

Transportation Commission Recommendation to City Council Concerning House Bill No. 4738

July 17, 2019

In response to House Bill No. 4738, which proposes statewide crosswalk law as an amendment to the Michigan Vehicle Code, the Transportation Commission recommends the following:

- Ann Arbor City Council and Mayor Taylor speak out against HB 4738 as proposed; this is vital to preserve Ann Arbor's high standard of safety and to offer greater protection and encouragement to pedestrians and drivers throughout the state.
- Ann Arbor City Council direct their Policy Agenda Committee to engage the State of Michigan in updating the draft bill to reflect best practices as represented by the Ann Arbor and Kalamazoo crosswalk ordinances.

Additional considerations:

- A number of City Councilmembers have promoted HB 4738, despite it being in direct conflict with the will of the Ann Arbor public and previous City Council decisions.
 - It is unknown the effect HB 4738 may have on Ann Arbor's crosswalk ordinance, and it may make the local ordinance easier to invalidate. There is an active and persistent group that has tried to render the local ordinance ineffective.
 - The proposed state law endangers *everyone* using the right of way, both motorists and pedestrians. HB 4738 is particularly problematic for the most vulnerable members of our community: children, the disabled, and the elderly.
 - Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) has denounced the bill, stating "If House Bill No. 4738 passes it will create unsafe conditions and confusion for student walkers and bikers. This district will not, in good conscience, educate students to step off the curb into the street as vehicles approach. This bill will essentially negate the work that has been done to increase student walkers and bikers by creating an unsafe and confusing crossing law for our community."
 - If HB 4738 overrides Ann Arbor's local ordinance, then Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) will be rendered ineffective as a pedestrian safety tool. At present, RRFBs alert motorists to the presence of a pedestrian at the curb, thereby notifying drivers via the flashing lights that they are required by local ordinance to stop and providing a safe point of entry for the pedestrian. Under the proposed state law, the lights would flash but motorists would not be required to stop until the pedestrian enters the right of way and endangers their own life, thereby rendering the device ineffective if not outright deceptive. Because of RRFBs' strategic location throughout the city, they
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overwhelmingly protect schoolchildren and the disabled on high-traffic right of ways with few pedestrian crossing points, such as Stadium Blvd. adjacent to Pioneer High School and numerous locations on Plymouth Rd.

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