

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ACCESS TASK FORCE COMMUNITY WIDE MEETING – ROUND #1 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Date: November 19, 2014

Location: Multi-purpose Room, Downtown Branch of the Public Library (343 S. Fifth St)

Attendees: Public Present: 39; refer to appendix A for sign-in sheets.

City staff present: 5; Kayla Coleman, Eli Cooper, Connie Pulcifer, Officer Jamie Adkins, Sergeant Tom Hickey

Consultant present: 2; Norm Cox, Carolyn Prudhomme

Purpose: To identify pedestrian issues and opportunities as they relate to the entire city, targeted areas, specific corridors and specific locations.

Note: This is not a direct transcript of the meeting. The following summary has been developed from notes taken during the meeting; comments are paraphrased. Where staff and consultants provided information and responses they are shown in italics.

Key Discussion Points and Comments: Participants had the opportunity to provide input during a large group discussion and on comment sheets. The following documents the input received during the meeting.

1. Crosswalks on Plymouth Road are not perfect, but a lot better than they were before.
2. A sidewalk on Nixon Road, north of Clague School, was supposed to be built in 2013. What is the status? *The funds are now available and we will be moving forward with the project. This is not the time of year when we would begin construction so you can anticipate construction in 2015.*
3. Sidewalk gaps are a great concern and should be a high priority (such as along Nixon, Scio Church, Stadium and Main near the football stadium).
4. Are there any runners on the Task Force representing the running community? *There are several members of the Task Force that are avid runners and they bring that passion to the Task Force.*
5. Has anyone been stopped or pulled over by police when the local law has been disobeyed? What is being done in regards to enforcement? *Over the last year, there have been concentrated efforts for the enforcement of crosswalks. When someone does not stop for a pedestrian waiting at a crosswalk it is a civil infraction and an officer has to witness the violation in order to issue a citation. When problem crosswalks are reported, they are added to the list for target enforcement. Traffic problems can be reported by civilians through the police department webpage. (Ann Arbor Police Department Traffic Complaint Questionnaire: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1463514/Ann-Arbor-Traffic-Complaint-Questionnaire>)*
6. I witnessed four near-fatal crashes when vehicles were making left turns and not yielding the right-of-way to the pedestrians. *Unfortunately, one thing that pedestrians have to keep in mind is that there are blind spots created by the pillars (structures near the windshield) in a vehicle which block a motorist's view of pedestrians when making left turns.*
7. Does Ann Arbor have a high pedestrian crash rate? *When the fatality occurred on Plymouth Road a year and a half ago, the city inquired about safety funding with the Federal Highway Administration and they noted that Ann Arbor's streets are relatively safe. Statistically speaking, relative to other communities, Ann Arbor has a relatively low crash rate for pedestrians. Ann Arbor has been acknowledged as a Gold Level Walking Community due to the high number of walkers and low number of crashes.*

