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CITY OF CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL



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Chair, Committee on Pedestrian and
Traffic Safety

Vice Chair, Committee on Contracting
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MONTHLY REPORT – FEBRUARY 2024 **COMMITTEE ON PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Pursuant to the Rule 45 of City of Chicago Rules and Order, the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety submits the following monthly report for February 2024.

Date, Time, & Location of Meeting:

On Tuesday, February 6th, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety held a meeting at City Hall in Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 10:16 a.m.

Members in Attendance:

Chairman La Spata (1st Ward)
Alderman Hopkins (2nd Ward) - virtual
Alderman Robinson (4th Ward) - virtual
Alderman Yancy (5th Ward)
Alderman Chico (10th Ward)
Alderman Quinn (13th Ward)
Alderman Moore (17th Ward) - virtual
Alderman Curtis (18th Ward) - virtual
Alderman Ervin (28th Ward)
Vice Chairman Cruz (30th Ward)
Alderman Knudsen (43rd Ward) - virtual
Alderman Lawson (44th Ward)
Alderman Martin (47th Ward)
Alderman Manaa-Hoppenworth (48th Ward)

Absent Members: Vice Mayor Burnett (27th Ward)

The Chairman accepted a motion from Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth to allow for remote participation by Ald. Hopkins, Ald. Robinson, Ald. Moore, Ald. Curtis, and Ald. Knudsen, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Public Comment:

There were 3 written and 12 spoken public comments for this meeting.

Written comment is included in its entirety starting on page 4, submitted by: Tyler Reed, Jeremy Wolff, and Chicago TheatreMaker.

Spoken Public Comment was provided by the following individuals (in order of appearance):

- Natasha G.: third visit and disappointed with the way that the City handles business; has issue with Complete Streets; shared concerns about immigration
- Jessica J.: upset with 2 minute maximum of public comment; shared concerns about immigration
- Edgar R.: part of a group of volunteers with other parents and shared school safety is major concern, citing dangers for parents, children, and wider community around Maria Saucedo Scholastic Academy; emphasized need to work together for greater safety and implementation of solutions
- Mary Carmen S.: 25-year resident of Marshall Boulevard; spoke about traffic accidents around the school that her children attend, which she and her children have been victim of as well; noted progress that boulevards have had as part of beautification but concerned that schools aren't prioritized and lack of ADA ramps, bumpouts, etc.; why are schools / kids not being prioritized for safety concerns?
- M. Diaz, Kids First Chicago: parent from Gage Park working with Kids First Chicago and Solorio school administration to try to address traffic safety concerns; named that there are five schools within a few blocks of one another with a total of 3,900 students between them with Amazon warehouse and a truck parking lot in this area too, which can be dangerous, especially during arrival and departure of students
- Lilia G, Kids First Chicago: parent of student at Garcia High School; been with Kids First Chicago for three years trying to improve safety conditions around Acero Schools; says issues have been raised with the principal since eight years ago and parents are disappointed because they haven't seen any changes; here today to hope they can get support from alders to collaborate and find solutions
- Tim Chambrook: appreciates the committee talking about how to make our city better and make it grow; need to allow people the opportunity to leave their car at home and still be able to get around; with better and reliable transit, bike, pedestrian infrastructure, some of the traffic safety issues around schools would be solved too; curious about rollout of pilot for bus and bike lane infractions in the loop
- Carston Lohan: commented on Chicago/Halsted project in the 27th Ward – finds the current plan substantially lacking with regard to pedestrian and cyclist and transit rider benefits and safety; main concerns is the omission of dedicated bus lane as Chicago Avenue route is the second-most-ridden route; would like connected bus lanes and a city that's more equitable for people who don't drive
- George Blakemore: upset about 2 minute maximum for public comment
- Ada G.: working as a crossing guard; at the intersection of 47th and Kildare, signage is needed to let people know they are entering a school zone; because there are many factories nearby, it is hard to identify that the other buildings are schools; not the only school area with safety problems; proposes that at the beginning of each school year, brochures/info on regulations and rules be shared
- Austin B.: addressed proposed Chicago/Halsted design in 27th Ward; current design would leave bikes completely exposed and project doesn't include bus lanes either; proposed design leaves a significant gap in the bike network; no pedestrian refuge island, which will be dangerous at night; implores for pause in project until it incorporates Complete Streets elements for all users
- Sativa V., Sierra Club: co-chair of Sierra Club's transportation team; emphasized need for City to be accessible to all of its users, not just those with cars; experiences every day how the City is not safe for pedestrians at various crosswalks on her commute; complete streets need to meet everyone's needs

