Pedestrian Safety Workshop

A Focus on Older Adults

The Pedestrian Safety Workshop: A Focus on Older Adults was developed by the Highway Safety Research Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill through funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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Today's Agenda

- Welcome and Introduction
- Walking and Older Adults: Safety, Health, and Transportation
- Watching Out for Us! Skills for Safe Walking
- Break
- The Walking Environment
- Completing the Picture: Education, Enforcement, and Encouragement
- Taking an Observational Walk
- Discussion and Next Steps

Walking and Older Adults

Safety, Health, and Transportation

Why care about walking?

- Valuable form of transportation
- Provides health benefits of physical activity
- Opportunity to socialize
- Can contribute to higher quality of life

Health benefits of regular physical activity are many:

- Helps maintain mobility and independence
- Increases balance and muscle strength
- Helps prevent depression and has other mental health benefits

More...

Health benefits of regular physical activity are many:

- Associated with increased longevity and lower rate of disability
- Lowers risk of chronic illnesses including: high blood pressure, heart disease, colon cancer, obesity, diabetes, and osteoporosis

"I walk about three and a half miles a day in my neighborhood and the last time I had my check-up at the doctor's office, the nurse said, 'From what I can tell, you have the heart of an athlete.'"

- *Resident of Dorada, NC*

"I started walking for exercise when I quit work and I only knew maybe the next door neighbors or the neighbors across the street, but I've gotten to know everybody in the neighborhood now."

-Resident of Dorada, NC

Why focus on older adults?

Older adults are:

- A growing part of the population
- Less likely to drive
- More likely to get hit by vehicles when walking

More...

Why focus on older adults?

- More likely to walk than do other types of physical activity
- Less likely to meet weekly physical activity recommendations

Addressing the realities of aging

- Vision
- Hearing
- Cognition
- Physical mobility
- Falls

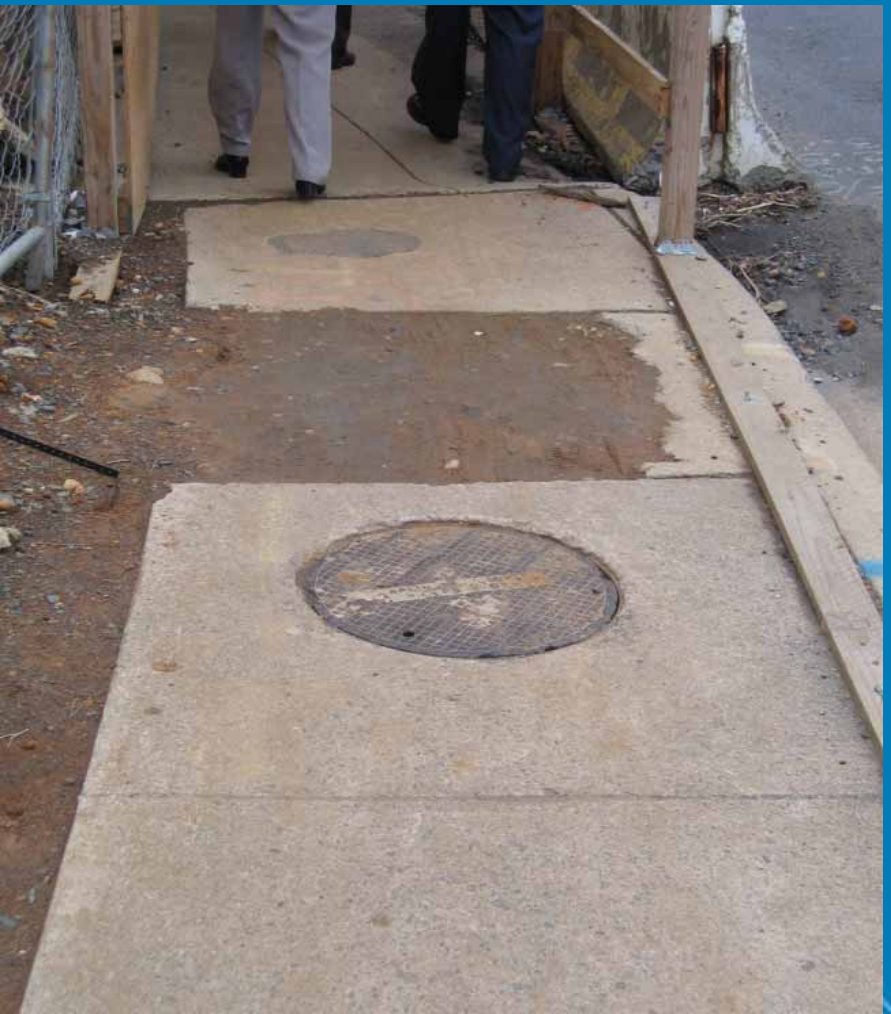
Whether walking to the store,
a friend's house, or just around the block . . .

What makes a walk feel safe?

Safety Factors

- Pedestrian behavior
- Driver behavior
- Walking environment

Community conditions can make walking difficult



Great conditions, but where are the people?

Community partnership

- Pedestrians taking control of their safety
- Communities understanding unsafe behaviors and conditions and identifying strategies to improve them.
- Everyone encouraging more people to walk more

Watching Out for Us!

Skills for Safe Walking

Developed by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center through funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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Walkers need to know . . .

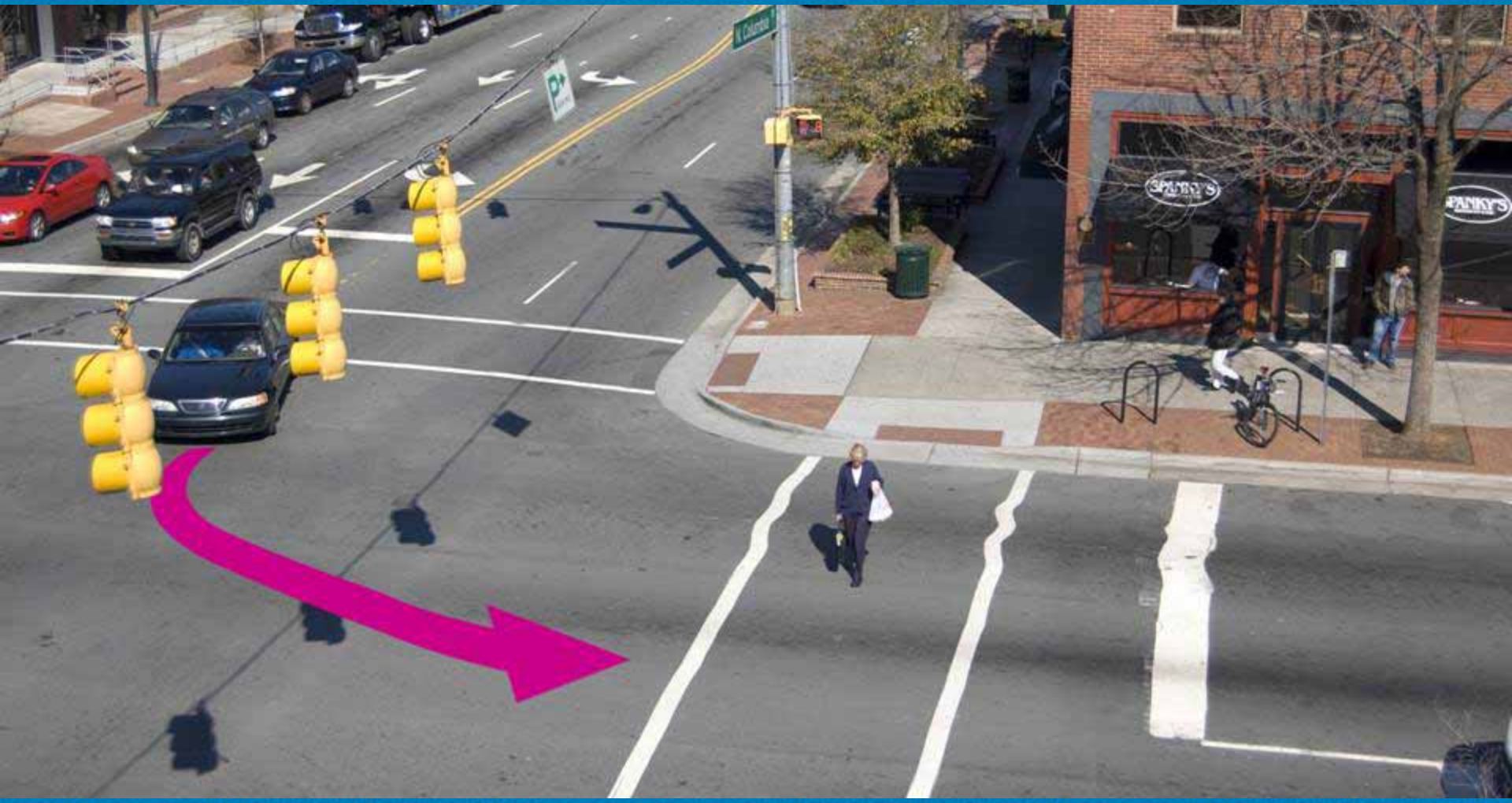
- What are the situations that increase the chances of being hit by a car
- How we can control those situations

