

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND ACCESS TASK FORCE STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS – ROUND #1 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Date: October 16, 2014

Location: Larcom City Hall, Basement Conference Room

Attendees: Public Present: 35; refer to appendix A for sign-in sheets.

City staff present: 3; Kayla Coleman, Eli Cooper (by phone), Connie Pulcifer

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 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.

CITY WIDE

Sidewalks/Along the Road:

- Sidewalk/walkway gaps within the existing network
 - A map should be available that highlights areas where sidewalks exist and where they are lacking.
 - Some existing sidewalks are substandard and should be upgraded (e.g. Sidewalk along Geddes Avenue).
 - Sidewalk gaps need to be identified and prioritized with a way to fund the improvements.
- Neighborhoods without sidewalks
 - Slower speeds should be enforced on shared streets because bicycles, pedestrians and motorists are all using the roadway.
 - There should be a process for neighborhoods to opt into a sidewalk program in order to get sidewalks in their neighborhood. There also needs to be a way to fund the new sidewalks. (Post meeting note: the [“New Sidewalks FAQ”](#) on the City’s website answers questions about process and funding.

Crosswalks/Across the Road:

- **Motorists failing to stop for pedestrians at crosswalks**
 - **Pedestrians standing at a corner or at bus stop near a crosswalk can be confusing to a motorist; it is unclear whether they are waiting to cross the road.**
 - **Public education is needed regarding signals at crosswalks – what does white mean? What does flashing red mean?**
 - **The HAWK signal is confusing for motorists.**
 - HAWK signal provides clear direction for pedestrians.
 - Motorists take advantage of the crossing opportunity provided when the HAWK is in use; motorists have an opportunity to cross the road or make turns onto Huron Street when pedestrians are crossing the street.
 - Higher speeds make stopping for pedestrians dangerous. Motorists have limited reaction time when traveling over 35 miles per hour.

- The cone of vision is relative to speed; on higher speed roadways a motorist may not see a pedestrian with enough reaction time to stop.
- Multiple driveways demand a lot of attention from motorists and divert focus away from pedestrians.
- Traffic signals should be considered at current unsignilazed mid-block crosswalks where high volumes of pedestrian traffic flow inhibit motorized travel to a high degree to allow buses to make scheduled runs.
- Funding to improve crosswalks should be proactive instead of reactive. This is an issue at the federal level.
- There is a need for data collection measuring the success of crosswalks by evaluating the location before and after the crosswalk installation.
- In Michigan, and perhaps the Midwest in general, pedestrians do not receive a sufficient level of respect; education and stricter enforcement may help.
- Unusual signal timing may cause confusion if pedestrians look at motorists signals and motorists look at pedestrian signals.
- **Multiple threat crashes on four and five lane roadways**
 - **Installation of rectangular rapid flash beacons need to be a priority at crosswalks on multi-lane roads with high speeds.**
 - **When traveling at relatively high speeds peripheral vision is limited and a driver may not see a pedestrian on the sidewalk waiting to cross. Uniform marking of crosswalks and flashing lights should be used on these corridors.**
 - Better lighting, visibility and education of the pedestrian in the crosswalk is needed at multi-lane road crossings.
 - High speed roadways with crosswalks can be dangerous; may need to consider using pedestrian underpass or bridges.
 - Design the road for the speed you want people to travel at.
 - More 4 to 3 lane conversions would help make multi-lane roads more pedestrian friendly.
- **Understanding the existing crosswalk laws**
 - **Better education and enforcement of crosswalk law is needed.**
 - **Motor City mentality – other cities and cultures have a higher priority for pedestrian rights and obey signals and signs better.**
 - Need to educate U of M students of existing laws.
 - There is confusion regarding the definition of a crosswalk and whether pedestrians have the right-of-way in an unmarked crosswalk.
 - Why is the use of crosswalks such a point of confusion in Ann Arbor and Michigan as a whole?
 - Other cities have higher enforcement and penalty for hitting pedestrians (e.g. New York City).
 - Education is needed to bring awareness for how crosswalks and roundabouts work; this should be included in driver's education classes for young drivers.
 - Enforcement cannot solve everything
 - There is currently no jaywalking law in Ann Arbor, so there is nothing to enforce; would there be any advantage to having a jaywalking law in the City?
- **Uniformity of crosswalk signals, signing and marking**
 - **Flashing lights should be red instead of yellow; yellow causes confusion because it generally means yield, but the law says you must stop.**
 - **Midblock crosswalks are not all marked the same; there is a need for consistency in pavement markings and signage. Drivers would be more aware if they knew what to expect.**

