

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ACCESS TASK FORCE STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS – ROUND #2 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

**Date:** March 12, 2015

**Location:** Larcom City Hall, Basement Conference Room

**Attendees:** Stakeholder participants: 33; refer to appendix A for sign-in sheets.  
City staff facilitators: 2; Kayla Coleman, Connie Pulcifer  
Consultant team: 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 focus group discussion. The following summary has been developed from notes taken during the three focus group sessions; comments are paraphrased. Items that were mentioned numerous times during different focus group sessions are highlighted in bold.*

### Potential solutions for the Top Ten Issues identified in the web survey:

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

- **Consistent signage**
  - Drivers need to be aware that there is a pedestrian in crosswalk, especially at night and in dark conditions.
- Identify differences between what the University of Michigan (UM) enforcement/designs vs. City standards.
  - Does UM have to follow or enforce the local law?
  - UM desires to mirror city practices and policies for consistency; identify difference between real vs perceived inconsistencies.
  - Good collaboration between City and UM
- Needs to be consistency in laws and enforcement between State, City and UM.
- Enforce the crosswalk law though ticketing (enforcement).
- Provide overhead lighting so pedestrians are visible.
- Use flashing beacons which are especially helpful at night.
- Larger and brighter signs should be used.
- Lower the speed limit.
  - Helps with visibility and stopping distance.
- Engineer a vehicle cue to notify motorists of pedestrians.
- Regular maintenance to keep reflectivity of pavement markings and signs fresh and bright.
- Reassess existing crosswalks to see if any should be removed.
  - Example: Broadway Bridge and Division has poor sight lines.
- Fewer, better crosswalks.
- Change flashing yellow light on Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) to red..
- Provide education of the law.
  - People do not know what the law is for stopping.
  - Inadequate education about signal use – people need to know why you can't just put in a red light.

- Legally, vehicles must stop for pedestrians.
- Narrow the road at mid-block crosswalks.
  - Get cars to slow down and notice the crosswalk.

*Issue #2: Distracted driving*

- **Ban all cell phone use while driving.**
  - **Unsure how practical it would be to enforce a ban; hands-free may be best policy.**
  - Understand that there may be enforcement issues.
  - Distracted driving is a major issue, if we could solve that it may take care of a lot of other issues related to pedestrian safety.
  - Multi-tasking while driving is out of control.
  - There should be no texting or talking on phone allowed while driving a vehicle.
  - It would be challenging to enforce a ban if the local law is different than state law.
  - It would be challenging for visitors to know the law if there is not consistency with the state law.
  - Changes at a state level may be more challenging to get through the legislature.
- Need state advocacy for hands free driving.
- Advancement of cars to help people drive so there is less risk (technology – smart car).
  - Have cars block out phone use, except for emergency calls.
- Enforce jaywalking.
- Police should patrol on foot.
  - It will help them understand and see the issue first hand.
- Increase the number of police on the street to enforce distracted driving.
- We need a culture in the police department where they can give tickets for distracted driving/texting.
- Need a better understanding of enforcement statistics for distracted driving.
- Encourage people to use transit instead of driving, that way they can use their mobile devices during their commute.
- Lobby for City Council (or other public figures) to take a stand on this issue.
- Need a cultural change.
- Approach car insurance companies to help with campaigns against distracted driving and walking.
- Educate drivers to stop/slow at crosswalks to see if there is a pedestrian present.

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

- **Use refuge islands on multi-lane and busy roads.**
  - Flashing lights don't do enough.
- Change flashing yellow light on Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon (RRFB) to red.
  - RRFB is based on national standards, may need to get permission to experiment with the red light.
- RRFB should be used on all multi-lane roads.
- Provide signage at the entries of Ann Arbor.
  - The signs need to be unique and attract attention.
  - List fines on signs.
  - Provide short, targeted messages.
- Use graduated fine system for those who fail to stop for pedestrians.
  - There should be a higher penalty for repeat offenders; similar to drunk driving.

