



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Public Works
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800
www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

To: Dave Ramsay, City Manager

From: Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director
Iris Cabrera P.E., P.T.O.E., Transportation Engineer

Date: April 1, 2008

Subject: MCFALL PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CORRESPONDENCE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that Council authorize the Mayor to sign the attached response to Ms. Natalie McFall regarding suggestions to enhance pedestrian safety.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

Ms. McFall wrote to the City Council to request that the City increase pedestrian safety measures. She proposes building a sky bridge on Central Way. She would like to know why this idea has not been considered in more depth.

Attachments

11091 Champagne Pt. Rd. NE
Kirkland, WA 98033
February 26, 2007

James L. Lauinger, Mayor of the City of Kirkland
City Council
123 Fifth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

Dear Mayor Lauinger:

I absolutely feel that pedestrian safety in Kirkland is very important. I urgently request you to increase the measures the City takes to insure pedestrian safety.

I understand that in late 2007 the City increased safety measures by changing the color of PedFlags in hope to encourage more people to use the flags. I also think that painting the curbs where the crosswalk starts and displaying the sign about how many people have gotten hit without a PedFlag, as compared to with, is all helpful. I see why these changes were made and I acknowledge that all of this helps increase pedestrian safety. Doing all of this it shows me, along with others, that the City does want to increase pedestrian safety measures. However, I feel they could be increased a significantly more.

I propose building a sky bridge to help pedestrians safely get across the more busy intersections or crosswalks throughout the City. It would be a good idea, especially since many of Kirkland's residents are elderly or young children. I particularly think that the Central Way crosswalk by Peter Kirk Park could use a sky bridge. There are many young children crossing there because of the park. The sky bridge would not only be used at the one crosswalk, but other nearby crosswalks on Central Way could use it too.

As you probably know from 1996 through 2006 there have been ten accidents on Central Way crosswalks from 6th Street to Lake Street, which is almost one-sixth of all the accidents in Kirkland. That is one reason why Central Way is a very good place to build a sky bridge.

Transportation Engineer Iris Cabrera informed me that the matter of putting a sky bridge or overpass in has been considered before, but never really thought about in depth. I would like to know why it wasn't more thoroughly considered. I would like you to reconsider the issue and to know if the City has looked into any costs. The issue of cost may be why a sky bridge or overpass was never really considered, but I think that the City could find a way around the cost issue. One way around the cost issue is that the City could fund some of the project and maybe get sponsors to help pay balance. I personally think that my solution to the vehicle-pedestrian accidents yearly would help to insure pedestrian safety.

Mayor Lauinger, I do realize that PedFlags have the same objective and that there might be some of the same problems with pedestrian sky bridge or overpass, but I would greatly appreciate it if this matter was considered more in depth.

Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Natalie McFall

*(all city council received
this letter)*

11091 Champagne Pt. Rd. NE
Kirkland, WA 98034
February 27, 2008

Mary-Alyce Burleigh, City of Kirkland Council Member
City Council
123 Fifth Avenue
Kirkland, WA 98033

RECEIVED

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CITY OF KIRKLAND
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Dear Councilwoman Burleigh:

Pedestrian safety is very important to Kirkland. Although I recognize that in the past year there have been many changes made by the City to increase the safety of all the pedestrians, I strongly feel that safety measures taken by the City should be increased.

Before the change of the flag color only 8.6 percent of the community used the PedFlags that Kirkland has to offer. I think that the signs on the flag holders and the painted curbs are helpful. It is really great to let everyone know how many people have gotten killed or injured on Kirkland crosswalks; ironically none of them were carrying a PedFlag. Do you know if the percent use of PedFlags has changed? I very much appreciate your efforts to increase pedestrian safety; however, I greatly feel that these measures could be increased even more.

I urgently request the City to increase these safety measures by putting in a sky bridge or overpass on some of the busy and dangerous crosswalks and intersections. This would be a good idea because a majority of Kirkland's citizens are elderly or young children. I propose to build a sky bridge over the crosswalk on Central Way by Peter Kirk Park, because it is used by many young children. The sky bridge would not be exclusively for that crosswalk, nearby or surrounding crosswalks could use it as well. I feel it would be a good idea for Central Way considering the fact that from 1996 to 2006 ten accidents have happened just from the segment of 6th Street to Lake Street. That number makes up almost one-sixth of all the accidents that have happened in Kirkland, and that is a considerable amount.

I would estimate that the sky bridge would cost somewhere around \$2.4 million. I do recognize that this could not all be funded by the City alone, but maybe the city could pay for some of the expenses and the rest could be paid for by sponsors. I talked to transportation engineer Iris Cabrera and she informed me that this matter has been brought up before but it was quickly dropped and never considered in depth. I would like to know why this was never fully considered, and what I can do to get this matter reopened.

I realize that the sky bridge or overpass might run into some of the same problems that the PedFlags ran into and would be much more costly; however, I still strongly feel that this is a very good idea that could really help increase pedestrian safety in the City of Kirkland.

Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Natalie McFall

April 1, 2008

DRAFT

Ms. Natalie McFall
11091 Champagne Pt Rd NE
Kirkland, WA 98034

Dear Ms. McFall:

Thank you for your letter recognizing the City's ongoing pedestrian safety efforts and requesting increased measures to enhance pedestrian safety.

The City's most recent efforts to improve pedestrian safety include the improved PedFlag Program, better lighting, adding refuge islands at mid-block crosswalks and moving curbs to make crossing easier. Because pedestrian safety does not depend on engineering measures only, staff is also working on pedestrian education and enforcing laws that protect pedestrians.

Thank you for your suggestion of an overpass bridge to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. At your suggestion, staff has looked at the issue of sky bridges in more detail. Although they are appropriate in some places, like crossing I-405, they also have some serious limitations. First, they are very expensive, costing over \$2 million. Also, in part because they require long ramps for wheelchair users, they take up a large area and can be visually unattractive. Finally, and most importantly, we found that studies show that even when a sky bridge is installed, pedestrians tend to not use it. Pedestrians, particularly older pedestrians choose to cross at street level rather than climb the stairs or ramps at both ends of the bridge.

The City Council appreciates your taking the time to express your thoughts. The City will continue its efforts to keep pedestrian safety in the mind of the community.

Sincerely,
KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

James Lauinger, Mayor