

WALKING ACTION PLAN (WAP)

Nacole S. Smith, MPH **2018 Walking College** *Increasing Pedestrian Safety at the State Center*

Background

The State Center is a major state employment hub with the largest concentration of State agencies in Maryland employing over 3,000 people. It is the bridge between Midtown and West Baltimore in the heart of the Cultural Arts District and sits adjacent to University of Baltimore and the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). It is one of the most transit-rich sites in the state with the metro, light rail, buses, and Amtrak a short walk away. Unfortunately, the State Center is also an isolated fortress of asphalt and obsolete buildings that divides and weakens the surrounding nine neighborhoods. The State Center is in the Mount Vernon neighborhood which has a walk score of 98, transit score of 88, and a bike score of 77¹.

In 2018, two pedestrians were hit and injured by vehicles at the intersection of Eutaw St. and Preston St. Currently, vehicles are permitted to make left and right-hand turns while pedestrians are permitted to cross. This makes pedestrian crossing difficult as vehicles and buses fail to yield to pedestrians when they cross the street. In addition, buses tend to block the cross walk due to the placement of the bus stop near this intersection, which prohibits pedestrian sight of moving vehicles and vice versa. Increasing pedestrian safety at the intersection of Eutaw St. and Preston St. will be the goal of this Walking Action Plan.

Goal

Increase pedestrian safety at intersection of Eutaw St. and Preston St.

- Strategy #1: Assess pedestrian volume during several peak hours
- Strategy #2: Assess pedestrian comfort level of safety
- Strategy #3: Host community meeting to discuss pedestrian safety
- Strategy #4: Analyze outcome(s) of community meeting
- Strategy #5: Solicit support from state agencies and city officials
- Strategy #6: Secure funding

Potential Partners

- Maryland Department of Health
- Maryland Department of Planning
- Baltimore City Department of Transportation
- Baltimore Regional Transportation Board
- State Center Neighborhood Alliance
- Health Freedom

Possible Short and Long-term Solutions

Some solutions/opportunities that would enhance walkability and increase pedestrian safety at the intersection of Eutaw St. and Preston St. are:

- Move bus hub 100ft away from intersection

¹ Walk Score, 2018. Accessed online May 7, 2018 at <https://www.walkscore.com/>

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- Change signal lights so vehicles do not turn when pedestrians cross
- Implement a pedestrian scramble or Barnes Dance at the intersection
- Expand transit system in Baltimore City so employees are less car dependent
- Implement protected bike lanes around the State Center
- Implement a bicycle sharing system around the State Center
- Implement electronic vehicle sharing systems (e.g., Birds) at the State Center

Barriers/Challenges

Some of the walkability barriers that were discovered around the State Center were non-functioning crossing signals, heavy vehicle traffic, damaged sidewalks, lack of comfort and appeal of surrounding neighborhood, numerous parked cars on the street that block pedestrian view of traffic, buses blocking the crosswalk, drivers not yielding to pedestrians, and safety issues during the evening, and lack of post office and grocery store within walking distance. Finally, a decade long project to redevelop the State Center has been a pending issue, and subsequently gained a lot of political attention and community petition. With plans to redevelop the State Center on hold, this could delay implementing solutions to increase pedestrian safety at this intersection.

Strategic Plan and Timeline

Goal: Increase pedestrian safety at intersection of Eutaw St. and Preston St.

Strategy	Action Steps	Timeline	Assigned to
Assess pedestrian volume during several peak hours	Count # of pedestrians that cross intersection at 8am, 12pm, and 4pm; people mapping	2018	Walking College Fellow
Assess pedestrian comfort level of safety	Create and disseminate survey to community members	2018	Walking College Fellow
Host community meeting to discuss pedestrian safety	Outreach to community members using Text campaign	2018	Walking College Fellow
Analyze outcome(s) of community meeting	Draft meeting minutes and summarize proposed solutions	2018	Walking College Fellow
Solicit support from state agencies and city officials	Contact state agencies and city officials to obtain support; conduct walk audit with agencies and officials	2019	Walking College Fellow
Secure funding	Obtain funding and/or explore low cost funding strategies	2019	Walking College Fellow, State Agencies, City Officials, Community Organizations