



Feet First Philly
A Project of the Clean Air Council

Philly Footnotes

The Newsletter of Feet First Philly
Dennis R. Winters, Editor

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WalkBoston a Model Pedestrian Advocacy Group

By Samuel Sklar

WalkBoston will serve as a planning model for Feet First Philly as we move forward as an organization that advocates for pedestrian rights and safety for the City of Philadelphia. Now in its 26th year as a professional activist not-for-profit, WalkBoston serves Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a vital piece of community planning efforts, as a safety and education consultant and a unified voice for those who walk around the city and the state. Since every commuter and meanderer is a pedestrian at some point in his or her journey, WalkBoston has played and continues to provide an essential service to each and every Massachusetts citizen for over two decades.

With WalkBoston as a model, Feet First Philly can certainly look to WalkBoston's established principles as a guide for current and future planning efforts.

Founded in 1990, WalkBoston, currently as a direct representative for more than 103 cities and towns across Massachusetts. It predates the "pedestrian movement's" national presence – AmericaWalks – by 6 years. The knowledge that has been gathered over the last two-and-a-half decades will be essential for both procedure and initiative planning in Feet First Philly's future.

WalkBoston Founders Ann Hershfang and Dorothea Hass are still active members and though the political and physical environment around which pedestrianism has evolved, their dedication to the safety and health of Massachusetts' residents has not waned in the least.

Under the guidance of Executive Director, Wendy Landman, for the past 11 years, WalkBoston has organized outreach efforts and, in concert with generous funding from Foundations and local, dedicated private firms (among others), produced great research and physical manifestations of Best Practices via dozens of walking maps through Boston's oldest neighborhoods and Massachusetts' most interesting towns. WalkBoston's dedicated staff, Bob Sloane, Brendan Kearney, Stacey Beuttell, Julie DeMauro, Laura O'Rourke, and Barbara Maratos, joins together under its inclusive mission statement: "WalkBoston makes walking safer and easier in Massachusetts to encourage better health, a cleaner environment and vibrant communities."

The organization continues to work with school systems via the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) initiative and with public officials through legislative action. The dedication and body of work is certainly a flag Feet First Philly can bear, should these be the causes the most in line with



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our mission. Certainly Philadelphia and its

region's context is different, but the fact does not change that walking is the dominant form of transportation for urban and

suburban dwellers alike and WalkBoston has set, and continues to set, a great example for the movement nationwide.

Distraction Is Dangerous Walking As Well As Driving

By Dennis Winters

A recent U.S. survey of adults found that even though they are aware of the risks, 60 percent of pedestrians walk while talking on the phone, texting, emailing, or listening to music. 70 percent of those pedestrians admitted their behavior could be dangerous.

The April 2015 phone survey of 1004 adults aged 18-65, was conducted by Liberty Mutual Insurance.

It is estimated that in 2010 this

kind of distraction was a contributing factor in over 4,200 deaths, an increase of 4 percent over the previous year based on figures from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"So much attention has been paid, and rightly so, to distracted driving that we have ignored the fact that distracted walking and crossing can be just as risky," said David Melton, a driving safety expert with Liberty Mutual Insurance and managing director of global safety.

"From an early age, we all learn

how to safely cross the street – look both ways, wait for the walk signs – but as adults many of us seem to forget those simple rules."

The Liberty Mutual release reported that a majority of the survey respondents, 55 percent, said they thought texting or emailing while crossing a street to be the most dangerous activity when walking, even more dangerous than running across a street to beat oncoming traffic (40 percent) or "jaywalking" (24 percent).

Volvo says horrible 'self-parking car accident' happened because driver didn't have 'pedestrian detection'

by Kashmir Hill

Last week, a gossip blog based in the Dominican Republic called Remolacha published a disturbing video of what it said was a "self-parking car accident." A group of people stand in a garage watching and filming a grey Volvo XC60 that backs up, stops, and then accelerates toward the group. It smashes into two people, and causes the person filming the video with his phone to drop it and run. It is terrifying.

We reached out to Volvo for answers about what went wrong here, and the company's response was also a bit disturbing. Volvo spokesperson Johan Larsson explained that the video is mislabeled. He said the car is not attempting to self-park. "It seems they are trying to demonstrate pedestrian detection and auto-braking," said Larsson by email. "Unfortunately, there were some issues in the way the test was conducted."

