either direction to be cautious when approaching the South Street crosswalk. Pedestrians can also push a button to activate flashing yellow lights before they cross.

But the crosswalk sits at the crest of a hill, and the street bends several times as it cuts through the university campus, reducing sight lines and reaction times for drivers and pedestrians.

Nathaniel Barr, a 21-year-old senior, said he was not

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entirely surprised to learn about the accident.

“I think it was something that was inevitable, because the cars go pretty fast here and there is a crosswalk, but it’s hard to see,” he said.

Barr said he and other students often sprint to cross the street there.

“I think it’s something that the school or city needs to address,” he said.

He suggested that the yellow flashing lights should be converted into a standard traffic light with a button pedestrians can press to make the signal turn red. He also suggested installing better signs or other measures to give drivers more warning before they reach the crosswalk.

About 6:25 p.m. Sunday, three undergraduates were walking east in the crosswalk when they were struck by a car traveling north and driven by a 42-year-old man from Belmont, Waltham police said.

Emergency responders found the students in the roadway and the driver on scene with his car, which had a damaged windshield, police said.

Two of the students had head injuries, police said. The third victim was unconscious. They were taken to Beth Israel with serious injuries, but the hospital reported to police later Sunday night that all three were in stable condition.

One student, an 18-year-old woman, remained hospitalized in serious but stable condition, Gallant said. He said the other two injured students, an 18-year-old man and a 22-year-old woman, had been released from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Waltham police and university officials referred questions to the Middlesex district attorney’s office. The office said no charges had been filed by Monday afternoon.

Graphic: The crosswalk at Brandeis



DAVID L RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

“There’s not enough warning that there’s going to be a crosswalk,” said Noam Steinman, a Brandeis student, speaking as a driver.

The office declined to release further details of the case, including the identities of the victims and the driver and what may have caused the crash.

Local TV news station WBZ reported that the three students were on their way to a Super Bowl party.

Student Zach Bardwell called it a “freak accident” that will not change his routine. He said he often wears headphones while navigating the crosswalk.

Another student, Noam Steinman, said in an interview near the scene of the accident that he usually does not have a problem crossing on foot there, but finds driving on the street difficult.

“There’s not enough warning that there’s going to be a crosswalk,” he said.

Students can cross over South Street by using a pedestrian bridge a short distance away. But some said the bridge can be inconvenient and a bit out of the way, depending on where they are coming from and going to on campus.

Steinman said he thinks the bridge may distract drivers, lulling them into thinking that there will not be anyone crossing the street.

“You see the bridge above you and you assume people will only be crossing in the bridge,” he said.

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Nathaniel Barr, a 21-year-old Brandeis senior, said he often sprints to cross the busy street where the accident occurred.

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