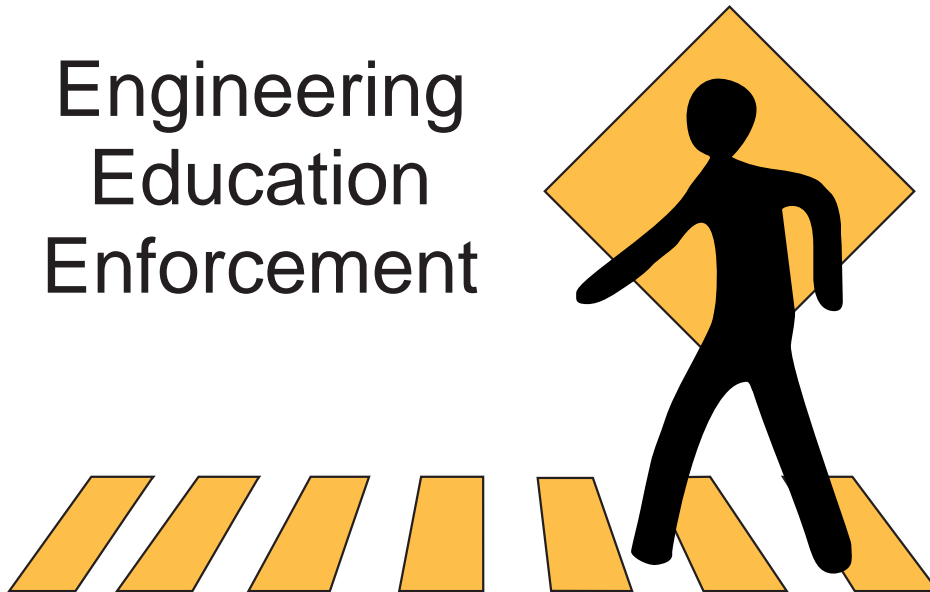


Pedestrian Safety

On and Around The UALR Campus

Engineering
Education
Enforcement



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**Pedestrian Safety On and Around
The UALR Campus**

**Report to Chancellor Joel Anderson
May 2004**

Introduction

A quality pedestrian safety program at UALR should be built on three strong pillars: *engineering, education, and enforcement*. Of the three pillars, engineering is the most important to plan correctly before proceeding. Once roads exist, the built environment lasts for decades. Education and enforcement can be improved from time to time without costly consequences. Improving the built environment can be very costly.

We believe that good pedestrian and motorist behavior can be taught. We seek well-planned and executed designs for crosswalks, medians, and other physical improvements. And, we appreciate the need for assuring that both walkers and drivers follow the rules established for their safety. Perhaps these premises are evident, yet we feel they need emphasizing. We have based our findings and recommendations on a balance of these mutually reinforcing supports; without any one of them, the strategies we put forth are weakened.

Over four months in late 2003 and early 2004, a task force numbering ten faculty members, staff, and students discussed, read about, and observed pedestrian and motorist behavior. The death of Asst. Prof. Rhonda Lewis on October 2, struck by a speeding, out-of-control car as she walked across University Avenue, provoked the study, commissioned by Chancellor Anderson.

We have organized our recommendations by zones (i.e. University Avenue, 28th Street, Fair Park, Campus, and Asher Avenue) and included a section on education. We appreciate the contributions of Amy Barnes and Kim Fox of the Office of Communications in preparing a Pedestrian Safety Education Plan, which appears as Appendix C. Complete lists of all recommendations forms Appendices A and B. We appreciate the many suggestions we received from students, staff, and faculty; we considered them all, regardless of cost or feasibility, although our recommendations are grounded in the reality of limited funding.

Many of our recommendations must be carried out in cooperation with the City of Little Rock and other entities. For purposes of this report, we have not assigned responsibilities. However, we assume the reader will know that changes to the city streetscape require City action. We have been encouraged by the cooperation of Jim McKenzie at Metroplan and Bob Turner, Guy Lowe

and Bill Henry from the City in our study. We have every expectation that such cooperation will lead to positive changes for the University District.

The task force met with experts and professionals in the fields of pedestrian safety, vehicular traffic management, transportation planning, and civil engineering. We conducted library and on-line research, interviewed students, faculty, and staff, convened five on-campus public hearings, conducted pedestrian counts at key crossings, and observed walking and driving behavior during daylight and nighttime hours.

The Context of an Urban Campus

The inherent nature of a busy urban campus requires constant vigilance over the movement of vehicles and pedestrians. They share many of the same pathways and frequently cross each other's route. Each university campus develops differently in space and time for different purposes. Commuter campuses particularly face the dilemma of desiring to serve their driving public while not giving over untoward amounts of valuable space to cars. At the same time, universities desire to serve and protect their walking public by designing a network of walking paths and visually pleasing, safe plazas, while controlling their passage to zones that don't unduly conflict with vehicular right-of-way. The following list outlines the particular challenges facing UALR as an urban, commuter campus.

1. **Increased density.** UALR's main campus presents a special set of circumstances created by increasing density of buildings, parking lots, cars, and pedestrians on a relatively small expanse of land. A busy north-south thoroughfare defines the western edge of campus, yet must be crossed by pedestrians frequenting restaurants or retrieving their parked cars. UALR over time has doubled in enrollment and vehicles while not greatly expanding its landmass. This realization frames recommendations focused on the control of highly interactive pedestrian and vehicular movement.
2. **The nature of class schedules and a limited road network.** Unlike a residential campus, UALR is a commuter campus with one residence hall and a limited number of bus riders. There are 1,944 motorists assigned to reserved lots and approximately 5,000 open parking permits issued each academic year. That's a huge number of cars that arrive at a limited number of entrances and campus drives. During concentrated periods of the academic day (8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5:30 to 9 p.m.), Public Safety estimates that there are 3,500 cars vying for the 3,741 parking places on campus whose operators may have departed too late from home or work and who are anxious to park and get to class on time. Under pressures of congestion and time, they sometimes make bad choices regarding their relationships with pedestrians. Once those motorists alight on foot, they

go on taking chances—by jaywalking and cutting across active parking lots, for example—to get to class on time.