What situations

1. Intersections
2. Backing vehicles
3. Drivers not seeing you
4. Too much trust in the system

INTERSECTIONS

What: Turning vehicles

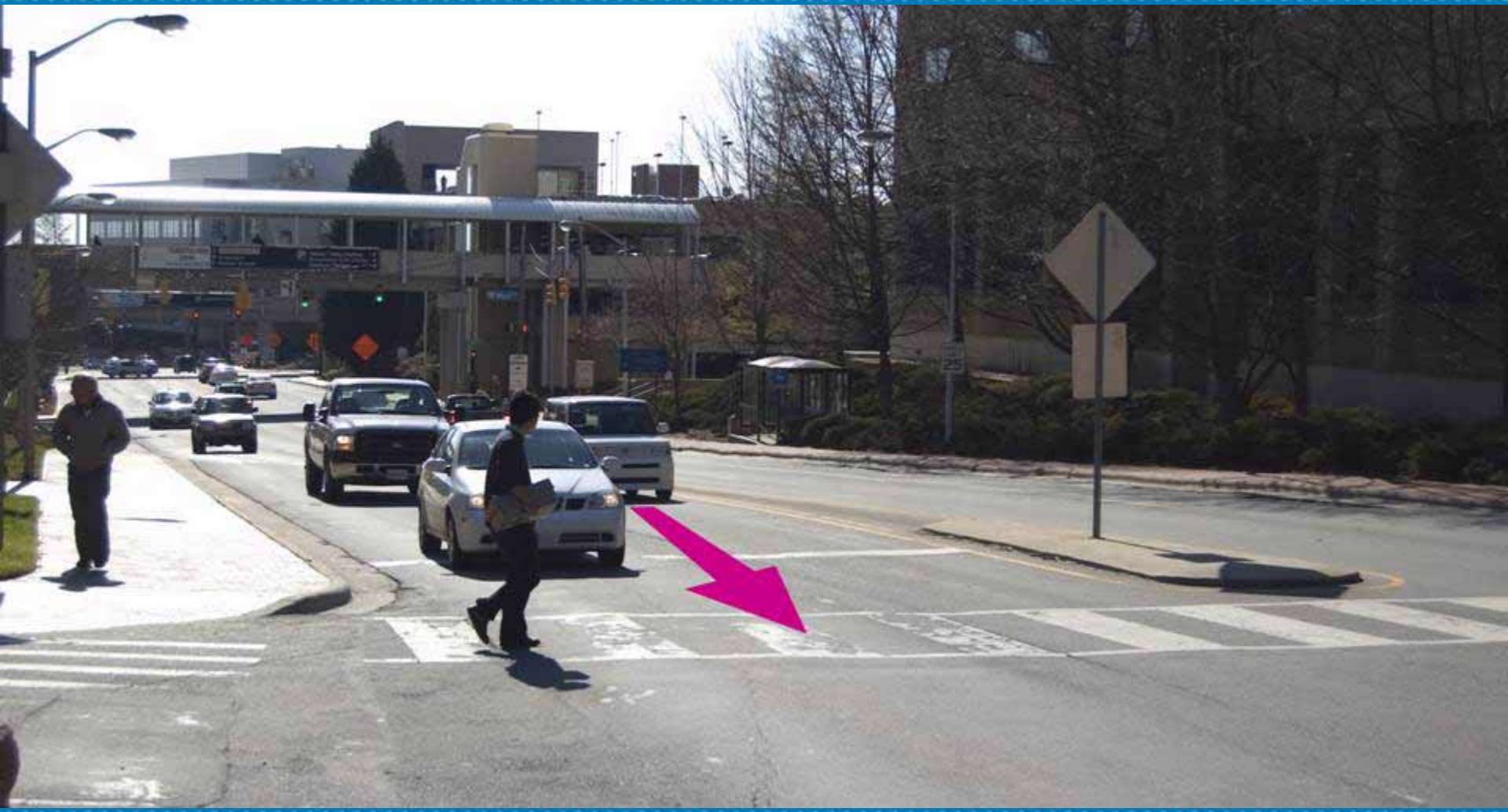


INTERSECTIONS

What: When stepping off the curb

INTERSECTIONS

What: Visual screens



What: Crossing time at signals

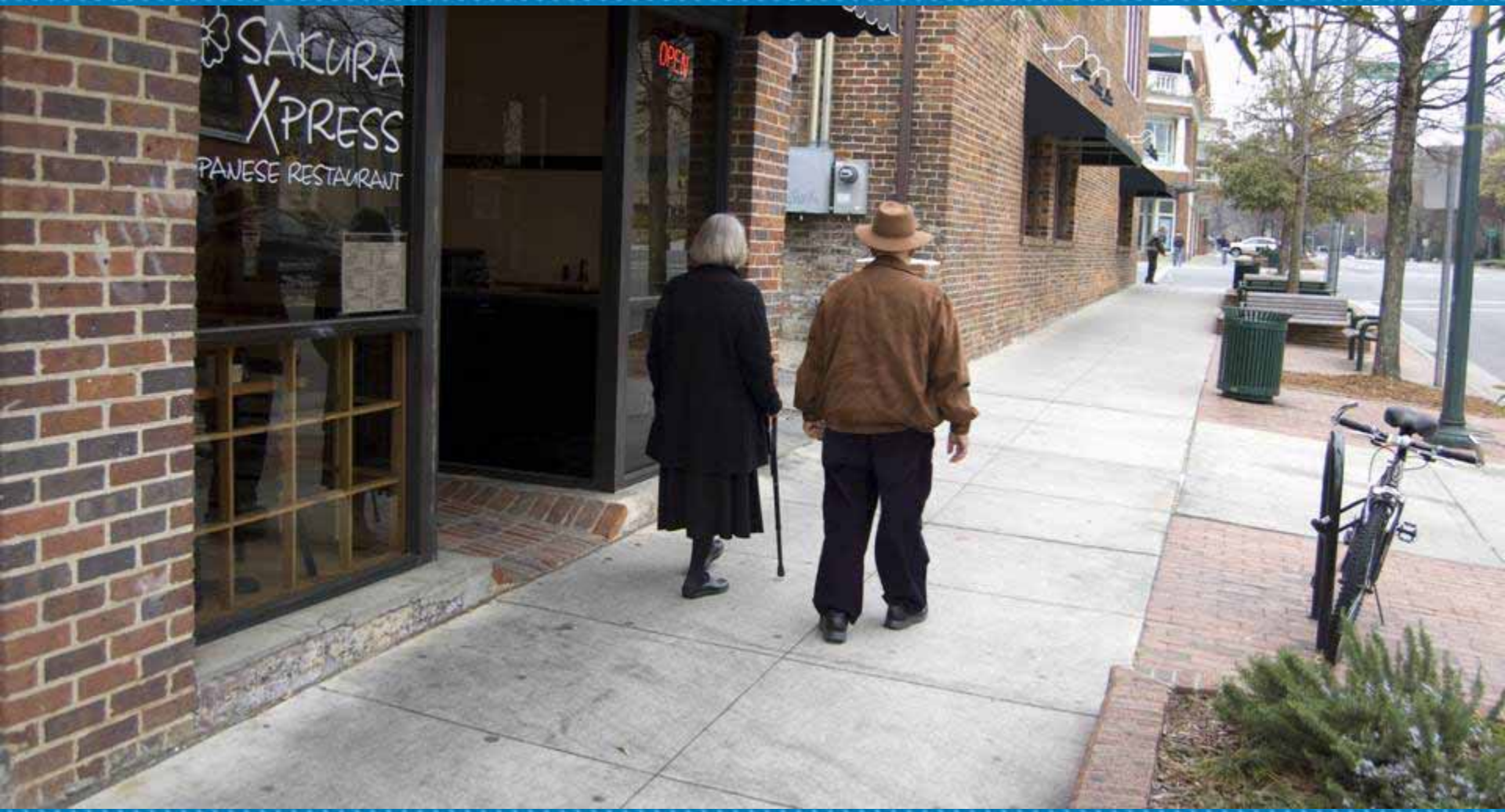