- Use hidden enforcement.
- Use cameras that take pictures of vehicles/pedestrian interaction at crosswalks.
  - Camera may be activated by button that a pedestrian pushes to take picture.
  - Track speed at crosswalks.
- Improve lighting and visibility.
- Use advanced warnings where there is limited visibility approaching a crosswalk.
- Incorporate raised crosswalks, including at arterial streets.
- Get support to determine the effectiveness of RRFBs.
- Post signs that state the current laws.
  - Example: Vermont
- Tax downtown drivers.
  - Example: London
- Adopt crosswalk guidelines as policy.
- Priority should be given to mid-block crosswalks on high speed roads and where there are a high number of severe crashes.
- Provide visual cues when changing from a business area to a residential zone.

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

- **Use a catchy message like “Click it or Ticket”.**
  - Something that can be hash tagged in social media.
  - Create a single phrase that everyone can use/post.
  - Partner with groups to share the message, such as Bank of Ann Arbor, 15<sup>th</sup> District Court, Get Downtown, etc.
  - Keep education messages simple.
  - Consistent message should be used by all organizations participating.
- Post consistent signs at crosswalks so people know there is a crosswalk.
- Maintain crosswalk markings so they are visible.
- Use red over yellow because motorists know what it means.
- Get residents to lead by example.
- Evaluate and identify locations where crosswalks are appropriate, not appropriate, needed and need to be removed.
- Need flashing lights (RRFB) on multi-lane roads.
- Use more conspicuous signage.
  - Use the “stop here for pedestrian signs” that are placed in the middle of street at a crosswalk (mid-block crosswalks on Main Street in the Downtown was a specific example).
- Target large employers to educate their staff.
- Partner with GetDowntown to help with education.
- Use communication methods within UM’s system.
  - Communicate through UM alumni association.
  - Visitors coming to health system may be distracted – this is a challenge.
- Educate the public on the meaning of crosswalk signage.
  - People don’t know crosswalk laws and don’t care about laws; they just want pedestrians to be able to cross the road safely.
- TV Commercials
  - Example: Las Vegas had a commercial about stopping for the blind.
- Use public Service Announcements at:
  - UM Football Games and other games/ events
  - Visitor and Convention Bureau

- Handouts at hotels, gas stations and during art fair
- Provide signs at city entrances to educate motorists.
  - State the law “stop for peds in crosswalk”
  - List the fine

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

- **Provide flashing light at the specific times during the day so motorists know they are in a school zone and have to follow a lower speed limit**
- Principals need to enforce behavior on school campus.
  - Principals tend to not deal with enforcement on school grounds and just let things go.
  - Parents know that they will not get in trouble on school property.
  - Signage on school property is ignored.
- Incorporate message into school education materials that students will take home and share with parents.
- “School crosswalk” should include routes to school, not just crosswalks in the immediate school zone.
- Explain the process to parents on how to get pedestrian issues addressed.
- Provide safe drop-off zones within a safe, walking distance to schools to relieve congestion on school property. Provide pedestrian islands at school crosswalks.
- Encourage walking, biking, and riding the school bus to limit drop-off congestion.
- Crosswalk guards should be used at all key crosswalks.
  - Apply for grants if money is an issue.
- Track number of cars in drop-off lane to see how different solutions affect the number of cars in the drop-off lane.
- Education needed for school parents.
  - Send notes home to educate about stopping at crosswalks.
  - Parents are the source of most of the problems around schools.

