City of Ann Arbor

# Crosswalk Design Guidelines Project

Public Meeting: August 3, 2016

Ann Arbor Public Library, 4:00-5:30 p.m.

## Introduction

Two public meetings were held on August 3, 2016 at the Ann Arbor Public Library to share:

- An explanation of the problem the crosswalk design guidelines project intends to solve;
- The project objectives;
- A discussion regarding the values and principles that should guide the project; who else should be engaged, and what else the project team should be aware of; and
- Next steps.

Representatives from the City of Ann Arbor and Bridgeport Consulting, LLC (providing public engagement support) were present to share a presentation and facilitate discussion. Approximately twenty-five (25) members of the public attended the first meeting, including members of Washtenaw Biking and Walking Coalition, representatives from the University of Michigan, and many concerned residents; and approximately six (6) members of the public attended the second meeting, including Council Member Jane Lumm. A full copy of the presentation materials is available here: a2gov.org/crosswalks

Concerned parties are also invited to contact Cynthia Redinger, P.E., P.T.O.E, City of Ann Arbor Project Manager, at credinger@a2gov.org or (734) 794-6410, ext. 43632 to learn more.

## Project Background

The City of Ann Arbor has undertaken a project to improve consistency of crosswalk design across the city. The inconsistency is a result of changing regulations, the evolution of design practices, individual variance among traffic engineers, and resource limitations.

The City's desired outcomes for this project include:

- A consistent, recognizable look/feel for all crosswalks throughout Ann Arbor, and
- An improved and shared understanding among users of how to interact with crosswalks.

## Discussion Summary

A facilitated discussion followed the presentation. Participant questions, and the City of Ann Arbor's responses, are summarized below. The format of this section is as follows:

**The Headlines list major issues raised.**

- The first bullet summarizes **attendees' stated questions and concerns.**
  - The second bullet describes the way(s) in which the project team **addressed these concerns** and questions.

**There needs to be an emphasis on outreach and education to build awareness about expectations among drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. (8)**

- Drivers are unclear of the rules/expectations at many crosswalks; the large island crossing on North University is particularly confusing.
- Some drivers don't realize there's a cross walk.
- Technology distracts pedestrians and can be a challenge. (2)
- 70,000 people come into the city every day; it is an interesting challenge to try to education them.
- Announcements at UM sporting events, City/County events, drivers education curriculum, UM radio stations, etc.
- Ideally, education would occur at the crosswalk.
- There need to be online resources regarding crosswalks (AATA)
  - The City of Ann Arbor's ordinance is that pedestrians at the curbline have a stop condition.
  - Crosswalk islands can be confusing and will be addressed as part of this project.

**Signage, including height and obstruction, contributes to confusion at some crosswalks. (3)**

- There can be confusion among drivers about yield and stop signs, the red and white signs on Division are especially problematic.
  - For signs, there was an inventory, and now a plan is in place that will be followed to address problems.

**The most important recommendation from the task force was to lower the speed limit to 25 MPH. (4)**

- Cars have to be inconvenienced to have safer streets for everyone (bottlenecking example). This doesn't mean that it will take more time to get places.
- Video surveillance should be considered.
- Add signs that say "Yield to pedestrian in crosswalk, State law" to crosswalks. The City is using these signs as part of a pilot on Division.
- Parking lots show us that the public has the capacity to build a foundational expectation that anything could happen and that they have to be cautious at all times.
- The shape of the street and paint markings can change the driver experience.
- To what extent is narrowing used at crosswalk locations?
  - During city project design it is being incorporated as needed/warranted.

**How can pedestrians signal intent to motorists? (3)**

- The Japanese have a sign they make to indicate they are intending to cross a street.
- Could there be a panted area in which pedestrians could stand to signal intent?

**Values and principles important to consider as we move forward with the project:**

- Equity: Investments shouldn't be just where residents are advocating but distributed equitably
- Speed as a factor
- Compliance with federal and state regulations, to ensure pedestrian and motorist safety
- Good survey design is important
- Side streets are just as important as major streets; visibility of crosswalks on both is important.