What: Parking lots

BACKING VEHICLES

What: Crossing behind parked cars

BACKING VEHICLES

What: Driveways

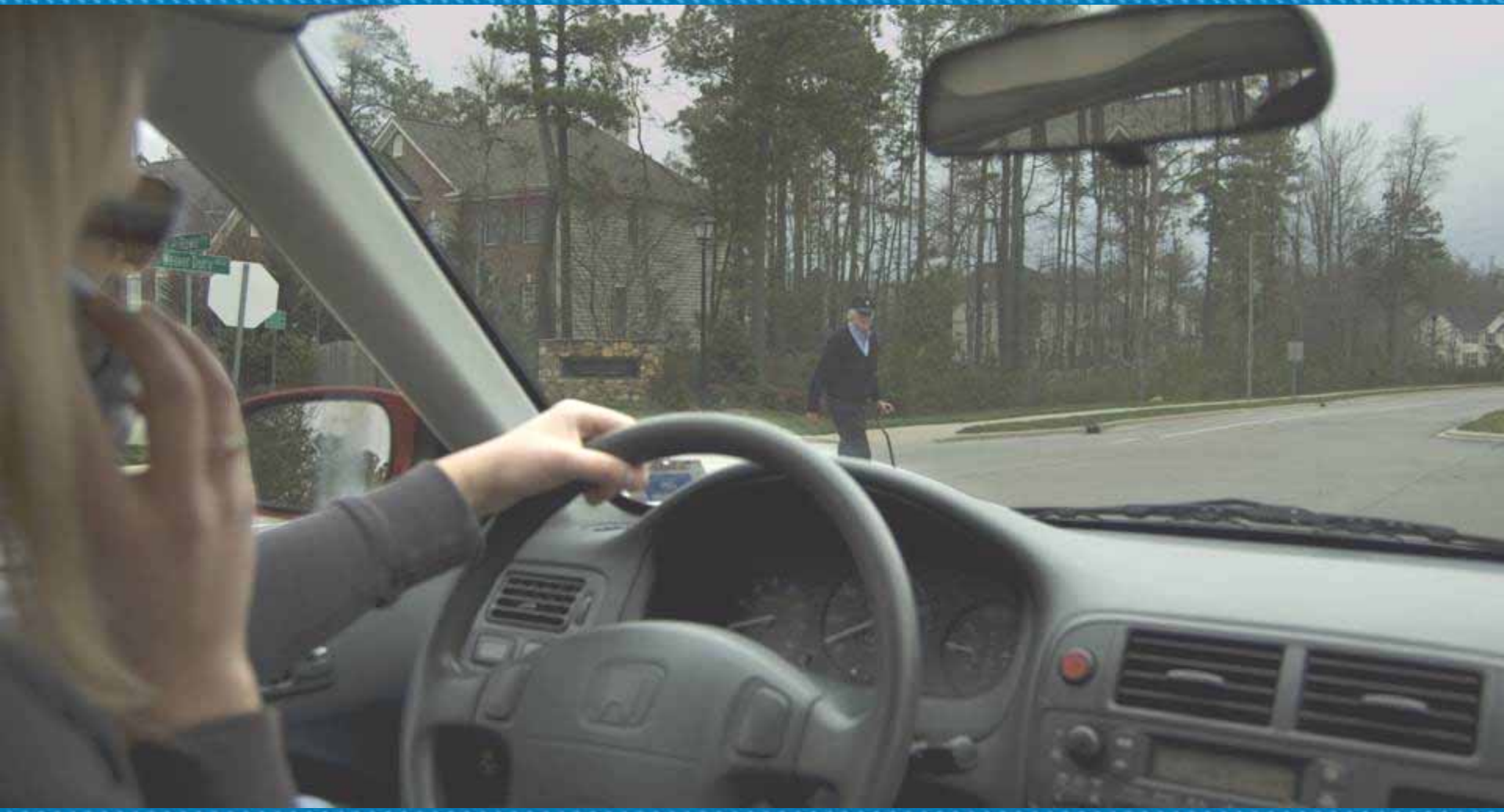


BACKING VEHICLES

What: Driveways

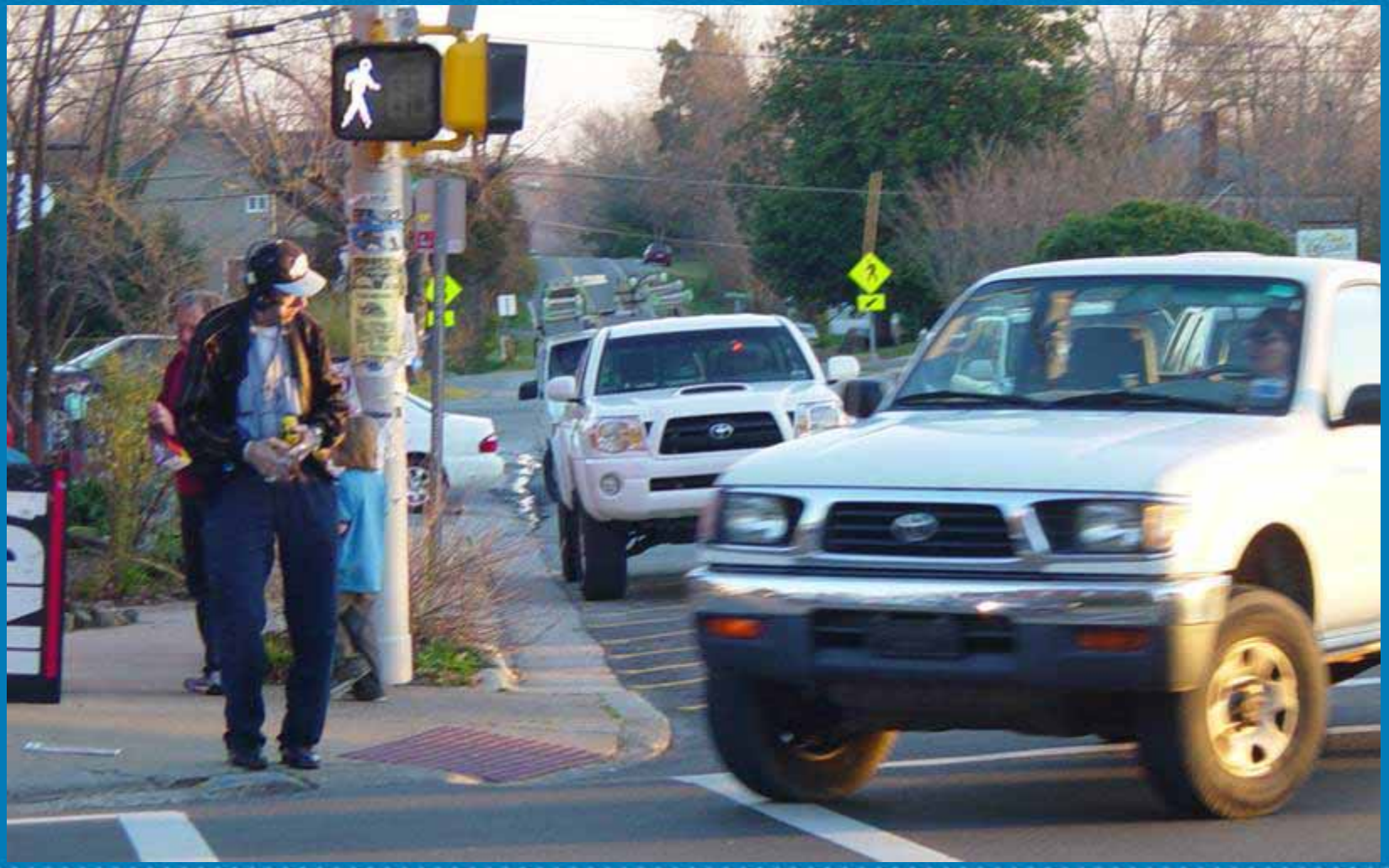
DRIVERS NOT SEEING YOU

What: Distraction, low lighting



TOO MUCH TRUST IN THE SYSTEM

What: Take control



What should the pedestrian do?

