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From: Thomas Boyd
To: "Krista Tidgwell" <tidgek@halifax.ca>
Date: 08/12/2010 5:46 pm
Subject: RE: FW: Study on sidewalk markings and pedestrian safety

Hi Krista,

This information was passed to me from Hanita and received as part of my role as a member on the ATAC. We have had this issue of marking pedestrian crosswalks come up several times at our committee meetings.

I am surprised in the information provided not to be told about the problem with using (Zebra markings) is that the paint in crosswalks causes the roadway to be slippery when it is applied to pavement and when the roads are wet. Pedestrians could fall and then HRM could be responsible and it becomes a liability issue. I would imagine by not properly marking the crosswalk one could also say that too could be a liability issue but that has never been addressed.

It always seemed to be a lame reason, yet in the past one given by HRM's staff. As we know crosswalks can be even more dangerous for persons with disabilities.

The solution is simple buy anti-slip paint and use it in crosswalks like other cities do.

This could be an item for our next meeting, to have Taso come to discuss this "study on sidewalk marking and pedestrian safety". It seems that the study supports the zebra markings.

What are your thoughts?

Regards,
Tom

-----Original Message-----

From: Hanita Koblenh [mailto:koblenh@halifax.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, December 08, 2010 3:27 PM
To: Scott MacPhee; Tom Boyd; Janet Barlow; Jennifer McGowan; stevebedard; Jennifer Watts; Erik Larson
Subject: Re: FW: Study on sidewalk markings and pedestrian safety

Hi All,

In addition to reading this study, I thought you should probably also see the comments of one of HRM's transportation planning engineers:

>>> Alan Taylor 08/12/2010 10:47 am >>>

Thank you for forwarding this interesting study. The results of the study are really not surprising. Taso knows better than I why HRM uses the standard 2-parallel-lines treatment instead of the zebra. However, in reading this study there are at least three significant problems in comparing the results in terms of a practical effect on driver behaviour.

The first problem is that in every jurisdiction in Canada, marked crosswalks are always accompanied by side-mounted signs (or a stop sign, or a traffic

signal). This is not normal in the US, as can be noted by looking at the illustrations in the report. (Some US jurisdictions have yellow side-mounted signs for school crosswalks only - none of them use the Canadian crosswalk signs with a black-on-white symbol. Black-on-white is regulatory - you can get a ticket - while black on yellow warning signs are not enforceable.) (I believe in Great Britain, at least, zebra crosswalks are always accompanied by signs or Belisha Beacons.)

The second problem is driver culture. I believe that in different parts of the US and in different parts of Canada driver behaviour is different as well. To me results of a test of behaviour of Montreal-area or Toronto-area drivers may not be that applicable to Halifax. Similarly in the US, different areas have different driver cultures. For example, drivers in Washington State stick closer to the speed limits than they do in other states because Washington State enforcement gives out tickets (that are upheld by their courts) for speeds just over 5 mph above the limit. In other states (and provinces) the tolerance is greater. This study looked at the detection of markings reported by the drivers themselves, out of a sample (presumably) of drivers from the College Station area of Texas. It would be better to test drivers from other areas, and it would be better to try to get an objective measure of detection (a camera following eye-movements perhaps).

Another problem is one of relative novelty - new and unusual markings are probably quicker to come to drivers' consciousness than standard ones. So the continental markings might stand out for that reason.

Even so maybe zebra crosswalks are better, and this study shows some indication of that, but there probably needs to be more study before we change (we - Canada) our standard. There is also some concern for slipperiness for pedestrians of the wide bars that they must walk on - another pattern to test is called "piano key pattern" which has the wide bars but with a path in the middle without paint. Also the "double ladder". (see attachments)

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>>> Jennifer McGowan
Hi all,

08/12/2010 2:27 pm >>>

In case you haven't seen this yet. Sorry if you have received this already! Some interesting pedestrian safety research.

Jen

-----Original Message-----
From: David MacIsaac

Sent: December 8, 2010 7:17 AM

To: TIC_List

Subject: Study on sidewalk markings and pedestrian safety

I came across this US study that compared different crosswalk markings. The results were dramatic for pedestrian safety.

Three marking patterns were studied: two where the markings are parallel to the street (like the Beatles crossing Abby Road) and one which is the standard that we have here in Halifax. In the study, drivers noticed the crosswalk with the Abby Road markings at TWICE the distance of the markings we use here.