



# SIGNALIZED INTERSECTIONS

Module 6

# Learning Outcomes

6-2

1. At the end of this module, you will be able to:
2. Explain why traffic signals don't "guarantee" safety: they assign the right of way
3. Identify signal timing techniques that favor ped crossings
4. Identify major conflicts: concurrent turn movements
5. Select protected turns to improve ped safety

# Signalized Intersections Can Be Improved For Pedestrians By:

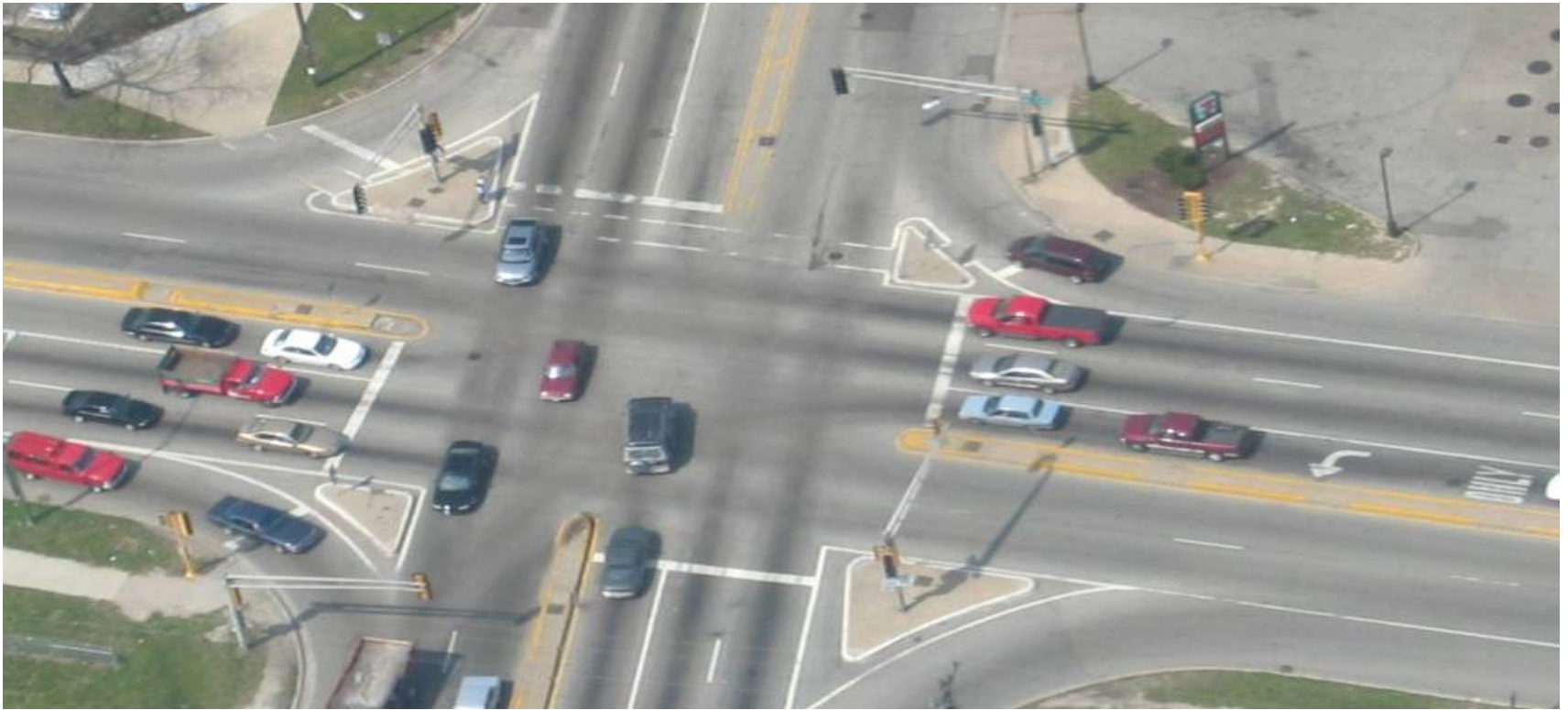
6-3

1. Using good geometric design
2. Placing islands to break up complex crossings
3. Placing crosswalks in logical locations
4. Improving convenience and ease of use of pedestrian pushbuttons and signals
5. Using techniques to reduce conflicts with turning vehicles

1, 2 & 3 addressed in earlier module

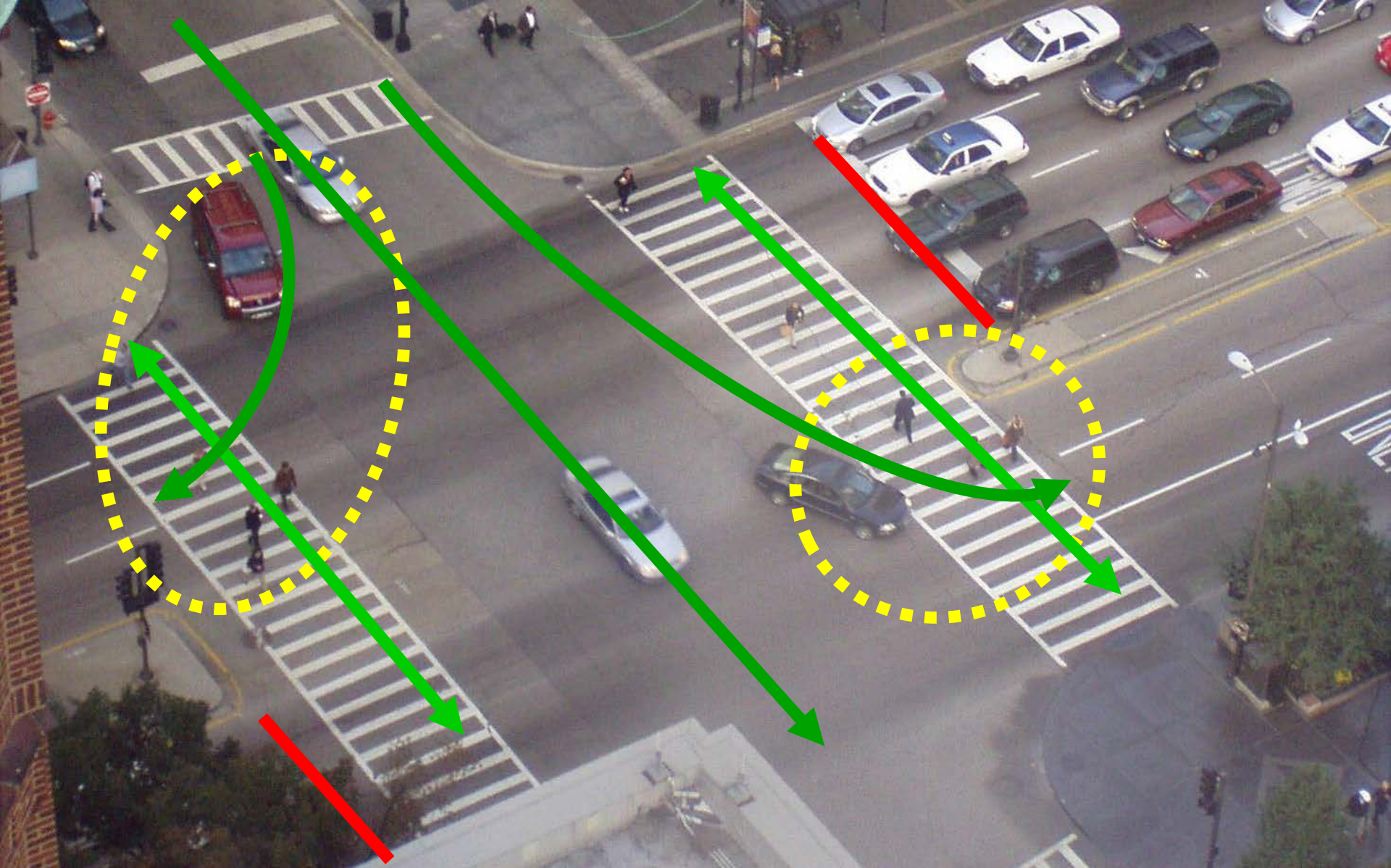
# Traffic signals assign the of right of way, regulate the flow of traffic and create gaps

