

DATE: May 24, 2022

TO: Helena City Commissioners and Mayor of Helena

FROM: Lowell Chandler – HCC Representative of District 3

RE: Recommendation Regarding a Motion for the HCC to Endorse the NMTAC’s Motion Advising the Commission to Budget for Two Pedestrian Protected Crossings on Broadway Street at Jefferson Elementary - Motion Passed at HCC meeting on 5/26/22.

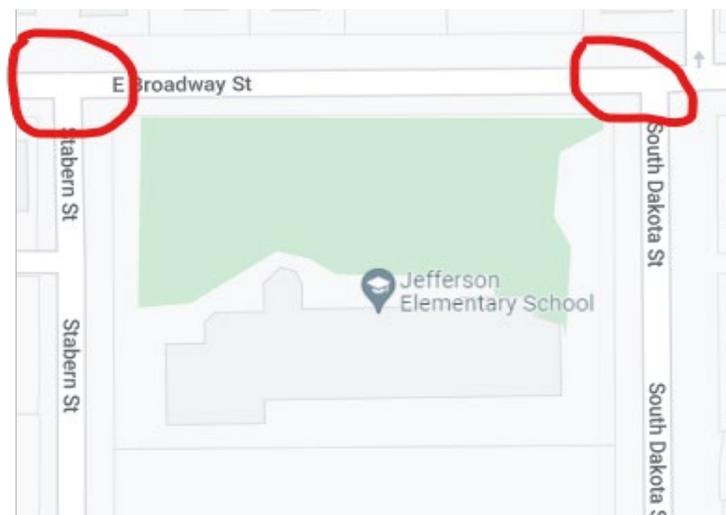
On April 12, 2022, the Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council (“NMTAC”) passed the following motion:

Motion advising Commission to budget for two (2) pedestrian protected crossings on Broadway at Jefferson School.

Currently, the City of Helena, along with the Montana Department of Transportation (Broadway St. is under MDT jurisdiction), is working on installing a new pedestrian crossing (flashing beacon push button crosswalk) at the Jefferson School, however, rather than installing a protected crossing at each of the school crossings on each corner of Jefferson Elementary (see map below), the existing plan is set to only install one enhanced crossing at the corner of Broadway Street and South Dakota Street.

FINDINGS

The NMTAC has considered and discussed this issue in depth and is recommending that an enhanced protected crossing (flashing beacons) be installed at both crossings along Broadway. Broadway is a thoroughfare for commuters to the Capitol, as well as the Hospital, and presents dangerous crossings for children, particularly during the morning hours (a child was recently struck by a vehicle at the Stabern crossing). Unfortunately, to date, our City has largely neglected the safety of our children (limited sidewalks, poorly marked crosswalks, no bike lanes, uncontrolled intersections around schools, higher speed limits, poor signage, vehicle congestion due to poorly planned drop-off and pick-up organization, etc.) and it is past time to start investing in the safety of our schools by ensuring that kids have safe routes to school. We can and must do better.



RECOMMENDATION

- I recommend that the HCC pass a motion endorsing the NMTAC's request on this issue and advise that the Commission budget for two pedestrian protected crossings on Broadway at Jefferson School.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Having enhanced crossings at each corner of Jefferson is a commonsense approach that will help keep kids safe while commuting to and from school. Likewise, installing two protected crossings at busy intersections that are used by children commuting to and from school will establish a precedent that the City of Helena is willing to make our schools safe and is willing to protect kids as they commute to and from school.

Overall, ensuring that children in our town feel safe walking, biking, or scooting, etc. to school is important. If kids and parents feel safe about using alternative modes of transportation to get to and from school, we can reduce vehicle congestion in and around schools/neighborhoods during the busy drop-off and pick-up times. Moreover, safe routes to school is a goal on the local, state, and national level and ensuring safe crossings at the corners of an elementary school is an obvious step towards meeting safe routes to school goals.

Overall, this is a commonsense step in the right direction, and I hope that the full HCC will support this motion.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Lowell J. Chandler

Lowell Chandler
HCC District 3 Representative.