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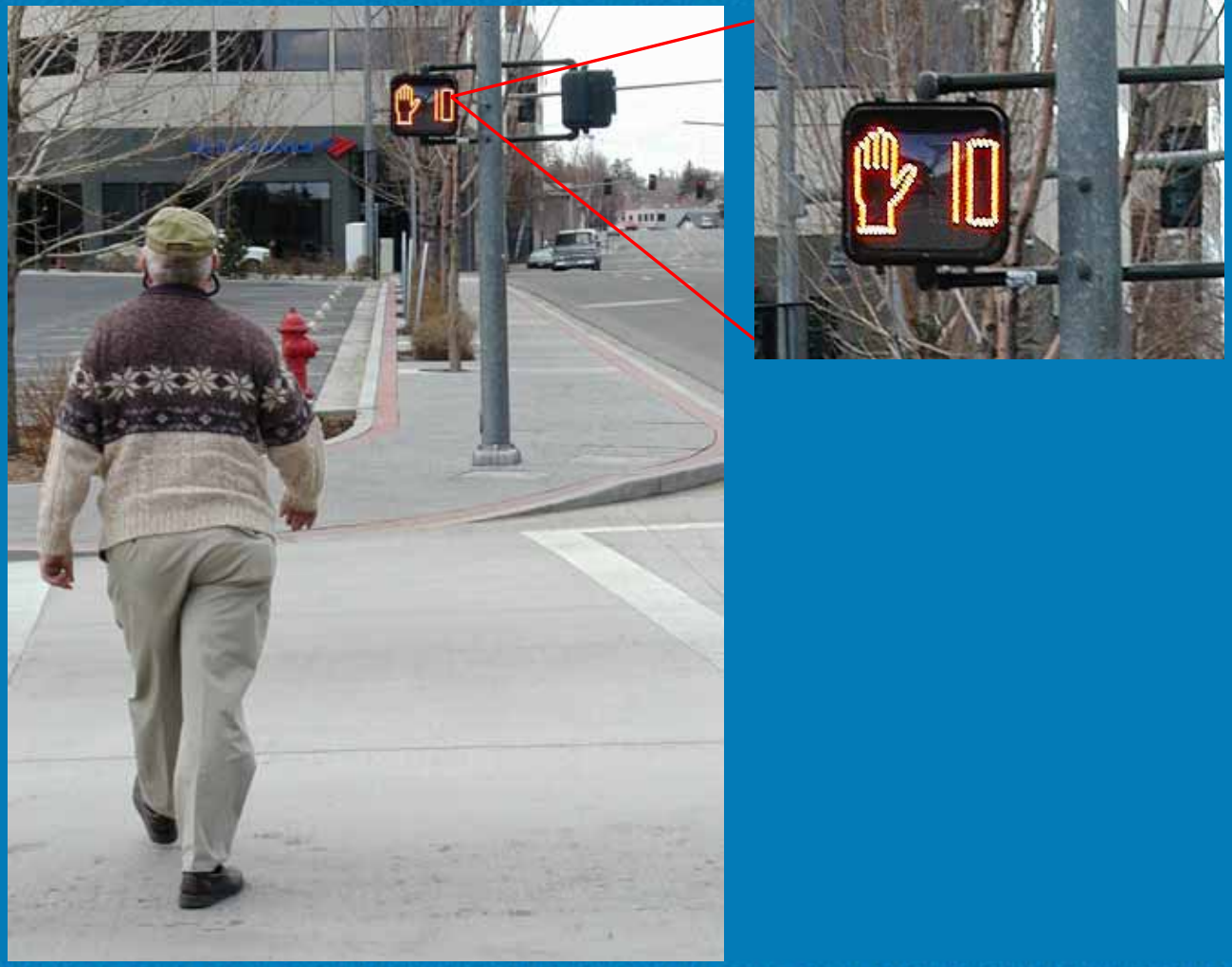

What should the pedestrian do?

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How many pedestrians do you see?

How many pedestrians do you see?

Recalling the basics

- Before crossing, look left, right, left, and all around for cars
- Walk on the sidewalk
- When there's no sidewalk, walk facing traffic

Selecting the best routes

- Places to walk
- Places to cross the street
- Conveniences
- Personal safety

Walking in groups

- Greater visibility
- Look out for each other
- Help overcome limitations
- Fun and friendships
- Encourages more walking

Notice things others can fix

Speeding drivers	Police
Drivers failing to yield	Police
Signal timing	Transportation engineers
Sidewalk broken or blocked	Public works
Need for sidewalks	City council, city manager

Summary

- Be alert at intersections
- Watch for backing vehicles
- Be seen
- Double-check the system
- Choose carefully where you walk
- Recognize how you're feeling
- Report issues you encounter

Spread the word

The Walking Environment

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"I couldn't handle the traffic anymore. It was impossible to cross on foot and there would be no way for an elderly person to make it."

-Resident of Ocean City, MD

Situations where the physical environment can help

- Intersections
- Backing vehicles
- Traffic speeds

Topic outline

Walking along the street

Crossing the street

Speed of traffic

Topic outline

Walking along the street

Crossing the street

Speed of traffic

What's wrong with this picture?

What's wrong with this picture?

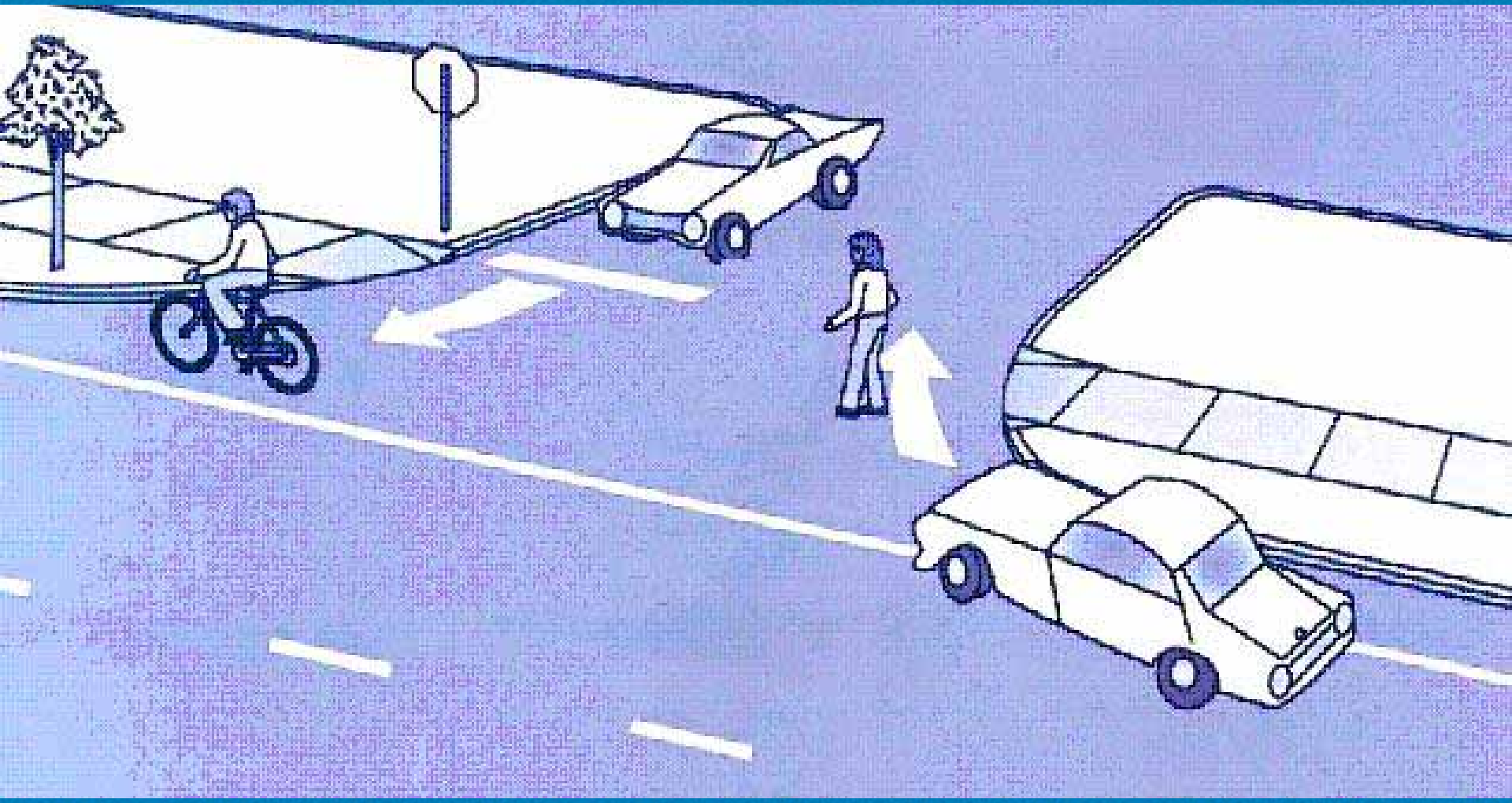
Good sidewalks encourage walking

What's wrong with this picture?

