

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ACCESS TASK FORCE COMMUNITY WIDE MEETING – ROUND #2 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Date: March 25, 2015

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

Attendees: Public Present: 33; refer to appendix A for sign-in sheets.

City staff present: 3; Kayla Coleman, Eli Cooper, Connie Pulcifer, Officer Jamie Adkins

Consultant present: 2; Norm Cox, Carolyn Prudhomme

Purpose: To identify potential solutions to pedestrian safety and access issues in the City of Ann Arbor.

Note: This is not a direct transcript of the meeting. The following summary has been developed from notes taken during the community wide meeting; comments are paraphrased. A number is listed after a comment, if the comment was noted by more than one person.

Potential Solutions Worksheet: Participants had the opportunity to provide potential solutions to the top ten issues identified by the public engagement survey. The following documents the input received for each issue.

Issue #1: Motorists passing other vehicles that are stopped for pedestrians in a crosswalk

1. Narrow roadway at crosswalks. (3)
2. Stopped vehicle turn on flashing hazard lights; flash high beams to alert oncoming cars. (2)
3. Follow best practices proven programs; such as New York City's "Vision Zero" and Michigan Department of Transportation's "Towards Zero Deaths".
4. Funds for education, including driver's educations.
5. Lighting.
6. Make school crosswalks a priority (e.g. Huron and Pioneer High Schools).
7. Tiered fines based on income; this is a serious issue.
8. Better road design (narrow lanes, separated bike lanes, etc.)
9. Enforcement campaign.
10. Notify the public.
11. Raised crosswalk.
12. Merge to one lane at crosswalks.
13. Overhead signs at crosswalk approach, "Watch for Stopped Traffic at Crosswalk".
14. Use system implemented on Long Island, New York; cameras take photo of violations and license of car.
15. Install cameras at each crosswalk & enforce.
16. Identify and fine through use of cameras in high incident areas; this is blatant and should be treated as such.
17. Fines.
18. Educate about the law and not passing stopped cars at crosswalks.
19. Post the fine on signs.
20. Increase fines with each ticket.
21. Increase enforcement.
22. Pedestrian activated lighting.
23. This is illegal under UTC R28.1703 Rule 703, and is extremely dangerous. Pedestrians must be aware of this danger when crossing multi-lane roads in order not to be "right but dead".

24. Ticket motorists; pedestrians need to pay attention.

Issue #2: Distracted driving

1. Hands free law. (2)
2. No cell phones – but if we can't even police speeds, how do we police people on cell phones? (2)
3. Cell phone restriction in Ann Arbor.
4. Encourage people to go to council meeting and sign up for public commentary
5. A full press media campaign.
6. Zero tolerance; you should not be drunk, texting, or eating while driving.
7. Stiffer penalties.
8. Enforcement blitz (About 20 years ago Ohio strictly enforced the speed limit and it worked)
9. "Heads up" educational campaign underlining the lethal risk to pedestrians of even momentary distractions. Emphasize revocability of driver's license. Motto, "remember walking is a right, driving is a privilege".
10. Even with aggressive enforcement, this will still be an issue given persuasiveness. The best means of mitigating this apart from direct enforcement is slowing the traffic down. If folks are going to get distracted and crash into things, they can at least be going slower.
11. Social pressure; this is not an issue that can be solved with technology. This is a social problem. When it is unacceptable to text/phone/etc. when driving, the incident will decrease.
12. Increase fine with each ticket.
13. Increase enforcement.
14. Pedestrian activated lighting that is clear, consistent, and in keeping with all other driving expectations.
15. This is likely the root cause of well over 50% of crashes. It is the hardest issue to solve. Hands free cellphone rules make this worse because it encourages more calls and then mental distraction is the real issue, not holding the phones.
16. Don't drive and use cell phone; enforce distracted driving, pedestrians also need to be observant and not text and cross the street.

Issue #3: Motorists failing to stop for pedestrians at midblock crosswalks

1. Increase lighting. (3)
2. Signage. (2)
3. Increased Fines (2).
4. Location of bus stops.
5. Pedestrians stepping in street should try to make eye contact with drivers; more drivers with stop as pedestrian educate them.
6. Better road design, signage and markings (bump-outs, refuge islands).
7. Enforcement of signals when there is more than one lane of traffic in one direction.
8. Many of these are not marked and those that are marked they are poorly marked; warning signs for flashers; "crosswalk ahead be prepared to stop".
9. Road paint; get creative.
10. Educate U of M Bus Drivers.
11. Enforcement by police must not be directed only at those with cars; but to buses as well.
12. Do not place a crosswalk at a bus stop.
13. Add more lighting to high volume roads where crosswalks are dark (e.g. Fuller Road).