**Who else should the City should engage?**

- MDOT
- Ann Arbor Public Schools, Safe Routes to School
- Pittsfield Senior Center (Richie Coleman – Community Engagement Contact)
- Groups that work with those with disabilities
- DDA

**What else should we be aware of?**

- Be mindful of multiple methods of communication/awareness, especially for those with disabilities, non-English speakers.
- There's no need to reinvent the wheel (Boulder, Seattle, Boston, best practices).
- Where might pedestrians be looking?
- Bus stops can cause interference.
- Right turn on red can be problematic.
- Signal conflicts.
- Sidewalk ramp corners should be visible. Many places within the City have pots and plants on corners, blocking visibility.
- Brick paved roads and crosswalks are slippery for pedestrians when wet.
- Current locations of some crosswalks should be reevaluated.
- Guidelines need to be created for crosswalks at roundabouts.
- Sidewalk gaps.
  - The City has done an inventory of sidewalk gaps and is creating a plan for addressing them.

**Design guideline suggestions**

- Make it easier for those with visual impairments to find crosswalks, particularly mid-block crosswalks (e.g. rubber strips or other texture change on the curb cut).
- The "measuring stick" for good design should be whether vulnerable populations feel comfortable crossing; do the crosswalks invite you to cross?
- Try to incorporate ways to make crosswalks more visible/illuminated to motorists at night.

- Guidelines are needed on the length of time for the flashing lights that signal to cars to stop (especially on RRFBs); some elderly and disabled people need more time than what is given at some crosswalks.
- Signals need to let disabled individuals know what to do (e.g. walk, turn, or stop).
- Guidelines should be established for the maximum distance a push button can be from the level landing.
- Guidelines are needed for site distance issues downtown.

**Other suggestions**

- Use targeted enforcement to send a message and educate (NYC dedicated bus land example).
- Apply design improvements when redoing streets (e.g. protected bike lanes).

**Requests for specific treatments at specific locations**

- Staff seems to compromise crosswalk safety due to other priority requests from City Council. For example, in front of Pioneer High School, there is a need for pedestrian safety specially since children are using the crosswalk most frequently.
- Implementing gateway treatments on Fifth Avenue in Kerrytown would be appreciated.
- The crosswalk at South Ashley and William needs signage and enforcement. Citizens submitted a A2-Fix It request but never received a response.
- Please don't take away the temporary gateway crossing on Nixon Road.
  - Because of the nature of it, the crosswalk will need to be removed before the first snow so that snow plows can get through.
  - Also, there's been driver confusion regarding all the little stop signs in the road.
- Some crosswalks need a treatment higher than they are "rated" due to mid-blocks. Please add RRFBs to the crosswalk at Liberty and Seventh Street.
  - This project will create guidelines for treatments that can be applied to the majority of areas. However, some areas will have to be reviewed individually due to their complexities (e.g. lower class street entering a higher class street).

**Device-specific comments**

- What is the cost of a HAWK signal?
  - Roughly $80,000 - $100,000.
- What is the cost of a RRFB?
  - Roughly $15,000 - $20,000.
- RRFBs are desperately needed at the crosswalk at Miller and Seventh Street.
- Would rather have the city invest in the installation of RRFBs and have more of them located throughout the city then only a few HAWKS.
  - Guidelines should be established as to where RRFBs and HAWKS can be used in the city (i.e. RRFBs are not usually used on two lane roads.

  - The existing RRFB installations have received positive feedback with citizens noticing that cars are more likely to stop when the RRFB is activated due to a pedestrian crossing.
- Why do RRFB lights flash yellow, which usually means yield/caution? Shouldn't the lights flash red?
  - The lights flash yellow to warn motorists that they are approaching an area where a pedestrian is crossing. The pedestrian is the stop condition telling cars to stop since they are in the crosswalk.

**Next Steps**

- Preparation of preliminary set of crossing treatments
- Community-wide survey
- Second public meeting: September 2016
- Share preliminary set of treatments; gather feedback
- Complete final design
- Final public meeting: TBD
- Share final design, construction plans, contact information
- Implementation to begin in 2017
- Possible: Post-implementation survey