6-4



Traffic signals do not guarantee safety – in fact, signalized intersections have more crashes than non-signalized





Turn movements often result in conflicts

# Traffic signals don't ensure protection

6-6

Washington DC



Peds routinely ignore the light (usually quite safely)



# Traffic signals don't ensure protection

6-7



Pedestrians will cross where it's convenient

# Traffic signals don't ensure protection

6-8

Corvallis OR New York NY



Pedestrians are at risk when crossing with the light



# Lucky Escape

6-9



# Improving convenience and ease of use of pedestrian signals

6-10

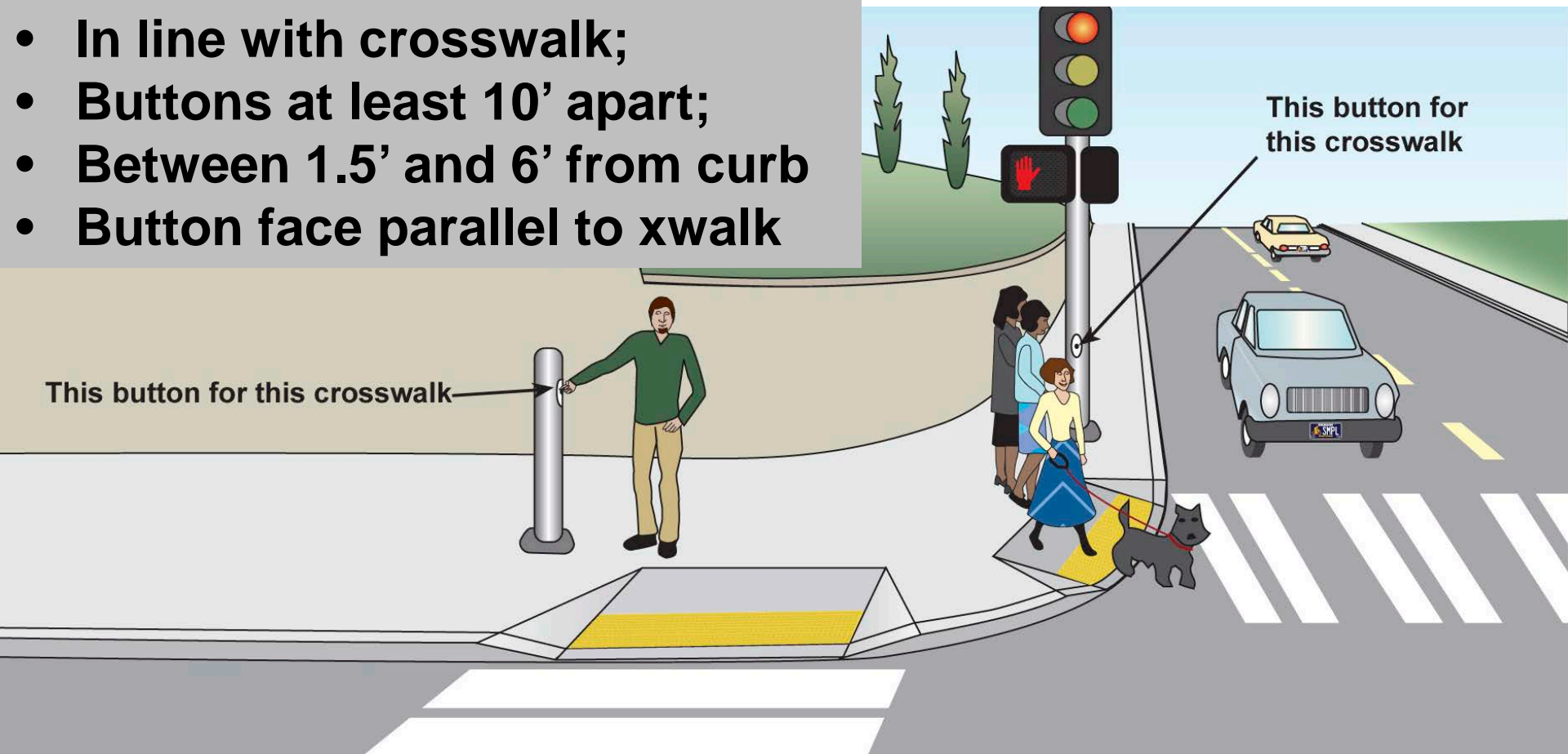
- ❑ Proper pushbutton placement
- ❑ Need and placement of pedestrian signal heads
- ❑ Signal timing for pedestrians
- ❑ Countdown Signals
- ❑ Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)

# Proper Pushbutton Placement

6-11

## MUTCD Recommendations:

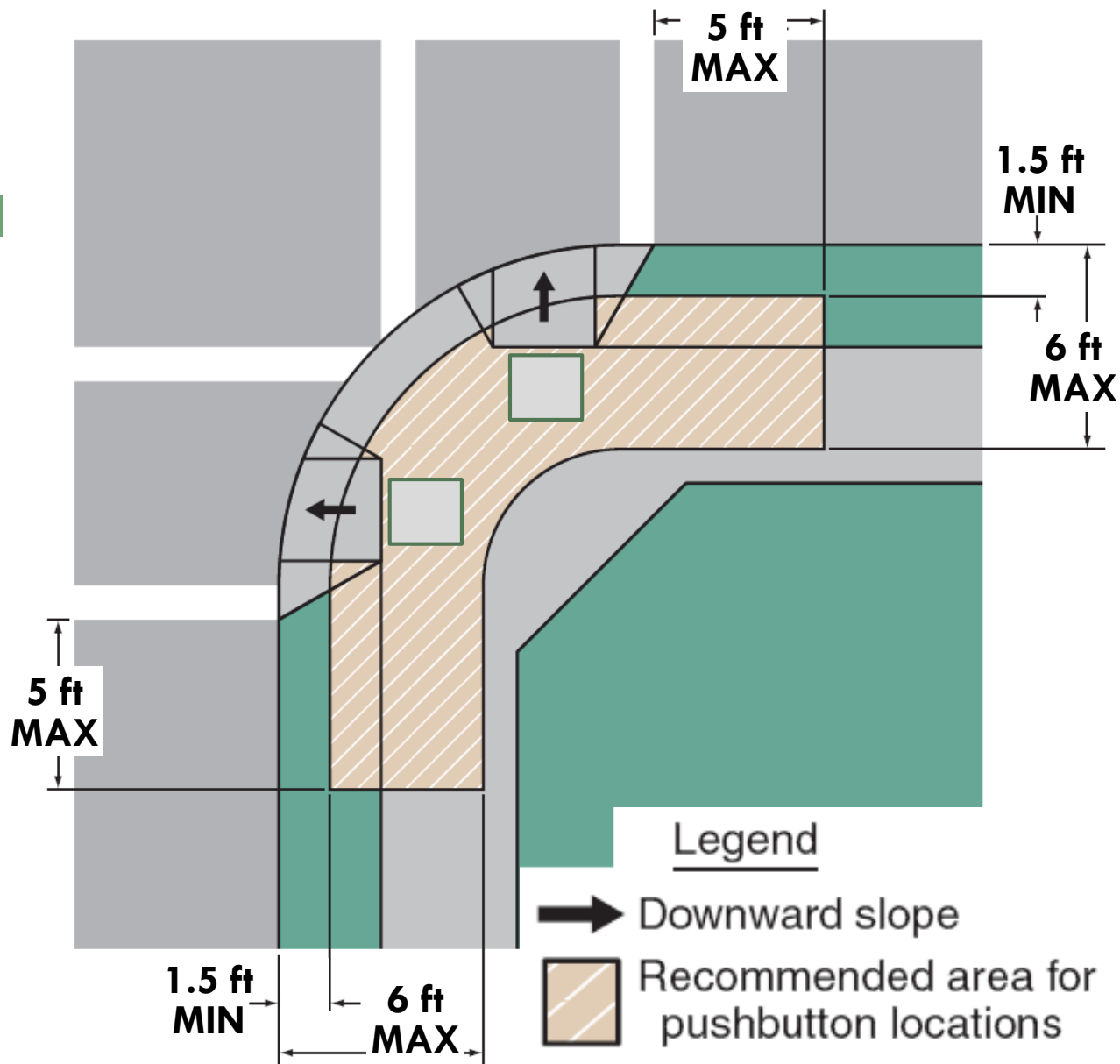
- In line with crosswalk;
- Buttons at least 10' apart;
- Between 1.5' and 6' from curb
- Button face parallel to xwalk