14. Signs across town as part of campaign with unified message, "New Rule: drivers stop for peds waiting at crosswalks."
15. Flashing lights.
16. Rumble strips.
17. Cameras – neighborhood watch.
18. Better designed crosswalks; need designs that break cars' inertia; a reason to brake other than pedestrians (e.g. raised walks, narrow lanes).
19. Education campaign that might include signs along the streets and sidewalks; displaying ads in Ann Arbor News; ads on local web sites; and mailings to residents.
20. One warning, then ticket for more violations.
21. Signs stating fine.
22. Ordinance stating fines.
23. Increase fine with each ticket.
24. Overhead pedestrian activated lighting achieves total focus from drivers.
25. All mid-block crosswalks should have the flashing beacons, no exceptions. Uniform is the operative principle.
26. Ticket motorists; speed bumps might help.

Issue #4: Misunderstanding of the existing crosswalk laws by nonresidents and visitors

1. Signage.
2. Signage at City limits.
3. Sign overload is an issue.
4. Our whole traffic system is not consistent, citywide.
5. Brochures at restaurants and gas stations.
6. "New Rule: drivers stop for peds waiting at crosswalks" signs at every city entrance; billboards; print ads; online and TV advertising (both cable TV and alternative media, like ROKU)
7. Education: newspapers, websites, signage at entrance to City.
8. Ignorance of law is no excuse; cars should yield/stop period. Full stop.
9. Simplify law; stop at crosswalk when person is on curb!
10. Existing signage is woefully inadequate.
11. Continuous education through billboards and non-ticketing stops.
12. One warning, then ticket for more violations.
13. Align bus stops for safer crossing.
14. Make sure when applying or renewing driver's license, questions regarding this topic are on the test and included in education for driver's education classes; make it a required topic.
15. Overhead pedestrian lighting can be understood readily by people unfamiliar with it.
16. With our transient populations, this will always be a problem for out of state visitors and for people from other areas of Michigan for as long as our ordinance is not compliant with State law and the Uniform Traffic Code.
17. When review drivers licensee, include education requirement.

Issue #5: Motorists failing to stop for pedestrians at school crosswalks

1. Crossing guards. (2)
2. A crossing guard with a paintball.
3. Increase enforcement.
4. Raised crosswalk.
5. AAA School Safety Patrol – patrollers cannot intervene with vehicle traffic.
6. Stiff penalties.

7. Better crosswalks design (pavement treatments, raised crosswalks).
8. During school hours, put cameras at all crosswalks where school-aged (K-12) children frequent. Post signs indicating cameras are present; rectangular rapid flash beacons (RRFB) can be ignored if motorists think that no one is watching. Heavy fine for violation.
9. Cameras - school monitors take down license plates and video; follow-up with City.
10. Really need to establish school zones with flashing lights.
11. One warning, then ticket for more violations.
12. Increase signs and fines.
13. Use cameras (if only to scare).
14. Flashing lights highlighting speed limit.
15. Overhead pedestrian lighting is the most realistic, responsible solutions for these vulnerable areas.
16. Flashing lights in operation morning and evening at the same times, as in 257.627a of the Michigan Vehicle Code
17. Flashing beacons could be considered

Issue #6: Misunderstanding of crosswalk laws by residents

1. Signage at City limits.
2. Brochures at restaurants and gas stations.
3. Better crosswalks design (pavement treatments, raised crosswalks); better design forces driver to stop.
4. Consistency between local laws the same as state laws.
5. Full page "New Rule: drivers stop for peds waiting at crosswalks" ads in every Ann Arbor Observer back page for three years.
6. Education: newspapers, websites, signage at entrance to City.
7. Education through pamphlets and flyers (e.g. gas bill, tax bill, welcome centers, chamber of commerce, visitor's bureau, etc.)
8. Simplify and enforce: Law – stop for pedestrians on curb or in walk; stop when there is someone on either side of street.
9. Education campaign.
10. One warning, then ticket for more violations.
11. Overhead pedestrian lighting is the least mis-understandable solution, period.
12. With our transient populations, this will always be a problem for out of state visitors and for people from other areas of Michigan for as long as our ordinance is not compliant with State law and the Uniform Traffic Code.

