

Your Walking Papers

PhillyWalks

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PhillyWalks Suggests Pedestrian Friendly Changes To Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Part 1 16th Street & the Parkway

PhillyWalks is making recommendations to maximize pedestrian use of the Parkway within the context of the road's importance for the movement of vehicles. Many pedestrians find crossing sections of the parkway intimidating and dangerous. There are many things that can be done to make the Parkway more easily and safely used by pedestrians without significant inconvenience to the many drivers who use it.

In some cases, Philly Walks is suggesting changes that would slow down traffic at places where pedestrian crossings are already marked. Since pedestrians legally have the right-of-way at these locations, it does not seem too much of an imposition to ask drivers to recognize and respect it!

A number of other recommendations merely take advantage of existing

opportunities for crossings, which are not currently signalized. People who frequently use the Parkway have discovered these opportunities and use them already, but they are far from obvious. Revised signalization would allow the infrequent user to walk along and across the Parkway as comfortably as a nearby resident might.

Recommendations:

1. 16th Street and the Parkway

A. Separate the pedestrian crossing of the Parkway into two phases. This is not the most convenient possible approach, but it is the safest, given existing traffic patterns. Currently pedestrians crossing the outbound lanes of the Parkway must compete with a heavy volume of vehicles turning left from 16th Street. These vehicles will not yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and striping the turning lanes has

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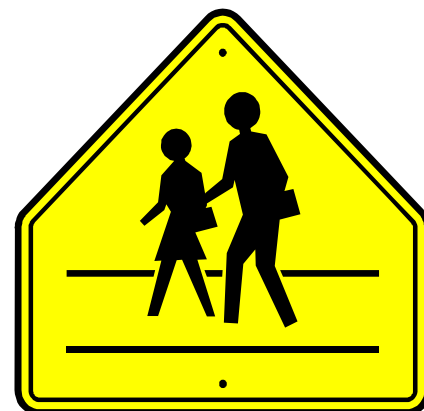
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Election Yields New President

At its March Meeting, Philly Walks held its annual election of officers. Peter Hecht, PhD was elected President, Nancy Lavin was elected Vice President, while Janet Heller and Dennis Winters were re-elected to fill the posts of Treasurer and Secretary,

respectively. Hecht had served as Vice-President for the last two years and had previously served as PhillyWalks' President. Lavin, the immediate past president, had served in that position for two years before stepping down.



Sidewalk parking—The problem is epidemic. The solution, elusive.

If you've had to compete, lately, for walking space where cars, vans, and contractors' trucks have taken up daily residence on Center City sidewalks you have lots of company. Sidewalks in our area have been disappearing with increased regularity under illegally parked vehicles.

PPA ticketing seems ineffective at stopping repeat violators who use Rittenhouse Square area sidewalks as parking lots. And, residential neighborhoods west and north of the Square are not routinely patrolled.

Fed up with the problem, residents of the 1900 block of Waverly Street have taken matters into their own hands. Owners of vehicles found parked on their sidewalks are put on

notice that they are breaking the law. Warnings are placed on offending vehicles advising the vehicle's owner that their license number has been forwarded to the police and to PPA.

Citizens who share the "Waverly Street Neighbors" ire should know that a new legislation mandates the *towing* of vehicles parked on sidewalks. Given the low threshold of PPA *ticketing* for this offense, it is doubtful the threat to tow will have much impact on sidewalk parking behavior.

Since the law's adoption, our attempts to get a handle on PPA's enforcement strategy have fallen on deaf ears. Current PPA policy allows for twenty minutes on the sidewalk if two wheels of the vehicle remain on the



Cars block the sidewalk in the Rittenhouse Square area of Center City.

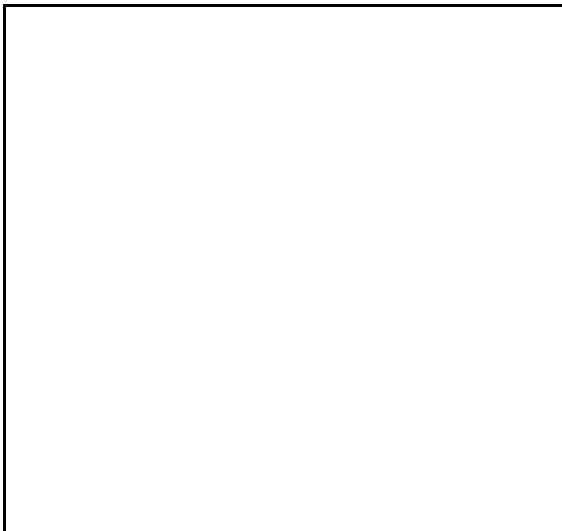
Help For Pedestrians On the Parkway

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not helped drivers recognize the crosswalk as something they need to pay attention to. However, pedestrians can safely cross this leg of the intersection when the Parkway traffic is moving eastbound. They then can cross the eastbound lanes during both the 16th Street and the Arch Street phases of the signal.

B. To accommodate pedestrians waiting for the next phase of their crossing, the median island in the Parkway approach should be expanded to the width of the painted median and extended east toward 16th Street. A new crosswalk can be added to allow people to cross directly from north to south without having to zig-zag west as they do now. This will have the added bene-

fit of reducing the oversized throat that encourages cars to speed up while turning left from 16th Street.



C. Extend or bulb out the sidewalk on both sides of the Arch Street crosswalk on the west side of the intersection to shorten the crossing and to prevent the frequent illegal parking that blocks the crosswalk.

D. Pedestrians crossing 16th Street on the south side can just as safely cross on the Arch Street phase (when it currently says "Don't Walk") as on the Parkway phase (when it says "Walk"). The "Walk" signal should be extended to let pedestrians know this.