



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800

www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

To: Dave Ramsay, City Manager

From: Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director
David Godfrey, P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager

Date: March 22, 2007

Subject: CORRESPONDENCE FROM MR. JEFF CHURCHILL

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter of response to Mr. Churchill, who emailed to commend the Council for reinstalling in-pavement lights at the 4th/Central crosswalk.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

Mr. Churchill feels that his walking commute to work is safer because of the reinstallation of the in-pavement lights at this location.

The response letter outlines other pedestrian initiatives many of which were described in the latest pedestrian update presented at the March 20 Council meeting. These include engineering, education and enforcement efforts such as repair of in-pavement lights, production of an education PSA, creation of a staff task force and research on the use of pedestrian flags.

From: Jeff Churchill [mailto:jdchurch@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 17, 2007 9:16 AM
To: KirklandCouncil
Cc: David Godfrey
Subject: in-pavement flashing crosswalk lights

To the Kirkland City Council,

My commute to and from work regularly includes walking across Central Way at 4th Street. During the winter, this was often in the dark. Recently, the City installed in-pavement flashing crosswalk lights and this crosswalk, and the difference is night and day! Thank you!

I know you know they make a difference because I skimmed the study prepared for the City on the City's website, but I thought a little re-affirmation couldn't hurt.

Before the lights were installed, I grabbed a flag, watched, waited, and crossed halfway when I knew the cars were stopping. Then I repeated those steps for the second half of the crosswalk. Now, cars stop immediately when they see the lights flashing, greatly increasing my sense of safety - and my actual safety! - in crossing.

I implore the Council to continue making pedestrian safety a priority when designing and re-designing transportation corridors. Specifically, I encourage you to continue funding in-pavement flashing crosswalk lights across high-traffic roads like Central Way.

Sincerely,

Jeff Churchill

520 4th Street #20
Kirkland, WA 98033

April 4, 2007

DRAFT

Mr. Jeff Churchill
520 4th Street #20
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Mr. Churchill:

Thank you for your email concerning in-pavement lights at the 4th Street and Central Way crosswalk. As a person who uses the crosswalk each day your comments are very valuable. Along with the in-pavement lights, the recently completed Central Way project removed a lane from eastbound Central Way which created more parking and made the crossing safer for pedestrians.

Kirkland first installed in-pavement lights about ten years ago. Since that time their use has spread from the west coast across the country. We also started the use of pedestrian flags about that same time and many cities across the United States now use them as part of their pedestrian safety programs.

Pedestrian safety is one of the Council's greatest interests. Recently we have directed staff to step up efforts to repair in-pavement lights as quickly as possible, to create materials for pedestrian safety education and to form a staff pedestrian safety task force to make sure that these and other initiatives are carried out. You can view our latest pedestrian safety Public Service Announcement at http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us/depart/TV/Video_On_Demand.htm click on the video button to the right of "Excel as a pedestrian". The message of this video is to encourage the behavior you described in your email: be alert, use a pedestrian flag, wait for traffic to stop in both lanes, make eye contact with drivers and only then leave the curb.

We are currently conducting grant funded research on pedestrian flags to understand how to encourage more pedestrians to use them. Research shows that pedestrian flags can be very effective at signaling to drivers, but we know that usage in Kirkland is quite low. Also, we are trying a pilot project of pedestrian activated overhead beacons at one location in Juanita. This may allow us to provide a more reliable, lower cost but effective alternative to in-pavement lights. The purpose of these efforts is to develop a wide range of tools that can be used to enhance pedestrian safety.

Finally, we salute you for commuting to work by walking. Thank you for being part of the solution to traffic congestion and pollution caused by auto use. If you have any other questions about pedestrian safety or treatments at crosswalks, please contact David Godfrey, Transportation Engineering Manager in the Public Works Department at (425) 587-3865 or dgodfrey@ci.kirkland.wa.us.

Sincerely,
KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

James L. Lauinger
Mayor