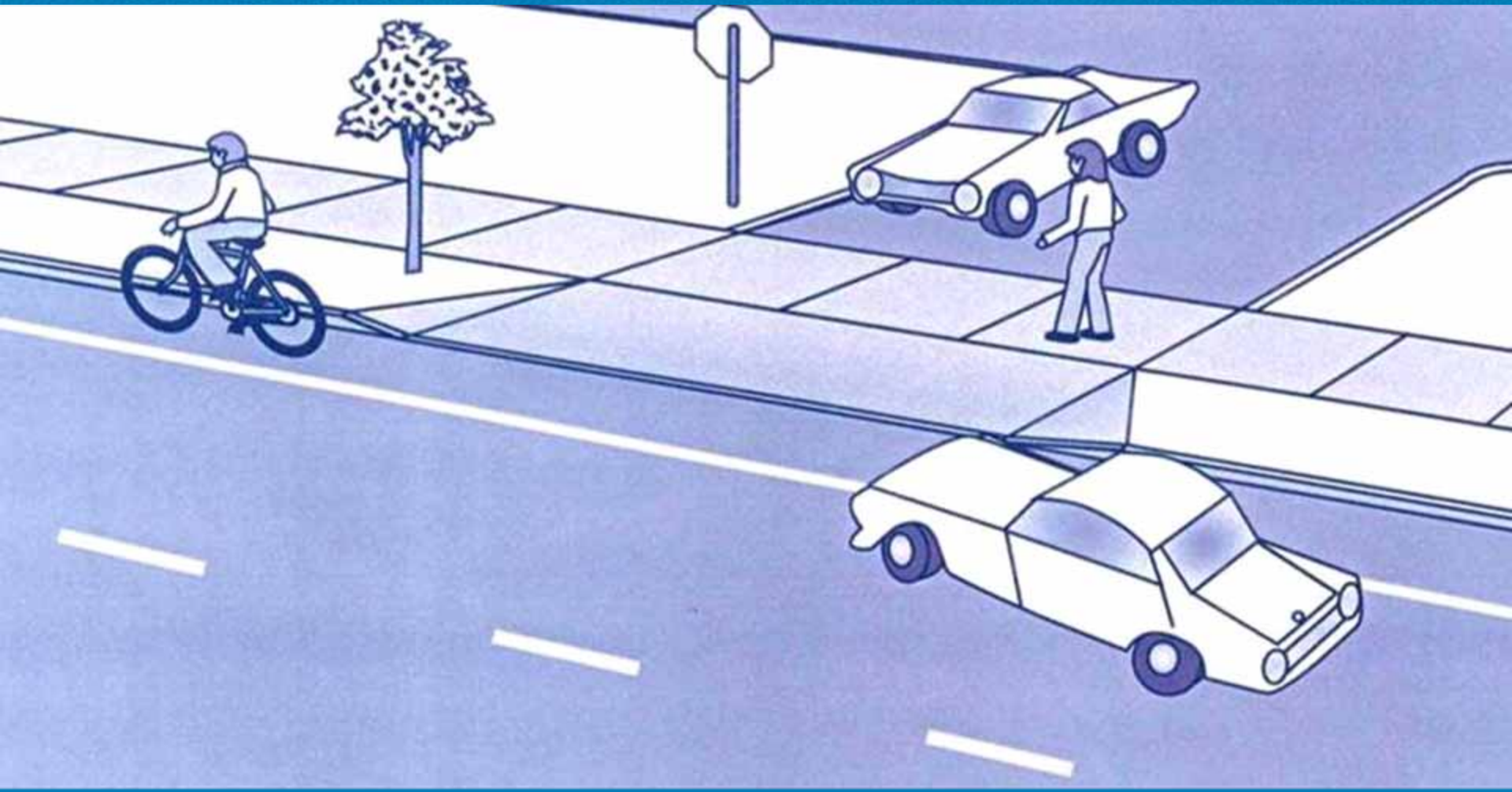
ADA requirements

Curb ramp design

What happens when driveways are built like intersections?



What happens when sidewalks continue across driveways?



What's wrong with this picture?

Which street looks more inviting for walking?

Additional features

- Street lighting
- Places to sit
- Access to restrooms
- Water fountains
- Public art

Topic outline

Walking along the street

Crossing the street

Speed of traffic

What's wrong with this picture?

Shortening the crossing

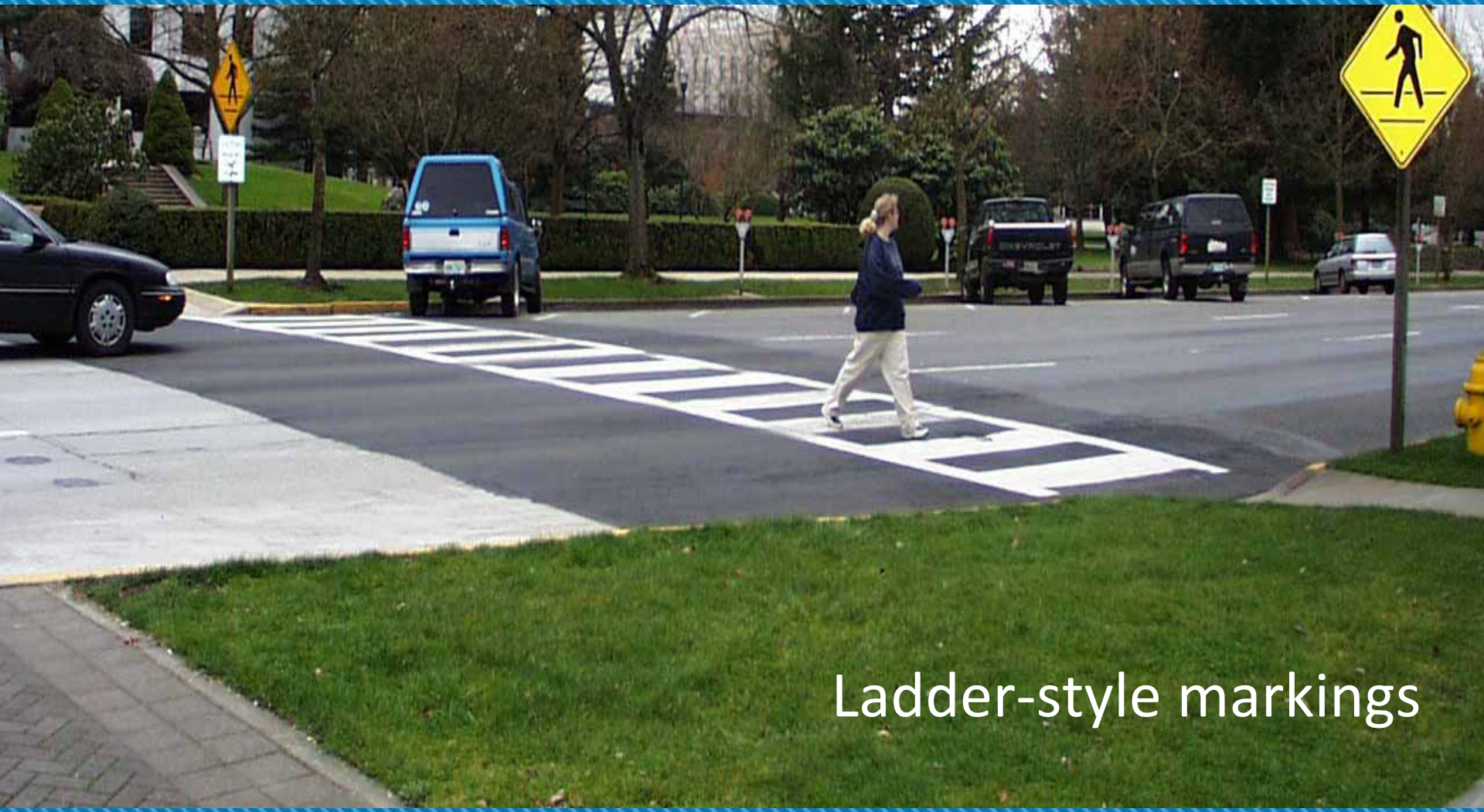
Curb extensions at crossings

Parking restrictions at corners

Restricting parking close to crosswalks provides better visibility for both drivers and pedestrians