3. **Heavy concentration of night classes.** Research and common sense show that more accidents occur at night when visibility is limited. UALR offers a great number of class sections between 5:40 and 10:00 p.m. They bring over 3,000 pedestrians to campus. During the winter months, a season of a standard time zone and rainy weather, visibility is impaired, putting a premium on good lighting and pavement markings.
4. **A considerable number of disabled students.** UALR has a proactive, supportive program that attracts students with various disabilities to the UALR campus. Students in wheelchairs and those who are hearing or visually impaired have particular challenges crossing streets and dealing with vehicular traffic that crosses their paths.
5. **UALR as an “open” campus.** Anyone can drive through campus at any time of the day or night. Beyond security concerns, such a high degree of access means that through traffic is competing with parking traffic and pedestrians for easy movement through campus. These competing needs increase friction on and around campus roadways. Observation indicates a heavy use of 28th Street (connecting Oak Forest with University Avenue) and Campus Drive and 32nd Street as a route south to Asher Avenue.
6. **Importance of University Avenue to Little Rock.** A quick glance at a city map detects a lack of north-south arterial routes. In fact, University Avenue is one of only three thoroughfares (the others being I-430 on the west and I-30 on the east). Hence, city traffic engineers have pushed hard for widening University Avenue to three lanes each direction from I-30 on the south to Markham Street on the north. From the perspective of moving cars, such a widening is necessary and desirable; from a pedestrian perspective and creation of a “university district” or community that strengthens the relationship of the campus and the shopping district, widening poses new challenges.
7. **Traffic counts on University and Asher Avenue.** The corollary to point 6 is that University and Asher Avenue have some of the highest traffic counts (and corresponding accident rates) in the state. University Avenue carries 27,000 vehicles a day, 30 percent over recommended capacity. Asher Avenue carries 23,000 vehicles, resulting in their intersection being ranked the busiest in the state. Motorists go from a higher-speed, packed corridor to a low-speed, packed corridor as they enter the campus. The abrupt transition is difficult to make for drivers intent on getting to class on time.
8. **UALR’s location in an area developed in the 1960s-1980s.** Architectural and infrastructure design reflects the decade(s) in which it was used to create public and

private buildings, public and private spaces. Examples in the University District abound. Most relevant to pedestrians is the 1970s habit of building streets without sidewalks; hence, we have a 1.2-mile stretch of University Avenue with an intermittent sidewalk along its western edge. The sidewalk along the eastern side, inside the university's fence, was built by UALR. All it takes is one journey along the west side curb for pedestrians seeking lunch to realize their uncomfortable proximity to speeding traffic.

9. **Importance of University and Asher Avenues to UALR.** Chancellor Anderson has appointed a multi-disciplinary, 33-member task force on redevelopment of the University District. Its focus is on economic and community development in the main campus footprint with particular attention to the University and Asher Avenues/Col. Glenn Avenue corridors. In its early stages of planning, the task force has identified several needs that relate to pedestrian safety. First, safe and comfortable pedestrian access to businesses across University Avenue from campus emphasizes traffic calming and protected crosswalks. Second, creation of a district identity involves a standardization of landscape and fixture design that may also have the effect of announcing to motorists that they are entering a special place.

The Context of Today's Drivers and Pedestrians

The following points relate more broadly to motorists and pedestrians today, regardless of setting. Still, these realizations affect a crowded university campus.

10. **Park at the front door mentality.** College students are no guiltier of this tendency than the general public. In an era of great vehicular mobility, drivers seek "front-door parking" and exhibit habits of great impatience when having to walk from the back of lot #13. Angle parking along West and East Campus Drive is of premium demand, even if a rushing driver has to sit for a minute to claim a spot just now vacated (while vehicles queue behind). The pull-off on University Drive, the temporary slots north of Stabler, and the metered spots east of Stabler, are rarely empty. We drivers of the 21st century demand convenience!
11. **Impatience and road rage.** Congressional hearings and broad media coverage signal the universality of "road rage," a phenomenon that seems to turn normally, mild-mannered motorists into retaliatory warriors intent on teaching a lesson to that driver who just cut them off or the pedestrian not focusing on traffic and preoccupied by a cell phone conversation. We've not observed excessive road rage on the UALR campus, but subtle signs—like speeding up to beat the pedestrian to the crosswalk—and occasional blatant examples—like running the red light and abrupt lane-switching on 28th Street—suggest

its presence. Replacing “aggressive driving” with “supportive driving” is an imperative for a safe pedestrian environment.

12. **Role dissonance between motorist and pedestrian.** Our psychologist colleagues could have a field day with this concept. Ironically, although almost all of us are both motorists and pedestrians on campus, we seem to forget what we thought and did, and how we felt just a few minutes earlier in the opposite role. We seem to have a form of “role dissonance.” We turn onto 28th Street and hurry to beat the light at the crosswalk, turn left in front of two on-coming vehicles, and dodge two pedestrians coming at us in lot #13, all in the name of claiming the right-of-way. (“Pedestrians need to watch where they’re going.”) Alighting from our car, we become walkers headed south down the campus spine from lot #13, potentially confronting drivers four times, depending on our destination. We insist on the right-of-way, even at times when we’re not in a crosswalk and don’t have it. (“I’m walking here, drivers beware.”) A broader conceptualization of this role switch would be useful.