# Proper Pushbutton Placement

The MUTCD recommends these dimensions



# Poor Pushbutton Placement

6-13



# Poor Pushbutton Placement

6-14



**Behind guardrail**



**Behind vegetation**



# Poor Pushbutton Placement

6-15



**At back of pole**



**In front of pole**



# Poor Pushbutton Placement

6-16

Hillsborough Co. FL



All of the Above?



# Proper Pushbutton Placement

6-17



**On side of pole**



**At top of ramp**



# Communicate With Pedestrians

6-18



LED tells peds the button works  
and the signal has received the  
call (*like an elevator*)

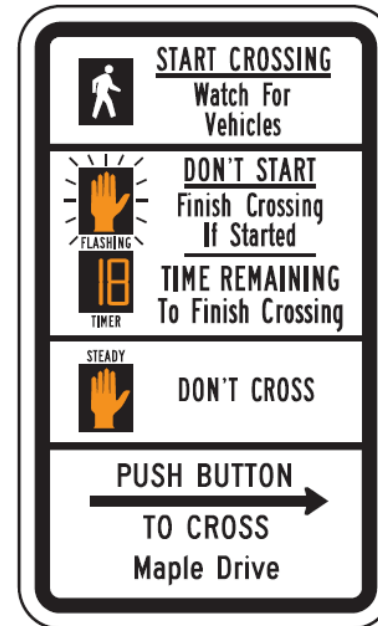


Tactile arrow gives direction  
to blind and sighted  
pedestrians

# Requirement in the 2009 MUTCD

6-19

- Combination of sign legends and pushbutton placement shall clearly indicate which crosswalk signal is activated by each pushbutton



# Pedestrian Signals

## (AKA Ped Heads/Pedestrian Indicators)

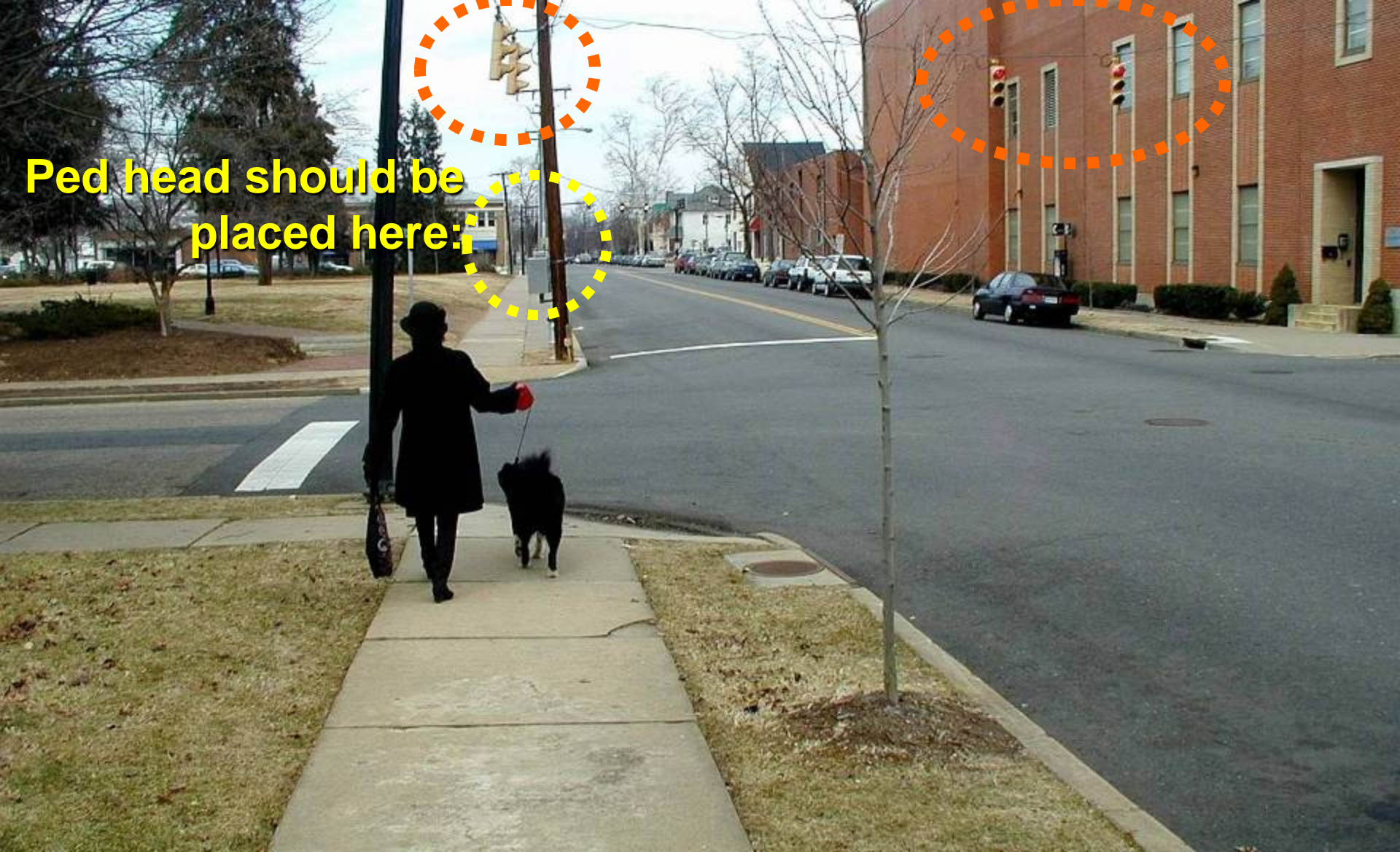
6-20

### Need and Placement at Signalized Intersections

- In general, use signals wherever pedestrians may be present (if in doubt, install them)







6-21

Fredericksburg VA

Pedestrian signals should be provided, Otherwise pedestrians don't know when to cross