- Crosswalk design guidelines are needed to provide consistency and uniformity.
- Why are the pedestrian signals red and white?
- The visually impaired do not benefit from the flashing countdown – they need an audible countdown.
- **Crosswalk lighting and visibility**
 - **Need to make crosswalks more visible with reflective paint and signage**
 - **Signage should be clear to let motorist know what they need to do when approaching a crosswalk.**
 - Pedestrians do not always activate the rectangular rapid flash beacon when crossing the road.
 - Delivery vehicles near crosswalks block views of pedestrians trying to cross the road; these areas need to be clearly marked and enforced for no parking.
 - Pedestrian islands need to be well lit, especially on the refuge islands where pedestrians are waiting to cross the road.
 - High visibility is required at crosswalks outside of the downtown area because motorists do not always expect pedestrians to be crossing the road – yield signs and warnings are more important at these locations.
- **Crosswalk opportunities**
 - Should there be more crosswalks? A lot of pedestrians will not go out of their way to use a marked crosswalk, so more crossing opportunities might be needed.
 - Existing pathways need to line up with crosswalks, especially on campus.
 - Need to target/prioritize high density residential areas for better crosswalks.
 - Need to make sure people feel safe using crosswalks in order to encourage more pedestrian activity.
- **Crossing at roundabouts**
 - Better lighting at roundabouts is needed to increase visibility.
 - Better warnings are needed for drivers to slow down prior to entering the roundabout – especially in off-peak hours.
 - Lane widths and number of lanes impact motor vehicle speeds through a roundabout; in multi-lane roundabouts during off-peak hour cars tend to use both lanes allowing them to travel at high speeds through the roundabout.
 - Pedestrian underpasses have been used for roundabouts in Europe.
 - The textured pavers in the center of the roundabout help to keep speeds low by making the lanes appear narrow, while allowing an area for large turning trucks.
 - Speed tables should be used at crosswalks in roundabouts.
 - Pedestrian islands are helpful near roundabouts to prevent pedestrians from being stuck between two lanes of traffic with no refuge.

Maintenance:

- **Winter Snow and Ice Removal**
 - **Impacts of City snow plowing on pedestrian travel**
 - **The remaining snow pile along the curb left by the plow makes curb cuts and ramps impassible, especially for those with disabilities and with small children.**
 - **When roads are clear and sidewalks are not, pedestrians will walk in the roadway presenting other safety issues.**
 - When snow is piled high along the edge of the road cars tend to park farther from the curb blocking visibility between motorists and pedestrians.

- When heavy snow is piled along the curb it covers the drains and prevents melting snow from draining causing giant puddles in the street and at crosswalk ramps.
 - Plowing snow into huge mountains along the sidewalk impacts visibility; snow should be removed.
 - If pathways and sidewalks are cleared before the roadways, then it provides an incentive to walk/bike.
 - There is confusion in the ordinance language when it comes to rental properties; it should say “tenant AND landlord” responsible instead of “tenant OR landlord”.
 - Snow removal should be a priority when it comes to city-wide maintenance of pedestrians facilities.
 - Responsibility of orphan areas (e.g. mid-block crosswalks, freeway overpass, bus stops)
 - Sidewalks along City property need to be held to the same standard as private property – how does the City to enforce itself.
 - Alleyways tend to not be cleared, causing adjacent sidewalk to be slicker due to melting and freezing snow.
 - Traverse City has a sidewalk clearing team.
- Facility Maintenance
 - Crosswalks
 - Maintain existing crosswalks – repaint the pavement markings on a regular basis so they have high visibility.
 - Signals and push buttons
 - Many signals may have outdated timing and are too short; people should be used to set the timing of crosswalk signals.