13. **Speed.** During many periods of the weekday, we have observed cars and trucks on University Avenue moving at 65 mph. Southbound drivers who “make the light” at 19th Street accelerate up the hill, through the light at 28th Street and easily exceed the 40 mph speed limit as they approach the 32nd Street crosswalk. On campus, a majority of cars observed on 28th Street were moving considerably faster than the 25 mph limit. And, during two days of observation, 95 percent of vehicles on the Campus Drive loop along Coleman Creek were exceeding the 15 mph limit. Although the 15 mph speed limit seems very slow, it is meant to allow vehicles to stop quickly when other vehicles are exiting the street-side parking spaces. Faster speed lengthens stopping distances, lessens time to react, and threatens pedestrians who are depending on drivers to stop for them when they are legally crossing.

These 13 specific and general realities concerning pedestrian safety frame our study and recommendations. Engineering, education, and enforcement strategies are appropriate responses to these problems. In short, these realities tell us that we pack a lot of cars and people into a small space at concentrated times during the day and night. We are proud to attract many special needs students who are challenged to negotiate busy streets and crosswalks, as are typical students. Because we are part of the neighborhood fabric, we experience vehicular traffic passing through from home to work and shop. Forming our west and south boundaries, two of the busiest streets (University and Asher) in the state of Arkansas constrain our pedestrians and motorists. There is another very busy city street (28th) that separates some campus parking from campus buildings. We want to cross these streets, but in some places lack the sidewalks to access restaurants and parking lots. Balancing the desire to maintain a beautiful, treed campus with parking convenience, we

provide additional parking, but put it on the margins of campus. Meanwhile, we try to create an environment that calms motorists so they won't speed, won't rage at those who do, and won't forget that they, as pedestrians, have certain responsibilities, as well.

Specific Observations and Recommendations

We focused on five sectors or zones of high volume traffic where pedestrian safety is most in jeopardy:

- Pedestrian crossings on University Avenue from 19th Street to Asher Avenue
- Pedestrian crossings of 28th Street from University Avenue to Fair Park
- Pedestrian movement, present and future, in the 28th Street and Fair Park area
- Internal campus crossings and pedestrian movement
- Asher Avenue from Fair Park to University Avenue.

Our recommendations for all of these areas call for “University District paving patterns” at crosswalks. By this, we mean that a distinct paving pattern should be developed to be used at all crosswalks in the University District (both on and off campus.) The crosswalks should be wider than normal and should have a different color and texture than the surrounding roadway. We urge consideration of the distinctive UALR pumpkin-colored brick as the material. The use of a material readily identified with UALR should make a clear visual cue that motorists are entering a University District with its associated high numbers of pedestrians. Following are our findings and recommendations.

Pedestrian Crossings on University Avenue

University Avenue is a vital north-south artery that carries both rush hour and off-peak traffic, both northbound and southbound. Its arterial importance, as mentioned above, resonates with City of Little Rock traffic engineers who are planning its widening to three lanes in each direction. The stretch from 19th Street to Asher Avenue, which most directly affects the campus, will be widened in the next several years. Considerable land will be taken from the edge of campus for the third, northbound lane and necessary safety improvements for both pedestrians and motorists. In a major and costly move, the wrought-iron fence and its stately brick pillars must be moved back to accommodate the additional lane. Many trees will be lost in the process. If there is a positive aspect of this development, it will be the opportunity to make this roadway safer through a series of enhancements. One

such enhancement is creating islands of safety in the roadway by widening the median strip, particularly at pedestrian crossings.

Further, the importance of University Avenue cannot be separated from the economic vitality and image of the University District. This was emphasized repeatedly by a broad group of community and university participants attending the University District Task Force charette held on May 11, 2004.

Widening University Avenue will have a major impact on the university and on the district. If it becomes an “urban freeway” merely conveying vehicles through the district, it neither benefits businesses nor the university, further dividing the east and west sides of the street and further diminishing pedestrian safety. If, on the other hand, it is designed as an urban boulevard that is an integral part of the district – with ample sidewalks, a landscaped median and standard UALR lighting and banners – University Avenue can add significantly to the image and identity of UALR and the district, helping to bridge the two sides of the street, improve pedestrian safety and create the environment for university-related businesses and programs to develop and flourish.

Standard, striped markings and traffic control signals indicate the pedestrian crosswalks on University Drive in locations between 19th Street and Asher Avenue. The hilly nature of the route tends to create uneven but often-excessive speed, beyond the posted 40 mph limit. Observation at various times of a weekday at all crosswalks recorded a majority of cars exceeding the speed limit by at least 10 mph. High rates of speed (in excess of 50 mph) especially from 19th Street to 32nd Street southbound were frequently observed.

Lighting emanates from high posts in the median and ambient illumination from businesses and strip malls. However, two lights have been out (one critically in the median opposite Pizza Hut) for months, leaving considerable stretches of the road dimly lit.

In the course of our fact-finding, we received many suggestions regarding the construction of an overpass or tunnel transversing University Avenue. While the premise is sound—that of separating vehicular and pedestrian traffic—the cost, space requirements, and likely infrequent use discouraged us from recommending such construction. To build an overpass that would meet ADA standards and rise high enough to permit all vehicles to pass underneath, considerable land on both sides of the street would be needed. Based on our research, we estimate that the cost would range from \$2.5 to \$4.0 million. A tunnel would cost even more. Given present crossing patterns, we would need to build two or three bridges or tunnels. Those familiar with such structures told us that pedestrians do not use such edifices as often as might be assumed. It seems that pedestrians continue to seek the shortest distance, even though that route might be considerably more dangerous than a safe,

but more arduous and longer bridge crossing. Further, they reported that infrequently used bridges/tunnels become likely places for criminal activity and vagrancy. Therefore, due to high probability of non-use combined with construction, maintenance and safety costs of both an overpass and tunnel, we do not recommend that either be built.

