

From: [REDACTED]
To: [City of Ann Arbor Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Walkability > Vehicle Speed & Volume (or it ought to be)
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Hello Transportation Commission,

Thank you for the thoughtful commentary and conversation at your July 16 meeting. As to the function of traffic lights, *we must minimize to the greatest extent possible the need to push buttons for people just trying to cross the street.* If the button hardware is necessary for accessibility that is one thing, but requiring them to be pushed to get a signal is inhospitable to the walking public and a downgrade to signals that currently have integrated pedestrian cycles.

There are many instances where accessing and pushing a button is difficult: folks with limited mobility of course; but also just people with their hands occupied by packages or bags; people with children (who you usually want to keep a hold of when standing at an intersection); and other situations--I can attest as someone who has biked a lot with kids that getting your bike up next to the pole can be challenging or impossible on a large bike or pulling a trailer. Pedestrian "sensors" are also not a great solution if they cannot detect someone approaching the intersection. Case in point is whatever detects the bikes at First/Huron: I ride my bike up to the intersection and arrive just as the light would be turning green, but I don't get a green because it doesn't detect my approach--this makes little sense to me (I understand this is an MDOT intersection, but the point stands).

We should be *decreasing* friction for transportation modes that we want to encourage and increasing (or at least maintaining) friction for those we want to discourage. I know the goal has historically been to pump as many cars through an intersection as possible, but at this point, that is counterproductive to the goals that our community proclaims (i.e. reducing VMT and CO2 emissions). When we ask people on foot to push buttons to cross the street, we are prioritizing vehicle speed (through the system) and volume over walkability. We can accommodate vehicles without prioritizing them. As always, I appreciate your service to the community.

Thank you,
Seth Peterson