

City says it's improving crosswalk safety, but some aren't satisfied

GORDON KENT, EDMONTON JOURNAL | 06.28.2015 |




SECTIONS

Police investigate after a man was hit in this pedestrian crosswalk on Jasper Avenue in 2014. EDMONTON JOURNAL/FILE *ED KAISER / EDMONTON JOURNAL*

EDMONTON - Employees at Edmonton's main postal sorting plant aren't satisfied with the latest city efforts to keep people safe when they cross the street.

Transportation officials said Monday they've changed their approach for determining where pedestrian lights are required to focus on the risk rather than the amount of activity on the sidewalk.

Parminder Pannu, a Canadian Union of Postal Workers shop steward for the plant at 149th Street and 121A Avenue, said three or four members have been struck crossing the street in the last decade.

But the city has turned down two petitions asking for pedestrian signals because not enough people use that intersection, Pannu said.

"I hope on the priority list they will change it so we get lights there before somebody else gets hit or really badly hurt."

Devinder Sunner told council's transportation committee he was struck by a pickup truck at this location in November 2013, suffering multiple fractures that still keep him off work.

"If there could be pedestrian crossing lights or amber flashing lights, it could save someone else from what I'm suffering now."

Traffic operations director Craig Walbaum said his staff are assessing the need for lights at 200 marked crosswalks across Edmonton based on such factors as speed, the number of lanes and how close they are to other lights.

They plan to install signals on Jasper Avenue this summer at 113th Street, 115th Street, 119th Street and 120th Street, he said.

Another five will be put on Whyte Avenue, 109th Street (at 83rd Avenue and 69th Avenue) and 104th Avenue by the end of 2016.

"We're really looking at what the barriers are to people walking to where they want to go," he said.

"There should be relative priorities based on the risk of someone crossing."

Although Walbaum is creating a schedule for when sites will be dealt with, he expects it will change as members of the public and councillors point out more danger spots.

Transportation officials are also looking at other ways to boost the visibility of busy crossings.

This includes overhead signs, painting wide “zebra” stripes on the road at schools and seniors’ centres, and rectangular rapid flashing LED lights such as the ones being tested at Saskatchewan Drive and 99th Street.

There’s now only enough money to add pedestrian lights at 10 locations annually.

While Coun. Ben Henderson said he likes the new approach, he’s concerned about how it will be carried out.

The city has rejected requests for pedestrian lights at the busy marked crossing on Whyte Avenue at 102nd Street, he said.

He doesn’t think enough people will walk a block west to cross at the traffic signals.

“Pedestrian safety has to come first. I think in the past the focus has been on the flow of traffic,” he said.

“If we have 200 intersections ... and are only doing 10 a year, that’s 20 years until they’re done, and I don’t think that’s acceptable.”

There were 336 Edmonton pedestrians injured in collisions last year, down from a high of 395 in 2008.

gkent@edmontonjournal.com (mailto:gkent@edmontonjournal.com)

Comments

We encourage all readers to share their views on our articles and blog posts. We are committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion, so we ask you to avoid personal attacks, and please keep your comments relevant and respectful. If you encounter a comment that is abusive, click the "X" in the upper right corner of the comment box to report spam or abuse. We are using Facebook commenting. [Visit our FAQ page](#)

[for more information. \(http://domain.com/news/story.html?id=7195492\)](http://domain.com/news/story.html?id=7195492)

7 Comments

Sort by Top ▾

Add a comment...



Douglas Taylor

Nice sentiment Ben but pedestrian safety doesn't come first. City police ignore flagrant illegal and outright dangerous violations of window tinting and hot shot peeling around pedestrian's toes at right hand turns. The heck with body cameras on cops, it's gotten so we need them on pedestrians to aid in managing bad drivers who have all the upper hand on roads.

Like · Reply · 2 · 30 June 2015 06:20



Tammy Kobluk

This article is about design, not enforcement, so your comment is not particularly relevant.

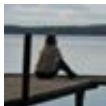
Like · Reply · 30 June 2015 08:05



Douglas Taylor

Form follows function and the issue is body safety from effective management.

Like · Reply · 30 June 2015 10:59



Renate Van Dorsser

Crosswalks in this city are dangerous period as are all intersections with traffic signals. Drivers either don't understand that a pedestrian has the right of way in a cross walk when crossing legally or they just don't care. I am a pedestrian and have been forced to walk faster through the crosswalk as the driver turning inches up closer and closer to you - it is very scary and dangerous. Tickets should be steep for drivers and demerits given

Like · Reply · 30 June 2015 10:43



Ross Sinclair

Let's just put traffic lights at every intersection! FFS COE...I am a pedestrian in this city and I am NOT going to wait at every damn intersection for a set of lights. Either ramp up the penalties for not driving or crossing safely or get someone else to do it. I don't have time to wait on every damn corner for a set of lights, which I will invariably start crossing against!

Like · Reply · 29 June 2015 21:52



Ross Sinclair

Let's just put traffic lights at every intersection! FFS COE...I am a pedestrian in this city and I am NOT going to wait at every damn intersection for a set of lights. Either ramp up the penalties for not driving or crossing safely or get someone else to do it. I don't have time to wait on every damn corner for a set of lights, which I will invariably start crossing against!

Like · Reply · 29 June 2015 21:51



Tammy Kobluk

9/30/2015

City says it's improving crosswalk safety, but some aren't satisfied



It's about time that signals were put in along Whyte and Jasper. Both streets are extremely dangerous to cross. And I agree with Henderson, that 10 per year is ridiculously low. I would like to see at least 20.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 30 June 2015 08:06



([HTTP://WWW.POSTMEDIA.COM](http://www.postmedia.com))

© 2015 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.