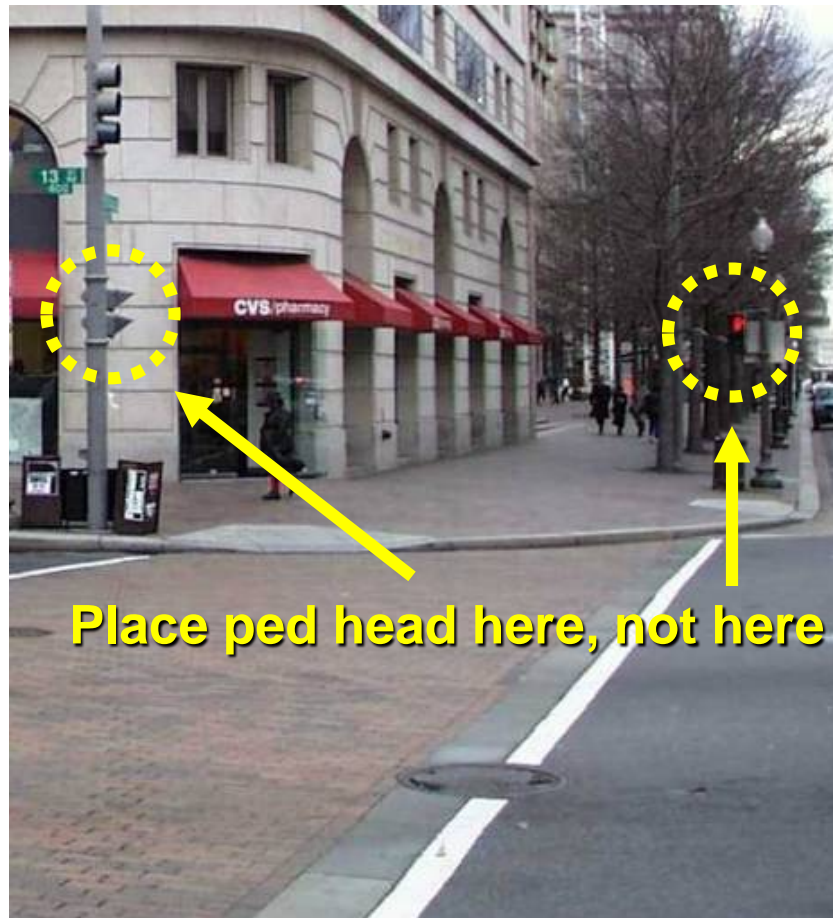
6-22

Raleigh NC

- ❑ Lack of pedestrian signals on one way street:
  - ▣ The pedestrian may not notice the signal

# Ped head placement: close to crosswalk, visible to pedestrians, especially with long crosswalk

6-23



**Poor example**



**Good example**



# Two-step signals: ensure pedestrians don't see conflicting signals

6-24



These pedestrians kept walking, not noticing the separate signal for the 2nd half of the roadway

**6-25**

# Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)

# Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS)

6-26


- ❑ Provide ped signal information in audible and vibrotactile format
- ❑ Benefit all pedestrians by providing redundancy
- ❑ The 2009 MUTCD describes the features of APS, but does not require them
- ❑ Future accessibility standards and future MUTCD editions will likely require APS for all ped signals





# MUTCD Specifies Pushbutton-integrated APS

6-27

- Not the loud Cuckoo/Chirps used in the past
- Key Features:
  - Speakers at the pushbutton
  - Pushbutton locator tone  (Click to play sample locator tone)
  - Tactile arrow (described earlier)
  - Automatic volume adjustment (so tones are audible within 6 to 12 feet of the button)
  - APS location is critical to proper functioning (see standards described earlier)

# APS WALK indications

6-28

- APS should have both audible and vibrotactile WALK indications
  - Audible WALK indication: tone or speech message during WALK
  - Vibrotactile WALK indication: tactile arrow (or other surface on button) vibrates during WALK



6-29

## “Recall to Walk”

(Walk Signal Comes Up Automatically)





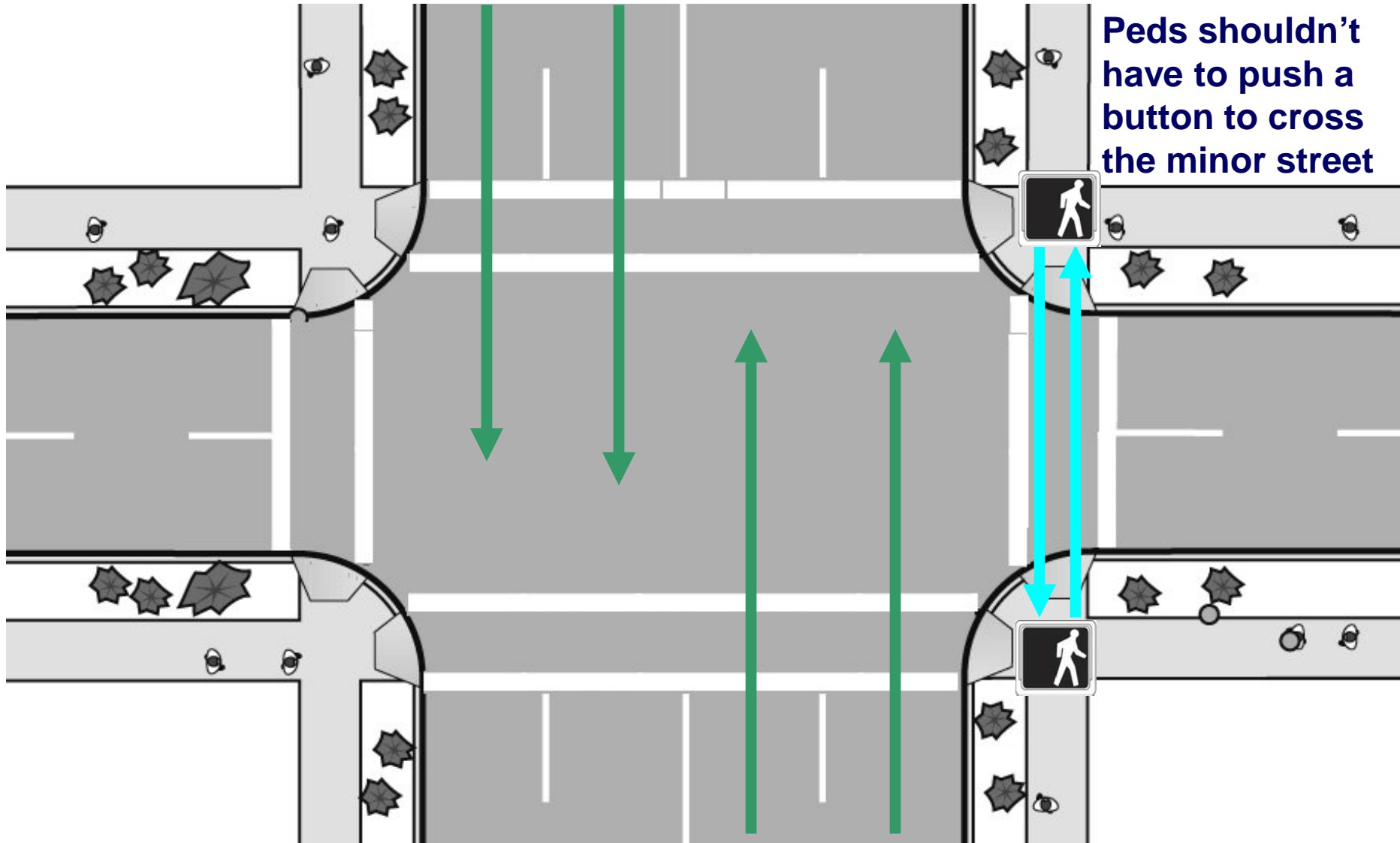
6-30

Long Beach CA

At high-use crosswalks, pedestrians should get a signal at every cycle

# Set pedestrian signals to recall to WALK when major street is set to recall to green

6-31



6-32

# Signal Timing & Walking Speeds



# Use Short Signal Cycle Length

6-33



Long wait causes stacking: pedestrians wait in street, or don't wait and cross against the signal

