

A STEP in the right direction

Safe **T**ransportation for **E**very **P**edestrian (STEP) is a relatively new concept introduced by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Because pedestrians are among the most vulnerable road users, the guidance is intended to help transportation agencies and other entities to address crashes by promoting countermeasures with proven benefits at uncontrolled crossing locations. The crossing location can be at an uncontrolled intersection or mid-block crossing. It is interesting to note that pedestrian fatalities account for 16% of all roadway fatalities. However, further analysis indicates that 72% of these pedestrian fatalities occur at non-intersection locations. By focusing on uncontrolled pedestrian crossing locations, agencies can address a significant crash pattern and improve the quality of life for pedestrians.

There are a host of low-cost countermeasures that can be deployed. These countermeasures should only be considered after an engineering investigation is conducted. Listed below are 6 countermeasures as recommended by the FHWA in the *Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations, January 2018*:

1. Crosswalk Visibility Enhancement;
2. Raised Crosswalk;
3. Pedestrian Refuge Island;
4. Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon;
5. Road Diet;
6. and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon.

Agencies should strive to incorporate a **complete street** policy for their jurisdiction. The policy in part explains the process for integrating sidewalks and or crossing enhancements with routine street maintenance activities. Agencies may also want to adopt a vision for eliminating all traffic related fatalities such as Vision Zero and or Toward Zero Deaths. Another approach is to identify existing plans with the potential for needed pedestrian countermeasures.

Once a direction and commitment are determined, agencies leaders can begin a Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP). This is a formal process to identify and prioritize key locations for improving pedestrian safety. It is also important to seek and document concerns from the public. Some agencies have set up a tracking and responding web page that makes it simple to get input from residents and visitors with respect to safety issues.

Pedestrian and Bicycle crashes are on the rise nationwide. As such, we as safety professionals need to address pedestrian and bike safety in all aspects for both maintenance and engineering projects. For more information on pedestrian safety at uncontrolled crossings please refer to the safety benefits and best practices at the publication FHWA-SA-17-072.