Issue #7: Motorists failing to yield to pedestrians when turning at intersections

1. Provide consistent markings, signage and lighting.(4)
2. "No Turn on Red" Signs. (3)
3. Cameras at busy intersections.(2)
4. "No Right Turn on Red" illuminated signs during some hour of the day when risks are higher.
5. No turn on red at busy intersections.
6. No "right on red"; (right on red) difficult for blind population.
7. Signage with a warning that failure to yield will result in a fine of up to \$1,000.
8. Encourage citizens to contact City Hall.
9. More four-way stops instead of traffic signals.
10. Leading pedestrian intervals.
11. Enforcement.
12. Ticket for violations.

Issue #8: Inconsistent signing, marking and signaling of crosswalks

1. Simple; we have sign overload; follow best practices from other countries and cities.
2. Best practices for crosswalks.
3. Make them consistent and well lit.
4. More signage, especially when requested.
5. Pedestrian activated crosswalk signs.
6. Education Campaign.
7. Continuous improvements program; partner with U of M.
8. Civil engineering program – summer evaluation program through internship.
9. Provide consistent signs that are clear to blind/deaf/ESL individuals.
10. UNIFORM is the most important work in the Uniform Traffic Code, the state and federal versions of the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices and the advisory group – Nation Committee for Uniform Traffic Control Devices; inconsistencies cause crashes.

Issue #9: Snow and Ice accumulation on sidewalks

1. Apply SnowBuddy example to the entire city. (4)
2. Slow the plows that put ice and snow back on sidewalks.
3. Have the City take responsibility for sidewalk snow removal; it is the only way to maintain sidewalks as safe, continuous transportation corridors. The current system, assigning, maintenance to thousands of individual property owners has zero chance of creating the safe winter pathways we all want. Even with 100% compliance you would still have mountains of snow at the base of every sidewalk ramp. Mechanized linear maintenance is the only way to clear those “windrows”.
4. If Buffalo can clear snow on sidewalks by 9 am, we can.
5. Ask volunteers for money to clear all sidewalks.
6. I gave a lot of A2FixIt complaints about this, but did not receive a response that a warning or citation was issued; it was discouraging.
7. With snow ordinance, have leniency on seniors; waiver no fines.
8. I must walk for my health and life. I am 71 and the only easy, car-free way to do this is walking through all seasons on city streets. This brutal winter I fell two times due to black ice, so I fully support and urge the clearing of sidewalks as vital transportation corridors by the City. Many more would walk if sidewalks were free and clear. It would reduce car emissions, accidents, noise, traffic jams, etc. It is good for the environment and all humans there in.
9. Make residents aware of sand available (free) to them for use on their sidewalks.
10. Fine homeowners for entire infraction.
11. Clear communication of resident expectations and responsibilities/ limitations (where to put snow when excessive).
12. Education campaign.
13. Enforcement of laws.
14. City plows sidewalks on major thoroughfares (e.g. Packard, State, etc.)
15. Clear mountains of snow and ice at crosswalks.
16. Ice on sidewalks forms when snow that has not been cleared melts and when snow melts on the grass that has overgrown the edges of the sidewalks and then flows onto the sidewalks. Property owners need to “edge” their lawns, put in narrow gaps between the sidewalk and the lawn to provide drainage for melting snow.
17. Force businesses as well as individuals to clear sidewalks.
18. Task City to remove snow citywide.
19. Remove all snow ordinances for residential areas

20. Make snow ordinances consistent with City plowing requirements; when snowfall exceeds 4 inches.
21. The amended council proposal is reasonable, the original version was unreasonable.
22. Having a city wide vote on whether the citizens would accept a small millage to have the city clear all the sidewalks would be a democratic suggestion.

Issue #10: Speeding in neighborhoods

1. Speed humps. (5)
2. Narrow roads. (2)
3. 25 mph zone everywhere; it allows more reaction time for all. (2)
4. The City needs to comply with Michigan MVC Section 257.627 (2)(3) 25 mph zones.
5. More enforcement consequences (warnings, tickets, community service).
6. "Sleeping" policemen.
7. Speed limit indicators.
8. Gardens in intersections.
9. Fewer signs.
10. Signs to slow traffic.
11. On-street parking.
12. Textured pavement at crosswalks.
13. Route police cruisers around neighborhood.
14. Enforcement to be the most effective option.
15. Please increase friction (e.g. narrow lanes, limited parking, speed humps, stop signs).
For too long traffic engineers have been tasked with reducing friction to maximize flow, this is great for cars but horrible for everyone else and is the reason people are not patient to yield. People are not patient to wait behind someone turning; people are not patient behind the wheel. Life is too short to be impatient.
16. More lights, especially where there is a blind corner (e.g. Greene at the north entrance to Burbank).
17. Neighbors and/or neighborhood watch being able to take down license plate numbers, give to police and driver gets warning.
18. This issue would be substantially reduced if the City would post safety – optimum 85th percentile posted limits to draw more traffic to all the collectors and arterials. More traffic should be on the collectors and off the purely residential streets. Almost every posted limit on main roads controlled by Ann Arbor is illegal and unenforceable because Ann Arbor defies Public Law 85 of 2006 and sets illegal limits well below the safest levels.