The main issue, said Larsson, is that it appears that the people who bought this Volvo did not pay for the "Pedestrian detection functionality," which is a feature that costs more money.

"The Volvo XC60 comes with City Safe-

ty as a standard feature however this does not include the Pedestrian detection functionality," said Larsson. The "City Safety system" kicks in when someone is in stop-and-go traffic, helping the driver avoid rear ending another car while driving slowly, or under 30 mph.

Keeping the car safe is included as a standard feature, but keeping pedestrians safe isn't. "It appears as if the car in this video is not equipped with Pedestrian detection," said Larsson. "This is sold as a separate package."

The pedestrian detection feature, which works using a radar in the car's grill and a camera located behind the windshield, has been around since the mid 2000s, and even started detecting cyclists in 2011, but it costs approximately \$3,000, according to IEEE.

But even if it did have the feature, Larsson says the driver would have interfered with it by the way they were driving and "accelerating heavily towards the people in the video." "The pedestrian detection would likely have been inactivated due to the driver inactivating it by intentionally and actively accelerating," said Larsson. "Hence, the auto braking function is overridden by the driver and deac-

tivated."

Meanwhile, the people in the video seem to ignore their instincts and trust that the car assumed to be endowed with artificial intelligence knows not to hurt them. It is a sign of our incredible faith in the power of technology, but also, it's a reminder that companies making AI-assisted vehicles need to make safety features standard and communicate clearly when they aren't. According to the Dominican blog, the "two men hit were bruised but are ok."

Even if you have paid for your car to detect and avoid hitting pedestrians, Larsson says, "Volvo Cars strongly recommends to never perform tests towards real humans."

Credit: 2015 Fusion Media Network, LLC <http://fusion.net/story/139703/self-parking-car-accident-no-pedestrian-detection/>



Why Pedestrians Should Support Protected Bike Lanes

By Dennis R Winters

Writing for The Green Lane Project, a **PeopleForBikes** program that helps U.S. cities build better bike lanes to create low-stress streets, Michael Andersen says protected bike lanes are not only good at making it safer for cyclists, but are great at making it safer to walk as well.

New York City reports that on streets that received protected bike lanes, total traffic injury rates were reduced by 12 to 52 percent between 2007 and 2011. Officials said that there were huge reductions on those streets where there had been about one pedestrian fatality per mile for years. But beyond the obvious benefit of getting bicycle off of sidewalks, how could protected bike lanes be so good for people walking? It comes down to four factors.

Protected bike lanes shorten crossing distances is probably the most obvious benefit of protected bike lanes for those on foot: You don't have to walk across as many lanes of auto traffic when crossing the street. The effect is similar to curb extensions, or "bulb outs," that also reduce the distance across an intersection. The crossing distance problem is closely related to the second safety factor.

Protected bike lanes make it easier to know which direction cars are coming from. When you are walking, it's not the traffic you

expect that poses a danger—it's the traffic you don't expect. Protected bike lanes reduce the number of mixed traffic lanes and effectively break each pedestrian crossing into manageable stages, all of which include highly defined vehicle movements.

Instead of the pedestrian having to cross 70 or more feet of unspecified undesignated roadway into which the car can be turning from a side street at any point,

cause of the threat to pedestrians, particularly seniors. But it is also dangerous for bicycle riders because vehicle operators wouldn't be able to see them and might turn directly into them, a crash that happens most often when a bicycle enters the street at a crosswalk and is hit by a turning vehicle. Unfortunately the same issues affect pedestrians too.

Drivers turning into crosswalks, hitting people who are following



A protected bike lane with green paint and plastic bollards

the pedestrian now crosses the bike lane, in which it's very clear where bikes are coming from. Then they cross three and only three—or sometimes two—lanes of traffic, and they know exactly where that traffic is coming from.

Dedicated signal phases prevent turning conflicts with people walking. Biking on sidewalks is illegal in most major cities be-

walk signals correctly but are somewhat obscured from motorists' view by parked or standing cars and trucks, are a major cause of pedestrian serious injury or death. However, the same traffic signals that give people on bikes a head start on traffic or a green light of their very own can also be used by people walking, having the same effect as a "leading

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green or walk signal.” The same daylighting and mixing zones that make it easier for motorists to see bikes while turning have exactly the same effect on increasing the visibility of people walking.

