

Mid-Block Crosswalk Pedestrian Safety in School Zones



CUSTOMER NAME

Sheboygan Leadership Academy

PRODUCT

TAPCO Solar Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB) Pedestrian Crosswalk System

SUMMARY

With recess held across the street, the Sheboygan Leadership Academy needed a mid-block pedestrian safety solution that would protect its students and give parents and teachers peace of mind. TAPCO's RRFB system was the A+ solution the school was searching for.

ORGANIZATION

Located in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, the Sheboygan Leadership Academy is comprised of 207 students ranging in age from four to 14. Now in its eighth year, the academy aims to inspire students to become leaders through their academic achievement, moral development and service to others.

SITUATION

Eight times a day. That's how often students in kindergarten through fifth grade at Sheboygan Leadership Academy had to jaywalk across the street — once in the morning, three times both ways for recess and once at the end of the day. With the playground and parking lot on the other side of the street from the school, there wasn't much choice. To safeguard students, the teachers and recess aides kept lookout — wearing orange vests and wielding handheld stop signs — because there was no crosswalk, sign or light on that part of the street.

Using the crosswalk at the intersection to the west would mean crossing one of the busiest streets in town. And using the crosswalk to the east would mean walking in front of a bustling alleyway leading directly to a fast food restaurant, with the school building blocking visibility for both motorists and pedestrians.

Neither were viable options for packs of children eight times a day, so the jaywalking continued for years. Motorists frequently encroached on children's space as they crossed, but the local police department was unable to issue tickets because the motorists weren't breaking the law; after all, the children weren't in a legal crosswalk. Something clearly needed to change before disaster struck.



A whopping 70 percent of pedestrian deaths occur at non-intersections, according to a study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

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*Laura Studee,
Principal of Sheboygan
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SOLUTION

Principal Laura Studee had wanted a safer solution since the school was founded in 2012 and, after a few close calls between students and drivers, she says she decided to “put [her] heart and soul” into the issue in 2018.

She and others from the academy worked with the local police department and the city of Sheboygan to finally add a crosswalk. Then, she connected with Kevin Byrne, a landscape architect with Kapur & Associates out of Milwaukee, who she said was incredible to work with and helped her out pro bono. He introduced her to the TAPCO Solar Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacon (RRFB) Pedestrian Crosswalk System, and everything fell into place.

“He was a really big fan of the TAPCO system and had seen many installations,” Laura says. “As soon as he showed it to me, I thought it looked perfect for what we were looking for: something really bright, visible and easy to use.”

The one-of-a-kind, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)-approved crosswalk system features extra-large light bars that flash in the Interim Approval 21 (IA-21) approved wig-wag plus simultaneous (WW+S) flash pattern, alerting motorists when pedestrians are in or about to enter the crosswalk. The system is ideal for school zone crossings – as well as other crossings with heavy foot traffic – because pedestrians can simply press a button to set off the flashing lights before safely crossing the street using the crosswalk.

Between the solar- and AC-powered options, Laura selected solar power because it was low maintenance and “seemed like the perfect solution that would hopefully work in perpetuity.”



RESULTS

The system's installation went well, taking less than a day and causing no interruptions. According to Laura, it looks polished and professional while serving its most important function: commanding motorists' attention and making young students and other pedestrians impossible to ignore.

"I'm really happy to get it done," Laura explains. "The TAPCO system took safety to the next level and was worth every penny... It makes our front entrance look more like a school and it's very visible and bright, so you realize as a driver that it's a school area. I would certainly recommend it to any school administrator or principal."

Feedback has been extremely positive, especially from parents. Now, they can send their children to the Sheboygan Leadership Academy knowing they'll be safe as they scamper across the street to school and recess, often more focused on what game they'll play than on the nearby cars. For parents, that peace of mind is priceless.

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Learn more about the TAPCO RRFB Pedestrian Crosswalk System here.

ABOUT TAPCO

As an industry-leading innovator, TAPCO manufactures, services and distributes a wide portfolio of traffic and parking safety solutions designed to increase safe travels for all. Since 1956, we have set the standard for delivering reliable, cutting-edge traffic safety enhancements. From our world-renowned line of LED-enhanced BlinkerSign® solutions to our pedestrian crossing products and early detection warning systems, safety is at the heart of all TAPCO innovations.

Working alongside traffic professionals for more than 60 years gives our team an exclusive perspective on the past, present and future needs of the traffic and parking safety industry.