Potential solutions for the other pedestrian issues:

1. The HAWK signal on Huron is very effective, including the warning lights ahead; more of these on Plymouth, etc. would be helpful.
2. The physical and mental costs that victims of the violation of all these "laws" needs to be highlighting; this is not an academic exercise. Victims (some) lose their lives; suffer permanent injuries, loss of income and quality of life. Put a face on this problem.
3. Formalize Vision Zero (see Sweden and New York City).
4. No more one-way streets.
5. Before coming to these meeting I had given up on government in this country. I thought that nothing I could do would make any difference. But now I realize that on a local level effective action is possible. Also, politicians may not be listening to us, but civil servant pay attention.
6. Make sure speed zones around K-12 schools are low. All crosswalks directly adjacent to K-12 schools must have RRFB's and cameras.

7. In general, safety of pedestrians, cyclists and runners should be primary, crosswalks or not.
8. Speeding tickets are often scoffed at as money-maker for the City. Perhaps community service for speeding is a better solution. A nice sandwich board could be worn along the roadside that says "please slow down".
9. 25 MPH City wide.
10. Require property owners to keep vegetation from protruding into space above sidewalk; trim back enough to allow for tall/large pedestrians to walk without bumping into plants. Especially important: trim overhanging branches at eye level.
11. Corner crosswalks downtown should be the City's responsibility.
12. Bumper stickers "I brake for pedestrians".
13. Reminder at exits from parking lots and garages, "watch for pedestrians" (would be particularly helpful at the exit from the parking lot behind the Credit Union on William Street.)
14. Education: youngsters new to driving/taking driving lessons: can pedestrian rights of way be included or emphasized more in drivers' education?
15. Signs at entry to and around the City: "respect and protect pedestrians" and "watch for pedestrians".
16. Thank you all!
17. Refer to appendix B for additional submittals.

Group Discussion: Participants had the opportunity to provide input during a large group discussion. The following documents the input received.

1. The City should be responsible for clearing sidewalks. (3)
2. The only way to safe, continuous, cleared sidewalks is through a system like SnowBuddy. It costs around \$3 per house, per plow.
3. Changing the snow and ice ordinance is not the solution to winter snow and ice removal.
4. A group should be created for victims of bicycle and pedestrian crashes.
5. Enforcement is key; put more officers on foot to enforce crosswalks.
6. Americans with Disabilities Act is clear on sidewalk clearing; the City is responsible.
7. We need to make our community safer for pedestrians; if a pedestrian is hit by a car it is only a \$140 fine. This is a serious problem; we need to put a face on it.
8. Crosswalks adjacent to schools on major roads need to be "school crosswalks" with the latest technology.
9. Put pedestrian activated lighting systems at all crosswalks.
10. Provide better pedestrian lighting on all high volume roadways.
11. Consider how changes to the snow and ice ordinance will affect seniors.
12. 40 mph speed limit is too high; we need 25 mph speed zones.
13. Provide consistency in signage.
14. Encourage people to go to City Council and ask to increase the budget for pedestrian improvements.
15. Increase budget for more lighting.
16. All mid-block crosswalks need flashing beacons; consistency is important.
17. All schools follow AAA Safety Standards and Guidelines.
18. Utility boxes block the view at crosswalks; see what other communities like Plymouth are doing to address this.
19. The City should determine cost and feasibility of taking on the responsibility of clearing all sidewalks.
20. Millage for sidewalks winter maintenance; probably cost around \$60 per homeowner per year.