# Pedestrian Walking Speeds

6-34

Silver Springs MD

## 2009 MUTCD:

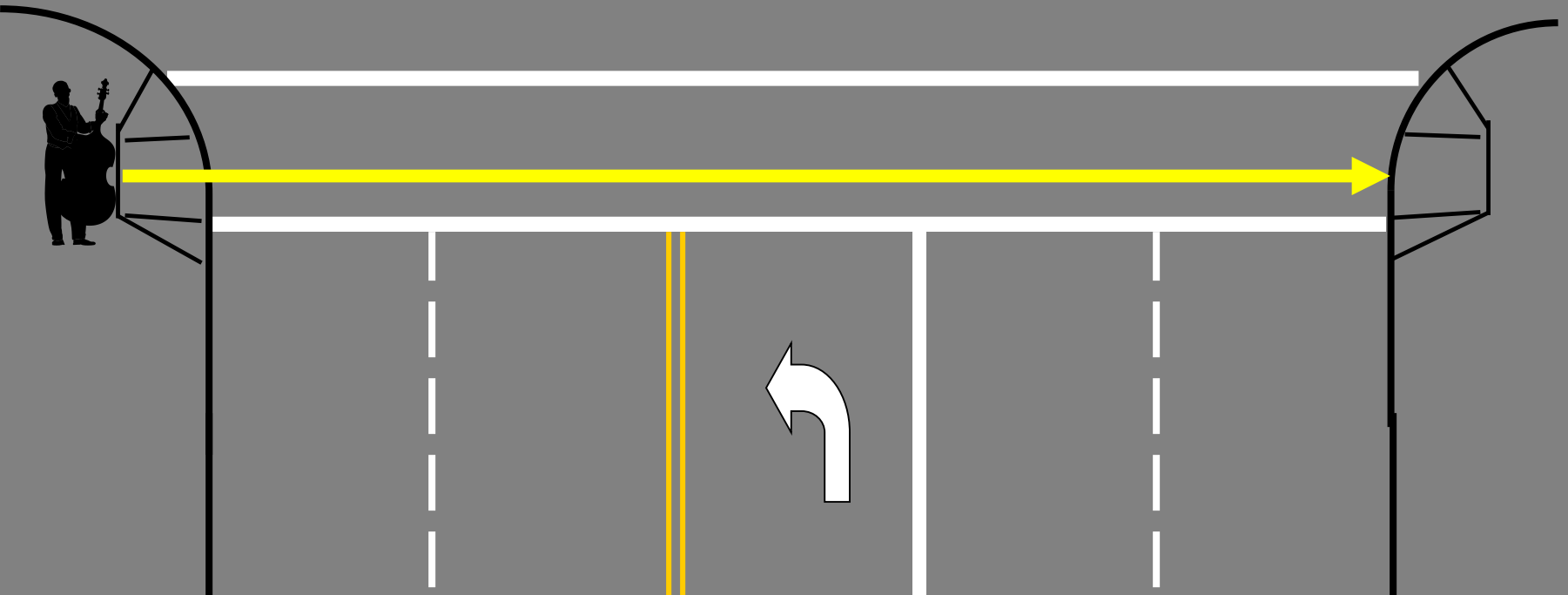
- 7 sec walk, 4 sec option (no change)
- Ped clearance time (flashing hand) calculated at 3.5'/sec curb-to-curb.
- Example: 60' crosswalk requires 17 sec
  - $7 + 17 = 24$  sec total
- Additional test for walk plus clearance time: Calculate travel time from push button (or 6' feet from curb if no button) to curb on other side at 3'/sec
  - Example:  $6' + 60'$  crosswalk = 66
  - 66' requires 22 sec
  - $24 \text{ sec} > 22 \text{ sec}$ ; passes test.



Guidance for walk plus clearance: Calculate time from pushbutton (or 6' from curb) to curb on other side at 3'/sec

6-35

**60' crosswalk + 6' = 66' total; @ 3'/sec = 22 sec walk plus ped clearance**



**Note: pushbutton is considered the departure point for older pedestrians and people in wheelchairs.**



# Old System

6-36

1. Ped symbol or WALK
2. Flashing Hand or DON'T WALK
3. Steady Hand or DON'T WALK

1/2 of Americans don't understand it;

□ Is there a better system?

**\* Flashing orange hand/DON'T WALK is ped clearance interval: very counterintuitive**

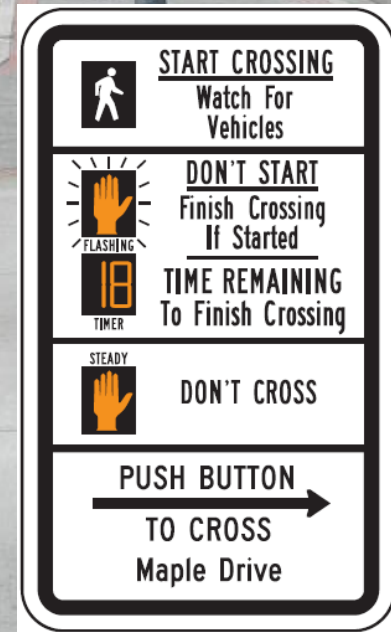




6-37

Problem with old system: People not sure if they can start during flashing hand / DON'T WALK





New system: countdown pedestrian signal tells pedestrians how much time remains for crossing



# Streetfilms: Guadalajara Countdown

6-39





6-40

## Countdown pedestrian signal research results:

1. Pedestrians understand how it works
2. More people start crossing during clearance phase, but...
3. Fewer people initiate walk late in clearance phase
4. Very few pedestrians in crosswalk in steady don't walk
5. Drivers don't take a cue and accelerate to beat the light



6-41

Honolulu HI

What about crash reduction?

Results from San Francisco study are promising:

$CMF = 0.75$  (CRF = 25%)



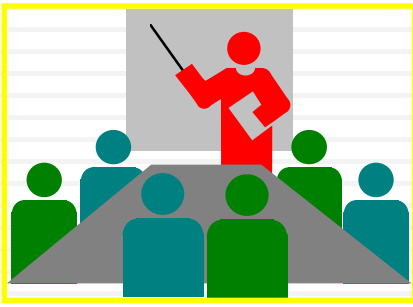
# 2009 MUTCD requirement

6-42

- Countdown displays required for new pedestrian signals (except the rare situation where the change interval is 7 seconds or less)
- Why? Significant reductions in pedestrian-vehicle crashes



MUTCD Sec. 4E.07



6-43

## Discussion:

What are your policies & practices regarding the provision of pedestrian indicators and countdown signals?

