

SAFE STREETS ACT 2023 - CRASH REVIEW

Location: Dalewood Drive at Dean Road

Crash Date: September 16, 2024

Crash Time: Approximately 7:39 AM

Local Case No.: 240044034

Review Date: January 17, 2025

Description of Incident

On Monday, September 16, 2024, at approximately 7:39 AM, a motorist traveling westbound along Dalewood Drive collided with a student who was crossing the street outside the marked crosswalk at the east leg of the intersection. According to the crash report, improper passing and obstructed visibility were considered as factors in the collision. Weather conditions were clear, the roadway surface was dry, and it was daylight. The responding officer reported that the pedestrian may have suffered minor injuries.

Figure 2 illustrates the crash location and direction of pedestrian and vehicle travel.

Location and Site Description

The crash occurred in the vicinity of the intersection of Dalewood Drive at Dean Road. Wheaton High School (HS) is located at 12401 Dalewood Drive, with the school's frontage beginning west of Dean Road. Thomas Edison High School of Technology (HST) is located east of the intersection. Wheaton HS has a current enrollment of 2,599 students in grades 9th through 12th, and Thomas Edison HST has a current enrollment of 558 students.

Wheaton High School and Thomas Edison High School of Technology

Most student arrivals occur between 7:20 AM and 7:40 AM and dismissals occur between 2:30 PM and 2:50 PM.

Dalewood Drive

Dalewood Drive is a two-lane neighborhood connector, which is 26 feet wide, and is generally oriented in the east-west direction. Dalewood Drive has grass-buffered sidewalks with a nominal width of four feet along the north side of the street and a nominal width of five feet along the south side. The posted speed limit along Dalewood Drive is 25 MPH. No stopping is allowed at any time along most of the segment, while no parking restrictions are in effect from 7:30 AM to 4 PM during school days on the north side between Fredale Street and Bluhill Road. Refer to **Figure 1** in the attachments for additional details of the Dalewood Drive segment.

Dalewood Drive at Dean Road

Dalewood Drive at Dean Road is a four-leg intersection located east of Wheaton HS. Dean Road is classified as a neighborhood yield street. The south leg of the intersection is an access road serving Wheaton HS and Thomas Edison HST. ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps provide accessible crossings of the north, south, and east legs of the intersection. The crossing of the west leg is neither marked nor accessible. Ladder-style crosswalks are installed for the east and north legs of the intersection, while a diagonal-style crosswalk is installed in the south leg of the intersection.

Dalewood Drive at Dean Road is a designated school crossing for Wheaton HS/Thomas Edison HST.

The Dalewood Drive corridor was evaluated to identify potential infrastructure deficiencies, maintenance needs, and road user behaviors that contribute to increased safety risk at and in the vicinity of the school-related crash location. The Dalewood Drive corridor was reviewed between Valleywood Drive to the east and Everton Street to the west. There are two horizontal curves along this segment – one west of Dean Road and one near Valleywood Drive. The segment also includes a vertical curve with a crest 250 feet east of the Dean Road intersection. The horizontal and vertical curvature constrain lines of sight and observations show the grade changes result in variable acceleration and deceleration rates by motors traveling the corridor. Please refer to **Figures 1** for additional information.

Crash History

Crash data obtained from dataMontgomery provides information for thirteen (13) incidents along Dalewood Drive between January 2015 and September 2024. One (1) crash involved a pedestrian. Three (3) crashes resulted in injuries. The incidents are illustrated on **Figure 3**.

Field Observations and Findings

Field observations were performed on Friday, January 17, 2025, during the Wheaton HS and Thomas Edison HST dismissal period. Weather conditions were clear, and the roadway surface was dry. Many students were observed using the crossings and sidewalks. Multiple vehicles were observed parking along the roadside for student pick up. School buses leaving Thomas Edison HST and students crossing Dalewood Drive caused a significant vehicle queue in the eastbound direction, extending back to the Wheaton HS entrances.

During these observations, a security guard from Wheaton HS was interviewed at the end of the dismissal period. This security guard was aware of the September 16, 2024, incident, and expressed concerns about the need for crossing guards at the school intersections along Dalewood Drive. They also confirmed that the seven members of the Wheaton High School security team are responsible for directing traffic on school property during pick up and drop off hours. However, the school security team are unable to monitor Dalewood Drive due to liability concerns.

