

Date of Hearing: March 28, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

AB 2264 (Bloom) – As Amended March 17, 2022

SUBJECT: Pedestrian crossing signals

SUMMARY: Requires installation and maintenance of traffic-actuated signals with leading pedestrian intervals.

Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Requires upon first placement or replacement of a traffic-actuated signal, it be installed and maintained to have a leading pedestrian interval.
- 2) Requires existing traffic-actuated signals capable of being programmed remotely or in-person to have a leading pedestrian interval programmed for intersections in the following areas:
 - a. A residence district.
 - b. A business district.
 - c. A safety corridor.
 - d. An area with a high concentration of pedestrians and cyclists, as determined by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) pursuant to Section 22358.7 of the Vehicle Code.
- 3) Defines a “leading pedestrian interval” as an official traffic control signal that advances the “WALK” signal for three to seven seconds while the red signal halting traffic continues to be displayed on parallel through or turning traffic.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Requires Caltrans to maintain appropriate signs, signals, and other traffic control devices on both state highways and, with the consent of local authorities, maintain city streets and county roads.
- 2) Defines a traffic-actuated signal as an official traffic control signal, as specified in Section 445, that displays one or more of its indications in response to the presence of traffic detected by mechanical, visual, electrical, or other means.
- 3) Requires, cities and counties, upon first placement of a traffic-actuated signal or replacement of the loop detector of a traffic-actuated signal, to install those signals that detect motorcycle and bicycle traffic on the roadway.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS:

Pedestrian Safety. According to the California Office of Traffic Safety, the pedestrian safety problem is reaching crisis proportions. In 2018, 893 pedestrians were killed on California

roadways, a 26% increase from 2014. Additionally in 2018, more than 14,000 pedestrians were injured. The total number of pedestrian fatalities between 2009 and 2018 was 7,500 with a pedestrian fatality rate that is almost 25% higher than the national average. This means California has more pedestrian deaths on its roadways than California.

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has introduced the National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS). Under the NRSS, USDOT has set a goal to strive for zero roadway fatalities. Zero is the only acceptable number of deaths on our highways, roads, and streets. The USDOT is committed to taking substantial, comprehensive action to significantly reduce serious and fatal injuries on the Nation's roadways. However, no one will reach this goal acting alone. Reaching zero will require USDOT to work with the entire roadway transportation community and the American people to lead a significant cultural shift that treats roadway deaths as unacceptable and preventable.

To achieve this goal, USDOT is adopting a safe systems approach, with the principles that death and serious injuries are unacceptable, humans make mistakes, humans are vulnerable, responsibility is shared, safety is proactive, and redundancy is crucial. To address these concerns to get to zero, NRSS sets across five complementary objectives corresponding with a safe systems approach: safer people, safer roads, safer vehicles, safer speeds, and post-crash care.

What is a Leading Pedestrian Interval? The leading pedestrian interval has been specifically described in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control (MUTCD) devices since 1961. A leading pedestrian interval or LPI is a traffic safety tool where an official traffic control signal that advances the "WALK" signal for three to seven seconds while the red signal halting traffic continues to be displayed on parallel through or turning traffic. This allows for pedestrians to begin crossing the street while no traffic is moving at the intersection, increasing pedestrian visibility and allowing pedestrians to avoid confrontations with vehicles making right-hand turns. In some cases, pedestrians may be able to fully cross the street before any vehicles begin to move through the intersection.

In the Local Roadway Safety Manual published by Caltrans, LPIs are discussed as a pedestrian and cyclist countermeasure. Caltrans contends that LPIs 1) increase pedestrian visibility; 2) reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles; 3) increase the likelihood of motorists yielding to pedestrians; and 4) enhance safety for pedestrians who may be slower to start into the intersection. Additionally, costs for implementing LPIs are very low, since only minor signal timing alteration is required. This makes it an easy and inexpensive countermeasure that can be incorporated into pedestrian safety action plans or policies and can become routine agency practice. Caltrans also indicates that LPIs can reduce pedestrian-vehicle crashes by approximately 40%.

LPI Successes. Leading pedestrian intervals have been installed across the country, providing an ample amount of data to demonstrate its effectiveness. A study from State College, Pennsylvania, conducted over a period of three years, found a reduction in pedestrian-vehicle crashes of 46%. A US Department of Federal Highway Administration review of studies from Chicago, Illinois, New York City, New York, and Charlotte North Carolina with over 100 treated intersection found 13% reduction in total pedestrian-vehicle crashes for all cities combined. Finally, an Austin, Texas study surveyed residents and found that 87% of those surveyed expressed feeling safer crossing the street when an LPI was installed.

Author's Statement: "With just a few seconds head start, we can reduce the staggering number of pedestrian casualties on our roads. LPIs are a proven practice, low cost, and important in helping make California streets safer for pedestrians. LPIs have also been known to increase a sense of safety for pedestrians, which is a crucial component of encouraging healthy and sustainable modes of transportation."

According to Streets For All, the sponsors of this bill, "Many U.S. cities have already meaningfully reduced pedestrian crashes by beginning to implement LPIs, including San Francisco and Los Angeles. LPIs have been found to reduce pedestrian-vehicle collisions on average by 13 percent across multiple U.S. cities. Some cities that implemented LPIs reduced pedestrian-vehicle collisions by as much as 60 percent. LPIs have a positive impact on people's feelings and perception of safety at intersections where LPIs are implemented. Of the people surveyed in Austin, TX, one city that implemented LPIs, 87% felt safer when crossing the intersection, knowing that they had a few seconds of head start. LPIs are a relatively inexpensive method to improve safety. Installation of LPIs can be as simple as updating traffic signal programming. Incremental costs for installation can be as low as zero if installation is incorporated into normal streetlight maintenance. This technology even when new infrastructure is required is very affordable."

Committee Comments: This bill would require installation of leading pedestrian intervals in areas with high pedestrian traffic and would greatly improve safety for pedestrians while keeping cost to a minimum by incorporating LPI installation into new-signal installation and necessary maintenance.

Related and previous legislation: SB 672 (Fuller) Chapter 432, Statutes of 2017, extends requirement of cities and counties, upon first placement of a traffic-actuated signal or replacement of the loop detector of a traffic-actuated signal, to install those signals that detect motorcycle and bicycle traffic on the roadway indefinitely.

AB 1581 (Fuller), Chapter 337, Statutes of 2007, requires, cities and counties, upon first placement of a traffic-actuated signal or replacement of the loop detector of a traffic-actuated signal, to install those signals that detect motorcycle and bicycle traffic on the roadway, until January 1, 2018.

AB 2521 (La Suer) of 2002 would have required that traffic-actuated traffic signals be capable of being actuated by bicycles and motorcycles. AB 2521 was vetoed by Governor Davis because the measure would have resulted in unknown reimbursable state-mandated costs on local government.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Active San Gabriel Valley
Calbike
Streets For All (Sponsor)

Opposition

None on file

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