Finally, protected bike lanes reduce traffic weaving. Another danger to pedestrians is the “zip around:” vehicles swerving one lane to another to get around a

stopped car, only to realize the other driver had stopped to yield to someone in the crosswalk. Protected bike lanes help solve this problem by creating traffic-calming barriers that drivers slow down to avoid and by narrowing or removing the mixed-traffic lanes that are available to vehicles. People make bad choices when streets have more auto capacity than it actually needs. There is going to be speeding and aggressive driving. People will be

speeding around each other and double-parked vehicles. Redesigning a street that has an unnecessary mixed-traffic lane into a street with a protected bike lane can have a dramatic effect on street safety...for all users. Once zip-arounds become impossible, people driving simply queue up and wait their turn—and the pedestrian is the biggest winner.

Step It Up!

U.S. Surgeon General Recommendations to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities

On September 9th the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is holding “A Call to Action” in Washington, D.C. to launch “Step It Up,” a new report that will recommend multisector strategies to increase walking (for details of this event go to (www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/form/partner-event.htm))

The need is great. According to the Surgeon General, only half of American adults get enough physical activity, which is one of the most important ways to improve health. Walking is the easiest way to get moving!

A collaboration using the resources of business, government, and non-profits has the potential to wield the power to address this systemic problem.

Look for STEP IT UP this month!

And at the local level...

Survey to Improve Safety, Transportation, and Housing in Philadelphia

Mayor Nutter is encouraging citizens to participate in a survey that will help Philadelphia become an age-friendly city. This initiative was announced on August 10, 2015 and is a partnership with the Mayor’s Commission on

Aging and AARP Pennsylvania. The city-wide survey will be used to identify challenges and opportunities to make Philadelphia more age-friendly.

Mayor Nutter commented, “We have worked hard to improve the overall quality of life for all our residents, no matter their age, race, or income level.” The survey will help the city better understand the diverse needs of communities.

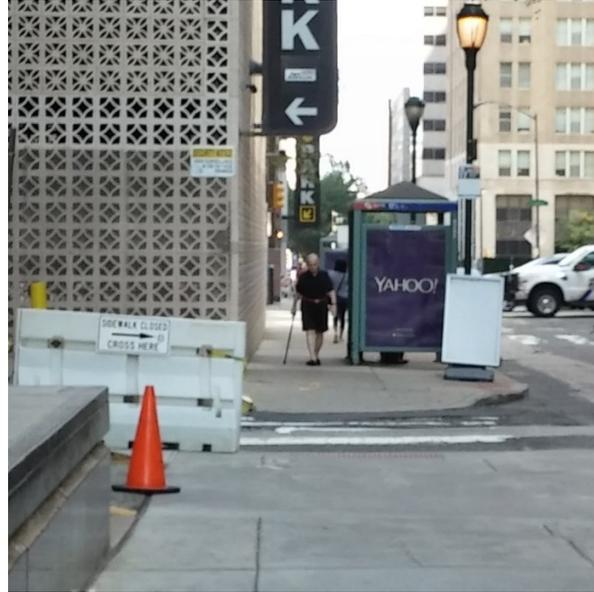
To take the “Grow Old in Philadelphia” survey online, go to <http://secure.jotform.us/philagov/mca-survey/>



Sign Issues at Construction Sites

When you approach a construction site and the sidewalk is closed, you may see two kinds of signs that are required by the City. One kind of sign should guide you safely around or through the construction zone. The other kind of sign should inform you that the sidewalk closure is legal, and should let you know how long the sidewalk may be closed. Unfortunately, in many cases, either or both kinds of signs are missing, badly designed or poorly located.

ADVANCE WARNING SIGNS



The photo above left shows a construction zone that is missing any kind of sidewalk closure sign, while the photo above right has a seemingly leftover “Sidewalk Closed” sign that would direct pedestrians needlessly across 19th street at an uncontrolled intersection.