**6-44**

**ITS**

Using ITS to Adjust Pedestrian Signal Timing





6-45

Portland OR

- In this example a high-tech signal was used to help slower pedestrians cross the street with minimal delay to traffic.
- A slower crossing speed would delay traffic significantly



6-46

Portland OR

Microwave sensors are aimed at the crosswalks to track peds





6-47

Portland OR

Pedestrian clearance is  
timed @ 3.5 ft/sec

The sensor tracks peds as they cross  
the street

MUTCD Sec. 4E.06, Paragraph 08



# ITS Pedestrian Signal

6-48 Portland OR

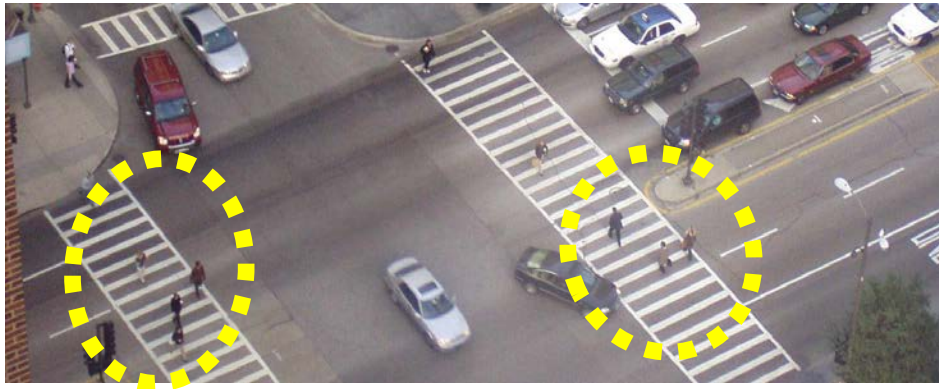
- The controller adds 4 seconds crossing time if pedestrian hasn't finished crossing (8 seconds maximum)
- In this case, the walk phase was prolonged in 20% of crossings, reducing unnecessary traffic delay the other 80% of crossings.



# Reducing Conflicts between Pedestrians and Turning Vehicles

6-49

- At signals, turning movements account for most ped crashes
- Left/right turn ratio is roughly 2:1
- Countermeasures
  - Protected vs. permissive turns
  - No turn on Red
  - Exclusive Pedestrian Phase
  - Leading Pedestrian Interval



# Signs: Remind Turning Drivers to Yield to Peds

6-50



**R10-15 in  
2009 MUTCD**

**Older local variations,  
using MUTCD-approved  
lettering and symbols:**



**Leesburg, FL**



**Juneau, AK  
Orlando, FL**



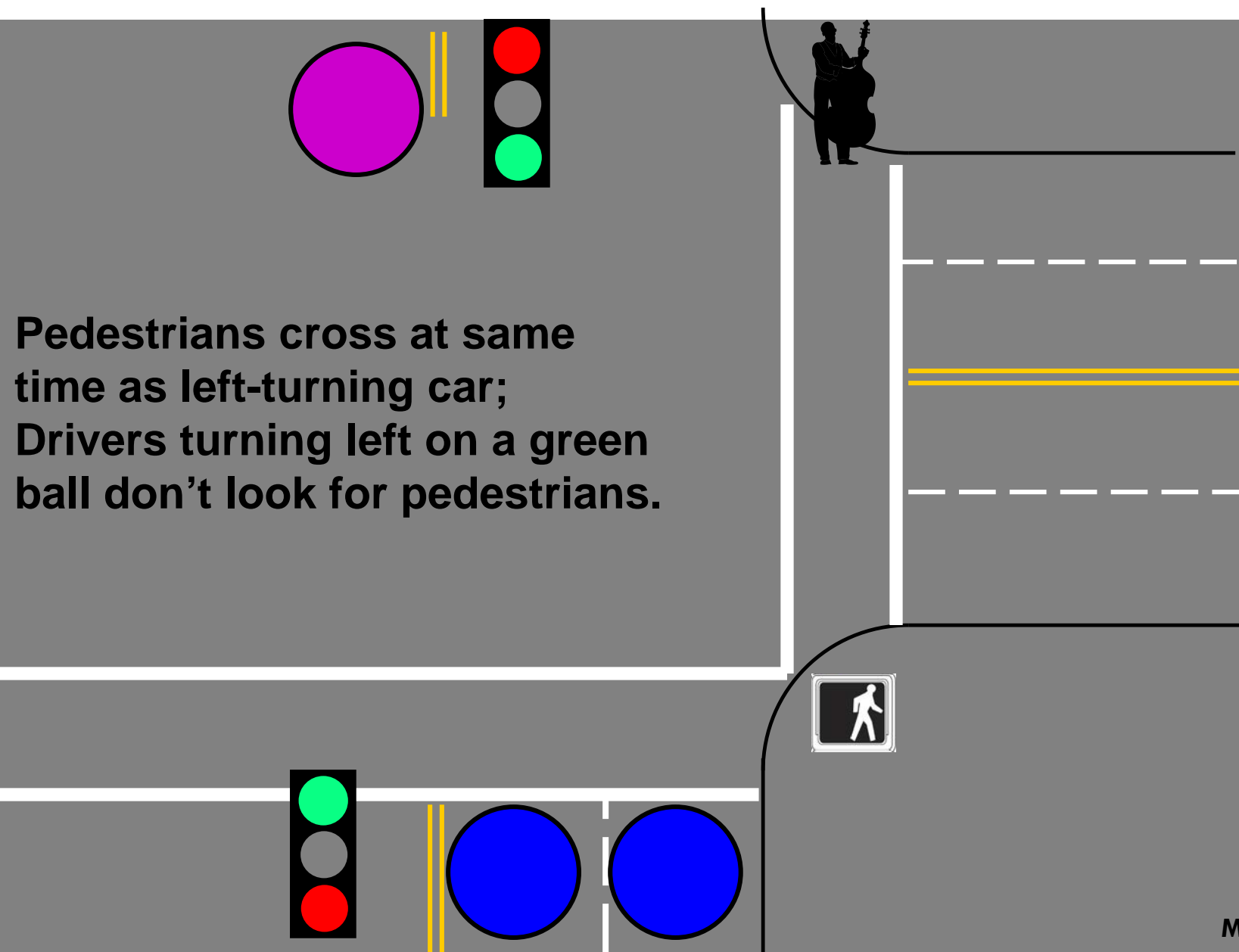
# Protected Vs. Permissive Left Turns

6-51

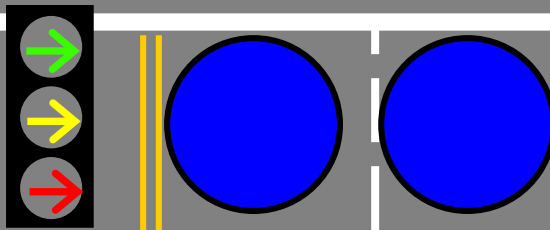
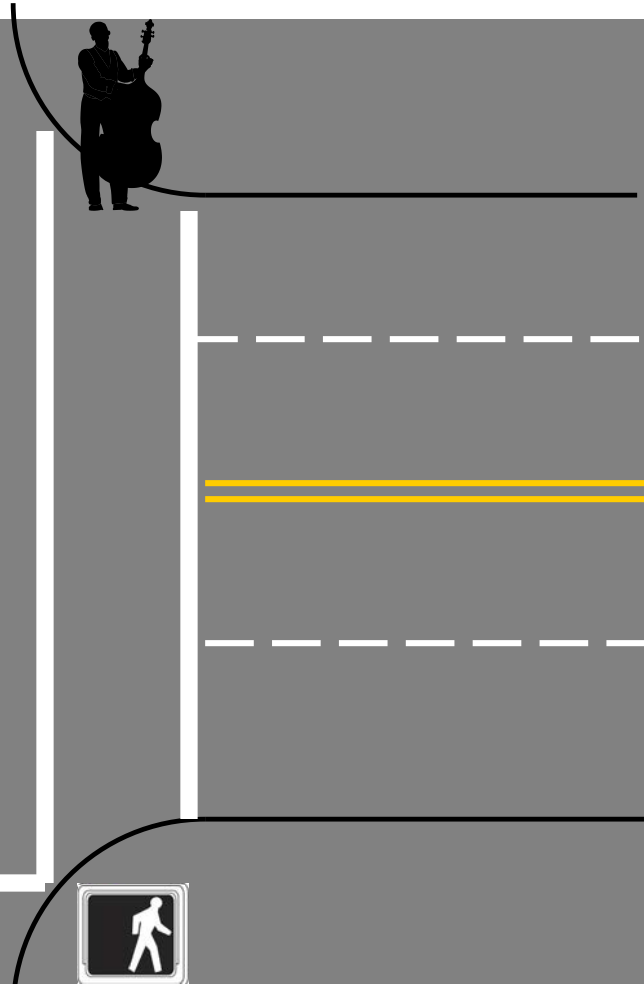
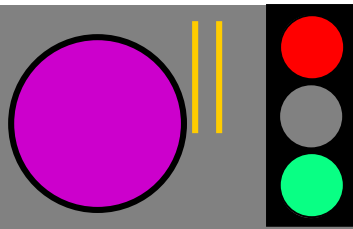