21. Additional mandates put on homeowners to clear sidewalks should not be recommended.
22. A2 Fix It needs better communication to let participants know if there issue has been addressed.
23. No speeds higher than 45 mph should be allowed.
24. Lower speeds in school zones.
25. Increase enforcement of sidewalks.
26. Expand SnowBuddy.
27. Trim vegetation; overhanging branches are dangerous.
28. The City, or a volunteer effort, should take on the responsibility of sidewalk snow and ice removal. The snow and ice ordinance needs to be consistent with the standard the City is held to.
29. Enforcement is key; City Council should make sure police are doing what they should be doing with the budget that is provided.
30. Make streets more complex and less complicated.
31. It is evidence based that more signs is less effective.
32. Set speeds based on zones (residential, commercial etc.)
33. Narrow roadways.
34. Plan trees in the middle of the roadway.
35. Increase fines for pedestrian accidents.
36. Provide access to information about where accidents take place.
37. Better street design.
38. Improve communication/transparency about where accidents are taking place including information on fatalities and major injuries.
39. Hills make a difference in vehicle speeds near crosswalks; consider rumble strips.
40. SnowBuddy doesn't always clear everything. Some areas still need to be salted. Residents need to know that they are not off the hook and are still responsible for snow and ice removal.
41. Educated public that sand/salt mix is available from the City.
42. Current crosswalk signage is too confusing. We need to simplify; start back from step 1.
43. Don't place crosswalks at bus stops.
44. Snow ordinance need to provide exceptions and leniency for the elderly.
45. Educate U of M bus drivers and students of the crosswalk law.
46. Make it easier to find good data.
47. Remove sign clutter.
48. Establish a 25 mph, citywide speed limit.
49. Evaluate vehicle access points, speeds and vehicle code.
50. Increase budget for improved safety.
51. Adopt "vision zero".
52. Construct based on best practices.
53. Provide flashing beacons and volunteer cross guards at school crosswalks.
54. Ann Arbor crosswalk ordinance needs to be in compliance with state code.
55. Provide training classes for those with disabilities and impairments on how to use crosswalk and roundabouts.
56. Driver's education should include training to know what it is like for a person with disabilities to cross the road.
57. We need an ordinance that is not so vague regarding sight distance at midblock crosswalks.
58. Staff should work on sight distance enforcement.

Appendix A – Sign-In Sheets



SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE
COMMUNITY WIDE MEETING
 Date: Wednesday, March 25, 2015
 Time: 6:30 – 8:30 pm
 Location: Multi-purpose Room - Downtown Library (343 S. Fifth Ave)

NAME

Barbara McMullin
 CINDY GOULD
 Matt Grocott
 Jamie Adkins
 Jim Walker
 Julie Weatherbee
 Nancy Nicholson
 Kathy Griswold
 Thaddeus Neme
 Chip Smith
 Roger Kellin
 Jason Abed
 Faith Huffman
 Karen Desjardes

Nicole Banks

Kevin Leaser



NAME

Jeff Gaynor
 J. VINCENT
 HELEN RYAN
 Aarlyn Tower
 Bruce Friedman
 Mary Eldridge
 Sally Bunn
 Tom BRUSH
 Richard Haseman
 Larry Keeler
 SETH PETERSON
 Barbara Kriit
 Linda Evans.
 Neal Elyakin
 PAUL TINKERHESS
 Owen Jansson
 Christina Busse
 Timothy Loxton
 Jane Lunn
 RAY DETTER
 Pam Schwarzmann
 Chris Hewitt
 KAI PETAINEN

Appendix B – Additional submittals

As a driver, it's too hard. I'm a good driver, an alert, defensive driver. I've been driving 40 years without a mark on my record. *But I can't maintain the level of vigilance the crosswalks require.* I can't trust I'll be able to analyze every situation in the split seconds it takes, over and over again, as I drive in town. There are several things to assess at every crosswalk, requiring each time that I take my focus off the road immediately before me. I can't tell you how many times I've been flustered – and a flustered driver is not a good driver. The very presence of people near the curb, or stopped on the sidewalk and looking at the street, often makes me need to do a sudden scan for crossing info...so the drain on my attention to driving happens many more times than there are even actual crossings. Maybe it's my age (I'm 56) - but I don't have the ability to multi-focus well enough for what this requires. If I think for a few seconds about the garbage truck altering traffic on the other side, or the bicyclist up ahead, I may miss a person stepping into a crossing. I WON'T miss a stop sign, or a stop light, or a turning car, or the brake lights ahead...I'm a good driver. But the level of alertness required for this is too much. I try, of course I try very hard every time I drive in town. But it's frightening how difficult this is.

Of all the configurations we have in town, the system that works for me is the pedestrian-activated lighting system. It gives me the confidence I need to be a good driver. It seems to me this is the only safe thing to do. Anything less is unrealistic. Anything less, I'm sorry to say, is irresponsible on the part of the City. I'm a good driver, but you're expecting too much of me. I have no blemishes on my forty year driving record, and I do not want the first one to be a life-altering pedestrian crossing accident...you need to help me here.