



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Public Works

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: October 20, 2025

Re: Adopting Ordinance Regulating Pedestrian Use of Medians and Islands for Enhanced Safety

Executive Summary

Staff is requesting adoption of pedestrian safety ordinance. At Council's request the City hired George L. Crawford & Associates (dba CBB) to conduct the Street and Intersection Pedestrian Safety Study. The ordinance would regulate the use of medians, roadway crossings, and islands by both motorists and pedestrians at intersections with any of the following characteristics: speeds of 35 mph or greater, average daily traffic (ADT) volumes of 15,000 vehicles or greater, or where median width of less than 6-foot wide are present.

Discussion

Following an earlier report to Council and a follow-up pre-Council presentation and discussion, the City Council expressed an interest in moving forward with an evaluation of pedestrian safety measures to address dangerous activity by both pedestrians and motorists in the roadway. The City engaged CBB to conduct the Street and Intersection Pedestrian Safety Study to evaluate median safety in Columbia in the existing built environment. The study analyzed local crash data and roadway conditions, identifying 47 pedestrian crash areas where speeds greater than 35 mph, traffic volumes greater than 15,000 vehicle per day, or medians less than 6 feet wide created significant hazards, as mapped for major arterials.

Other cities have implemented ordinances restricting pedestrian access to medians under similar conditions, focusing on safety without targeting any group. This approach, informed by the study's comprehensive analysis, aims to guide pedestrians to crosswalks and designated areas, enhancing safety across the community.

In Columbia, a number of roadways would fall under these high-risk areas. The study's maps highlight extensive overlap of these conditions, with 47 identified crash areas where pedestrian safety is compromised, supporting the need for uniform restrictions. Public Works shared the findings at a pre-council work session on June 16th, 2025 and with the new Ward 2 Council member directly, with no specific comments received. This measure aligns with Vision Zero principles, focusing on objective safety criteria to protect all roadway users.

The proposed ordinance restricts pedestrian use of medians and islands at intersections meeting the specified conditions directing use to safer crossing points. This is supported by peer city examples where such regulations have proven effective, as detailed in the CBB study, without singling out any population. The 47 identified crash areas underscore this action. Staff recommends Council adoption of the ordinance.



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If adopted, a public education campaign will need to be conducted by the city to educate both drivers and pedestrians of the requirements.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: Minimal
Long-Term Impact: Minimal

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Safe Community, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Secondary, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

Legislative History

Date	Action
06/16/25	Pre-Council Presentation
12/16/24	Pedestrian Safety Report provided to Council

Suggested Council Action

Adoption of the ordinance.