Crossing islands

High-visibility crosswalks



Pedestrian pushbuttons

Countdown signals

No-turn-on-red may increase pedestrian safety

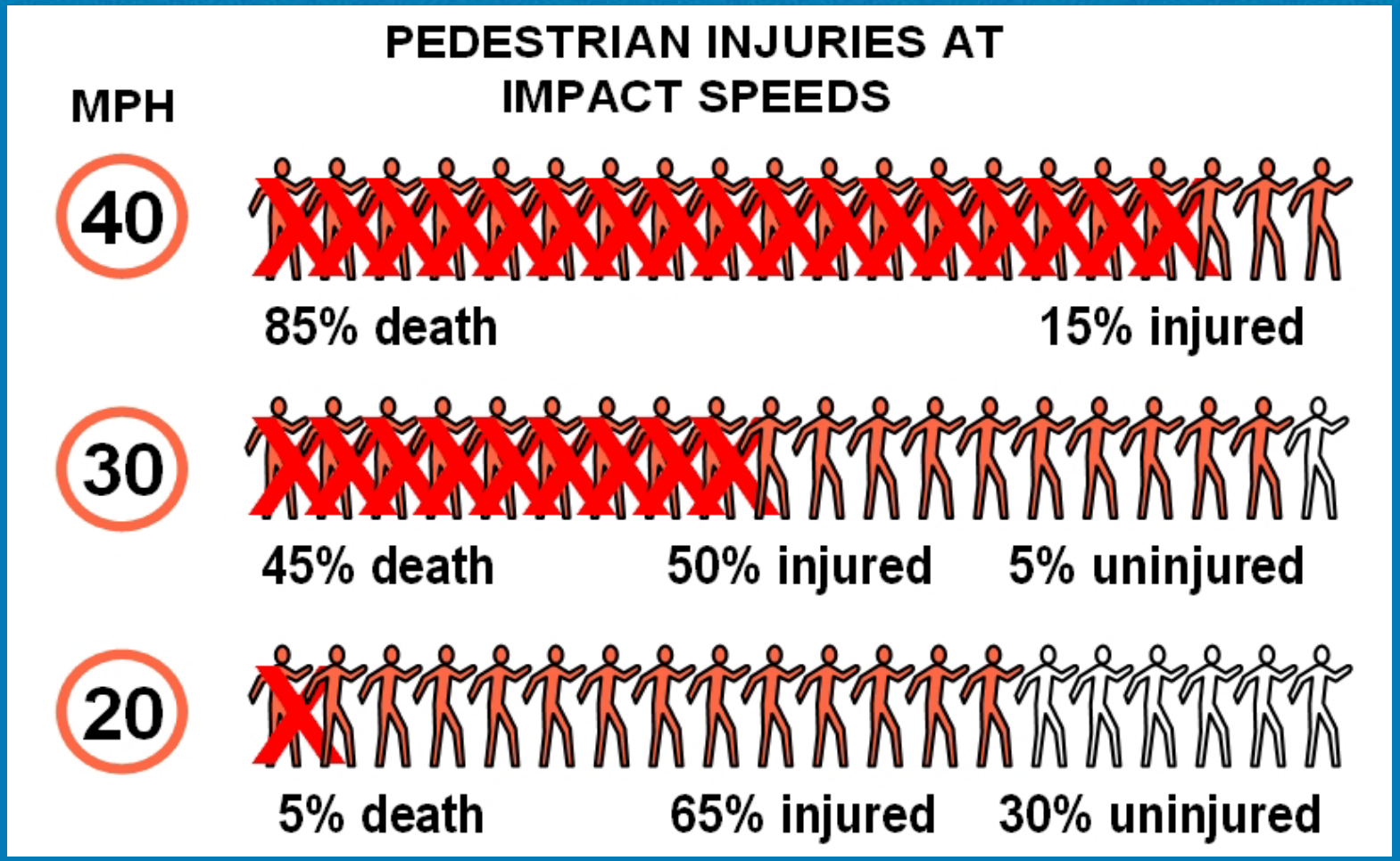
Topic outline

Walking along the street

Crossing the street

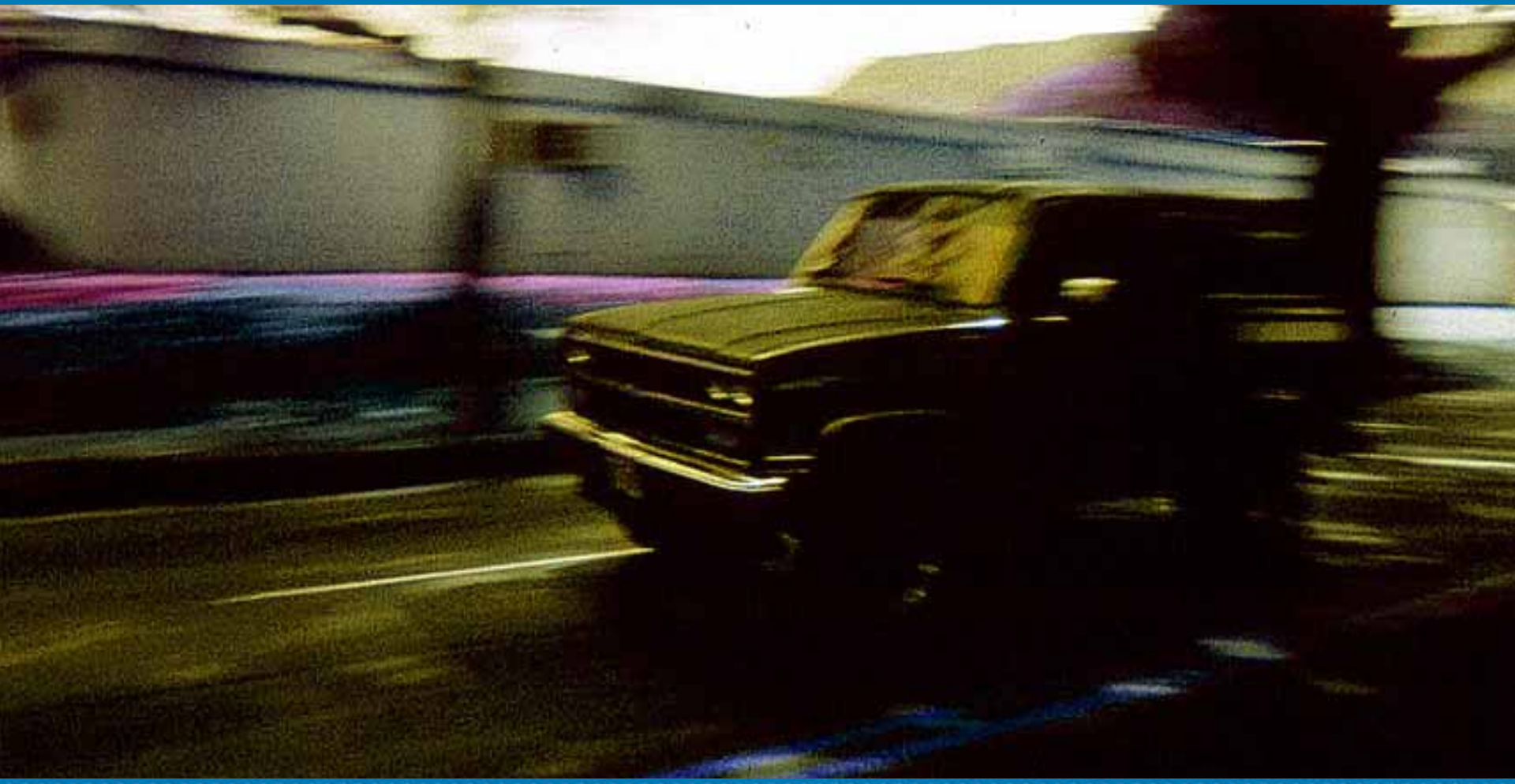
Speed of traffic

Why are we concerned with slowing down traffic?