Recommendations

- Prominently construct and mark the crosswalks on University Avenue between 19th Street and Asher Avenue using a distinctive University District paving pattern.
- Install “count-down” walk lights at University/University Drive, 32nd and 28th Street crosswalks. We appreciate the responsiveness of City Public Works to install the first one at 32nd Street.
- As street widening permits, widen medians to permit at least a six-foot wide pedestrian safe-zone. Install protective buffers (“bull-noses”) between the crosswalks and cross streets. Medians should be constructed in the University District motif.
- Improve lighting on University Avenue, both in intensity and focus. To emphasize the district concept, we recommend that a standard lighting fixture be used (we like those used in the new parking lot at 28th Street and Fair Park) with an appropriate level of illumination that meets standards. Immediately, the tall light in the median at Pizza Hut must be repaired.
- Institute a “No right-turn on red” at University Drive (coming out of campus where turners cross paths with pedestrians).
- Install Accessible Pedestrian Signals at each crossing. Signals should not be merely “chirpers,” such as those presently installed, but visual, audible, and tactically sensitive for our various special needs populations. Pedestrian signal boxes (push buttons) should be equipped with an audible beacon to direct both seeing and blind pedestrians to the box.
- Request that the LRPD enforce the 40 mph speed limit on University Avenue. This should include radar enforcement and prominent marking of the speed limit on the pavement. (North Little Rock has experimented with this technique with reported success.)
- Work with University Avenue merchants and the City of Little Rock to install a sidewalk that runs on the west side of University Avenue from 28th Street to Asher Avenue to provide some separation from the curb lane of traffic and pedestrians some safety. Portions exist, but are in average to poor condition. Ideally, this sidewalk would be placed behind a landscaped buffer of at least six feet.

- Correct incomplete pavement markings indicating directional turn lanes at the exit of the Town and Country shopping center (opposite the University Avenue entrance to campus) and in the eastbound lanes of Broadmoor at University Avenue (at the 28th Street entrance). Driver confusion has the potential to endanger pedestrians crossing University Avenue, especially at University Drive. We appreciate the Town and Country shopping center manager's agreeing to make this correction. The City should be urged to make the latter alteration.

Pedestrian Crossings of 28th Street

As the UALR campus shifts northward (at least for the time-being until the University Plaza property is developed and integrated into the campus scape), increased pressure has been placed on 28th Street between University Avenue and Fair Park as a thoroughfare and as the main access to buildings and parking lots. In a flurry of construction, the university will have added three major buildings (Reynolds, Bailey, and the Events Center) and two major parking lots in a short four years. The constant interaction between pedestrians and cars, especially at peak hours, has put a premium on our three pillars of pedestrian safety - engineering, education, and enforcement.

Along this corridor are committed the worst of our factors—impatience, role dissonance, and speed. Drivers park in lot #13, frustrated when they get behind a walker in a car lane, then become pedestrians themselves and can't understand why drivers are impatient with them. Drivers accelerate to 45 and 50 mph in short bursts coming down the hill westbound on 28th Street and to catch the light at University Avenue. Second only to speeding on University Avenue, the near breakdown of driver etiquette and pedestrian common sense at the two legal pedestrian crosswalks on 28th Street, creates a high-risk pedestrian experience.

The fault is not totally with the drivers: pedestrians consistently jaywalk between Lot #13 west and the Reynolds Building. Pedestrians jaywalk at Bailey. They insist on seemingly constant cell phone use, regardless of their circumstances. Also, inadequate lighting at one point in this corridor limits nighttime visibility. Pedestrian risk at these 28th Street crossings seems to equal that of the University Avenue crossings.

Recommendations

- Permanently close the vehicle-exit gate of Lot #13 west closest to University Avenue to prevent pedestrians from dangerously jaywalking directly across 28th Street to the Reynolds.

- Upgrade lighting at the east crosswalk to Lot #13 east. To emphasize the district concept, we recommend that a standard lighting fixture be used.
- Upgrade crosswalks of 28th Street between University Avenue and Fair Park using University District paving patterns.
- Install advance signage indicating pedestrian crosswalks 30 feet from the actual crossing so as to prepare the motorist to yield.
- Study traffic flow at the second entrance to Lot #13 east to determine if westbound cars on 28th Street should stop before the entrance to permit eastbound left turners “trapped” between the light and oncoming traffic to complete their turns into the lot. (We realize that the subject gate is presently reserved for construction traffic during the building of the events center, but urge consideration of this change once the gate is returned to use by all vehicles.)

As noted above in our recommendations about University Avenue, we appreciate the City’s installation of a 25-second countdown walk light at the crosswalk on 28th Street. This action was another taken after discussions with City officials.

Pedestrian Safety in the 28th and Fair Park Area

Most of our concern for this area focuses on the two large parking lots recently constructed at the intersection of 28th Street and Fair Park and along Fillmore north of 28th Street. The latter, particularly, will cause pedestrians to cross 28th Street as they head for campus or the events center. (The sidewalk along 28th Street crosses the Coleman Creek bridge on the south side.) Of associated concern, residents of the Lions World Services for the Blind center at 28th Street and Fair Park regularly cross Fair Park. We have witnessed several near misses of Fair Park motorists demonstrating little patience for the slow-moving, visually impaired pedestrians.

