

Pedestrian Flags Over Dane County

Below is a sample neighborhood newsletter or community newspaper article you can use to educate area residents about flagged crossings. Feel free to adapt it as is useful. Contact the Safe Community Coalition at 256-6713 or 238-5612 for more information.

PEDESTRIANS ARISE: CARRY YOUR FLAG HIGH!

Having a hard time crossing the street? The _____ Neighborhood Association/ _____ Police Department is planning to address this issue at the intersection of _____ and _____ by participating in a new initiative sponsored by the Safe Community Coalition: *Pedestrian Flags Over Dane County*.

Here's how it works: To give walkers courage and drivers a clear visual signal that the pedestrian means to cross, pedestrian picks up a flag from a bucket at the curb, waves the flag to drivers to communicate his intent to cross the street, and returns the flag to a similar bucket on the other side of the street so it's there for the next person.

Salt Lake City is using these flags at 105 intersections. As a result of the flagged crossings, Salt Lake City's ranking as among the worst U.S. cities for pedestrians has drastically improved. After three years of experience with the flags, Salt Lake City has had only one pedestrian injury at a flagged crossing.

In Dane County, wary pedestrians have indeed been afraid to assert their rights in the face of drivers who are ignorant or dismissive of the law. The state statutes require that drivers yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk, marked or unmarked, at every (however busy) intersection without traffic signals. However, a recent survey shows that about 3/4 of drivers don't know the law.

Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Association brought the idea of pedestrian flags to Dane County.

With a mini-grant from the Safe Community Coalition (SCC), a local organization advocating traffic safety, we expect to schedule the inauguration of our flag crossing for early June, tentatively at the _____ intersection. This is a heavily used pedestrian crossing (with _____ recent ped/car crashes, many children or elderly pedestrians, or many frustrated pedestrians, etc.) If the project is successful, we plan to expand it, as person power permits, to other popular pedestrian crossing points. The SCC hopes to replicate it at pedestrian crossings around the community to provide the efficient, safe, and pleasant experience that pedestrians require to continue walking.

How you can help? Please use the flags even if you think you don't need them, so drivers learn to expect them, and will be on the look-out for assertive pedestrians. It will help the more vulnerable elderly and children when they need to cross. As a driver, and nearly all of us are pedestrians and drivers, please yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, with or without flags.

Also, we are asking for help from all those people who have told us that crossing _____ is an Olympics-level challenge. We need short-term help with signs to instruct drivers, initial pedestrian training, publicity, and monitoring our flags (initially we'd like them brought in at night to avoid theft). If you have questions or can help, please contact _____.