

Your Walking Papers

PhillyWalks

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PennDOT Follows Sprawl and Fails to Embrace Pedestrians



PennDOT's New Headquarters in King of Prussia

Now, only one SEPTA bus (the 125) goes anywhere near the new K of P offices and then it is nearly at the end of the line. Largely due to the automobile traffic encountered along the way, the bus trip to PennDOT's new offices usually takes over an hour...each way! For carfree transportation activists, attending a meeting at PennDOT's District 6-0 offices has gone from a mild inconvenience to an arduous journey of several hours. But this is really another story.

What is really disturbing, though, is the lack of safe pedestrian access once visitors get to the Geerdes Boulevard entrance to the office park that contains the District 6-0 building. Except for one, there are no sidewalks into or around the inside of the office park and visitors and employees on foot are forced to walk in a four lane roadway that is signed as PA Route 23.

In the Fall of 1999 the District 6-0 office of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) moved from St. Davids in Radnor Township, Delaware County to Geerdes Boulevard north of the Mall at King of Prussia in Upper Merion Township, Montgomery County. For anyone from downtown Philadelphia attending a meeting there, the old Delaware County office was marginally accessible by public transportation. Taking either SEPTA's Norristown High Speed Line (Route 100) or its R5 Regional Rail line left only a relatively short walk to reach PennDOT's building.

The one exception, and the only sidewalk to be seen, is built around the corner lot that the District 6-0 office building sits on! It

appears to be new and probably was built after PennDOT moved into the facility. The concrete sidewalk even includes ADA ramps through the curb at the corner of Geerdes

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"If you have brains in your head and feet in your shoes, if the street isn't nice, you'll go where you choose."

Dr. Seuss

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Boulevard and Route 23. Ironically, while the ADA ramp invites pedestrians and the wheelchair-bound to cross the street at this point, the traffic signal post on each of the four corners has “No Pedestrian Crossing” signs facing both opposite corners and there are no marked crosswalks between any of them!

Once a pedestrian has walked out of the office park on the entrance road, he/she will not find a crosswalk or pedestrian-actuated help to reach the other side of Allendale Road (another busy four-lane facility). While waiting 25 minutes for the 125 bus to return to the city, one Philly-Walks member counted 8 people walking out of the office park to reach the bus shelter. The conversation tak-

ing place between them indicated the eight were employed in the office park and used public transportation (and their feet) to get to and from their jobs.

Recent federal transportation laws like the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and its predecessor the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 are supposed to elevate the status of pedestrians in a truly intermodal transportation system. From the benign neglect they receive in suburban office parks in general, and at the PennDOT District 6-0 offices in particular, it is clear that instead of embracing those who travel on foot, developers and even PennDOT are still holding pedestrians at arms length.



NO PEDESTRIAN CROSSING signs on all four corners



Entrance to Office Park at Geerdes Boulevard and PA 23



ADA curb ramp leads into prohibited crossing!

PhillyWalks

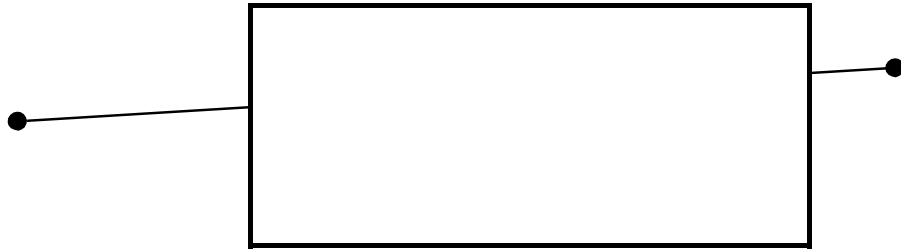
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- The Voice of Walkers in Philadelphia

Resolutions from 1st Walking Congress (Continued)

Resolution 01-04 Marking Crosswalks

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that America Walks calls upon jurisdictions to require:

1. That all legal crosswalks be marked on streets where average daily traffic equals or exceeds 8000 vehicles.

2. That highly visible crosswalk markings be installed at all school crossings and all transit stops, including those not located adjacent to a traffic signal;

3. That crossing improvements such as pedestrian refuge islands, curb extensions, and flashing in-pavement lights be considered on streets where the speed or volume of traffic, the width of the crossing, or limitations on visibility may make crossing without such improvements unsafe;

4. That crosswalks be well illuminated at night;

5. That crosswalk markings have a high color contrast to be visibly distinguishable from the road pavement;

6. That, crosswalks be designed in accordance with the recommendations of the Public Rights-of-Way Access Advisory Committee, so that their benefits may be extended to the greatest number of pedestrians .

Resolution 01-05 Designing Walkable Communities

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by America Walks and its member organizations, assembled this

18th day of August, 2001, in the city of Oakland, California, that America Walks calls on all those involved in the shaping of our cities and towns to incorporate safety, accessibility and comfort of pedestrians as primary criteria in designing communities and transportation systems.

Resolution 01-06 Promoting Walking

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by America Walks and its member organizations, assembled this 18th day of August, 2001, in the city of Oakland, California, that America Walks calls upon governments, agencies and corporations to devote sustained resources to educating the citizenry in the benefits of walking, to promote walking, and to actively and without reservation encourage people to walk as a part of their daily lives and as a form of transportation.