



MEMO TO CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Topic on the City Council Agenda

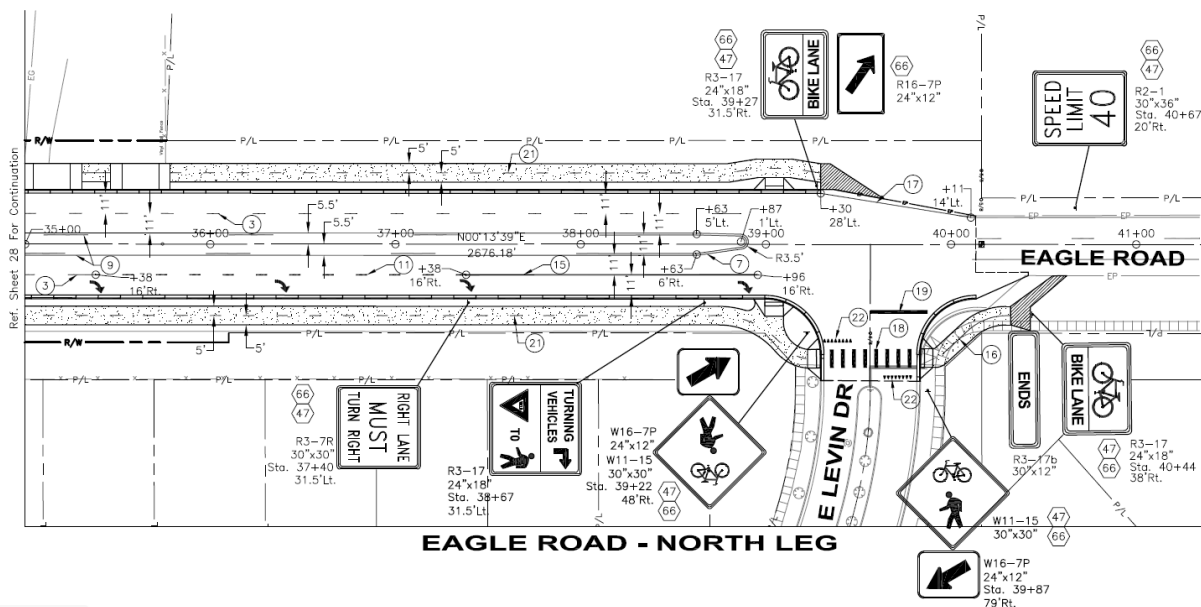
From: Meridian Transportation Commission **Date:** June 2, 2021
Presenter: Walter Steed, Chair & Ryan Lancaster, Commissioner **Estimated Time:** 15 minutes
Topic: Transportation Commission: Pathway Crossing Concerns

The Meridian Transportation Commission recommends that Meridian City Council request ACHD to look at redesign of multiuse pathway and sidewalk crossings.

Meridian staff have expressed concerns with ACHD staff about new designs placing pathway crossings behind and between cars at street intersections and the visibility conflicts it creates. ACHD staff responded recently that they are acting as they have been directed and any changes will have to come from the executive level. As such, Meridian staff brought their concerns forward to the Transportation Commission.

In May 2021, the Meridian Transportation Commission discussed the pathway crossing in the 95% design for Lake Hazel Road and Eagle Road. After discussion of staff concerns, reflection of past Commission discussions, and review of the example in this project at E Levin Dr, the Commission felt that the issue warranted closer review.

As there are no similar urban examples, there is concern with committing to a treatment without testing/experiencing it first. While this treatment may make sense in certain conditions, staff is not convinced that residential corridors, with distractions such as landscaping, are the appropriate



settings for setback crossings. Bike and especially pedestrian supportive designs are very sensitive to perception, and human behavior can have significant implications on function.

In the Lake Hazel Road and Eagle Road design shown, you can see the crossing is pulled back from the intersection. The perceived benefit is to allow vehicles to approach without blocking the crossing. However, a vehicle may still just as easily block the crosswalk, and if done, this negates the benefit of the design. It is possible signage, striping, or some other means of education could improve this, but drivers do not typically leave crosswalks open, unless pedestrians are already seen in them or they are beyond marked stop lines.

Another concern is human behavior. People take shortcuts; especially pedestrians. You can see this in many poorly designed public spaces. Worn "cow paths" can often be seen through a grassy area, because the sidewalk was in a location determined less convenient to the target destination. People will often go to greater lengths to circumvent a process or design, than would otherwise be required to just adhere to it. People (bikes and pedestrians) might cross where a ramp is normally located, and also at the new setback location. You would then have multiple points of conflict, upset expectations, and reduced awareness of all. This could possibly be improved with additional controls for crossing, but they do not exist in the design.

Lastly, landscaping, fencing, utility poles, and traffic signs all exist and complicate a driver's ability to perceive pedestrians. That's compounded when looking for pedestrians that are further from a driver's area of focus and normal expectations.

There may be some well-founded reasons why all of these concerns are less important than a more pressing design consideration, but it's not been made evident to the Transportation Commission or Planning staff.

Thank you for considering bringing this to ADHD's attention.