*Issue #6: Misunderstanding of crosswalk laws by residents*

- **Use social media to provide education to the public.**
  - Facebook, twitter, email, etc.
- **Use traditional media such as local TV, radio and new papers.**
  - MLive, 107.1 radio, Ann Arbor Observer
- **Use city emails and publications.**
  - Utility bills
- **Provide education at orientation for new students/staff/faculty at UM.**
  - Difficult to incorporate into orientation because of time constraints.
  - Resident halls may be easier way to disseminate information.
- Provide QR codes to information on crosswalks around town.
- Tap into school and university communications.
  - UM News Paper
- Provide easy to find educational videos on city website.
- “Drive like your kid lives here” signs.
- Provide ads on back of bus and garbage trucks.
- Put up temporary signs to highlight new crosswalks when first implemented and during UM move in to alert motorists.
- Get community partners to help spread the word.

- Connect with people who already cast a broad net and ask them to get the word out.
  - Speak at large group gatherings like rotary clubs.
- Have on-site signage.
- Provide catchy phrase for residents.
  - Message needs to be for motorists and pedestrians, so everyone understands the law (including braille and audible).
- Include in drivers education courses.
  - Bike/driver education needed.
  - Current driver education courses are not customized to local laws and culture; state laws are taught.
- Enforce “sting” operations for crosswalks.
- Use signalized intersections rather than mid-block crosswalks where warranted.
- Develop evaluation system to identify where we need crosswalks.
- Align bus stops with intersections so we can reduce the need for mid-block crosswalks.
- Education campaigns.
- Follow the Michigan uniform traffic law rather than local crosswalk law.
  - Having a local law has caused a lot of confusion about what the law is; need better understanding of what the law actually is.
- Need to use signs that the general public understands.
  - Red means stop, yellow means slow.
- Encourage use of the GoPass!
  - Get people walking, not driving.
- Use grassroots, door-to-door communication to educate residents.
  - This is the most effective communication tool.

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

- **No right (or left) turn on red**
  - There is a relationship between issue #7 and issue #2.
  - Not everywhere but in “urban areas.
  - Major intersections may not be as much a problem.
  - Traffic congestion in the downtown should be considered, but it may not be a problem; cars already stop because there are so many pedestrians present.
  - When the crosswalk signal is activated there should be no turn on red.
- **Consider using a scramble** (where all vehicles get red light and pedestrian get to cross in every direction).
  - At major pedestrian intersections and high crash zones.
  - State Street and S University may be a good area to test it.
- **Use numbered countdown signals for pedestrians.**
  - Countdowns are well received.
- Use “Don’t Block the Box” symbols in street (a boxed off area is delineated in the intersection and vehicles are fined if stopped in the area. Results in fewer blocked intersections.)
  - Would support as a pilot study.
  - As a courtesy, drivers should not scoot into intersection if there is not space to get through.
- Need consistency in pedestrian crossing signal.
- Provide longer “green” at busy intersections so there is enough time for both pedestrians to cross and vehicles to turn.

- Provide leading pedestrian signal.
  - Include education about laws - confusion if pedestrians can cross on yellow or do drivers need to yield when turning on green?
- Maintain pedestrian signals so they are working correctly.
- Signs to remind people to yield to pedestrians.
- There needs to be a shift from what is currently being done, safety should be a priority over vehicle efficiency.

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

- **Use numbered countdown signals for pedestrians at all crosswalks.**
  - Especially helpful where there are multiple lanes of traffic to cross.
- Use consistent crosswalk signals.
  - The HAWK signal is confusing to drivers.
  - RRFB is very effective.
  - Nothing is perfect, but we need to do better than what is currently being done.
- Overhead beacons should be used at crosswalk where the speeds are over 25 mph.
- Provide visual consistency in signage, height, brightness etc.
- Incorporate raised crosswalks.
- Provide rumble strips at crosswalks.
- Maintain crosswalk pavement markings.
  - Faded paint is difficult to see.
- Include bollards at end of island to protect pedestrians.
- Encourage the message that both pedestrians and motorists need to take responsibility.
- Need education/understanding of crosswalk laws including signage and enforcement.
  - Police do not follow laws.
- Crosswalks should only be put in where they are safe.
  - Need to align with locations where people cross and where drivers will be expecting a crosswalk.
- Narrow motor vehicle lanes at crosswalk.
  - Provides visual cue for motorists to slow down and expect the crosswalk.
- Make crosswalks consistent across entire city.
  - Worth spending the time and money.
- Provide braille on street corners to identify what direction the traffic is running.
- Education of what a crosswalk is and what the different pavement markings mean.
  - Parallel lines vs zebra
- Maintain all ADA signals and devices.
  - This is a big issue, many are inconsistent and not working correctly.
- Leading pedestrian interval at all signals.
  - Let pedestrians get walk signal before motorists.

