

Hello Residents and Council,

I hope everyone had a good holiday season and wish everyone a Happy New Year!

Here is my report of recent activities and my calendar of planned Dexter activities looking ahead:

**Mayor's Thoughts on Pedestrian Safety**

Over the past several months, the subject of pedestrian safety has been brought up several times. The City has received comments from the school district specifically related to 4 crosswalk locations (Baker Road between Creekside and Bates, Dexter AA Road at Kensington and two locations on Dan Hoey) in the City. Each of these locations is currently an uncontrolled location. In other words, these crosswalk locations do not have a traffic signal, or a stop sign at them that requires a vehicle to stop. The school district has requested Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB's) at each of these 4 locations.

Over the past several weeks, I have been studying these crosswalks and the corridors in which they reside. I have approached them in my own vehicle and I have approached them and crossed them as a pedestrian several times. I have also tried to vary the time of day during which I have used them or cross them (as a driver).

I would like to offer the following observations and initial recommendations for discussion with Council, staff and the schools and as part of the community awareness process for this issue:

**Baker Road crossing between Bates and Creekside**

- This crosswalk across Baker utilizes a raised median island so that pedestrians only need to cross one lane of traffic at a time. The crosswalks themselves are decorative concrete with white pavement markings parallel to the walking path. The improvement was constructed in 2015 as part of the Safe Routes to School Project.
- There is flashing yellow beacon at this crossing that flashes during certain school times. The crossing has a pentagon shaped pedestrian crossing warning sign (neon yellow in color) at the crosswalk facing both directions of traffic, as well as advanced pedestrian warning signs.
- The posted speed limit on Baker Road is 30 mph.
- The overhead lighting at this location could be improved to add more light in the evening and overnight hours. It currently has an older style of overhead illumination that should be upgraded. The City Manager has asked DTE about options to upgrade the lighting at this location.

**Dan Hoey crossing at Dongara**

- This crosswalk across two lanes of Dan Hoey is located on the east side of the intersection at Dongara.
- The Dongara approach is controlled by a stop sign. Dan Hoey traffic is uncontrolled.
- The speed limit on Dan Hoey is posted at 35 mph, reduced to 25 mph during school drop off and pick up times.
- The crosswalk is marked with "ladder" type pavement markings.

- The crossing has a pentagon shaped pedestrian crossing warning sign (neon yellow in color) at the crosswalk facing both directions of traffic, as well as advanced pedestrian warning signs.
- There is currently no street lighting directly at this crosswalk.
- My initial recommendation would be to add lighting to enhance the visibility of this crosswalk location.

#### Dan Hoey Crossing at the Mill Creek Drive Approach

- This crosswalk has recently been changed as part of the road widening and road improvements on Dan Hoey. It was originally created in 2015 as part of a Safe Routes to School Project.
- This crosswalk is located just east of the School Access Drive to Mill Creek. The Mill Creek Access drive is controlled by a stop sign.
- The crosswalk at this location is across 4 lanes of the newly constructed Dan Hoey Road. There two through lanes, a left center turn lane and a WB right turn lane into the School Access drive.
- The crosswalk at this location currently has appropriate neon yellow pentagon signage for a school crossing.
- This location is currently lacking the appropriate crosswalk pavement markings. The School District is responsible for adding these and has indicated that the crosswalk pavement markings will be added on January 13, 2019.
- This crosswalk has a single overhead light on the northern side of the road.
- Due to the long span of crossing 4 lanes of traffic, this location seems like a potentially good candidate for enhanced driver awareness of pedestrian activity.

#### Ann Arbor Street crossings

- The Ann Arbor Street corridor has 4 uncontrolled crosswalks between the two signalized intersections at Main Street and Meadowview. There is one crosswalk at Edison, one at Hudson, one at Inverness and one at Kensington. All of these crosswalks are located at the intersections. The crosswalks are all decorative concrete with white pavement markings parallel to the walking path installed as part of the 2014 Ann Arbor Street project.
- Dexter Ann Arbor Road is posted at 25 mph.
- The crosswalks at Edison and Hudson do not contain any pedestrian crossing warning signage or advance warning signage. We could consider adding the appropriate pedestrian crossing warning signage at these two locations.
- The crosswalk at Inverness has a pentagon shaped pedestrian crossing warning sign (neon yellow in color) facing traffic heading in a northwest direction (toward downtown), however there is no similar sign for traffic heading southeast. Typically, a neon pentagon shaped pedestrian sign indicates a designated school crossing. We should consider adding additional signage to notify drivers in both directions of the crosswalk.
- The crosswalk at Kensington has only been active since it was installed in 2010. This crosswalk is not signed as a designated school crossing but does have yellow diamond pedestrian crossing warning signs at the crosswalk and yellow advance warning signs in both directions.
- The crosswalk at Kensington does not currently have any direct lighting intended to specifically enhance the crosswalk. There is one decorative streetlight “in the vicinity”, however, I would recommend that the City consider lighting upgrades at this location.