The stately wrought-iron and brick pillar fence around Lot #15 nicely demarcates the northeast corner of campus and calls for the University District treatment of pavement, landscaping, and lights in the surrounding streetscape.

Recommendations

- Establish a crosswalk from the Fillmore lot (currently under construction) across 28th Street to campus with appropriate and correctly placed signage, utilizing the University District paving pattern.

- Build a pedestrian bridge across Coleman Creek carrying a well lighted, paved pedestrian path/sidewalk, from the Fillmore lot to Lot #13 east to channel pedestrians to the events center without having to negotiate 28th Street. Associated markings and landscaping of Lot #13 east should be added to mark pedestrian passage through the lot.
- Upgrade the east-west crosswalk of Fair Park at 28th Street, using the University District paving pattern.
- Create sidewalks into Lot #15 so that pedestrians can enter and exit the lot without using the vehicular entrance.
- Upgrade lighting from Coleman Creek to Fair Park along 28th Street and along Fair Park south to 32nd Street so as to extend the attractive and functional lighting of Lot #15 and help emphasize the University District concept.
- Construct an east-west sidewalk between the Tri-Delt and Pike houses and/or across property at the College Park apartments. The sidewalk should be well lighted, not only for safe passage, but to indicate continuing pedestrian traffic across the Coleman Creek walking bridge. We appreciate the willingness of the owner of the apartments at the southwest corner of Lot #15 to permit construction of a sidewalk across his property to Campus Drive East.

Internal Campus Crossing and Pedestrian Movement

As noted above, 28th Street, Campus Drive, 32nd Street, and University Drive are active thoroughfares that intersect the UALR campus and provide important access to buildings and parking lots. They also move a considerable amount of through traffic in and out of adjacent neighborhoods. A study of vehicular movement on these campus drives suggests several interesting realities that frame our recommendations. First, those drivers who use campus drives as “cut-throughs” to Asher and University Avenues do so in great part to avoid delays at the busy intersections of Fair Park/Asher and Asher /University. Second, because they are attempting to save time, these drivers tend to exceed the 15 or 20 mph speed limit on all campus drives. For that matter, almost all drivers exceed the speed limit on internal campus drives. Third, there are 18 crosswalks where pedestrians legally have the right away when they cross campus drives. However, those crosswalks are inadequately marked in several cases or not adequately protected from oncoming traffic.

Several colleagues suggested that speed humps be installed on campus drives to slow vehicular speed. We considered the suggestion and discussed it with city officials and others familiar with the technique. In the end, we decided that speed humps would not be effective or desirable for the following reasons:

1. To be effective, they must be placed regularly throughout campus. One or two speed humps slow traffic only when it encounters the actual hump. Drivers frequently speed up between humps.
2. The expense is estimated at \$1,500 each. We believe the cost benefit of this strategy is unfavorable.
3. Speed humps and the approach markings are unsightly and will detract from the beauty of the campus.
4. Speed humps have the tendency to disrupt traffic flows by causing motorists to speed up and slow down, rather than maintaining one steady speed. We believe there are other more effective methods of slowing speed.
5. Speed humps tend to erode (asphalt breakup) at the juncture with the street pavement, causing rough passage and continuing maintenance cost.
6. Speed humps can damage low-clearance vehicles at any speed.

Recommendations

- Survey lighting at all crosswalks on campus and upgrade where determined to be inadequate. Use standard lighting poles and lights to create a campus design signature.
- Install flashing lights (either imbedded or standing) at the curve on University Drive that warn motorists of a crosswalk immediately around the bend.
- Consider constructing a sidewalk that parallels East Campus Drive from the 32nd Street bridge over Coleman Creek to 28th Street. Presently, pedestrians must walk through mud or in the road. Integrate this improvement into any master plan recommendations to improve the landscape along the creek.
- Upgrade all crosswalks on campus by using the University District paving design. Street size necessitates that the campus interior design be proportionally smaller than that required on exterior streets.
- Explore creating a pedestrian-friendly way to enter the back of the University Plaza from the existing campus. One way may be to cut a breezeway through the shopping center.
- Install a railing on the south side of University Drive between the campus entrance and the first crosswalk from Lot #5 that prevents pedestrians moving between the University

Plaza parking lot and campus from jaywalking. This likely will become more of a problem as the University Plaza property is developed as part of the university.

- Install signage alerting motorists that pedestrians have the right-of-way at all marked crosswalks and in parking lots. Be sure that all signs are placed far enough before actual crossings so as to prepare the motorist to yield.
- Discuss with campus master planners the wisdom of closing Campus Drive between the intersection with University Drive and the intersection with 32nd Street to all vehicles except emergency vehicles. As a protective move for pedestrians, we believe this to be a good idea. However, we are concerned about the unanticipated consequences of such a closure and suggest a well-thought-out approach to this decision. Also, a temporary closure to test its appropriateness might be in order.

Asher Avenue from Fair Park to University Avenue

Asher Avenue is a vital east-west state highway. UALR owns or will soon own property on both sides of Asher Avenue. The property on the south side of Asher Avenue is currently undeveloped. Tentative plans are for this property to be developed as a competition track and intramural fields. In addition, the planned purchase of the University Plaza on the north side of Asher Avenue will lead to academic and support programs being placed there, next to retail and banking areas. Pedestrian and vehicular traffic across and along Asher Avenue will increase as these properties are further developed.

- We encourage Metroplan, highway and city planners to include the University in planning activities related to Asher Avenue.
- We urge adoption of the standard University District motif, including median design, crosswalks, lighting and landscaping on Asher Avenue from Fair Park to University Avenue.

