



Norfolk Pedestrian Safety Initiatives



Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

Problem

Norfolk — a city of almost 240,000 with a quickly growing tourist sector, an international airport, and four different colleges/universities — experienced high demand for a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.

Background

Norfolk had a good track record of decreasing pedestrian crashes. Pedestrian accident counts in 2003 were only half the rate of 1996. This success was made possible by several key pedestrian safety initiatives.

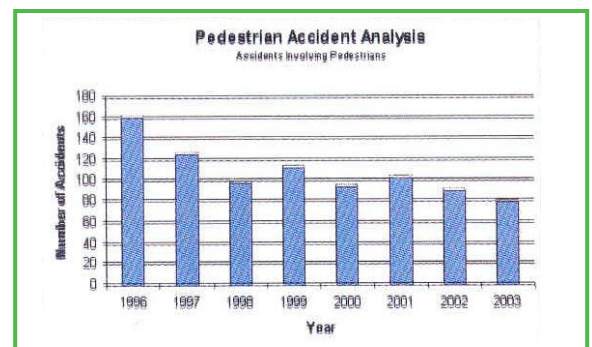


A planted median and refuge island for pedestrians.

Solution

The three primary safety initiatives pursued by the City of Norfolk were the School Safety Program, the Downtown Pedestrian Safety Program, and the Mid-block Pedestrian Crossing Safety Program. The Division of Transportation partnered with the Norfolk Police Department, Norfolk Public Schools, and the Parent Teachers Association to provide a safe school environment. The first of their activities was the Safe Routes to School Program, whereby safe walking routes for children were designated and marked with symbols for children to follow. When necessary, new sidewalks and crosswalks with handicap ramps were installed. The Hazard Investigation Team (HIT) worked in conjunction with the Safe Routes program by evaluating concerns or complaints regarding the safe walking route to school. The team was made up of representatives of each partnered organization.

The City also was involved in several facility enhancement projects around schools, including school zone flashers, pedestrian crossing signs, crosswalks with diagonally painted lines, and in some cases, pedestrian activated in-pavement amber lights. Funding for these lighted crosswalks was available through a technology incentive program. In addition, engineers worked with school administrations to create safe parent pick-up and drop-off areas, and the Norfolk Police Department enforced the school zone regularly with the use of speed radar trailers. This enforcement was funded by a grant of \$10,000 from the Department of Motor Vehicles.



The Downtown Pedestrian Safety Program implemented a series of safety measures, including extended walk times at intersections during off-peak and weekend times, explanatory pedestrian walk signs, brick or “stamped asphalt” crosswalks, pedestrian countdown signals, and reduced speed limits along high foot traffic corridors.

There are several major arteries that flow through residential and commercial areas in downtown Norfolk, providing a challenge to balance traffic flow and pedestrian safety. Towards this goal, mid-block pedestrian refuge islands with landscaping were installed. The policy was to first implement the temporary technique of “reflected domes,” and if proven successful, then searching for funding for a permanent installation.

Norfolk Pedestrian Safety Initiatives — Norfolk, VA

Results

Anecdotally, the mid-block crossing islands were found to be successful. No accidents have taken place since the installation of the refuge islands in the few locations where several accidents — including a fatality — had occurred.

Contact

City of Norfolk
Division of Transportation
City Hall Building
810 Union Street, 2nd Floor
Norfolk, VA 23510
Phone: (757) 664-7300
Fax: (757) 664-7311
Email: pworks@norfolk.gov

Images Source

Institute of Transportation Engineers Pedestrian Project Award Application. City of Norfolk Division of Transportation.
<http://www.ite.org/awards/pedproject/Norfolk.pdf>

