PEDESTRIAN CRASHES ON THE BURBANK AND NICHOLSON CORRIDORS

THE PROBLEM AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

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PEDESTRIAN CRASHES ON THE BURBANK AND NICHOLSON CORRIDORS: DEADLY BY DESIGN

The Problem

- Two recent pedestrian deaths: July 17 (Jennifer Jean at Nicholson) and September 23 (Burbank at Gourrier)
- 2016 crash data for all types of crashes in the area range from a low of 162 to a high of 268
- That same area for that same time saw 16 motor vehicle crashes with serious injury and 4 deaths
- That same area for that same time saw 41 total pedestrian crashes with 13 serious injuries and 2 fatalities

The Physical reality: Burbank Drive

- The Burbank Drive/LA42 corridor has been designed to allow maximum motor vehicle flow with no regard to the setting through which the highway passes
- Burbank Drive transitions from a four-lane highway with posted speed limit of 55 MPH to four-lane boulevard posted at 45 MPH to five-lane highway posted at 35 MPH
- Drivers routinely exceed these posted speed limits, especially in the area between the 55 MPH and 35 MPH areas and often into the 35 MPH area
- Speed limit violation are particularly bad in the half-mile between Parker Boulevard and the intersection with Nicholson Drive
- This is the area with the greatest number of businesses across the highway from dense housing
- Crosswalks are poorly marked and maintained and street lighting in the area of the crosswalks either does not exist or is substandard

The Physical reality: Nicholson Drive

- As with Burbank Boulevard, the Nicholson Drive/LA30 corridor has been designed to allow maximum motor vehicle flow with no regard to the setting through which the highway passes
- Nicholson Drive, currently a two-lane highway with posted speed limit of 55 MPH transitions to a two-lane highway posted at 45 MPH
- Drivers routinely exceed these posted speed limits
- Speed limit violation are particularly bad in the area between the intersection with Burbank Drive and Lee Drive
- The intersection of Nicholson and Burbank Drives is very wide, includes turning lanes from multiple directions, tends to have debris build up in the multi-use path transition to the street, and has traffic lights sited in such a way as to make seeing them if on foot or on as bicycle very difficult
- Crosswalks are poorly marked and maintained and street lighting in the area of the crosswalks either does not exist or is substandard

RECOMMENDATIONS: BURBANK DRIVE

SHORT-TERM

- Refresh crosswalks and maintain them
- Change crosswalk design from simple parallel lines to high-visibility crosswalk pattern, such as a ladder, continental design, or diagonal marking. (See 2009 Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUCTD), page 384.)

MEDIUM TERM

Improve lighting at intersections with crosswalks using guidelines such as those in “Best Practices for Pedestrian Master Planning,” 2005 https://nacto.org/docs/usdg/best_practices_ped_master_planning_design_sacramento.pdf
LONG TERM

- Add high-visibility crosswalks at uncontrolled locations on the half-mile segment of the roadway between West Parker and the intersection with Nicholson.
- Redesign roadway cross section by removing dedicated turn lane, where appropriate, creating pedestrian refuge(s) at high-visibility crosswalks at uncontrolled locations
- Enforce speed limits

RECOMMENDATIONS: NICHOLSON DRIVE

Nicholson Drive from Gourrier to Brightside/Lee is one of three projects in the MOVE BR plan. It is essential that the City-Parish work closely with LaDOTD and LSU to ensure as much as possible that Complete Streets principles be applied to this segment of Nicholson Drive.

It is equally important that the City-Parish and LaDOTD work closely with LSU to ensure as much as possible that the work done on this segment of Nicholson Drive meshes seamlessly with the LSU Transportation Master Plan.

At the very least, it is important that the work done on this segment of Nicholson Drive does not conflict with or otherwise diminish the LSU Transportation Master Plan.

It would be ideal to redesign the intersection of Burbank/Gourrier and Nicholson to:
- Improve sightlines for pedestrians and bicyclists using the multi-use path along the east side of Nicholson
- Narrow the distance required to cross Burbank at that intersection perhaps through adding “refuges” and/or realigning crossing to include existing “island” creating the northbound right turn lane from Nicholson onto Burbank
- Reduce the number of conflicts between motor vehicles and vulnerable road users
- Change configuration of traffic control lights to make them more visible to pedestrians and bicyclists

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Regularly clean the roadway to remove debris and other hazards from the shoulder and the transition of the multi-use path to the roadway
- Enforce speed limits on both roadways
- Improve/add lighting at crosswalks
- Add extend multi-use path on east side of Nicholson to Lee/Brightside intersection
- Remove most of the dedicated turn lane on Burbank from transition to divided highway to intersection with Nicholson
- Add high-visibility crosswalks at uncontrolled locations where needed

Thank you for considering these issues.

Sincerely.

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City-Parish Complete Streets Citizen Advisory Committee, 2019-2021