\*  $CMF = 0.3$  (CRF 70%) (all crashes) converting permissive left turns to protected only left turns

# Permissive Left Turns

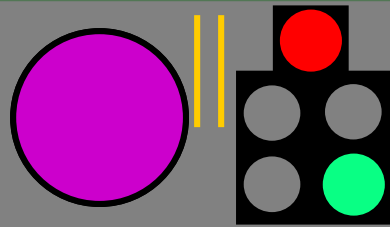


# Protected Left Turns

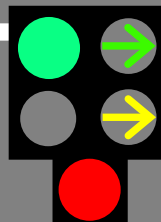




# Protected/permissive Left Turns



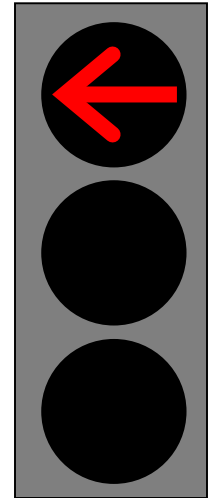
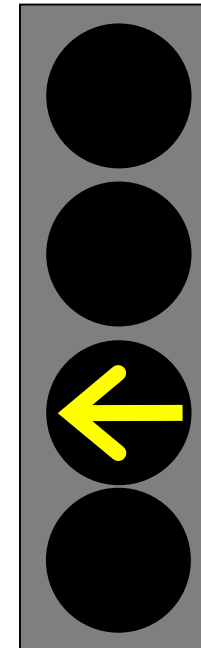
**Pedestrians cross after most left-turning cars (protected phase);  
Pedestrian and remaining cars  
are in conflict (permissive phase)**



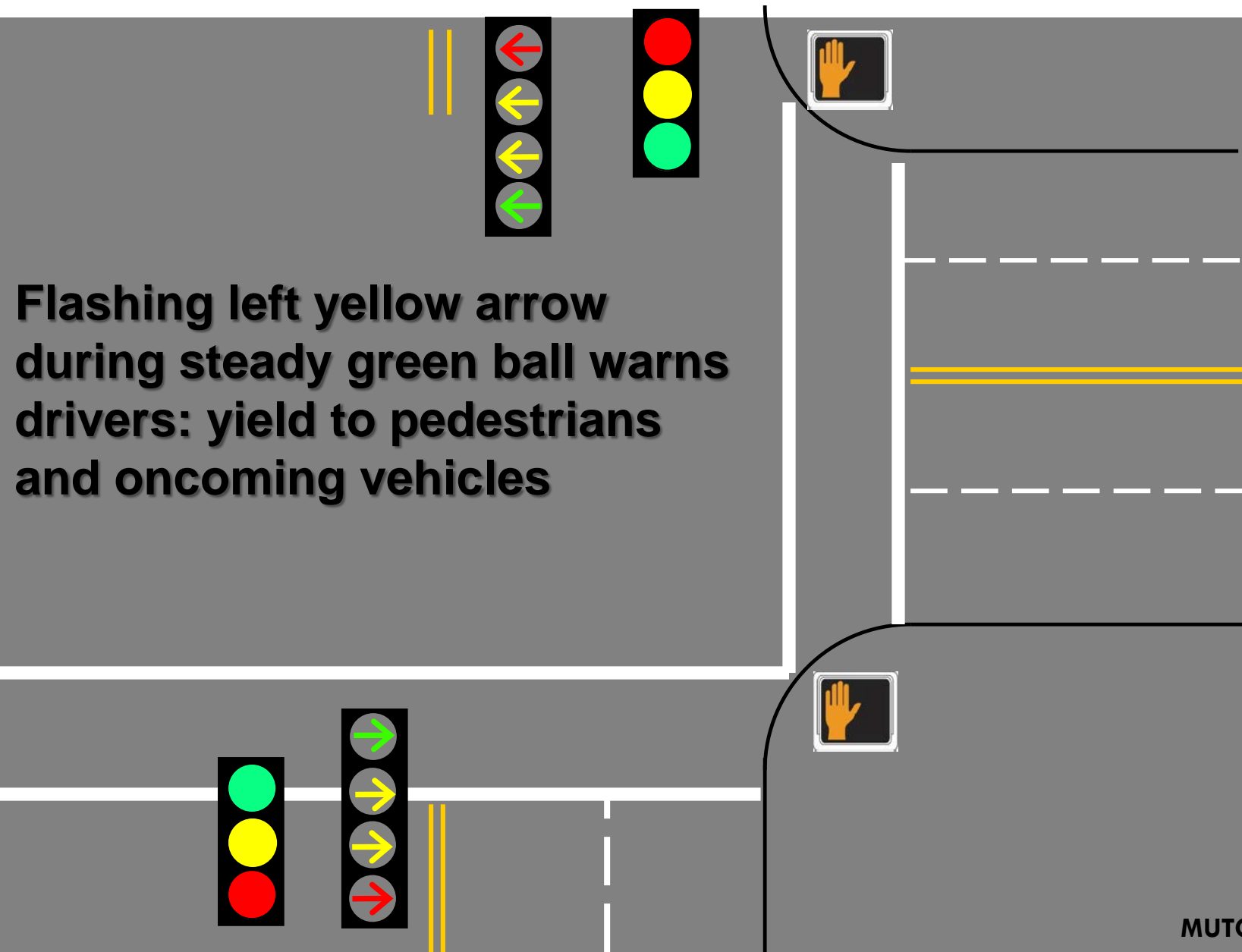
# Protected/permissive Left Turns: Solutions

6-55

1. Provide protected-permissive phasing by default, but revert to protected-only when pedestrian button is pushed or based on time of day
2. Flashing Yellow Arrow (details on the next slide)

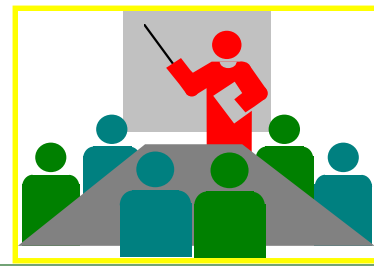


# Flashing Yellow Arrow





# Discussion



6-57

- ☐ Do you use protected left turns to protect pedestrians from turning vehicles?
- ☐ Do you use protected/permissive phasing?
- ☐ If so, have you considered flashing yellow arrow during the steady green ball?

