

MEMORANDUM



TO: WALKABLE NOVI COMMITTEE
FROM: REBECCA RUNKEL, PROJECT ENGINEER
SUBJECT: 10 MILE RD & TAFT RD PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS
DATE: NOVEMBER 9, 2023

Mayor and Council –
A follow-up from staff regarding a recent request to the Walkable Novi Committee.
- Victor

In response to a resident inquiry and at the request of the Walkable Novi Committee, City staff have investigated the feasibility, as well as the pros and cons, of changing the operation of the pedestrian walk signals at the intersection of 10 Mile Road and Taft Road. Currently, the pedestrian signals operate by a push button, so pedestrians must approach the intersection and push a button on a post to initiate the walk signal cycle. This way, the walk signal only activates when the button is pushed.

10 Mile Road is under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission of Oakland County (RCOC), and the RCOC controls the traffic signals at this intersection. The RCOC can change the pedestrian signals from a push button system to an automatic cycle that doesn't require a push button, either cycling continuously all hours of the day or on a set schedule (i.e., daytime hours only). According to staff at the RCOC, automatically cycling the pedestrian signals makes sense if the crosswalks are near a school where children will be crossing, where pedestrian volumes are high, and/or where Jewish communities are present (during Sabbath).

City engineering consultant OHM Advisors, completed a 10 Mile Rd Corridor Study in 2019 which assessed current and future operational and safety performance along 10 Mile Road within the City. The 10 Mile Road and Taft Road intersection was listed as a location of concern due to afternoon peak traffic delays. Based on SEMCOG and STRAVA data, this intersection sees high daily volumes of both vehicles and pedestrians. The location of Fuerst Park, the Novi Library, and Novi High School just east of the intersection may make the intersection a good candidate for automatic pedestrian signal cycling during certain times of day.

The main concern with automatically cycling the pedestrian signals is an increased vehicle wait time, especially when traffic volumes are low. Currently the traffic signals will 'rest' or remain on green for motorists traveling on Ten Mile Road until traffic approaches the intersection from Taft Road or the pedestrian signals are activated by the push buttons. If the pedestrian signals are cycled continuously 24 hours a day, the vehicle wait time would increase due to the longer time needed for pedestrian signal cycling.

Another factor to consider is the push button system provides the pedestrian with the maximum amount of time needed to cross the intersection. If a pedestrian approaches the intersection and activates the push button after traffic is already stopped by a red light where they intend to cross, the walk signal will not display until the traffic signal cycles through to the next red light, giving the pedestrian maximum crossing time. By changing

to automatic signals, pedestrians may approach an intersection after traffic has been stopped at a red light, see the walk signal displayed, and choose to cross despite having less than the maximum amount of time to cross.

If the City decides to request the RCOC to change the operation of the pedestrian signals, further evaluation would be needed by RCOC staff. While destinations near the intersection may warrant changing to an automatic signal during certain hours of the day, the current push button system provides the safest conditions for pedestrians.