

by Wanda McConnell

The pedestrian corridor across Henderson Highway at Valhalla Drive has finally been equipped with pedestrian-activated flashing amber lights — and Henderson councillor Don Mitchelson wants to make sure area residents use them.

Mitchelson told **The Herald** that a study to determine the effectiveness of pedestrian-activated flashing lights, undertaken by the city in the early 1980's, proved that the lights reduced traffic/pedestrian accidents in the corridors by almost 70 per cent.

About two years ago he launched a campaign to have all pedestrian corridors equipped with the lights, even though it meant battling the mayor — who said the corridors were a "death trap" and should be eliminated entirely.

That theory was "ludicrous," Mitchelson countered. He pointed to the Valhalla corridor, used predominantly by senior citizens, making the case that one can't have elderly people crossing a high-speed traffic strip without some sort of protection.

Mitchelson and his supporters won out and the city, in co-operation with the provincial government under the Highway Traffic Act, moved in mid-1984 to equip Winnipeg's pedestrian corridors — 105 of them — with the flashing amber lights.

About 35 corridors were equipped with the lights in 1985, and once city council approves the 1986 capital budget in mid-March, work will proceed on the remaining 70. The project is to be com-

pleted in 1986, says Councillor Jae Edie, (Deer Lodge), chairperson of the works and operations committee. The lights cost an average of \$4,000 per corridor.

The Valhalla corridor is used heavily by the high number of senior citizens living in apartment complexes on the west side of Henderson Highway to get to the River East Plaza to do their shopping. Although disgruntled that the lights weren't installed until December, Mitchelson said that now that the lights are there, he is concerned that the seniors remember to push the button on the light standard to activate the lights.

The lights flash alternately, and are highly visible to oncoming traffic, making it much safer for pedestrians, Mitchelson pointed out.

"I just want to call to the attention of seniors that the button is there, and to use it," he said, adding that the corridor offers less protection without it. There is also a button to activate the lights again on the median in the middle of Henderson Highway, and Mitchelson said pedestrians shouldn't hesitate to push the button again before proceeding across the highway. And lastly, he reminded pedestrians to wait until the traffic has stopped before stepping out onto the highway.

In other traffic matters, Mitchelson says the executive policy committee has approved a \$59,000 capital budget project to install traffic lights at the corner of McIvor Avenue and Henderson Highway. The project awaits final council approval in mid-March.

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