- *Pedestrian Crashes: 53 in 2014, 52 in 2013, 47 in 2012, 48 in 2011*
 - *Pedestrian Fatalities : 2 in 2013, 1 in 2012, 1 in 2011*
8. What is the fine for an accident with a pedestrian? *The Police Department does not assess the fine. Fines can be found on the 15th District Court Website. The fine depends on the infraction; the lowest fine is around \$130 dollars.*
 9. This City would be better off if everyone used multiple modes of transportation on a monthly basis. That would allow people to understand the perspective of all the different roadway users.
 10. Pedestrian islands on Liberty work well.
 11. W Stadium pedestrian islands are too far apart, there is no traffic calming, and there is barley room for a bicycle in the island. Islands work best when combined with some type of traffic calming device.
 12. Jackson Road at West Stadium is not pedestrian friendly. The intersection is wide and the pedestrian clearance time is too short.
 13. Wide angle curbs are good for buses, but dangerous for pedestrians. Pedestrians have been killed near the medical school by buses.
 14. Would like to see the link to the Ann Arbor Police Department Traffic Complaint Questionnaire on the Pedestrian Safety and Access Webpage.
 15. We should be doing more to improve the pedestrian experience by making a sidewalk a more pleasant experience. Sidewalks need some type of separator from traffic, especially on busy roads.
 16. Pedestrian malls are great and work well in a number of communities around the country. They should be considered in Ann Arbor.
 17. Eliminate turning right on red in the downtown to make it more pedestrian friendly.
 18. Greatest conflict between cars and people in the downtown seems to be on one-way streets that encourage high speeds (Division, Fifth, First, Ashley). Rarely do people have the time or willingness to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk and enforcement efforts have not been successful in changing the behavior. Getting rid of one-way streets should be on the table.
 19. Culture is different in other communities. In San Francisco, cars stop for pedestrians approaching a crosswalk. Cars do not stop in Ann Arbor. Changing culture is difficult.
 20. On multi-lanes roads there is a concern that if one car stops for pedestrians the other car will not. If a motorist fails to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk, what is the fine and how many tickets have been written for this? *I Based on State Law, if a vehicle is stopped at a crosswalk it is illegal for a vehicle to pass that car. If someone passes you when you're stopped at a crosswalk, they have violated a state law. Please communicate that message to other's to help change the culture.*
 21. Ann Arbor's crosswalk ordinance conflicts with the state traffic code. Until they are harmonized it will remain a major problem. Ann Arbor has a lot of visitors and this is confusing when other communities in Michigan have different laws; it doesn't work.
 22. Motorists in the downtown are not interested in stopping for pedestrians; they will cut in front of or behind pedestrians in a crosswalk. Based on 6 years of observations at Huron and Main Street, vehicles that are heading east on Huron, making a left or right onto Main Street do not yield to pedestrians.
 23. Arborland is very difficult get to from the nearby bus stop. It can take up to ten minutes waiting at traffic lights. Timing of the traffic lights is essential. Vehicles turning right on red do not yield to pedestrians. If you are in a wheelchair you are physically unable to safely get to Arborland.
 24. Bus stops are not cleared and snow piles are deposited where you enter and exit the bus. People who are not physically abled have a very difficult time getting onto and off of the bus.

Pleased to see the new pedestrian signal on South University. However, why are yellow blinking lights being used to tell cars to stop? Yellow means proceed *The common misconception about Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) is that they are a regulatory device. They are not. They are warning devices. Drivers are not required to stop because of the flasher; it is the presence of a pedestrian and the City's ordinance requirement that constitutes the stop requirement. RRFBs alert drivers that there is a pedestrian either crossing, or ready to cross, a street. Therefore, the color has to match a category of a "warning device" which is yellow. To change it to red would require at least two things: creating a legal document at the ordinance level that would describe what the driver should do approaching a new device with red flashers (this is not defined anywhere, and would be unique to Ann Arbor), and getting permission to experiment from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to install such a device (of some new design, as it cannot be a yellow diamond sign with red flashers) and to study if it is better than the standard beacon (such a device is not allowed under MMUTCD). Both of the actions are difficult, time consuming and unnecessary as existing RRFBs have comparable, if not better, performance measures than HAWKS which are red. Another potential danger with choosing this path is that it will dilute the underlining of the ordinance, which is changing the driving culture to the one prevalent in other States with similar regulation, namely yielding to pedestrians regardless of the sophistication level of the crosswalk.*

25. There are a lot of sidewalk gaps in the Waterhill area. Brooks Street is missing sidewalks, and in the winter people walk in the street. Fountain also has gaps.
26. On Valley Drive there is a crosswalk near the Pittsfield Branch of the public library. The speed limit is 45 and there is a sharp curve limiting visibility.
27. There are issues on Main Street in the downtown with vehicles trying to turn left. They usually turn after the light has turned red and when the pedestrians are in the crosswalk.
28. Children going to Dicken School have to cross Covington Drive and there are no safe crossings for them. A traffic study showed that vehicles travel 49 mph and there is a sign posted 25 mph. If there was a safe crossing, more students would walk to school. Radar and a cable were used to detect speeds. These are only band-aids that work for that day. "Safety Town" is need for the adults rather than the children.
29. It is important to provide safe access along and across the road to get to bus stops.
30. Someone in a wheelchair should not be expected to put themselves into the crosswalk in order to have the traffic stop.
31. Education is very important; relicensing procedure may be an opportunity.
32. Plymouth Road is a lot better now, especially with the flashing lights.
33. It is hard to see pedestrians at night, especially with dark clothing.
34. Standardization of signs and markings would be helpful.
35. Snow and ice removal is critical this time of year and glad to see there is a subcommittee working on that topic.
36. It is easy to miss the pedestrians on Broadway Bridge at the crosswalk; a flashing beacon would be helpful at that crossing.
37. Flashing beacons, like the once used in Ann Arbor, are in other states as well.
38. Speeding is an issue on Plymouth Road and some of the crosswalks are located at the bottom of a hill, which contributes to higher speeds and difficulty in stopping.
39. There is a significant sidewalk gap on north side of Broadway.
40. Does the pedestrian ordinance apply to midblock crosswalks? *Midblock means that the crossing is not at an intersection that's signalized. A signalized intersection provides a clear direction to the motorist that there is potential for a pedestrian to be crossing the*