Major and Ongoing Education Campaign

A major premise of this study is that education about safe walking and safe driving is a vital part of efforts to improve pedestrian safety. We asked the UALR Office of Communications to develop a Pedestrian Safety Education Plan, an outline of which appears in Appendix C. Awareness, knowledge, courtesy, and constant vigilance are important attitudes and behaviors that characterize safe pedestrians and safe drivers.

We surveyed other campus websites to learn of their approaches. Many appeared at first to be pitched to elementary grade children until we realized that the basics of pedestrian safety

do not change from the time we were first taught to cross with the light to today's negotiation of one-way streets and angle parking. (It really is true: Everything we ever needed to know we learned in kindergarten!) For example, these simple reminders, if followed, would improve pedestrian safety:

- Cross at marked crosswalks or traffic lights, not in the middle of the block;
- Make sure drivers see you before you cross;
- Watch for traffic turning at intersections;
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks;
- Do not pass vehicles stopped at crosswalks;
- Slow down when driving on campus; and,
- Use extra caution when driving at night.

The key to a successful pedestrian safety education campaign is: a good message, frequently and well delivered. The message should include specific instructions or directions. For example, we learned in our research that the push button located at crosswalks when activated, electronically alerts the traffic light that a pedestrian is waiting to cross and also lengthens the time that the pedestrian has to cross the street. Pushing the button triggers a full, 25-second walk period. Hence, we'll conduct a "Push the Button" campaign.

Some simple rules are forgotten. For example, a useful message is that pedestrians have the right-of-way when they are crossing legally in a crosswalk or crossing a parking lot. They do not have the right-of-way when they are crossing in the middle of a block. Such a repetitive message, disseminated on the marquee, in *The UALR Forum*, and in posters and fliers, is needed.

We recommend that an electronic speed sign be installed periodically along campus drives to alert motorists of their speed. We want to conduct safety campaigns each semester to remind both pedestrians and motorists to practice safe walking and driving habits. We want to reward good driving and safe walking. We seek to keep pedestrian safety before the student body, the staff, and the faculty. Without education, we cannot pass along the knowledge and awareness related to the dangerous interaction of pedestrian and motorist.

Vigilance

An emphasis on pedestrian safety is a constant, not an occasional educational campaign. Safety programs are seldom flashy and if overdone can become invisible and commonplace. Therefore, we urge the development of a series of public relations campaigns, special events, and reminders that are regularly scheduled and effective. Student organizations should be involved since our students represent the one largest class of pedestrians and drivers.

We realize that engineering changes cannot be effected all at once. Again, a scheduled and effective upgrading of crosswalks, lighting, signage, and sidewalks is necessary. Whenever changes and upgrades are scheduled for University District roadways (both on and off campus), median, crosswalk, lighting and landscape improvements should be part of the project.

Enforcement complements education and engineering progress. For example, closing the Lot #13 west gate and enforcing speed limits are two positive moves toward better pedestrian safety.

The members of the Pedestrian Safety committee appreciate this opportunity to survey the status of pedestrian safety on our campus. Although submission of this report completes our assigned role, we request that the committee be activated one year from now and asked to complete an update report on progress made on our recommendations.

Appendix A

Recommendations by Priority

Our recommendations are rearranged here by priority, based on their importance or criticality to immediate pedestrian safety concerns.

Highest Priority Recommendations (requires prompt action)

1. Permanently close the vehicle-exit gate of Lot #13 west closest to University Avenue to prevent pedestrians from dangerously jaywalking directly across 28th Street to the Reynolds Building.
2. Upgrade lighting at the east crosswalk to Lot #13 east. To emphasize the district concept, we recommend that a standard lighting fixture be used.
3. Install “count-down” walk lights at the University Avenue/University Drive, 32nd and 28th Street crosswalks.
4. Construct an east-west sidewalk between the Tri-Delt and Pike houses and/or across property at the College Park apartments. The sidewalk should be well lighted, not only for safe passage, but to indicate continuing pedestrian traffic across the Coleman Creek walking bridge. We appreciate the willingness of the owner of the apartments at the southwest corner of Lot #15 to permit construction of a sidewalk across his property to Campus Drive East.
5. Install flashing lights (either imbedded or standing) at the curve on University Drive that warn motorists of a crosswalk immediately around the bend.
6. Consider constructing a sidewalk that parallels East Campus Drive from the 32nd Street bridge over Coleman Creek to 28th Street. Presently, pedestrians must walk through mud or in the road. Integrate this improvement into any master plan recommendations to improve the landscape along the creek.

High Priority (requires action staged over next year)

7. Request that the LRPD enforce the 40 mph speed limit on University Avenue. This should include radar enforcement and prominent marking of the speed limit on the pavement. (North Little Rock has experimented with this technique with reported success.)

8. Discuss with campus master planners the wisdom of closing Campus Drive between the intersection with University Drive and the intersection with 32nd Street to all vehicles except emergency vehicles. As a protective move for pedestrians, we believe this to be a good idea. However, we are concerned about the unanticipated consequences of such a closure and suggest a well-thought-out approach to this decision. Also, a temporary closure to test its appropriateness might be in order.
9. Reconstruct crosswalks on University Avenue between 19th Street and Asher Avenue using a distinctive University District paving pattern.
10. As street widening permits, widen medians to permit at least a six-foot wide pedestrian safe-zone. Install protective buffers (“bull-noses”) between the crosswalks and cross streets. Medians and crosswalks should be constructed in the University District design pattern. Appropriate landscaping should be utilized to create a Boulevard appearance as a traffic calming effort.
11. Improve lighting on University Avenue, both in intensity and focus. To emphasize the district concept, we recommend that a standard lighting fixture be used (we like those used in the new parking lot at 28th Street and Fair Park) with an appropriate level of illumination that meets standards. Immediately, the tall light in the median at Pizza Hut must be repaired.
12. Institute a “No right-turn on red” at University Drive (coming out of campus where turners cross paths with pedestrians).
13. Install Accessible Pedestrian Signals at each University Avenue and 28th Street crossing with a traffic light. Signals should not be merely “chirpers,” such as those presently installed, but visual, audible and tactically sensitive for our various special needs populations. Pedestrian signal boxes (push buttons) should be equipped with an audible beacon to direct both seeing and blind pedestrians to the box.
14. Work with merchants and the City of Little Rock to install a sidewalk that runs from 28th Street to Asher Avenue on the west side of University Avenue to provide some separation from the curb lane of traffic for pedestrians. Portions of the sidewalk exist, but are in average to poor condition.
15. Install signage indicating pedestrian crosswalks at a distance from the actual crossing so as to prepare the motorist to yield. The distance should be in compliance with traffic standards.