A student who attends Thomas Edison HST was also interviewed. The student did not believe it was safe to cross Dalewood Drive because vehicles frequently do not slow down for pedestrians. The student also mentioned that they sometimes avoid using the marked crosswalk because it is not always convenient.

Recommendations

Based on the crash report, the motorist was bypassing the vehicles stopped for school traffic and had obstructed visibility when the incident happened. Field verification confirms that the westbound approach provides adequate sight distance, meeting the AASHTO minimum stopping sight distance requirement of 155 feet for 25 mph. The visibility obstruction is likely due to vehicles parked too close to the intersection in violation of existing parking restrictions. While there are no roadway deficiencies, visibility and pedestrian awareness could be improved through various countermeasures outlined in the recommendations below:

1. Consider installing School Crossing Assembly (S1-1 and W16-17P) on both left and right sides of the crossing for both eastbound and westbound approaches to improve visibility.
2. Consider installing double yellow lines in the vicinity of marked crosswalks along Dalewood Drive to discourage bypassing.
3. Coordinate with the school to educate students about the importance of safe crossing habits and encourage the use of crosswalk.

Site Photograph



Photo 1. Crosswalk Markings at Dean Road Crossing



Photo 2. Westbound Approach to Dean Road Crossing



Photo 3. Eastbound Approach to Dean Road Crossing



Photo 4. During Dismissal Period



Photo 5. Absence of School Crossing Assembly on Eastbound Approach

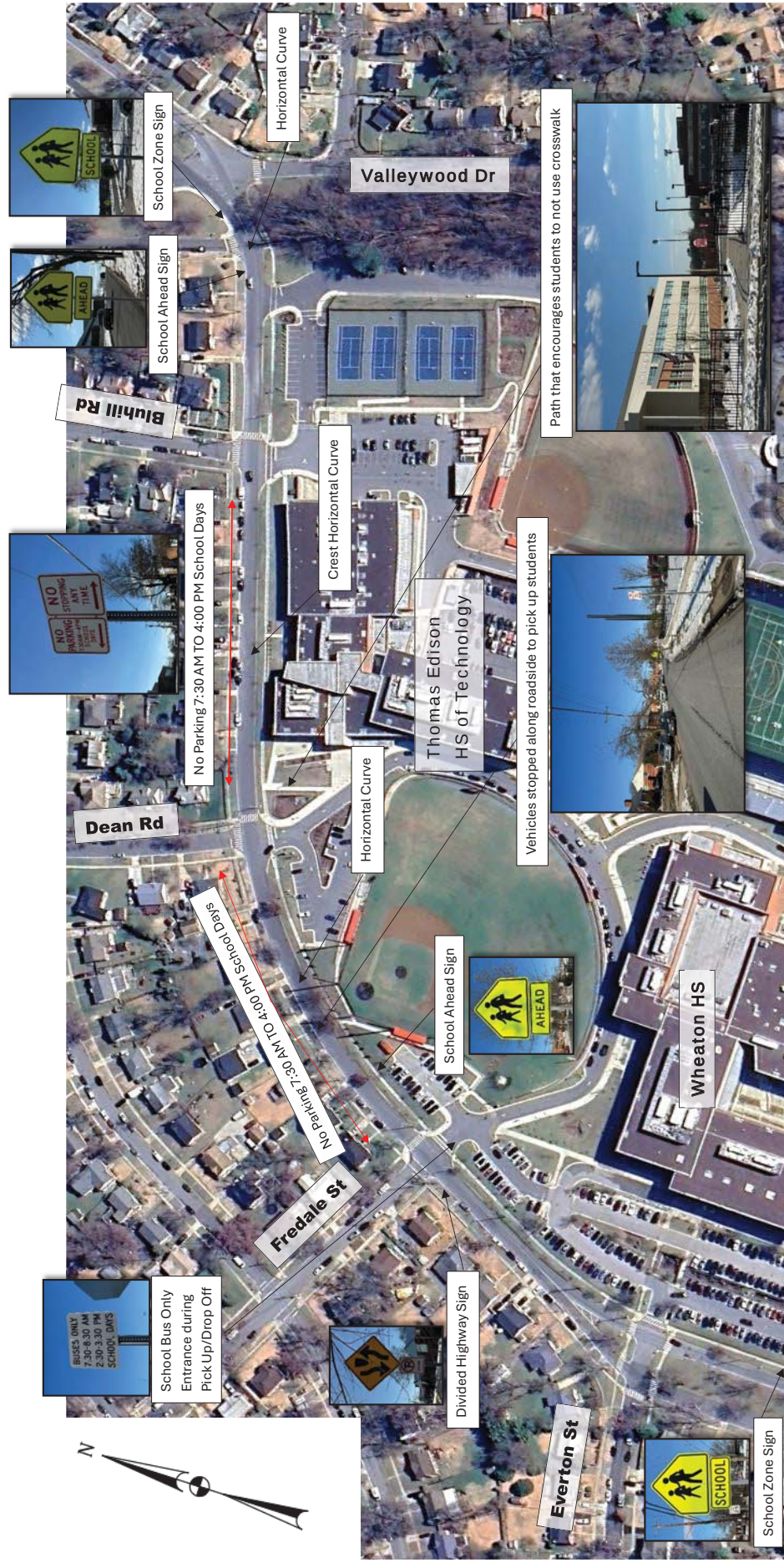


Figure 1 - Dalewood Drive Corridor Evaluation

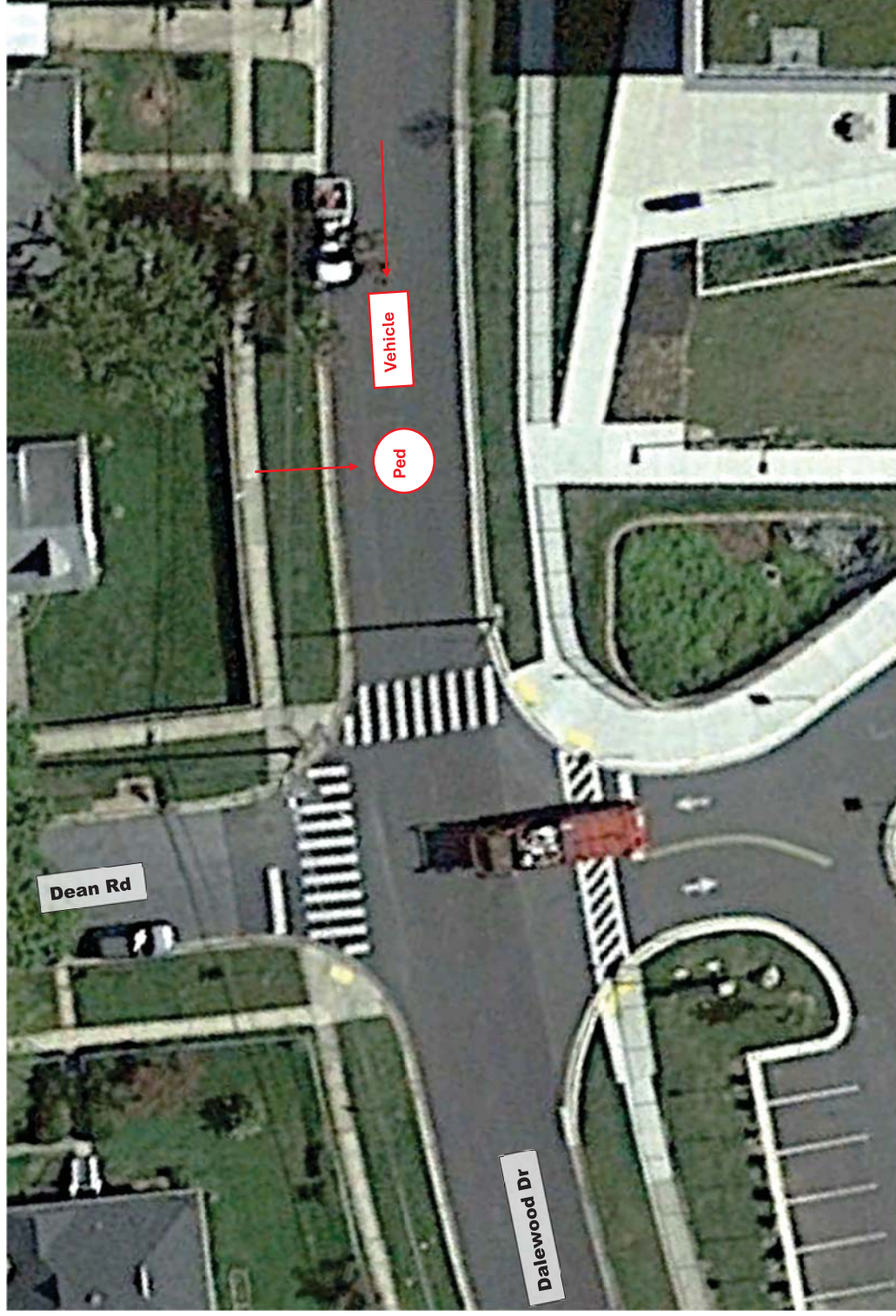


Figure 2 - Dalewood Drive at Dean Road
2024 September 16 Pedestrian-Involved Crash

