

To: The City of Columbia Mayor and City Council Members
Date: December 26, 2025
Subject: **Council Bill No. B 265-25, aka Pedestrian Safety Ordinance, Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission Comments**

Dear Mayor Buffaloe and City Council Members:

Executive Summary:

During its November 19, 2025 meeting, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission voted 7-0 to recommend that City Council not pass Bill No. B265-25, as written.

1. The proposed ordinance places most of the responsibility for safety on vulnerable road users.
2. The ordinance does not address mitigating vehicle speed, traffic volume and roadway conditions, which are major factors in pedestrian crashes.
3. The ordinance would inhibit pedestrians' access to major parts of Columbia.

Recommendations:

1. Do not pass B265-25 unless substantially amended to address safety concerns, including initiation of the process for the items enumerated below.
 - a. Install pedestrian safety devices (e.g. HAWK crossings) at roundabouts and at least every quarter mile on all major corridor roadways.
 - b. Construct and maintain existing sidewalks on both sides of major corridor roadways.
 - c. Add speed humps and/or signals to slip lanes to reduce vehicular speed through these pedestrian crossings.
 - d. Initiate a comprehensive program to reduce vehicular speeds on major roadways.
2. We make no recommendation regarding the "distribution conduct" portion of the ordinance, since neither the ordinance nor the related Street and Intersection Pedestrian Safety Study, dated November 3, 2025, provide data on this subject.

Background and Rationale:

1. Major corridor roadways disproportionately are sites of injury and death. A paper in 2021 found that "nearly two thirds (63%) of all hot spot corridors were roadways with 1) three or more lanes, 2) speed limits of 30 miles per hour or higher, and 3) high traffic volumes." (R. Schneider, et al., "U.S. Fatal Pedestrian Crash Hot Spot Locations and Characteristics," *Journal of Transport and Land Use* 14(1) 2021, quoted in W. Marshall, *Killed by a Traffic Engineer* Washington DC: Island Press, 2024, p.179).
2. Speed on major roadways is a function of physical conditions. Wide roads lead to faster traffic and higher volumes. (<https://www.ucdavis.edu/magazine/does-widening-highways-ease-traffic-congestion>, accessed 12/11/2025). The ordinance does not address traffic calming on major corridors.

Local Implications:

1. Section 14-587(d)(1) prohibits crossing a major corridor roadway except in a crosswalk.
 - a. Major corridor roadways in Columbia lack pedestrian facilities, e.g., accessible crosswalks, lighted signals, HAWK lights, sidewalks.
 - b. The following major corridor roadways lack intersections within a half-mile of each other (not an exhaustive list):
 - i. West Broadway: Fairview to Stadium, Stadium to Clinkscales.
 - ii. Scott Blvd throughout its length.
 - iii. Stadium Blvd, except through the MU campus.
 - iv. Business Loop 70: Stadium to Garth, Providence to Range Line, east of Range Line. (Range Line at Business Loop 70 was the site of a recent fatality of someone who was crossing in compliance with this ordinance.)
 - v. East Broadway: Williams to Old Hwy 63, Old Hwy 63 to Trimble Rd.
 - vi. Old Hwy 63: East Business Loop to Broadway, Broadway to Stadium Blvd.
 - c. Many of the major corridor intersections covered by the ordinance feature slip lanes, which present a hazard to pedestrians, especially the visually and physically impaired and the young. We are only aware of one slip lane in Columbia that features traffic calming (e.g. speed humps) or signaled pedestrian crossings of both the slip lane and the adjacent road.
 - d. Even many marked intersections on major corridors lack lighting or pedestrian signals (e.g. HAWK lights), including West Broadway, Scott Blvd at Georgetown, and many T-intersections.
 - e. Roundabouts on major corridors are poorly marked for pedestrian access and road crossing. As the City looks to construct more roundabouts to facilitate traffic flow, these should be engineered to provide enhanced visibility, signals and pedestrian access.
2. Section 14-587(d)(4) states “No person, other than an occupant of a vehicle, shall be upon a major corridor roadway except to lawfully cross such roadway.” While community members who walk or use mobility devices within the roadway are disproportionately threatened by traffic, they usually have no better alternative. This ordinance would leave pedestrians with the choice between an impassable route and ignoring the ordinance. This section is problematic for multiple reasons.
 - a. There are no definitions of vehicle as part of the ordinance. Are powered cycles, scooters, and e-bikes all considered vehicles? Are they allowed to be on the roadway, but human-powered bicycles are not allowed?
 - b. Pedestrians are often forced to use the shoulder or bicycle lane because the sidewalk is icy or snow-covered, poorly maintained, or because there is no sidewalk, at all.
 - c. People in wheelchairs or power chairs often use the side of the road because the sidewalks, even when cleared, are too uneven to allow sufficient stability.
 - d. Many of the high-usage streets lack sidewalks on one or both sides of the roadway. Prominent examples include:
 - i. Broadway: East and west of Stadium;
 - ii. East side of Range Line St, north of I-70.

3. The ordinance includes no definition of a “designated passenger loading zone” where entering a stopped vehicle would be permissible.
4. A longer stop in the median can be for reasons other than soliciting, e.g., disability, controlling pets or children, even conversation. CPD officers should not be put in a position to decide what conforms to an ambiguous reason for being in a location.
5. The ordinance forbids all solicitations in the roadway, including charitable fundraising. Do we want to prohibit firefighters holding up their boots to raise funds for the United Way, or student groups fundraising for cancer research?

Conclusion:

The Commission, and indeed, many members of the community, recognize the imperative to ensure pedestrians’ and bicyclists’ safety on Columbia streets and roadways. Council has adopted Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies aimed at reducing death and injury, particularly to vulnerable road users.

However, we strongly disagreed that the ordinance as proposed would improve pedestrian safety significantly. While it might lead to reduced numbers or relocation of public solicitations, it would do little to improve pedestrian safety on major roadways.

In conclusion, the proposed ordinance is notable for what it doesn’t address, vehicle speed and human behavior, which are affected by road design and conditions. If the revised ordinance directly addressed causes of pedestrian injury and death, we could reconsider supporting it. As it stands, however, the ordinance casts the blame on individuals, including vulnerable members of the community, without addressing the limiting factor: Columbia’s need to design and build a road transportation system with people foremost.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments. Do not hesitate to contact the Commission with any requests for additional information.

Sincerely,



ELKE BOYD, CHAIR, CITY OF COLUMBIA BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COMMISSION

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