In the photo below, crossing 17th Street at Market, you can see that the sidewalk and the curb ramp are blocked. But is there a protected walkway in the parking lane of Market Street? Or must pedestrians detour across Market Street in order to continue walking eastward?



As it turns out, there is a protected walkway in the parking lane, but a pedestrian would have to cross 17th Street

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and walk past the newsstand to see it.

Whenever pedestrians are forced to detour across the street because of a sidewalk closure, advance warning signs must be provided. This is particularly important where the sidewalk closure does not start at a crosswalk but at mid-block. The advance warning signs are to be placed at the nearest upstream crosswalk before the sidewalk closure, as illustrated below.



Advance warning signs need to be well-constructed and easily detectable with a cane, like the sign shown on the left below. They should not create tripping hazards like the sign on the right.



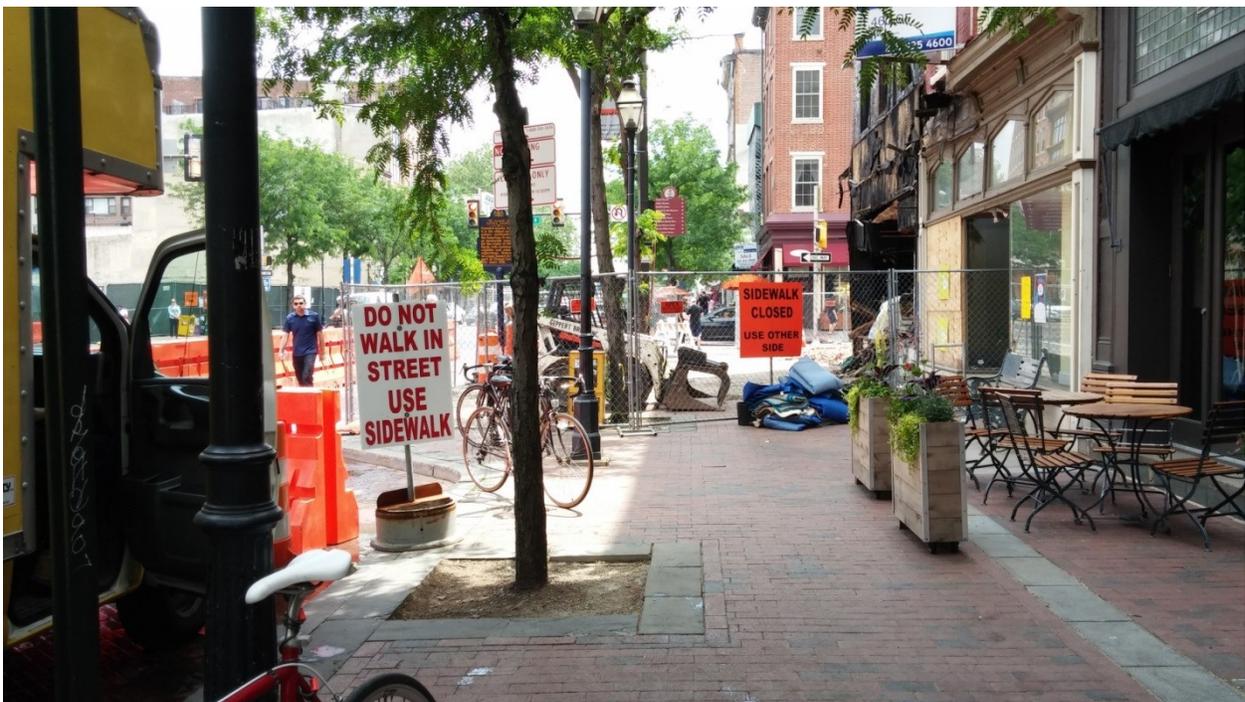
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Signs need to be placed so they are seen by pedestrians approaching the construction site from all directions. In the photos below, the warning sign can be seen by people approaching on 12th Street from the south, but is likely to be missed by pedestrians approaching on Chestnut and turning right onto 12th Street.