Approval of January 2024 Rule 45 Report:

Ald. Cruz moved to approve, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Agenda of Matters Considered:

The Agenda of Matters Considered consisted of 13 pages and included the following matters:

- Subject matter hearing on Chicago's Complete Streets Guidelines,
- 169 ordinances related to disabled parking permits,
- 26 ordinances related to parking restrictions,
- 12 ordinances related to traffic warning signs and/or signals, and
- 8 ordinances related to residential parking permit zones.

Direct Introductions on page 2 Passed without Department recommendations. Ald. Yancy moved to approve all Direct Introduction ordinances, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 3-5 Passed as Recommended by the appropriate Department(s). Ald. Cruz moved to approve all Recommended ordinances on pages 3-5, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 6-13 Passed with No Recommendation. These items were submitted as aldermanic overrides or received no recommendations from City Departments. Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth moved to approve all No Recommendation ordinances on pages 6-13, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All actions taken at the meeting were by viva voce vote.

The subject matter hearing topic was Chicago's Complete Streets Guidelines pursuant to section 10-14 of the Chicago Municipal Code.

Acting Commissioner Tom Carney, Vig Krishnamurthy, and Dave Smith attended on behalf of the Chicago Department of Transportation. Acting Commissioner Carney led the presentation, displaying and discussing the different elements of the guidelines and showing examples of the elements in completed projects around the city.

Alders La Spata, Manaa-Hoppenworth, Chico, Lawson, and Martin shared comments and asked questions following the presentation. Questions fell into the topics of ensuring equitable infrastructure investments across the city, technical implementation of the guidelines, the Safe Streets Pilot, and open communication and collaboration between departments.

Having no further business before the committee, Chairman La Spata requested a motion to adjourn. Ald. Martin so moved, and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Written Public Comment:

Tyler Reed, submitted February 2, 2024:

Will the legislative body look into asking CPD to enforce the Illinois Rules of the Road for bicyclists? While the City often looks into ways to ensure that motor vehicle drivers are obeying the Illinois Rules of the Road, I also believe this committee has the responsibility to ensure that bike riders are following the rules as well.

There seems to be NO ACCOUNTABILITY for bike riders in the City of Chicago, and no mention of bike rider responsibilities when incidents involving motor vehicles occur that lead to injury or a fatality.

This committee does ALL CITIZENS a disservice by allowing bike riders in the city to break the law without consequence.

It's also important to note that there is a disparity in tickets issues to bike riders in the City of Chicago. An Oct 2021 Suntimes article reported that CPD issues tickets at higher rates to Black and Latino bike riders on the South and West Sides of the city. Black people are issued tickets at 8x the rate as Whites. Latino's are issued tickets at 3x the rate as Whites.

What can this committee do to ensure that all people are safe while commuting as I see the following laws dismissed by bike, riders https://www.ilsos.gov/publications/pdf_publications/dsd_a143.pdf

- 1. I don't see bike riders in Chicago yielding the right of way to pedestrians. As stated in the law: Yielding the Right of Way Since bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of vehicles and pedestrians, the rules that govern the right of way for motorists and pedestrians apply to bicyclists also. When bicycling, you must follow rules that govern the right of way.*
- 2. I don't see bike riders in Chicago coming to a complete stop or stopping at all when approaching 2 and/or 4 way intersections with STOP SIGNS present. As stated in the law: Two-way Intersections — When coming to a stop sign at a two-way stop intersection, you must yield the right of way to pedestrians and vehicles on the cross street before proceeding. Four-way Intersections — When arriving at four-way stop intersection, the vehicle or bicyclist who arrives first at the intersection should be the first to go. Take turns and go one by one through the intersection after coming to a complete stop. Proceed only when it is safe to do so.*
- 3. I don't see bike riders in Chicago coming to a complete stop at RED LIGHTS. The law does allow for bike riders to pass through red lights, only after waiting at least 120 seconds. As stated in the law: Bicyclists, as well as drivers, must obey all traffic signs and signals. The signs and signals warn of railroad crossings and other hazards and advise you where you may ride your bike. Traffic Lights Red Light — You must stop before the intersection or crosswalk until the light changes to green.*

