

On May 19, Bike Walk Knoxville was proud to host a Walk with Elected Officials along Concord Street, between Sutherland Avenue and Kingston Pike. We were joined by several elected officials, including Mayor Indya Kincannon, City Councilman Matthew DeBardelaben (District 4), Board of Education member Kat Bike (District 4) and Patricia Fontenot-Ridley (District 3). We also had several candidates walking with us, including Breauna Holloway (Board of Education, District 1), Kat Bike (Board of Education, District 4), Brandon Huckaby (County Commission, District 3), and Katina Sharp (County Commission, Seat 11). Finally, we were thrilled to have representatives from City departments including Vision Zero, Transportation Engineering, Parks and Recreation - Greenways, and the Knoxville Police Department with us. Thank you to everyone who came out for the event!

The tour began at Tyson Park, where the group discussed the importance of connectivity between the Marble City and Bearden neighborhoods to campus and downtown, specifically highlighting the upcoming project to construct a tunnel to connect Tyson Park to Fort Sanders. The walk continued up to Concord Street, passing over a wooden greenway bridge, acknowledging the lessons learned from installing handi-tread to improve bike traction under wet conditions. At the end of Tyson McGhee Park Street, folks highlighted the common crossing made by cyclists and pedestrians to connect between the Park and Painter Avenue, which is often perceived as a more convenient way to connect to the Third Creek Greenway.

The main focus of the event was an upcoming road diet project, which will transform Concord Street from its current four vehicular lane status to three lanes - one vehicular lane in either direction with a center turn lane and buffered bike lanes on either side. According to [NACTO](#), "Road diets can improve traffic flow and reduce conflicts with turning vehicles, while increasing a road's efficiency by channeling turning vehicles out of the through lanes. Streets designed with either 2 lanes or a 2-way left-turn lane can cut crash risk by nearly half." We were thrilled to highlight this project and the safety benefits it will bring to the area!

Another point of discussion was the Third Creek Greenway crossing. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) were implemented there as a result of advocacy from City of Knoxville Greenways Ambassadors, but safety issues persist - drivers often fail to yield to crossing cyclists and pedestrians, or due to multiple lanes, one driver will yield and another will try to use the other lane to proceed, creating a dangerous circumstance. Not only will the road diet project reduce the number of vehicle travel lanes pedestrians need to cross, but it will also add a painted pedestrian island in the center, giving pedestrians a place to pause and evaluate car flow before proceeding, improving safety.

The route proceeded up to the intersection of Concord Street with Sutherland Avenue, where neighbors discussed challenges they face navigating as pedestrians. Faded and unmarked crosswalks without pedestrian signalization, in addition to a right turn slip lane coming off of Sutherland Avenue and onto Concord Street, create dangerous conditions for folks traversing the area. Advocates also highlighted safety improvement projects that have been implemented along Sutherland Avenue, including curb bump outs in front of West High School and centerline hardening at the intersection with Hollywood Road. Vision Zero Knoxville has been hard at work making streets safer and working to achieve the goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries on City-owned roadways by 2040! To continue on this momentum, Bike Walk Knoxville urges strong support for safety efforts.

The walk looped back around to highlight the other end of the road diet project, emphasizing the intersection with Kingston Pike and traffic concerns that have been raised due to the prohibition of left turns coming off of Kingston Pike onto Concord Street. Finally, the event concluded with the group walking over to the John Ulmer Bridge and thanking our hardworking Public Service crews as a part of National Public Works week! The zig-zag bridge was rebuilt, true to the original design, but with the addition of handi-tread that improves traction for folks traversing the bridge!

Bike Walk Knoxville would like to thank everyone who came out to walk with us, especially our elected officials, candidates, and valued stakeholders. We look forward to the road diet project coming to fruition, and a safer Concord Street for all road users!