16. Establish a crosswalk from the Fillmore lot (currently being constructed) across 28th Street to campus with appropriate and correctly placed signage, utilizing the University District paving pattern.
17. Upgrade crosswalks of 28th Street using the University District paving pattern.
18. Survey lighting at all crosswalks on campus and upgrade where determined to be inadequate. Use standard lighting poles and lights to create a campus design signature.
19. Build a pedestrian bridge over Coleman Creek carrying a well lighted, paved pedestrian path/sidewalk, from the Fillmore lot to Lot #13 east to channel pedestrians to the events center without having to negotiate 28th Street. Associated markings and landscaping of Lot #13 east should be added to mark pedestrian passage through the lot.
20. Install signage at crosswalks on campus alerting motorists that pedestrians have the right-of-way at all marked crosswalks and in parking lots.

Priority (requiring action in 1-3 years)

21. We encourage highway and city planners to include the University in any planning activities related to University Avenue, Asher Avenue, Fair Park Boulevard or to 28th Street. We urge adoption of the standard University District motif, including medians, crosswalks, lighting and landscaping on all these streets in the areas of proximity to the University.
22. Study traffic flow at the second entrance to Lot #13 east to determine if westbound cars on 28th Street should stop before the entrance to permit eastbound left turners “trapped” between the light and oncoming traffic to complete their turns into the lot. (We realize that the subject gate is presently reserved for construction traffic during the building of the events center, but urge consideration of this change once the gate is returned to use by all vehicles.)
23. Install a railing on the south side of University Drive between the campus entrance and the first crosswalk from Lot #5 that prevents pedestrians moving between the University Plaza parking lot to campus from jaywalking. This likely will become more of a problem as the University Plaza property is developed as part of the university.
24. Create sidewalks into Lot #15 so that pedestrians can enter and exit the lot without using the vehicular entrance.

25. Upgrade lighting from Coleman Creek to Fair Park along 28th Street and along Fair Park south to 32nd Street so as to extend the attractive and functional lighting of Lot #15 and help emphasize the University District concept.
26. Upgrade the east-west crosswalk of Fair Park at 28th Street, using the University District paving pattern.
27. Upgrade all crosswalks on campus by using the University District paving design.
28. Correct incomplete pavement markings indicating directional turn lanes at the exit of the Town and Country shopping center (opposite the University Avenue entrance to campus) and in the eastbound lanes of Broadmoor at University Avenue (at the 28th Street entrance). Driver confusion has the potential to endanger pedestrians crossing University Avenue, especially at University Drive. We appreciate the shopping center manager's agreeing to make this correction. The City should be notified about the latter alteration.

Appendix B

Recommendations by Zone

Our recommendations are repeated here by zone in contrast with Appendix A that reflects our recommendations in order of priority. We think this list will be useful because we urge that improvements in safety be thought of in a holistic manner; that is, a group of upgrades or changes made simultaneously in proximity to one another can have a stronger effect than one made at a time.

Pedestrian Crossings of University Avenue

- Reconstruct crosswalks on University Avenue between 19th Street and Asher Avenue using a distinctive University District paving pattern.
- Install “count-down” walk lights at University/University Drive, 32nd and 28th Street crosswalks. We appreciate the responsiveness of City Public Works to install the first one at 32nd Street.
- As street widening permits, widen medians to permit at least a six-foot wide pedestrian safe-zone. Install protective buffers (“bull-nose”) between the crosswalks and cross streets. Medians should be constructed in the University District motif.
- Improve lighting on University Avenue, both in intensity and focus. To emphasize the district concept, we recommend that a standard lighting fixture be used (we like those used in the new parking lot at 28th Street and Fair Park) with an appropriate level of illumination that meets standards. Immediately, the tall light in the median at Pizza Hut must be repaired.
- Institute a “No right-turn on red” at University Drive (coming out of campus where turners cross paths with pedestrians).
- Install Accessible Pedestrian Signals at each crossing. Signals should not be merely “chirpers,” such as those presently installed, but visual, audible, and tactically sensitive for our various special needs populations. Pedestrian signal boxes (push buttons) should be equipped with an audible beacon to direct both seeing and blind pedestrians to the box.
- Request that the LRPD enforce the 40 mph speed limit on University Avenue. This should include radar enforcement and prominent marking of the speed limit on the pavement. (North Little Rock has experimented with this technique with reported success.)

- Work with University Avenue merchants and the City of Little Rock to install a sidewalk on the west side of University Avenue that runs from 28th Street to Asher Avenue to provide some separation from the curb lane of traffic for pedestrians. Ideally, this sidewalk would be placed behind a landscaped buffer of at least six feet. Portions exist, but are in average to poor condition.
- Correct incomplete pavement markings indicating directional turn lanes at the exit of the Town and Country shopping center (opposite the University Avenue entrance to campus) and in the eastbound lanes of Broadmoor at University Avenue (at the 28th Street entrance). Driver confusion has the potential to endanger pedestrians crossing University Avenue, especially at University Drive. We appreciate the Town and Country shopping center manager's agreeing to make this correction. The City should be urged to make the latter alteration.

