

Dear Missoula County Commissioners,

On behalf of the Frenchtown School District, I am writing to formally request that Missoula County initiate a traffic study in the area surrounding our school campuses. Our district serves nearly 1,400 students and employs over 200 staff members, with families and community members frequently traveling to and from our facilities throughout the school day.

Frenchtown School District encompasses **337 square miles**, stretching from west of the Nine Mile Community Center, through Huson and the town of Frenchtown, and past the Wye. Growth is occurring across our district boundaries, particularly at the Wye, where new subdivisions such as those developed by Hayden Homes, along with recently launched apartment complexes, are contributing to increasing traffic volumes. Simultaneously, new housing developments are also emerging in Huson and central Frenchtown.

As we prepare for the start of the school year, we are already anticipating significant congestion—particularly along the Frontage Road and I-90 overpass. Mornings regularly see traffic backing up from our elementary school across the overpass, creating both delays and safety concerns. Making a left-hand turn onto the Frontage Road from our north (secondary) campus is especially difficult during peak times, as parents, student drivers, buses, and through-traffic converge in the same area.

Our school system is uniquely situated: our elementary and secondary campuses are separated by an interstate, a frontage road, and a railroad line. This configuration results in daily crossings by buses, staff, and students—on foot and by vehicle—necessitating heightened attention to traffic patterns and safety risks.

We have observed the following ongoing concerns that merit formal study:

- Student and community vehicle traffic over the I-90 overpass during lunch periods
- Frequent pedestrian use of the overpass
- Excessive vehicle speeds near school zones
- Congestion at key stop signs and intersections
- Inefficient traffic flow during morning drop-off, afternoon pick-up, and school events
- Pedestrian safety concerns along the path connecting the two campuses

Additionally, the proposed Town Pump development has raised new concerns regarding increased commercial traffic, additional turning conflicts, and the potential for heightened pedestrian risk. We experienced two school bus-related accidents on the overpass: one involving a district driver, and another involving an outside motorist. This past spring, a third accident occurred when a vehicle exiting our campus was struck while attempting a left turn onto the Frontage Road.

In light of these challenges, we respectfully request a comprehensive traffic study that addresses both existing issues and the anticipated impacts of new development in the area. Our goal is to promote the safety of our students, staff, and families, and to maintain effective and predictable traffic flow in the school zone.

We understand that this type of study and any resulting infrastructure improvements may take time, which is why we are making this request now. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued support of the Frenchtown community and its schools.