

REPORT / RECOMMENDATION



To: Edina Transportation Commission

Agenda Item #: VI. B.

From: Mark K. Nolan, AICP, Transportation Planner

Action

Discussion

Date: February 19, 2015

Information

Subject: "Respect is a Two-Way Street" Street Safety Campaign Messages

Action Requested:

Feedback regarding the revised "Respect is a Two-Way Street" Street Safety Campaign

Information / Background:

Please recall that in August of 2014, the ETC considered a draft street safety campaign prepared by City staff titled "Respect is a Two-Way Street." This campaign is being developed to focus on promoting safe walking, biking and driving behavior on Edina's roadways. At the August 2014 meeting, Commissioners provided staff with input and feedback regarding the proposed plan, and City staff from the Communications, Administration, Engineering and Police Departments has continued to meet to revise the proposal. As discussed previously, an eight-month effort is envisioned, starting in the spring of 2015, with a monthly topical focus. This campaign is called "Respect is a Two-Way Street." Please review the attached memorandum and share your comments.

Attachments:

Memorandum: Communications messages and materials for street safety campaign

Communications & Technology Services Department
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Date: Feb. 3, 2015

To: City Manager Scott Neal
Police Chief Dave Nelson
Engineering Director Chad Millner
Lt. Tim Olson

cc: Senior Communications Coordinator Kaylin Martin
Communications Coordinator Jordan Gilgenbach
City Management Fellow Lindy Crawford

From: Communications & Technology Services Director Jennifer Bennerotte
Transportation Planner Mark Nolan

Re: Communications messages and materials for street safety campaign

Background

The City of Edina has been working for years to make Edina easier and safer to navigate by foot and bike. The City has made strides over the last several years to make biking through and around Edina easier and more convenient. The City has about 16 miles of on-street bicycle facilities and 3 miles of off-road bike facilities – figures that will continue to grow. The Engineering Department’s goal is to add 2.5 miles of new bike facilities each year. In the last two years, more than 9 miles of bike facilities were added around the community. Additionally, in December the City Council approved a Comprehensive Plan Amendment updating the City’s sidewalk facilities map, which now looks to add an additional 40 miles of sidewalk to the City’s 78 miles of sidewalk over the next 20 to 30 years.

In May of 2014, the City was named a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. Edina is one of only 11 cities in the state to have any level designation from the League. A Bicycle Friendly Community encourages people to bike for transportation and recreation to improve public health, reduce traffic demands, improve air quality and better an individual’s physical fitness. According to the League, such communities are more connected, active and environmentally sustainable, and see increased property values, business growth and tourism.

An education campaign for all street users (motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists) is one of the Transportation Commission’s work plan goals. As a result, in recent months, requests for communications materials have been made by both the Police and Engineering departments. Beginning in June 2014, staff from multiple departments began meeting to discuss and formulate a City-wide education campaign, including determining appropriate messages and materials for an eight-month campaign. The campaign is on the Police Department’s work plan for 2015. Staff believes that the campaign should foster a culture of respect among all street users and should be modeled after Edina Police Department’s “Focus In” campaign, with a monthly focus on a safety topic.

***Messaging***

The theme of the campaign will be "Respect is a Two-Way Street." Key messages, developed from those used by the League of American Bicyclists and Yield to Life, for the eight months will be:

Different but Equal/Follow the Law.

In all states, cyclists are deemed by law to be drivers of vehicles and are entitled to the same rights on the road as motorists.

Motorists: Expect cyclists on the road. Watch for cyclists on the road. Treat them as you would any slow-moving vehicle.

Bicyclists: Your safety and image of bicyclists depend on you. You have the same rights and duties as drivers. Obey traffic signals and stop signs. Ride with traffic; use the rightmost portion of a lane or roadway where space allows. Signal your turns. Ride no more than two abreast in a single lane but do not impede normal and reasonable movement of traffic.

Respect

Cyclists have a rightful spot on the road, and even the sidewalk. Do not resent cyclists. Replace frustration with a smile every time you see a cyclist.

Be Predictable and Visible.

Bicyclists: Make your intentions clear to everyone on the road. Ride in a straight line and don't swerve between parked cars. Signal turns, and check behind you well before turning or changing lanes.

Ride where people can see you and wear bright clothing. Use a front white light, red rear light and reflectors when visibility is poor. Make eye contact with others, and if you choose to ride on the sidewalk, slow down and yield to pedestrians.

