

I've spent time with studies. I've talked with hundreds of people who drive, walk, bike, who are disabled, who enforce laws, who compile statistics, who travel the world. I spent 1 1/2 years on the Pedestrian and Safety and Access Task Force listening to the community, and reading reports. I endorse the findings of the Task Force, which were to support Ann Arbor's Crosswalk Ordinance. The references and evidence are in that report. Here are my additional thoughts.

Not everything can happen at once. The Ann Arbor Crosswalk Ordinance improves on the state version in many ways, but implementation has been awkward and uneven. For an effective ordinance you need education, engineering, consistency, enforcement and enthusiastic support from everyone affected. We didn't have that, and it wasn't possible to have it all right away.

It is a very good law. Not only is it good, it is how it is done around the country. And around the world. Ann Arbor should have no trouble catching up with what other states and other countries have been doing for decades. Where pedestrians are valued, the ordinance is common sense.

Ann Arbor asks motorists to be aware of pedestrians, to be aware of crosswalks, and to stop for pedestrians approaching crosswalks. Ann Arbor also asks pedestrians to use crosswalks, and to enter the crosswalk only when a car can reasonably stop.

Approaching a crosswalk is a pretty safe activity. Having to step into the crosswalk to activate cars stopping is not. This is especially true if you are a pedestrian preceded by a dog or a stroller. There is no controversy here.

Expecting cars to stop for pedestrians is pretty much a monumental cultural shift for Michigan. Even though it is done every day at corners and mid block crosswalks around the world. I believe this is where our controversy actually lies. Ann Arbor has chosen - repeatedly - to be pedestrian friendly. We are attempting to guide a massive cultural change. The crosswalk law is a core element of that change. If you believe pedestrians should be secondary to cars, this is a bad ordinance. If you want pedestrians, bikes, and cars to safely and effectively negotiate their points of interaction while especially encouraging walking and biking, this ordinance does exactly that, with responsibility shared and explicit.

Car and pedestrian interactions remain dangerous, and also controversial. And maybe even a bit irrational. Indeed common sense seems to fail. We can finally note significant improvements in engineering, consistent signs, education for drivers and pedestrians, enforcement, and awareness. And we have proof of improvement. It is also a work in progress. Anger, resentment, venting, and even fear are still very much present.

Reverting to the way it used to be (pedestrians must step into the roadway to signal cars to stop, and a car that *wants* to stop for a pedestrian *who clearly wants to cross* truly enters a gray area of not having the authority to stop) is focusing on the wrong problem. Speed and distractions will continue to hurt and kill people. Requiring walkers to step into the roadway to cross doesn't help one bit. Our city is fully endorsing a more pedestrian friendly culture, like so many places around the world.

We have taken many steps now in the right direction. Let's focus our time and energy on what needs improving, and not put people clearly in harms way. Speed and distraction (drivers and pedestrians) are the primary problems we must continue to solve. At the same time, the times have changed for the remaining few drivers who believe in "full speed ahead" without concern for sharing the roads and intersecting with other users and transportation corridors. I welcome a

discussion on those issues, and believe that is the appropriate focus at this time for those of us who want to encourage biking and walking and safety for all.

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