*Issue #9: Snow and Ice accumulation on sidewalks*

- **Ensure storm drains are clear so water can drain.**
  - Ice accumulation and puddle water are issues.
  - Snow plows create pile that may prevent/block drainage.
- **Consistent enforcement of businesses**
  - City should clear in front of businesses and then charge business owner; even without notice.
- The City should identify acceptable method for removal of ice and snow.

- Example: Calcium Chloride
  - Getting salt can be a challenge.
- The City should hire more staff to clear pedestrian routes across the street.
  - This includes areas that are missed by the plow in the crosswalk.
- Promote A2 Fix It – It works!
- Encourage people to use sand and salt in addition to shoveling.
- Use pervious pavement to help reduce slush.
  - At the edge of the road or near ramps.
- Enforce Snow Emergencies.
  - Streets need to be fully cleared so pedestrians with disabilities can get out of cars parked in the street.
  - Consider limiting parking to one side of the street at a time to clear completely.
  - One night of inconvenience vs weeks of difficult conditions.
- Provide education on who is responsible for pedestrian islands and curb ramps leading to the islands.
- Consider a sliding scale discount for snow clearing based on rate of pay/income.
- Coordinated effort between City and AAATA for snow clearing around bus shelters.
- Snow removal at bus stop areas should include grass extension and paved pad.
  - Currently not addressed in ordinance or ordinance change.
- Special assessments for business areas, high volume pedestrian zones, and elderly/disabled homeowners.
- Heated sidewalks:
  - In targeted areas, such as the downtown.
- Need higher budgets and larger crew sizes at schools to improve snow and ice removal.
  - Rules on truck drivers limit how much time they have to clear.
- Increase signal timing during winter so everyone can cross the street safely.
- Need to be clear on who is responsible at schools.
- ADA compliance needs to be addressed.
  - Sidewalks are in public ROW so it should be City's responsibility to have a mechanism to have it cleared.
  - Current ordinance/enforcement of ordinance is not acceptable.

*Issue #10: Speeding in neighborhoods*

- **Speed humps/bumps**
  - When speed humps are put in on one street, other near-by streets need to be evaluated as well, because traffic may just move from one street to the next based on where the speed humps are located.
  - More sharp and severe speed humps.
  - If you make efficiency though the City more difficult than people will not want to drive through town (sustainable commute).
- Use flashing speed limit signs where there is speeding.
- Provide education on what "Stop" means.
- Trim vegetation/trees that block the view of stop signs and speed limit signs.
- Provide more, safe pedestrian crossings that are visible to drivers.
- The city should work with owners of private roads to provide consistent standards for speed humps.
- Consistent 25 mph speed limit city wide.
  - Similar to New York's policy.
- Social media shaming.

- Or the opposite, where you highlight good behavior.
- Speed traps by police.
- Increase budget for increased enforcement.
- Provide east-west bike boulevard on Washington to encourage slower traffic and more bicycling.
- Need friendly speed limit.
- Community based policing.
- Acquire more areas for park and ride so cars are not driving and parking in neighborhoods.
- Use decoy police cars on local roads.
- Slower snow plows so sidewalks do not get slush from plow.
- Increase lighting.
  - To increase visibility and prevent accident.
- Use sign of kid playing with ball.
  - Potential for sign fatigue should also be considered.