When conditions change, signs need to be updated to avoid confusing pedestrians, as in the photo below:



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SIDEWALK CLOSURE PERMIT SIGNS

When the Streets Department issues a permit for a sidewalk to be closed, the technical name is an “Equipment Placement Permit”. The Equipment Placement permit may give permission to close multiple sidewalks, parking lanes, and traffic lanes at a single construction site. The permit gives the reason for the closure, such as demolition, and gives the length of time the sidewalk (called “footway” on the permit) is allowed to be closed. No permit may be issued for longer than a year, but permits can be renewed. In some cases, special conditions are listed on the permit. Here is an example of an Equipment Placement permit:

RICH TREGLOWN
INTRICH CONSTRUCTION, INC.
3001 MARKET ST
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104

March 09, 2015

PERMIT NO: 2015-06561

PERMIT TYPE: Equipment Placement

PROJECT TYPES:
Building Construction

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF CLOSURE:
PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED TO CLOSE THE WEST CURB LANE AND FOOTWAY ON 18TH STREET FROM BUTTONWOOD STREET SOUTH APPROXIMATELY 260'. * CLOSE THE EAST CURB LANE AND FOOTWAY ON 19TH STREET FROM HAMILTON STREET NORTH APPROXIMATELY 230'.

GENERAL LOCATION LIST:

Occupancy Type	On Street	From Street	To Street	Reference Type	Value
Lane/Footway	N 18TH ST	CALLOWHILL ST	BUTTONWOOD ST		
Lane/Footway	N 19TH ST	BUTTONWOOD ST	HAMILTON ST		

ENCROACHMENTS ON THE RIGHT-OF-WAY:

- Construction Fence
- Trailer
- Truck

DATE: 3/10/2015 - 3/25/2016
 TIME: 7:00AM - 3:30PM
 PURPOSE: SITE DEVELOPMENT
 COMMENTS: (MUSEUM II APARTMENT TOWER)

CONTRACTOR MUST INSTALL TEMPORARY ADA RAMP TO ALLOW FOR TRANSITION OF PED MOVEMENT FROM SIDEWALK TO CATTLE CHUTE.

- MUST MAINTAIN TRAVEL LANES AT ALL TIMES
- MUST MAINTAIN A 6' PEDESTRIAN FOOTWAY AT ALL TIMES
- MUST OPEN STREET TO FULL WIDTH AT THE CONCLUSION OF WORK.
- MUST MAINTAIN GOOD HOUSEKEEPING AT ALL TIMES DURING AND AFTER EVENT/WORK SITE
- MUST PROVIDE & MAINTAIN ACCESS FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES AT ALL TIMES, I.E. POLICE, FIRE, ETC.
- MUST REFER TO PA DOT PUB 213 FOR PROPER WORK ZONE TRAFFIC CONTROL.
- CONTRACTOR IS RESPONSIBLE TO RESTORE ALL PAVEMENT MARKINGS DISTURBED BY EXCAVATION.

MUST KEEP PERMIT ON SITE AT ALL TIMES TO SHOW ANY AGENT FROM THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA UPON DEMAND.

