



CeCe Ibson – Ward 1 City Council Candidate Survey Responses

2. Safety Near Schools

City leaders are considering lowering school zone speed limits to 15–20 mph, adding flashing signs, and redesigning dangerous roads near schools.

How should the City approach school zone speed limits and enforcement?

I agree that school zone speed limits should be reduced but I also believe we would benefit from better enforcement of the current school zone speed limits. If school zone speed limits are reduced down from 25 mph, we should consider a transition zone approach where appropriate (for example, along major road ways where the posted speed limit is 35 or 40 mph). In terms of enforcement, while people complain about the DMPD traffic enforcement vehicles, I know from personal experience that when one is parked at Tower Park, traffic on Hickman Road slows to an appropriate speed. The lighted crosswalks on, for example, Martin Luther King (south of Hickman) and Beaver Avenue are important additions to traffic flow during school hours. When families expressed concern about driver near-misses with school children walking several years ago, I worked with the City to get the lighted crosswalk in downtown Beaverdale installed and supported the same across from Holy Trinity where, despite having the right-of-way, my young son was nearly hit by a speeding driver several years ago.

When road redesigns near schools may reduce lanes or change traffic flow, how would you balance child safety with other transportation needs?

Child safety needs to be the priority, always. So, to me, it is not about balancing but prioritizing. If lanes or traffic flow are changed, a strong public information campaign, reminding drivers that the safety of a child is worth far more than a brief delay in travel time, is a good starting point. It took drivers some time to get used to the lighted crosswalk in downtown Beaverdale but today most drivers stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk even when the lights are not flashing. The City and DMPD need to work with the schools to address vehicle traffic during drop-off and pick-up times. There are a number of areas where cars and vans fill up the streets, including across crosswalks, blocking cyclists and walkers, including children. I have witnessed too many near misses at Moore, Monroe and



Roosevelt over the years, as well as at Holy Trinity (although there they have paid staff who direct errant drivers).

What additional steps would you take to help children walk and bike safely to school?

The number one problem, in my view, is drivers. I routinely see motor vehicle operators blow through crosswalks (lighted and otherwise), ignore posted speed limits (not just flashing school zone reduced speed alerts) and fail to give leeway to cyclists and pedestrians. The recent hands-free law is a good step towards combatting distracted driving. The schools in my neighborhood and in those I drive frequently are staffed before and after school by crossing guards who do an excellent job of leading children to safety and calling out driver misconduct. We would benefit from more protected crosswalks, better sidewalks and a robust public information campaign regarding helmets. A law requiring bicycle helmets is out of reach, currently. But I see too many children riding without them, as well as adults with children in tow who are helmeted but the adults are not.

How we educate drivers is also an important consideration. While the law permitting alternate driver instruction addressed certain concerns (cost and issues with equitable access to approved drivers education programs) it perhaps created another – if the instructors are not well versed in the intersection of driving and other modes of transport, the students will not be well informed. Revising the written test could address this, but that is within the purview of the State, and not the City.