Jeremy Wolff, submitted February 3, 2024:

Dear Committee Members,

I am Jeremy, a resident of the 33rd ward.

In 2017, the City of Chicago unveiled an 85-page Vision Zero Action Plan, a collaborative effort involving 12 city departments. The mayor articulated the plan's goal - to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries on Chicago's streets by 2026.

This plan draws inspiration from a 1997 Sweden Vision Zero initiative, emphasizing the urgent need to address traffic fatalities. However, we find ourselves seven years past Chicago's Vision Zero launch, and the progress of the Complete Streets program, intended to transform streets into safe, equitable spaces, is concerning due to its sluggish pace.

While the terms "equitable" and "inviting" are open to interpretation, the concrete measure of safety lies in our proximity to Vision Zero. Unfortunately, the current trajectory of Complete Streets suggests that it will take decades to be implemented citywide, a delay Vision Zero cannot afford.

To expedite Chicago's journey to Vision Zero, I propose three measures:

- 1. Accelerate the implementation of bump outs, a feature already employed by Complete Streets. This can be achieved swiftly by establishing a dedicated CDOT bump-out team tasked with deploying planters and flex posts at Chicago's most perilous pedestrian intersections. This low-cost solution would have a substantial impact on safety. We don't need to wait for a whole street transformation or funding for concrete curbs to do bump outs and save lives.*
- 2. Address the lack of enforcement in bike and bus lanes. Immediate action is needed to ticket and tow vehicles violating these lanes. Implementing the Smart Streets Ordinance would be a step forward. Additionally, empowering CDOT to enforce violations aligns with their mandate to enhance bike and bus lanes, focusing on public safety and transit efficiency. They can use cameras or bounty systems to implement, or given the authority, hire and deploy CDOT agents specifically tasked to the most violated lanes, and increase enforcement until there are almost zero violations (Finance is unable to do this do to equity concerns, but a CDOT tasked with public safety wouldn't face this limitation)*
- 3. Improve loading zones for delivery drivers by creating multiple, sizable zones on every block. Funding for this initiative can be generated through an ordinance requiring annual fees from delivery and rideshare companies, and per vehicle fees. Strict fines, not less than \$500, should be imposed on vehicles parked illegally within 20' of crosswalks, in bike lanes, and in bus lanes/stops, reinforcing the importance of adherence to traffic laws.*

In conclusion, the effectiveness of Complete Streets is hindered by the lack of enforcement of existing ordinances; just look at the bike and bus lanes on Complete Streets being used as parking spots. It is imperative that we prioritize the implementation and enforcement of measures to ensure Chicago's streets align with the Vision Zero goal. It is also essential that the elements of Complete Streets that save lives, like bump outs, be implemented faster by putting in place a dedicated team that can work quickly and use low cost immediate solutions. And Complete Streets ignoring delivery vehicle needs is putting them on crutches. Your support in implementing these proposals will contribute significantly to creating safer and more efficient public spaces.

Thank you for your attention to these critical matters.

*Sincerely,
Jeremy*

Chicago TheatreMaker, submitted February 5, 2024:

Hello,

I'd like to learn more about the design guidelines for raised crosswalks, and I'd like city council members to encourage CDOT to standardize raised crosswalks in every complete streets project. Many of the raised crosswalks are not steep enough to get drivers to meaningfully change their behavior. Raised crosswalks are also somewhat expensive, so we need to build them effectively going forward.

Lastly, want to share my belief that not all complete streets have to be completed with cars.