Other City Wide Issues and Opportunities:

- **Enforcement and education are needed to prevent distracted driving and walking (e.g. using cell phones).**
- **There is a high turnover of population in Ann Arbor, both on a daily basis and with the University. Visitors are not here long enough for education to effective.**
- Pedestrian safety is paramount.
- Speeding is a city-wide issue and the 85th percentile could legally affect local speeds. The City should have a discussion with other communities on this topic.
- Ann Arbor should continue to try new ideas, such as the new green bike lanes that were recently installed on Ann Arbor – Saline Road.
- Safety for pedestrians has improved dramatically since leaf pick-up moved from the street to the bins. Piling leaf debris in the street blocked the roadway and prevented water drainage, leading to large puddles and leaf debris at crosswalks.

TARGETED AREAS

Downtown:

- Bicycles on sidewalks
 - Speed of bikes on the sidewalk is the issue, especially near South University.
 - Bicycles do not trigger traffic signals; it would help keep bicycles off the sidewalk if signals were activated by bicycles.
 - Designated bicycle facilities are needed to keep bicyclists off of the sidewalk.
 - Bicyclists that ride in the sidewalk often do not walk their bikes across the crosswalk.
- Signalized Intersections
 - Right turn on red is very dangerous; cars roll through the intersection and block the crosswalk.
 - A “No Right Turn on Red” zone should be considered for the downtown area; not sure how this would affect traffic congestion or the amount of sign clutter it would create.
 - Sign clutter/overload - motorists are already driving slowly in the downtown area; yield signs may not be needed.
 - Scramble (signal turns red for all motor vehicles and pedestrian can cross in every direction) should be considered for T-intersections in the downtown (e.g. State at Liberty, William and N. University).
- Clear and consistent marking of crosswalks in the downtown.
- Reallocation of street space should be considered on some corridors to provide more space for pedestrians and bicycles.
- Define the space for skateboarders; we have an ordinance but it is not enforced.
- There should be bicycle and transit priority streets in the downtown area (e.g. Washington Street).

School Zones:

- Speeding needs to be addressed within the “walking zone” around a school, which may reach further than the actual “school zone”.
- Sidewalks need to be complete within the “walking zone” around a school.
- Sidewalks within the “walking zone” around schools need good lighting; it is dark when kids travel to and from school.
- Filling in sidewalk gaps should be a priority near schools.
- Better management of school pick-up/drop-off traffic is needed.
- Motorists are not stopping at crosswalks near schools.
- Schools have an opportunity to help families understand safe walking routes.
- Safe Routes to School programs are not consistent among all schools and should be coordinated throughout the district. Currently elementary schools participating in the program are on their own, without guidance from the school district or other organizations. The City should work with the schools if Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) is not going to lead this effort

Campus:

- Campus areas have a different set of issues than the rest of the City; students cross the road no matter what.
- U of M orientation tells student they can walk and cross anywhere they want.

- If crosswalk laws were obeyed uniformly, there would be grid lock around campus and traffic would not move.
- There are very high pedestrian volumes at class change time.
- More traffic lights should be used instead of 4-way stops because students and drivers would obey them.
- A 4-way stop may be safer than a traffic light where motorists are not going to stop and pedestrians still try to cross.
- Hazardous situation - when cars are backed-up pedestrians tend to cross the road between stopped cars.
- Crossings near "the Diag" need to be improved.
- Crosswalks on campus should line up with existing pathways.
- Campus draws a lot of visitors that are not aware of the local laws (e.g. student move-in, graduation). How do we educate this group?
- Snow and ice removal is typically done well in student rental area because it is done by a management company.