Motorists: Do not pass a cyclist until you can see that you can safely do so. You should allow ample space between your vehicle and the bicycle and make sure you do not place the cyclist in danger. If you pass too closely, the drag from your vehicle can pull a cyclist off course and cause the rider to swerve out of control.

Pedestrians: Use the sidewalk – it's unlawful to walk along the roadway if there's an accessible sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left side of the roadway (when practicable), facing traffic. Cross at intersections or marked crosswalks when not at an intersection; pedestrians have the right-of-way at these locations.

Patience, not Patients.

Motorists: Patience, especially on the road, is a virtue, and can save lives. Your patience may involve:

- Waiting until it is safe to pass a bicycle and refraining from tailgating.
- Giving cyclists the right of way when the situation calls for it.
- Allowing extra time for cyclists and pedestrians to go through intersections.
- Recognizing road hazards that may be dangerous for cyclists and giving cyclists the necessary space to deal with them. In conditions where there is not enough room for a cyclist to ride to



- the right, they are allowed to ride closer to the lane of traffic, and sometimes even in the lane of traffic.
- Stop in advance of a stop sign, stop line or crosswalk and yield to pedestrians

Never engage in conduct that harasses or endangers a cyclist or pedestrian. Above all: Be tolerant. Be understanding. Be careful.

The Right Behavior.

Motorists: Watch out for pedestrians and cyclists when you are turning right. A bicyclist may well be to the right of you and planning to go straight at the same intersection. Do not speed ahead of the bicyclist thinking you can negotiate the turn before they reach your car. The cyclist may be going faster than you think and, as you slow to make the turn, the cyclist may not be able to avoid crashing into the passenger side of your vehicle.

To the Left, To the Left.

Motorists: Also look for cyclists when making a left-hand turn. Cyclists who are crossing straight through the same intersection in the opposite direction may be going faster than you realize. It is particularly dangerous on a descending slope, when cyclists pick up more speed.

A Back-up Plan.

Motorists: Bicycles, and the people who drive them, come in all shapes and sizes. When backing out of your driveway always look to see if someone is riding in your path or approaching on a sidewalk. Pedestrians and children on small bikes might be hard to see. Drive slowly and look carefully.

Honing Your Honking Habit.

Motorists: Do not honk unnecessarily at cyclists. If the need arises to honk your horn to alert a cyclist who you are about to pass, do so at a respectable distance. If you are too close, the noise itself can cause a cyclist to lose his or her bearings and create a hazardous situation for both you and the cyclist.

The footer of some materials will have a call to action to "Try it, You'll Like It." Supporting messages could be "Ride a bike or walk. It may just change your life. Riding and walking is good for you and good for your environment. At the very least, it will give you a better appreciation for the problems cyclists and pedestrians face every day on the road with respect to motorists."

Though the City Code was recently amended to allow bicyclists to ride on sidewalks, the group decided not promote riding bikes on sidewalks, but rather let the rules be known and use messaging such as "When you choose to ride on sidewalks, [this is the procedure.]"

Project Elements

The group agreed to follow the communications model of the Edina Police Department's "Focus In" campaign, with a monthly focus on a safety topic. Ongoing during this eight-month campaign would be website updates, social media posts and video bulletin board messages, all done in house and at no charge to the Police or Engineering departments. Whenever appropriate, stories will be included in *About Town, Edition: Edina* and "Agenda: Edina" and video public service announcements created. Press releases and video content would also be developed each month.



To bring additional attention to the campaign, the group agreed to work on newspaper advertisements, posters, brochures and other promotional and informational pieces.

Doing all of the above projects would cost approximately \$4,600-\$6,100, plus staff time. Funding for the campaign would come from an \$8,000 SHIP grant, Pedestrian and Cycling Safety (PACS) Fund and perhaps \$400 or \$500 from the Edina Crime Prevention Fund.

Edina Public Schools will be asked to support the campaign by allowing the City to hang posters in the schools and occasionally attach promotional and informational pieces to bike racks at schools. Through an existing agreement between the Communications & Technology Services Department and Edina Public Schools, a story on the campaign could be written by City staff and inserted in the school district's newsletter. Additionally, some ads can be placed free-of-charge in Community Education catalogs. We may want to ask if we could have a presence at some of the school district's larger events, such as school carnivals in the spring. There, we could distribute information and reflective sliders.

Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to meet again to discuss the plan. Otherwise, it should be routed through your departments and the Transportation Commission for feedback. Then, we can finalize the plan and begin work so that the campaign is ready to be rolled out in the spring.

Thank you!