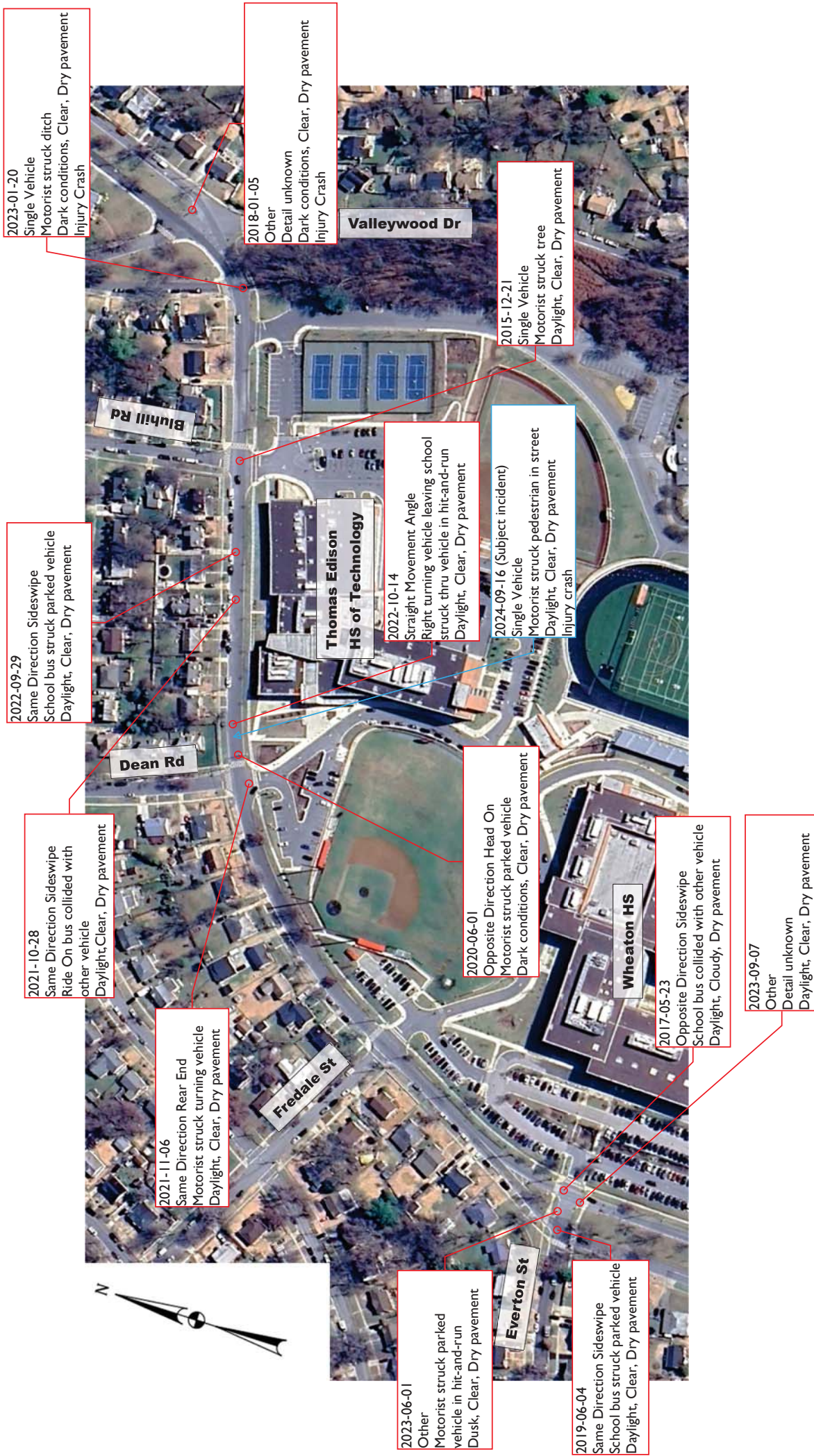


Figure 3- Crash History (2015-2024)