Neighborhoods:

- Artistic painting of the neighborhood streets has been done in other communities and provides traffic calming and a sense of place - could be helpful near school zones
- Gateway treatments - there needs to be a clear message to motorists that they are entering a neighborhood zone and should slow down (not signs).
- Neighborhoods should take ownership of streets where sidewalks are not present.
- Most traffic enforcement occurs on major roadways - there should be more enforcement in neighborhoods to monitor through traffic and speeding.
- Don't write off major roads with residential housing on them – they should be considered "neighborhood streets" as well.
- There is a lack in uniformity when it comes to snow and ice removal in neighborhoods; the S. Main Street Neighborhood uses peer pressure to get neighbors to clear ice and snow.

SPECIFIC CORRIDORS

Plymouth Road:

- **Existing crosswalks are not safe enough, speed differential is deadly**
- Speeding
- There is a lot of turning movement by cars in and out of driveways causing motorists to not see pedestrians and block crosswalk.
- Jaywalking has stopped since crosswalks have been put in to align with walking patterns.

Secondary Roads (e.g. Seventh, Geddes, Division, etc.)

- **Speeding**
- Pedestrian crossings should be used to discourage speeding on these corridors.

Liberty Street, Seventh Street and Washington Street:

- **Pedestrian crossing islands have been successful in slowing traffic speeds.**

Jackson Road:

- Pedestrian crossing islands are needed.

S. Main Street:

- Speeding

State Street:

- Sidewalks are not wide enough for pedestrians, bicycles, and café tables; would have to remove on-street parking for more room.
- Zig-zag of café tables on sidewalk is an issue; they should be against the building or near the curb, not both.
- State Street piles snow in café area in winter.

Nixon Road and Green Road:

- Bad corridors for all users (bicycles, pedestrians and motorists)

SPECIFIC LOCATIONS

Ashley Street - Existing bike lanes are too wide; delivery trucks park in the bike lane impairing visibility at the crosswalk. Bike lanes are also used as a turning lane causing bicycles to use the sidewalk; enforcement is needed.

Newport Road and Red Oak Road

- Flashing light is yellow and cars do not yield to pedestrians; could it be flashing red during school hours?
- Sidewalk gaps on east side of Newport Road.

Geddes Avenue

- Issues with speeding
- No sidewalk on one side of the street and the existing sidewalk is inferior.
- More marked crosswalks.

Geddes Road and Earhart Road Roundabout

- Better lighting to increase visibility
- Flashing beacon needed to draw attention to pedestrians in crosswalk
- Motorists concerned with athletes crossing the road at the roundabout
- There are no refuge islands

Nixon Road and Huron Parkway Roundabout – Motor vehicles speed through roundabout at night

Green Road and Glazier Way – Bike lanes are used as turn lane and bikes end up using sidewalk instead

South University Ave and State Street – High pedestrian volume, would a traffic signal be better than a 3-way stop?

North University Ave at bus transit center

- Consider a traffic signal or underpass
- Need to keep motor vehicle speeds slow but still allow buses through

Liberty Street and State Street – Potential for a “scramble” at this intersection. A scramble is where all motor vehicle traffic is stopped and pedestrians can cross in all directions, including diagonally.

Huron Street near North Ingles Street – High speed and multi-lanes; crosswalk needs active warning beacons

Huron Parkway and Fuller Road – Needs better pedestrian warnings.

Oakwood Drive and Ann Arbor-Saline Road– Needs pedestrian crossing (2 are planned to go in on this corridor)

Fifth Street in Kerrytown – A lot of pedestrians crossing this corridor, functions like a “crossing zone”.

Depot Street and Fifth Ave – There are concerns with the number of out-of-towners that drive down Depot Street and the need for highly visible crosswalk. After further study by the police

department, it was found that the demand for the crosswalks is not where the existing crosswalks are along this corridor.

Fuller Road near the VA Hospital – High speeds and multi-lanes; crosswalks need active warning beacons.

Green Road at Plymouth Road – A high density area with pedestrians crossing the road.