road. When there is no traffic control device, the crosswalk itself with a pedestrian at the curb or in the crosswalk constitutes a condition where a motorist must stop. Through the ordinance and behavior of culture change we hope the stop compliance at these crosswalks will increase.

41. Entrances to US-23 are very difficult to cross as a pedestrian.
42. Northside Elementary has taken on a 6th grade (and will soon be a K-8 school) causing the school population to more than double and we expect over 150 students in the next year. This has presented some challenges since there are more students walking to school and students from different areas of town being driven in. Pedestrian safety and traffic congestion are issues. The intersection between Pontiac and Barton needs improvements. Vehicles turn right on red when students are trying to cross the road. Also, Taylor and Peach have issues with traffic control going into the school. *That issue came up and was discussed at the September Transportation Safety Committee meeting. We will be looking at that issue in more detail at the January meeting. Just to get a stop sign requires a traffic study and the conditions must warrant the device. We would encourage you to look into the Safe Routes to School Program. Michigan has a progressive Safe Routes to School Program which provides state and federal resources. This type of effort has to be initiated by the school.*
43. Nonstandard intersections need to be fixed. These are intersections that do not comply with standards that are consistent through the country. For example, Stadium and Washtenaw is difficult for pedestrians and needs improvements.
44. Many of the issues discussed tonight deal with education and not infrastructure changes. We need to educate the driving population and pedestrian population on what the rules are and how to comply with those rules. Unlike infrastructure, these changes are easy and there is a lot of room for growth.
45. Infrastructure may be the harder solution, but it is needed. One of the big impediments to pedestrians in the oversizing of the auto environment. As we replace streets we should be reducing their width.
46. Funding for infrastructure is needed. We do not have funding in our Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) because we do not have a method of putting it in there. I would like to see 2 million put into the CIP every year for the next 5 years. It may seem like a lot of money, but we have underfunded infrastructure for at least the last decade. It is critical we have funding.
47. A state crosswalk law is needed so we can teach it in driver education, and have consistency in signage across the state.
48. What is the legality of having flashing red lights? Is it even possible to have beacons colored red? There are mixed feeling on the HAWK signal. *Traffic signal control comes from the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) which is a North American guide. Whatever is used to control traffic in the right-of-way must be in this guide. A few years ago, the guide allowed the rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) with the yellow flasher which are the only types that are formally endorsed and allowed. The flashing lights are yellow because they are a warning and with a yellow warning sign. A community could go to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and seek experimentation to use red. The need for the experiment must be identified and you would have to agree to monitor and report findings if the FHWA grants the experiment. The HAWK, which is now called the Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon (located at Huron and Third) goes through a sequence of lights. Like the rectangular rapid flash beacon, the pedestrian wanting to cross pushes a button indicating that the motorist must stop. Western Michigan University did a study and found that stop compliance is actually higher for the RRFBs and not the Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon. Also, 5 to 7 rectangular rapid flash beacons can be installed at the cost of one Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon.*

49. Thank you to all of the traffic engineers to listening to us and how we think the City should do things.
50. Lighting at non-signalized crossings is insufficient
51. Paint! Do not let crosswalks and bike lanes fade
52. Eliminate one-way streets downtown
53. No turning on red in downtown
54. Please narrow auto lanes to 10' minimum when repainting (this will help with passive speeding)

Prioritization Exercise: Participants were asked to select their top three priority issues. The following list shows the top priorities. The number of participant votes per issue is noted on the right.