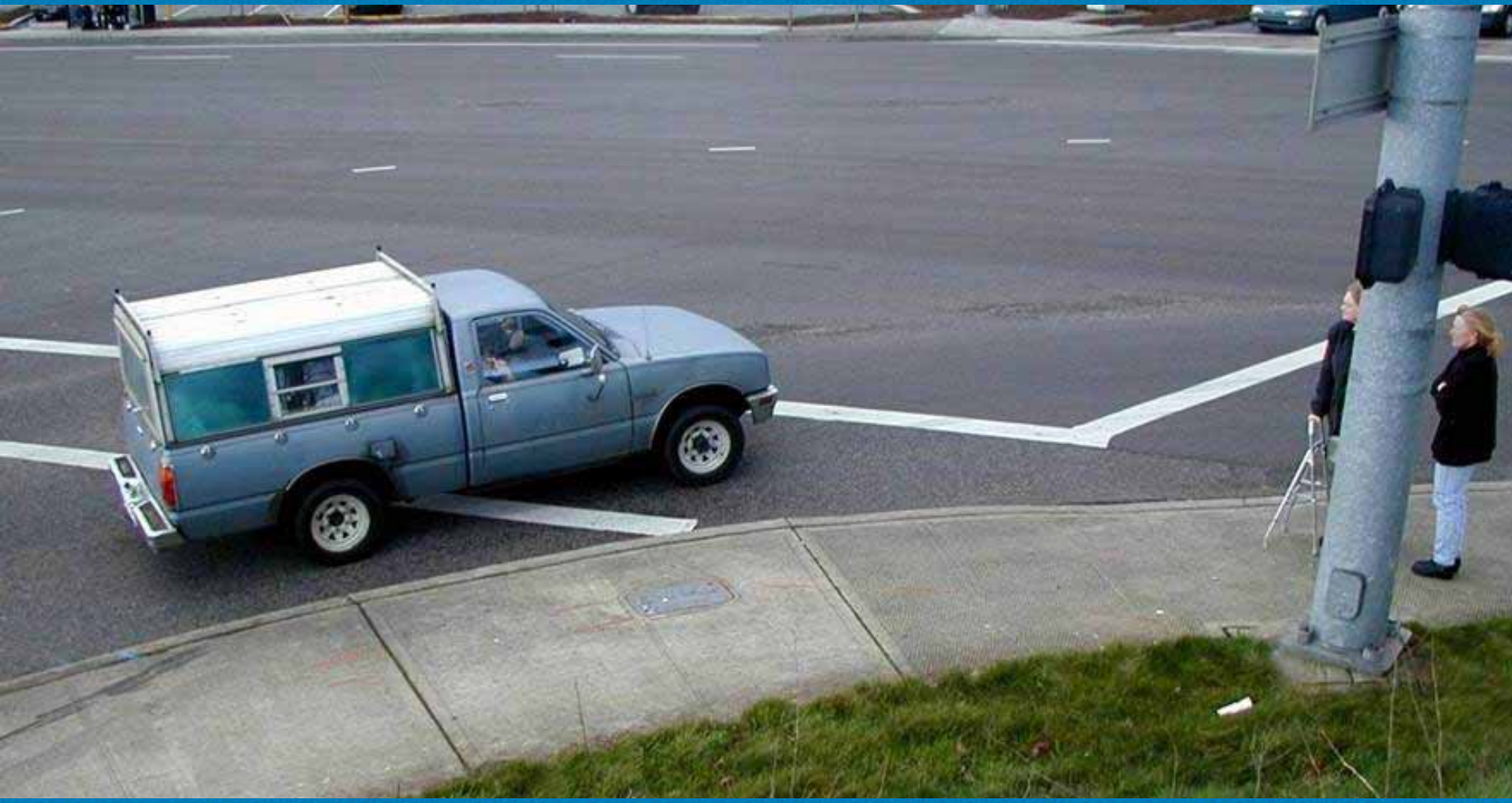


UK Department of Transportation (1987)

Speed is a central issue for pedestrians



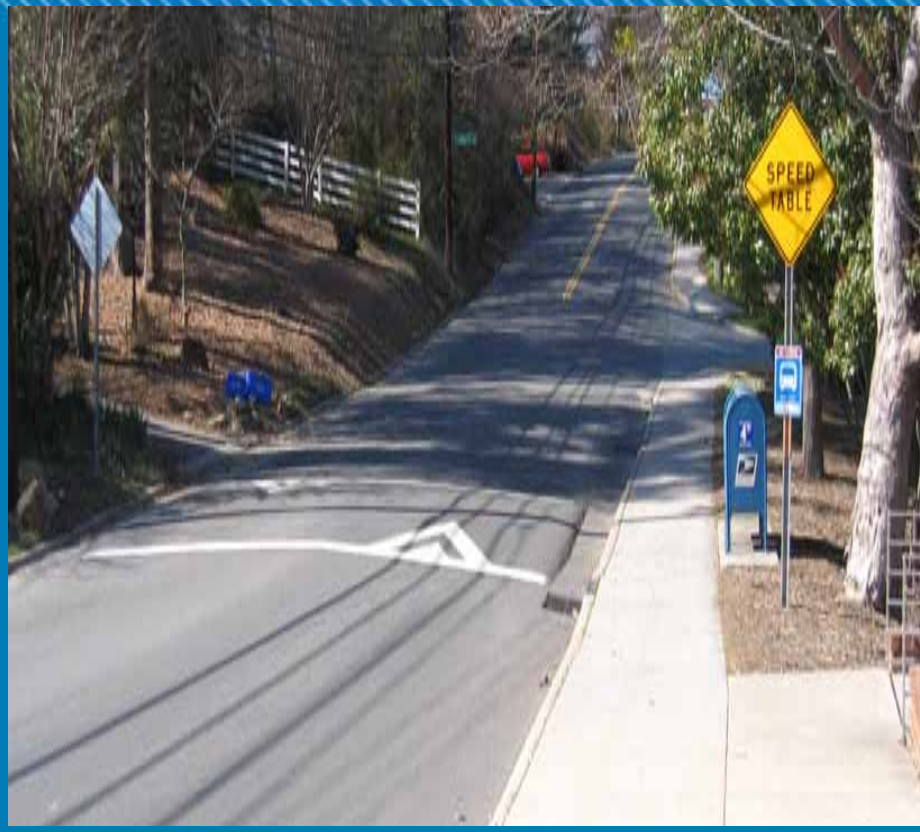
Wide turns mean traffic can move faster



Tight turns slow down motor vehicles

Speed humps

Speed tables



Speed humps and speed tables slow down traffic

Raised pedestrian crosswalks

Thoughts?

Summary

Older adults:

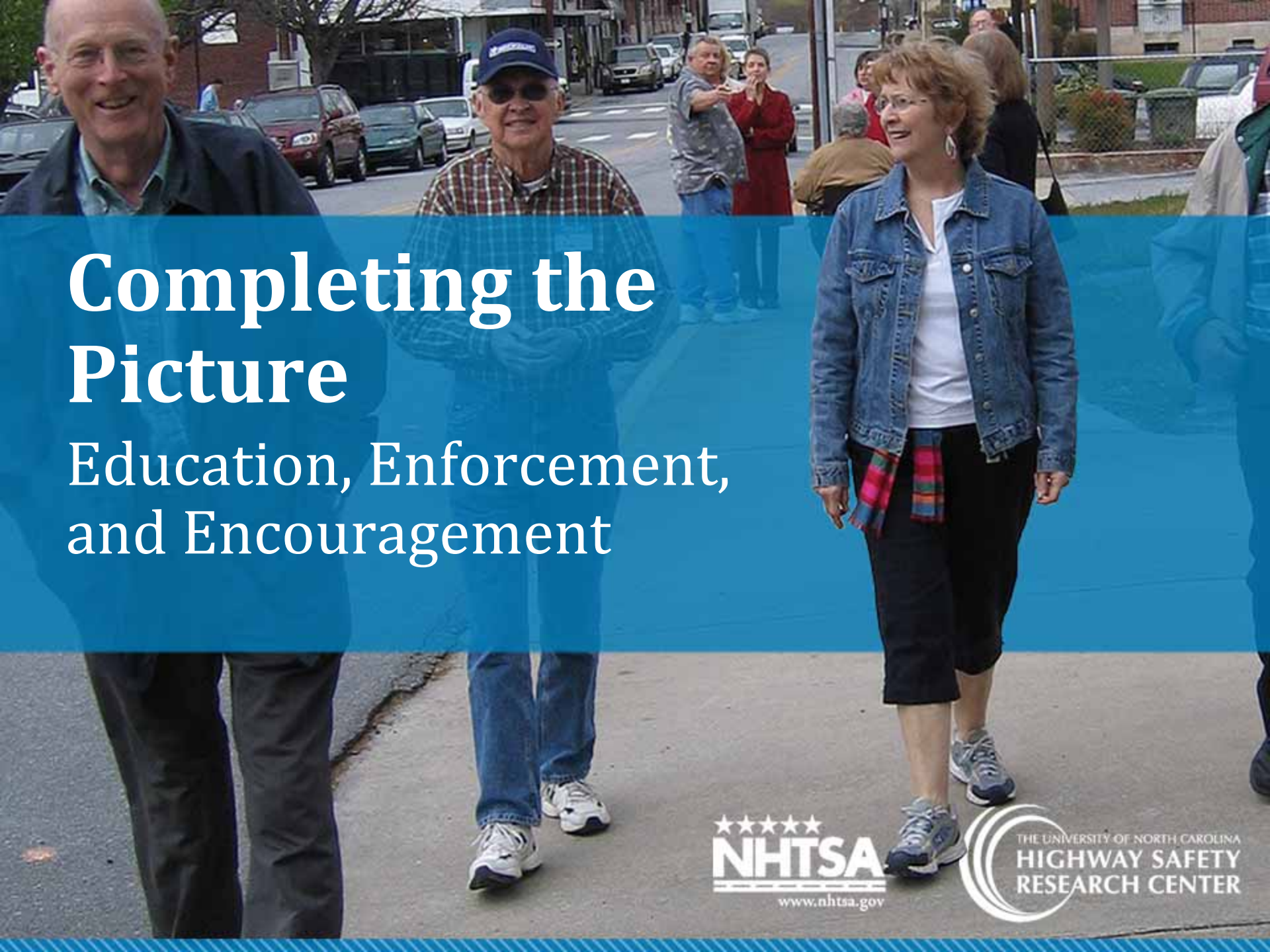
- Pick walking routes with features that have safety benefits.
- Work with transportation professionals to improve places that don't feel safe.