Pedestrian Crossings of 28th Street

- Permanently close the vehicle-exit gate of Lot #13 west closest to University Avenue to prevent pedestrians from dangerously jaywalking directly across 28th Street to the Reynolds.
- Upgrade lighting at the east crosswalk to Lot #13 east. To emphasize the district concept, we recommend that a standard lighting fixture be used.
- Upgrade crosswalks of 28th Street between University Avenue and Fair Park using University District paving patterns.
- Develop sidewalks for pedestrians presently exiting Lot #13 through vehicle gates. A safe separation is important for both walker and driver.
- Install advance signage indicating pedestrian crosswalks 30 feet from the actual crossing so as to prepare the motorist to yield (as state law requires).
- Use appropriate pavement markings to indicate that westbound cars on 28th Street should stop before the second entrance to Lot #13 east to permit eastbound left turners "trapped" between the light and oncoming traffic to complete their turns into the lot. (We realize that the subject gate is presently reserved for construction traffic during the building of the events center, but urge this change once the gate is returned to use by all vehicles.)

Pedestrian Safety in the 28th Street and Fair Park Area

- Establish a crosswalk from the Fillmore lot across 28th Street to campus with appropriate and correctly placed signage, utilizing the University District paving pattern.
- Build a bridge carrying a well lighted, paved pedestrian path/sidewalk, from the Fillmore lot to Lot #13 east to channel pedestrians to the events center without having to negotiate 28th Street. Associated markings and landscaping of Lot #13 east should be added to mark pedestrian passage through the lot.
- Upgrade the east-west crosswalk of Fair Park at 28th Street using the University District paving pattern.
- Create sidewalks into Lot #15 so that pedestrians can enter and exit the lot without using the vehicular entrance.
- Upgrade lighting from Coleman Creek to Fair Park along 28th Street and along Fair Park south to 32nd Street so as to extend the attractive and functional lighting of Lot #15 and help emphasize the University District concept.
- Construct an east-west sidewalk between the Tri-Delt and Pike houses and/or across property at the College Park apartments. The sidewalk should be well lighted, not only for safe passage, but to indicate continuing pedestrian traffic across the Coleman Creek walking bridge. We appreciate the willingness of the owner of the apartments at the southwest corner of Lot #15 to permit construction of a sidewalk across his property to Campus Drive East.

Internal Campus Crossings and Pedestrian Movement

- Survey lighting at all crosswalks on campus and upgrade where determined to be inadequate. Use standard lighting poles and lights to create a campus design signature.
- Install flashing lights (either imbedded or standing) at the curve on University Drive that warn motorists of a crosswalk immediately around the bend.
- Construct a sidewalk that parallels East Campus Drive from the 32nd Street bridge over Coleman Creek to 28th Street. Presently, pedestrians must walk through mud or in the road.
- Upgrade all crosswalks on campus by using the University District paving design.

- Install a railing on the south side of University Drive between the campus entrance and the first crosswalk from Lot #5 that prevents pedestrians moving between the University Plaza parking lot to campus from jaywalking. This likely will become more of a problem as the University Plaza property is developed as part of the university.
- Install signage alerting motorists that pedestrians have the right-of-way at all marked crosswalks and in parking lots. Be sure that all signs are placed far enough before actual crossings so as to prepare the motorist to yield.
- Discuss with campus master planners the wisdom of closing Campus Drive between the intersection with University Drive and the intersection with 32nd Street to all vehicles except emergency vehicles. As a protective move for pedestrians, we believe this to be a good idea. However, we are concerned about the unanticipated consequences of such a closure and suggest a well-thought-out approach to this decision. Also, a temporary closure to test its appropriateness might be in order.

Appendix C

Pedestrian Safety Plan

I. “Push the Button” mini campaign

- Forum article featuring advantages of “pushing the button,” new pedestrian countdown light, and preview of upcoming safety report
- Forum ad
- e-mail message to: all students, Facfocus, classifieds
- Place signs at cross walks where the new buttons are installed
- Brochure for pedestrians – clever design, perhaps featuring “the button” of the countdown
- Work with SGA or Campus Life to get students involved in campaign to stand near the new crosswalk stations, distribute brochures and explain how pushing the button allows you to cross faster

II. Pedestrian Safety PR Campaign

Safety Week kick-off

- News conference to Safety Task Force recommendations
- Place an electronic speed sign on campus so drivers know how fast they are traveling
- Outdoor vinyl signs on campus
- Work with City of LR and LRPD to promote safety issues
- Public Service Announcements to run on University Cable channel
- Ads in Forum – The ads could feature a student who was caught “being safe” by Public Safety
- Include recommendations on UALR home page
- Send e-mail from Chancellor to faculty, staff and students
- Facfocus message

Ongoing Efforts

- Distribute brochures at student, faculty, and staff orientations
- Share information at first SGA meeting of fall semester
- Share information with First Year Experience students
- Address Faculty and Staff Senates at first meeting of fall semester
- Message on electronic board
- Add info to UALR website (under campus safety section?)
- Distribute brochures during Welcome Week and Alcohol Awareness Week – SGA distribute brochures and serve soft drinks
- Distribute information to help educate students who appeal tickets about campus safety initiatives
- Explore mandatory “driving school” for speeders

Support materials

- Bullet points for speakers
- Press kit
- Brochure

- Signage
- Give away for Safety Week