1. Motorists do not respect pedestrian rights and safety (7)
2. Gaps in the sidewalk (5)
3. Motorist failing to stop for pedestrians on high speed roadways (5)
4. Motorists passing other vehicles that are stopped for pedestrians in crosswalk (5)
5. Sidewalk Gaps in neighborhoods (5)
6. Speeding (3)
7. Motorists failing to yield to pedestrians when turning at intersections (3)
8. No turning on red in downtown (2)
9. Misunderstanding of the existing crosswalk laws by residents (2)
10. Misunderstanding of the existing crosswalk laws by nonresidents and visitors (2)
11. Motorists failing to stop for pedestrians at midblock crosswalks (2)
12. Inconsistent snow and ice removal on sidewalks in neighborhoods(2)
13. Pedestrian travel in neighborhoods without any sidewalks (2)
14. U of M Visitors and students misunderstanding local laws (2)
15. Pedestrians crossing the roadway outside a crosswalk near U of M Campus (2)
16. Pedestrians crossing against the pedestrian signal (1)
17. Lack of direct pedestrian access to adjacent commercial areas (1)
18. Motorists failing to stop for pedestrians at roundabouts (1)
19. Motorists failing to stop for pedestrians at school crosswalks (1)
20. Inconsistent signing, marking and signaling of crosswalks (1)
21. Insufficient lighting at crosswalks (1)
22. Insufficient lighting at crosswalks in school zones (1)
23. Sidewalk gaps within the walking zone of a school (1)
24. Bicycles on sidewalks in the Downtown (1)
25. Lack of midblock crosswalks where there is demand to cross the road in the downtown (1)
26. Motorists not yielding to pedestrians when turning at intersections in the downtown(1)
27. Motorists blocking crosswalks when turning at intersections in the downtown(1)
28. Motorists blocking crosswalks when turning right on red in the downtown (1)
29. Inconsistent crosswalk markings in the downtown
30. Snow and ice accumulation on sidewalks within the walking zone to school (1)
31. Speeding in neighborhoods (1)
32. Traffic generated by school drop-off-pick-up (1)
33. Crosswalks located too far from bus stops (1)
34. Distracted walking (e.g. using cell phone) (1)
35. Paint! Do not let crosswalks and bike lanes fade (1)
36. Pedestrians do not respect motorists rights and safety (1)
37. Insufficient funds spent on pedestrian safety and access (1)

38. Please narrow auto lanes to 10' minimum when repainting (this will help with passive speeding) (1)
39. Snow and ice accumulation on sidewalks (1)
40. Snow and ice accumulation at bus stops (1)

Place Specific Input: A map was provided for participants to give place specific comments.

1. Miller Road and Spring Street
 - Why are there a dozen crosswalk signs on Miller between Maple and Main, with nothing at Spring and Miller? People are often running for their lives and cars screeching to a stop. Please put up signs now, they are a simple solution. Do not wait until someone is hurt or killed!
2. Independence Blvd and Gladstone Ave
 - No Sidewalk on either side of street
3. Ellsworth Road at Railroad Crossing
 - No Sidewalk
4. Scio Church Road near Winsted Blvd
 - Sidewalk Gap
5. Stadium Blvd near the U of M Football Stadium/Golf Course
 - Sidewalk Gap
6. Main Street near Pioneer High School/Golf Course
 - Sidewalk gap
7. Nixon Road at Clague School
 - Ramp on west side of Nixon from sidewalk to crossing is way too steep

Appendix A – Sign-In Sheets



**SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE
COMMUNITY WIDE MEETING**

Date: Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Location: Multi-purpose Room - Downtown Library (343 S. Fifth Ave)

NAME

JAMIE ADKINS
INDIANE FELDT
JIM STEPHENSON
MARILYN TOWSE
Clark Charnetski
SETH PETERSON
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Richard Hausman
Ben Bushkowi
Larry Deck
Chip Smith
Lisa Lemble
Jenya Abramowitz
LARRY SATTERFIELD
Timothy Loxton
Kathy Griswold
Nancy V. Walker
Jennifer Fike
Susanna Zoumbaris
NEAL EYAKIN
CARLENE COLVIN - GARCIA

NAME

MARTINE PERREault
SALLY PINNELL
Allison Stupka
Julie Grand
Antonia Shirley Wolfe
RITA LOCH-CARUSO
Kirk Westphal
Robert Gordon
Emily Eisbruch
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Jesse Kimm
KAREN GALLUP
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Jim Walker
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Tom Hickey
TONY PINNELL
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Mike Goodin
Prashanth Gururaja