More...

Summary

Transportation professionals:

- Get to know the issues that put older pedestrians at risk.
- Use engineering tools to build environments that encourage safe driver and pedestrian behavior.



Completing the Picture

Education, Enforcement, and Encouragement

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Education: Who needs pedestrian safety education?

1. Pedestrians
2. Drivers
3. Neighborhood residents
4. Elected officials and decision-makers

Safety messages for drivers

- Pedestrians are an important part of the transportation system
- Speed matters: 5 mph difference can be deadly
- Driver mistakes are costly for pedestrians
  - Make complete stops
  - Avoid distractions
  - Expect pedestrians

Safety messages for neighborhood residents

- Keep sidewalks clear
- Prune bushes and trees
- Drive the speed limit

Safety messages for decision-makers

- Walking is a critical part of the transportation system
- Pedestrians are a good indication of a healthy community
- Designing a walkable environment requires careful attention
- Physical improvements must go hand in hand with policy support

Community efforts

- Neighborhood meetings
- Neighborhood signs and materials
- Pruning parties

Community efforts

- Neighborhood speed watch programs

- Neighborhood pace cars to remind drivers of speed limit

Media campaigns

Law enforcement

Officers are valuable partners who can play many roles

Enforcement includes an array of methods to improve unsafe behavior

Unsafe driver behavior

- Speeding
- Failure to yield
- Running red lights or stop signs
- Distracted driving
- Not anticipating pedestrians
- Blocking the crosswalk

Unsafe pedestrian behavior

Law enforcement methods

- Speed trailers/driver feedback signs
- Pedestrian decoys
- Progressive ticketing
- Photo enforcement

Speed trailers and active speed monitors

- Increase awareness of local speed limits
- Reduce speeding
- Trailers:
  Can be moved from place to place
- Monitors:
  More permanent

Photo enforcement

- Movable units can provide citywide coverage
- Permanent units supplement police efforts

Pedestrian “decoy” enforcement actions

Progressive ticketing

First: educate

Second: warn

Third: ticket

Media coverage

Maintain good public relations by informing and preparing the community

Success story: Heed the speed

- Education about speeding
- Yard signs/speed trailers
- Citations and tickets
- Repeat if speeds increase

Encouragement programs

How are communities promoting walking?

- Group walks
- Events
- Walking maps
- Media campaign
- Mileage tracking
- Contests
- Park and walk

Group walks and walking clubs

- Regularly scheduled walk on a designated route
- Chance to socialize
- Sense of safety in group

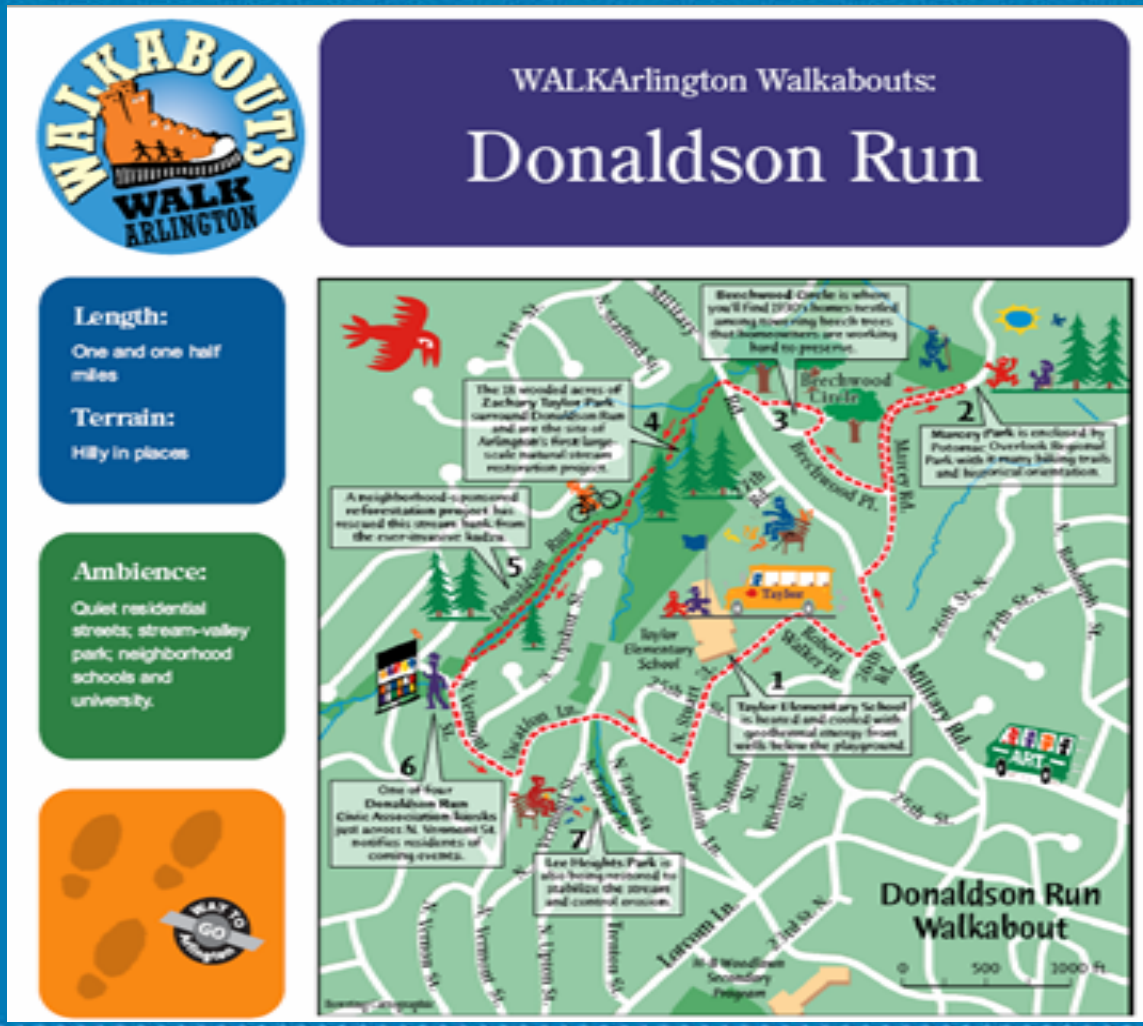
Special events

- A chance to “try out” walking
- Build enthusiasm
- Opportunity for media coverage

Walking maps

Identify

- Sidewalks
- Walking routes
- Crossings
- Destinations
- Benches
- Restrooms
- Water fountains



Media campaigns

"You're just two feet from some of the best places in town."

You're just two feet from some of the best places in town.

Got some place to go? Try the method of transportation you learned long ago: walking. You'll do more than get from point A to point B, you'll also help clean up our air and unclog our streets. And if you have too far to go, fear not. You're just two feet from a bus stop.

Valley Metro Regional Bus Route and Schedule Information:
(602) 253-5000

Tempe In Motion Transit Office:
(480) 350-2739

www.tempe.gov/tim

b u s b i k e w a l k

tim
tempe in motion

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Name _____

Address _____ *Apt #* _____

City Tempe *State* AZ *Zip Code* _____

Phone Number (_____) _____ *Age* _____

*Excludes express routes. Must be a Tempe resident to redeem coupon.

NT

Walk Wise Drive Smart

Hendersonville, NC

- Focus on pedestrian-friendly environments for seniors
- Includes: educational workshops, changes to the physical environment, neighborhood walks

Live Long, Live Well
New Jersey

- Logbook to track mileage
- 356K miles in 3 years
- Average age: 72
- 88% report increased levels of physical activity

Wheeling Walks
Wheeling, WV

- Focused on health benefits of walking
- Used TV, radio, newspaper
- Walking “prescriptions”
- Results: 30% of inactive residents increased walking versus 16% in community without the program.

Summary

- Education and enforcement both work to change unsafe behaviors
- Encouraging more people to walk can provide many benefits

Taking an Observational Walk

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Questions to ask when walking

- Is there room to walk?
- Is crossing the street easy?
- What is the condition of the walking surface—are there tripping risks?

Questions to ask when walking

- How are drivers and pedestrians behaving?
- Do the surroundings feel safe?
- Do the surroundings feel comfortable?

Discussion and Next Steps

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