

November 7, 2011

Mr. Gabe Klein and Ms. LuAnn Hamilton
Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner
Chicago Department of Transportation
30 N. LaSalle St., Suite 1100
Chicago, IL 60602



Dear Ms. Hamilton and Mr. Klein,

For over 36 years, the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents (SOAR) has fought for the safety of the residents of Streeterville. A core principle of our organization is to "promote safety and well-being." It is regarding that subject, safety, that we are writing you this letter.

In the past several months, numerous accidents have occurred at the intersection of N. Columbus Dr. and E. Illinois St. Two pedestrians have died as a result of some of these accidents. While accidents can occur at any intersection in the city, it is widely known, and reported in the media, that the intersection of Columbus and Illinois is one of the most dangerous. This intersection is used by a wide spectrum including pedestrians, bikes, cars, as well as CTA, shuttle, and charter busses. A solution needs to be developed that addresses the needs of all users while maintaining a safe environment. Steps need to be taken to address problems in this intersection for the safety of Streeterville residents, for the safety of Chicagoans, and for the safety of visitors.

The following areas need to be addressed in this intersection:

- The speed at which vehicles travel to and through this intersection. Currently vehicles are traveling at high accelerated speeds from the south (as the street widens), north (as they come down the hill), east (as they race on Lower Illinois) and west (as they race the Grand Ave. light).
- The disregard for the traffic signals and timing
- The expansive length in which pedestrians cross unprotected across Columbus

To address the safety of the intersection, and the above mentioned issues, we suggest the following solutions be implemented:

1. A raised median should be built on N. Columbus from upper E. North Water to E. Ohio St. This raised median should contain planters to beautify the street, but more importantly create an island in the middle of Columbus that pedestrians can use as a safe-haven. A long median from the north and south of this intersection will create friction on Columbus and slow traffic down well in advance of this problem location.
2. The double left-turn lane from southbound Columbus to eastbound Illinois and from northbound Columbus to westbound Grand should be reduced to a single left-turn lane. The area vacated by the one left-turn lane would be used to construct the median as proposed in number one above.
3. Modify the intersection signals to allow for an "all-walk" by pedestrians. This will eliminate the conflict that occurs when pedestrians and vehicles attempt to share the same space at the same time.
4. Clearly marked, and strictly enforced speed limits and red-light cameras should be implemented to deter drivers from exhibiting harmful behaviors. During peak hours and seasons, target police enforcement should occur in this area to set an example.
5. Due to the high percent of accidents involving taxicabs in downtown Chicago, more training, regulation and oversight should be implemented to make those drivers more responsible for their driving habits and public safety.

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Working to Keep Streeterville a Neighborhood

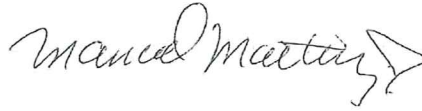
SOAR understands the need for balance in a community. We are proud of the attractions, shopping, dining and entertainment in the neighborhood that brings thousands of residents and visitors into the area each day. The safety of all to enjoy these great things is critical.

We want to work closely with CDOT to address this intersection and to further the city's goal of Chicago becoming the best pedestrian city in the world. Please confirm receipt of this letter and let us know when we can meet to discuss these ideas further.

Sincerely,



Gail Spreen
Chair Real Estate Review Committee



Manny Martinez
Chair of Safety and Security Committee

Cc: Alderman Brendan Reilly
Benet Haller, City of Chicago Dept of Zoning and Land Use Planning
Phil Levin, Planning Director, GNMAA
Mable Buckner, Executive Director, Streeterville Chamber of Commerce