Potential solutions for the other pedestrian issues:

- Videos of live crosswalks in use– like the Abbey Road example that is can be found on the internet.
- Increase in street lighting; consider solar power.
- There needs to be a process for constructing sidewalk gaps.
- UM gives rebate to faculty who ride bikes.
- Need to identify specific intersections noted in first round of public input and address them.
- Develop process to fix “broken” crosswalks.
- School curriculum that includes pedestrians and bicycle safety.
- Need to get people to think about would you/could you stop.
- Placemaking campaign – why we want to make it sustainable and more walkable.
- Sidewalk assessment process shared throughout the community when there is a community assessment to get sidewalk gaps filled (voluntary or assessment).
- Look at private areas with sidewalk gaps where there is public traffic.
- Adapt a “stop if you don’t know” approach.
- Install pedestrian islands (temporary or permanent) on Jackson road where it is three lanes (east of Stadium Boulevard).
- More midblock crosswalks like on Liberty, Washtenaw and Seventh – they work!
- Consider solar options for hard to light areas.
- Many of the pedestrian and bicycle solutions are the same and some are different, refer to other cities for examples:
  - Traverse City – sidewalks
  - Madison - bicycles
- Educational awareness about bus options.
  - Use bus or train as alternative to keep vehicles off the street.
  - Michigan Flyer needs more stops around town.



Appendix A – Sign-In Sheets



**SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE  
STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP – BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS/COMMERCIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**  
**Date:** Thursday, March 11, 2015  
**Time:** 8:30 - 10:30 am  
**Location:** Basement Conference Room - Larcom City Hall (301 E Huron Street)

NAME

ORGANIZATION/GROUP

Naura Thomson

MSAA

Linda Diane Feldt

NMVTf

Appendix A – Sign-In Sheets



SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE  
STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP – BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS  
Date: Thursday, March 11, 2015  
Time: 1:30 – 3:30 pm  
Location: Basement Conference Room - Larcom City Hall (301 E Huron Street)

NAME	ORGANIZATION/GROUP	EMAIL
MARILYN CORLETT	INTERPRETER/UNIV. TRANS.	
Linda Evans	Commission for Disability Issues	
Molly Maciejewski	City of Ann Arbor	
JAMAR WRIGHT		
Jim Stephenson	Concordia University	
Jonathan Levine	UoM Urban + Reg'l. Plan.	
Nicole Banks	Univ. of Mich. Dean of Students	
Sarah Mills	Ann Arbor Planning Commission	
Sue Gott	U.M.	
Daily Petersen	President	
Kelly Schwartz	Get Downtown	
Eli Coopa	C.T.U. Staff	
Jeff Kern	A2 Staff	
Cynthia Peduigen	"	
Mike Maroney	A2 Public Schools	
Scott Zeleny	AAPD	

Appendix A – Sign-In Sheets



**SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE  
STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP – NON-PROFIT GROUPS, ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND  
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS**

Date: Thursday, March 11, 2015

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Location: Basement Conference Room - Larcom City Hall (301 E Huron Street)

NAME ORGANIZATION/GROUP EMAIL

MARKUS NEE	GEDDES LAKE	
Bob Daszka	Friends West Park + 5th St	
Sheryl Kosnes	Crossings of Ann Arbor Bldg Assoc	
Janet Kingsten	Arbor Hills Neighborhood Alliance	
PETER HOUK	WBWC	
Laura Strowe	Broadway	
Ken Korol	"	
Mary Underwood	Traverse	
Janet Wynn	Comin	
Ruth Krout	Upper Water Hill/Sunset/Hill	
Julie Weatherbee	S Main Neighbors	
Hym Lindner	Woodcreek Subdiv	
Geri Perchler	Recycle Ann Arbor	
Larry Deck	Walk, Bicyc. + Walking Coal	
Vince Camero	ACWG, ORA, Lib/Grh	