As a general observation, there needs to be a discussion with the School District about which crosswalks are specifically designated as school crossing zones. The Michigan Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

provides for different types of signage at appropriate locations. While the Kensington crossing at Ann Arbor Street has adequate signage, it is not specifically signed as a school crossing. We should discuss the differences and decide as a community which series of signs make the most sense for this crossing. Based on my review of historical images, it appears that Inverness may have been the historical designation for a school crossing. The crossing at Kensington did not physically exist until 2010.

My goal in discussing this topic again in my report is to provide our citizens with knowledge of how the City is currently evaluating these crosswalks. I want to continue to initiate and encourage others to initiate some education about pedestrian safety in our community. The City has met with the Sheriff Department twice over the past two months to discuss our crosswalks and the rules regarding “who has the right of way” in a cross walk. Our pedestrian system needs to be compliant with State law and we need to follow approved guidelines whenever we implement an improvement to the system.

I presented this information in my last report but am including it again in hopes of reinforcing pedestrian and driver responsibilities near crosswalks. Here is some information regarding crosswalks, driver responsibilities, pedestrian responsibilities and who has the right of way that we feel needs to be shared across the community:

- The Sheriff’s office provided the City with the following information:
  1. Unlike crosswalks at intersections, the State of Michigan has no law related to mid-block crosswalks, whether they have a flashing light or not. What this means is midblock crosswalks do not provide any additional protection from a legal standpoint.
  2. Pedestrians cannot enter the roadway into the path of a vehicle. If they do, they are not automatically protected by state law. Conversely, if a pedestrian is crossing the road, a driver is required not to hit them. These two points are important to understand because they are based upon the notion of who (vehicle or pedestrian) was in the cross walk first. These two points establish “who has the right of way”.
  3. While a yellow light at a signalized intersection means caution, a yellow light (flashing or steady) at a mid-block crosswalk is just a light. In the case of a crosswalk that has an RRFB, what this means is that a motor vehicle is not required to stop.
- Pedestrians need to walk defensively whenever they are approaching or planning to use a crosswalk.
- Driver behavior and pedestrian behavior are both unpredictable. It is my hope that through increased education on this topic that we will encourage more and more drivers to stop when they see pedestrians waiting to cross the street, but pedestrians need to understand that not every driver may stop to let a pedestrian have the right of way.
- There is a misconception in our community that a vehicle has to stop at a RRFB just because the lights are flashing. While a flashing light is intended to provide enhanced driver awareness that a pedestrian may be crossing, the input from our Sheriff’s office indicates that the pedestrian should not assume that the flashing light requires a vehicle to stop. This point needs some emphasis across our community. As a parent, I feel it is my responsibility to teach my kids this and I would like to encourage all parents to talk to their kids about crosswalks, and driver and pedestrian responsibility at crosswalks.
- The City has a new RRFB just south of the Grand and Baker intersection. The RRFB was approved at this location because the crosswalk at this location is across 3 lanes of traffic and away from an intersection. RRFB’s are not intended to function as controlling devices. They are awareness devices. The presence of the RRFB doesn’t guarantee that drivers will stop when it is flashing. In our recent City email update on Friday, December 14, 2018, we issued the following messages:
  1. *If you are a pedestrian, please check for traffic before using any crosswalk. Walk defensively and make eye contact with the drivers to ensure that they see you (before you cross). Never assume*

*that you are seen or that a motorist will yield. Don't leave the curb or go into the path of a vehicle which is so close that the driver can't yield.*

- 2. Drivers must yield to pedestrians within a crosswalk when the pedestrian is in or near the same half of the street as the driver. Drivers can choose to stop at a crosswalk to allow a pedestrian to cross the street, but it is not required regardless of the presence of a beacon.*

I believe it is important to discuss this issue frequently and often as we work toward making each crossing as safe as possible for all users. Hopefully, we can all help encourage responsible driver and pedestrian decision making, because no device, sign or marking guarantees 100% safety.

### **Recent Activities & Meetings**

December 27, 2018 – Meeting with David Gassen of Partners in Architecture regarding assistance in preparing the presentation materials for the upcoming public meeting on Facilities.

January 7, 2019 – Meeting with representative from the United States Census

January 7, 2019 - Meeting with Avalon Housing regarding City's Dan Hoey property – we discussed the potential sale of this property. The materials discussed during this meeting have been included on the Agenda under New Business Item L - 5 for Council to review and comment.

January 8, 2019 – Lunch with Council member Jim Smith – discussion of cross-walks, pedestrian safety and facilities.

January 10, 2019 – 3045 Broad Street Committee meeting (apparently this meeting has been moved to January 10<sup>th</sup> so I may not be able to attend)

January 11, 2019 – Meeting with Dexter Community Schools regarding Crosswalk Safety within the Community

### **Upcoming Activities**

January 14, 2019 – City Council meeting

January 16, 2019 – WATS Policy Committee meeting

January 16, 2019 – Southeast Michigan Asset Management Work Team

January 17, 2019 – Downtown Development Authority meeting

January 17, 2019 – Dexter Area Fire Board meeting

January 28, 2019 – City Council meeting

I hope everyone has a great 2019 and I look forward to seeing you around our town. ☺

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