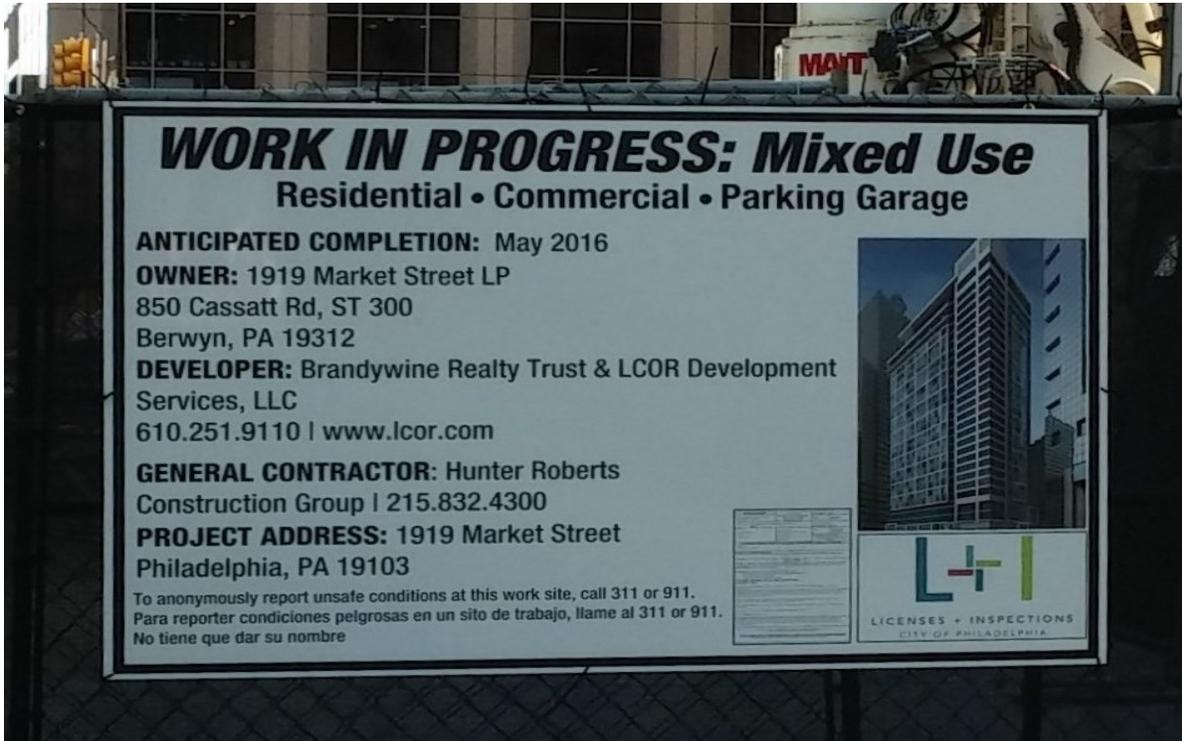
During this subject closure, you agree to maintain regulation PADOT barricades (if applicable) at the extremities of the construction area; provide watchmen where necessary; direct traffic including notification signs and danger signals; be subject to the regulations of the Highway Division in accordance with the Department of Streets, Licenses and Inspections, Police & Fire, PADOT, and any other department that may be concerned. In accepting this permit, you further agree to be responsible for all injuries to persons and/or damages to property that may be caused by the street closure, and to hold the City of Philadelphia harmless in the event of an accident or mishap. Upon expiration of this permit, the barricades, signs, etc., must be removed, and the street left in a clean and safe condition.

Patrick O'Donnell
 Patrick O'Donnell
 For Chief Highway Engineer

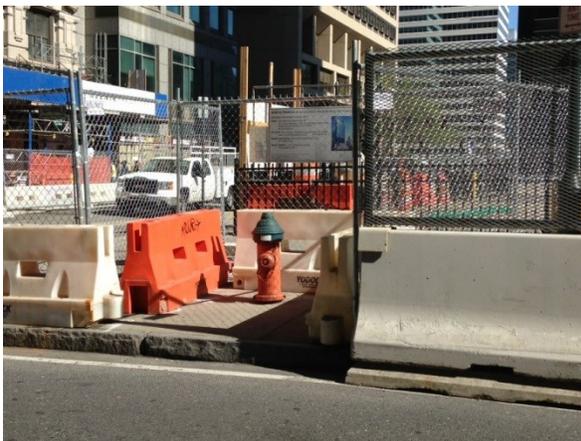
CLEAN AND SAFE STREETS

Clearly, the Equipment Placement permits are designed for use by City staff, although they do include information of interest to the general public. Last fall, the code was updated to require 11” by 17” signs at each end of all sidewalk closures stating when the permit expires. This was an attempt to give the public some useful information in a simplified form and was to go into effect January 2015. Feet First Philly has never seen any of these signs. The update also allowed a loophole whereby a project that has a Project Information Panel Sign for Major Buildings does not have to post either the 11” by 17” signs, or the individual Equipment Placement permits (although some sites continue to do the latter.) The Project Information Panel sign (shown below) displays only one permit, the main building permit for the project, and encourages the public to call 311 or 911 to report unsafe conditions.

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None of this information signage will be useful to the public if we can't get close enough to read it without risking being run over. The posting requirements need to ensure safe pedestrian access.



When you see problems with signs in construction zones, call 311. Since City resources for enforcement are limited, the public's help is needed to call attention to these kinds of problems that otherwise will go unnoticed for too long. And after you call 311, consider taking a photo and filling out a [report](#) at our construction disruption website.