Birch Hollow Road – Motorists do not yield to pedestrians

Division Street and Broadway Street Bridge

- Traffic moves too fast
- Problematic for pedestrians and bicycles
- Existing crosswalk may be in the wrong location
- People try to use the diverter islands to cross the road
- Intersection should be re-evaluated/redesigned

Birch Hollow Road and Stone School Road – Existing crosswalk needs improvements; no crosswalk markings, speeding, and poor visibility and motorists do not yield to pedestrians.

Maiden lane - Missing sidewalks and existing sidewalks are not maintained well.

Orchard Hills Neighborhood

- Need more road crossing opportunities for students walking to Clague Middle School.
- Re-evaluate stop signs along Georgetown Blvd; there is a stop sign for a dead end street (Yorktown Drive).

Seventh Street near West Park – traffic moves too fast

Skyline

- Adjacent sidewalks not cleared, students walking in roadway
- Not a lot of students walking in this area

Packard Road and Main Street - Walk time at pedestrian signal is not long enough to cross the road, especially for seniors.

Packard Road and Easy Street - High speed and multi-lanes, pedestrian crashes and near misses, crosswalk needs active warning beacons

Packard Road at Buhr Park – Existing crosswalk is poorly lit.

Baldwin and Brockman – Both streets used as cut through for motorists traveling between Packard and Stadium.

Stadium Boulevard south of Liberty Street - High speed and multi-lanes; crosswalk needs active warning beacon.

Stadium Boulevard and Edgewood Avenue – High speed and multi-lanes; crosswalk needs active warning beacon.

Slauson Middle School - Pedestrian crossing islands are needed near the school.

Appendix A – Sign-In Sheets



SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE
STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP – BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS/COMMERCIAL NEIGHBORHOODS
Date: Thursday, October 16, 2014
Time: 8:30 - 10:30 pm
Location: Basement Conference Room - Larcom City Hall (301 E Huron Street)

NAME

ORGANIZATION/GROUP

Ruth Kraut

Upper Water Hill / Sunset Hill

LINDA JANE FEIG

ARK FINE

Frances Todoro

State St Area

Maura Thomson

MSAA

MAGGIE LADD

SUAA

NEAL ELYAKI

TASK FORCE

Appendix A – Sign-In Sheets



SIGN-IN SHEET - PEDESTRIAN SAFETY & ACCESS TASK FORCE
STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUP – BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS
Date: Thursday, October 16, 2014
Time: 1:30 – 3:30 pm
Location: Basement Conference Room - Larcom City Hall (301 E Huron Street)

NAME	ORGANIZATION/GROUP
Jason Bidwell	U-M PTS
Jim Stephenson	Concordia
Tom Kooy	AZPD
JAMIE ANKING	AZPD
Scott Zeleny	AAPD
Ben Bushkahl	AR Historic Distric com.
Sarah Porynowicz	AAATA
Ellen Remyburgh	HOC
Quen Jansson	PSATF
Eric Thompson	WISD
Josie Parlar	AADC
Roug Mantele	MAPD
Neal Elyakin	wisd/ped safety task
Mike Maroney	Ann Arbor Schools

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, October 16, 2014
Time: 5:30 – 7:30 pm
Location: Basement Conference Room - Larcom City Hall (301 E Huron Street)

NAME	ORGANIZATION/GROUP
Bob DeScola	Friends of West Park
Ann Aersaug, II	Ives Wood
Rebecca Priebe	OHM HA
Vince Canino	Blendale Literary
Ken Korol	Broadway
Laura Strowe	Broadway
Julie Weatherbee	S. Main Neighbors
Bruce Friedman	Geddes Lake Condo
RAY DETTER	DOWNTOWN AREA CAC
Kate Delaney	Glacier Highlands
Sheri Kersnes	Crossings of Ann Arbor
Nancy Van Alshine	Fairhart Village
John Held	Brookside S/dive
Ericz Briggs	WBWC
Larry Deck	WBWC