

From: [Robbie Webber](#)
To: [Transportation Commission](#)
Subject: Item 8: Going back to pushing pedestrian buttons
Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 4:33:29 PM

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I won't be able to log in to the meeting tonight, so I wanted to send comments to request that the city NOT go back to making pedestrians push the button to get a walk light and sufficient time to cross.

The reasons for selecting locations to disable the pedestrian recall button and have a walk light on every cycle are still relevant. Locations with high pedestrian/bicyclist usage, near essential services, and near high-use transit stops should **always** have automatic walk lights. The list of locations looks like it was well researched and appropriate. Let's keep the good practices and habits we've developed and not revert to assuming we must make it easy to move motor vehicles and other modes come second.

Needing to press a pedestrian button to get a walk light and an appropriate crossing interval can be a burden, a deterrent to walking/biking, and a safety problem.

Burden: If one misses the chance to press the button before parallel traffic gets a green, one must wait through an entire cycle to get another chance. Or, one can violate state law and common safety standards by trying to run across on a shortened cycle. This, of course, assumes that one is strong, healthy, and fleet of feet.

Safety: Many people, realizing that they have missed the chance to get a walk light will simply try to cross anyway. They will face a shortened cycle and may not realize that turning vehicles are not going to yield. They may also get stuck in the middle of the road on a median, or even in the middle of traffic that now has a green.

Transit users, perhaps facing a tight schedule and seeing their bus approach, are especially vulnerable to making a risky crossing without a walk light.

In addition, bicyclists that have to shimmy over to the curb or sidewalk to press the pedestrian button have now put themselves in a less-visible position for other road users. Right turning drivers may cut them off, and they may get squeezed out of a safe position because they are no longer in the middle of the lane.

Deterrent: Anything that forces an additional action on non-motorized users of the public rights of way compared to those using motorized transport discourages walking, biking, and transit use. Not being able to safely and easily cross the road can be the difference between making a trip pleasant and logical without a car vs making it seem abnormal. Feeling unsafe is one of the primary reasons people give for not walking, biking, and using transit. Let's facilitate those modes, not make them more difficult.

For all these reasons, I ask you to both reconsider going back to pedestrians pushing buttons and consider if the list of locations really needs to be as long as it is. Keep more automatic walk lights. Fewer places where we have to push buttons.

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Transportation geek

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