# Restricting Turns on Red

6-58

Tampa FL

Consider No Turn on Red signs where there is:

- ❑ Poor sight distance between vehicles and peds;
- ❑ An unusual number of ped conflicts with turns on red (compared to turns on green);
- ❑ An exclusive pedestrian phase; or
- ❑ A leading pedestrian interval



# Restricting Turns on Red:

6-59

Washington DC

## 1. At all times





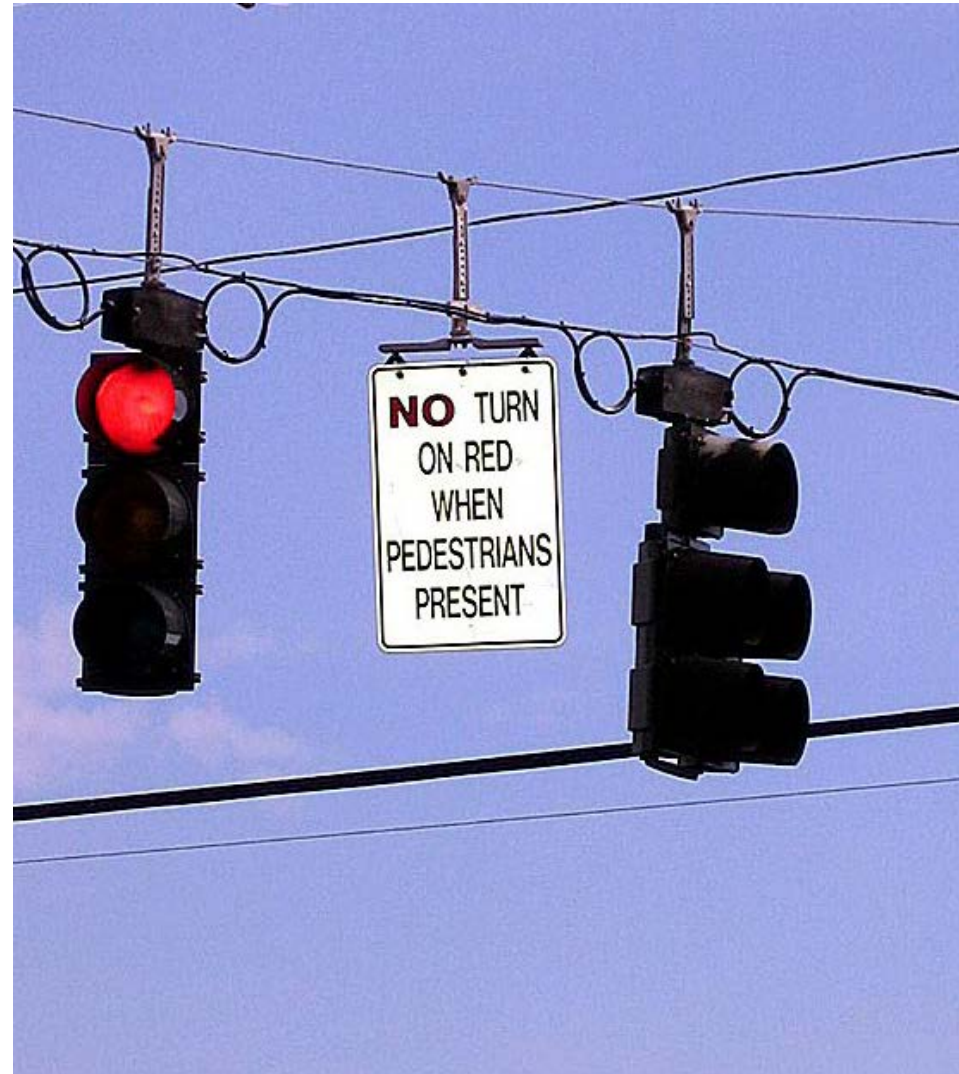
# Restricting Turns on Red

6-60

Tucson AZ

2. When pedestrians are present

Difficult to enforce



# Restricting Turns on Red:

6-61

St Paul MN

## 3. By time of day

Limits most turns on red



# Restricting Turns on Red:

6-62

Orlando FL

4. Changeable message sign – can be activated when ped pushes button or as set by controller



Note: An on-demand NTOR sign can be used to improve the effectiveness of a Lead Pedestrian Interval



# Exclusive Pedestrian Phase (Barnes Dance)



6-63

Pasadena CA

- Popular because all traffic stops and pedestrians can cross in any direction (must ban turns on red)



6-64

Pasadena CA

- Pedestrians pay a price in delay:
- Pedestrians wait for traffic in one direction





6-65

Pedestrians wait for traffic in other direction





Exclusive pedestrian phase increases safety  
(**CMF = 0.66; CRF=34%**)  
but decreases efficiency of intersection  
Use where there are high ped volumes  
and many turning vehicles

Reward: pedestrians can cross in any direction

6-67

# LPI = Lead Pedestrian Interval

LPI gives pedestrians a head start

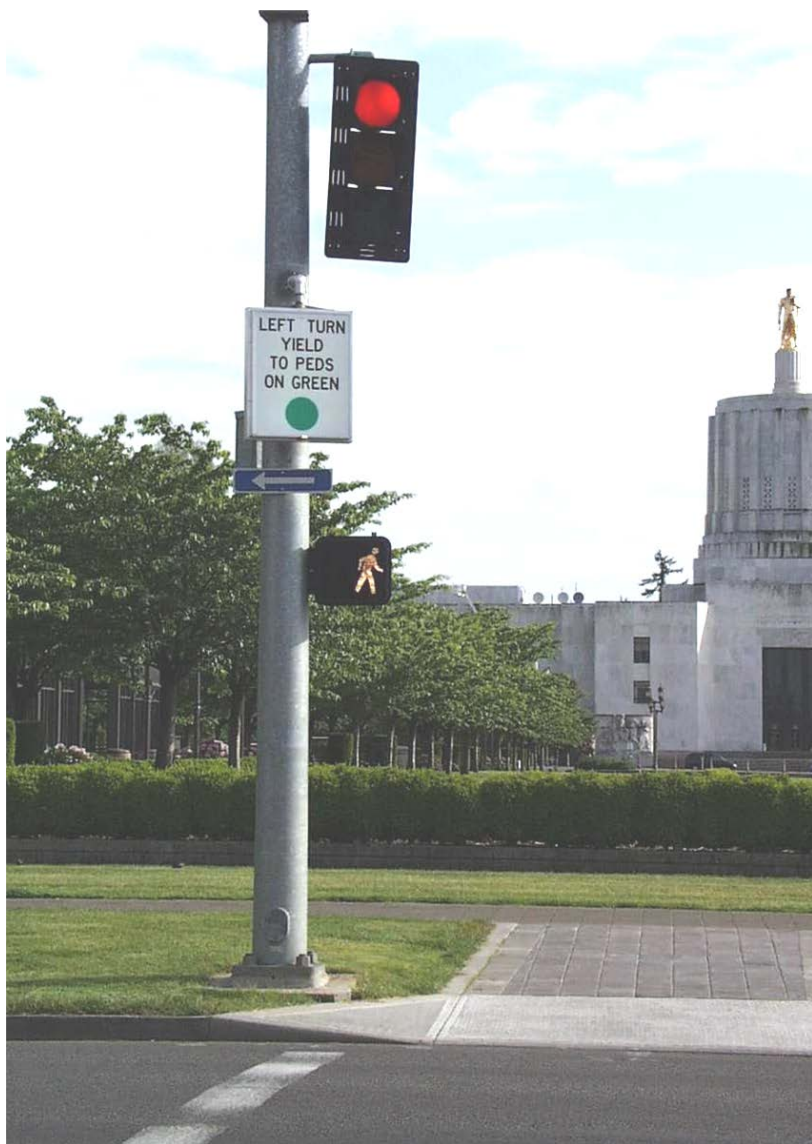
It's like a “mini” exclusive phase

# Leading Pedestrian Interval

6-68







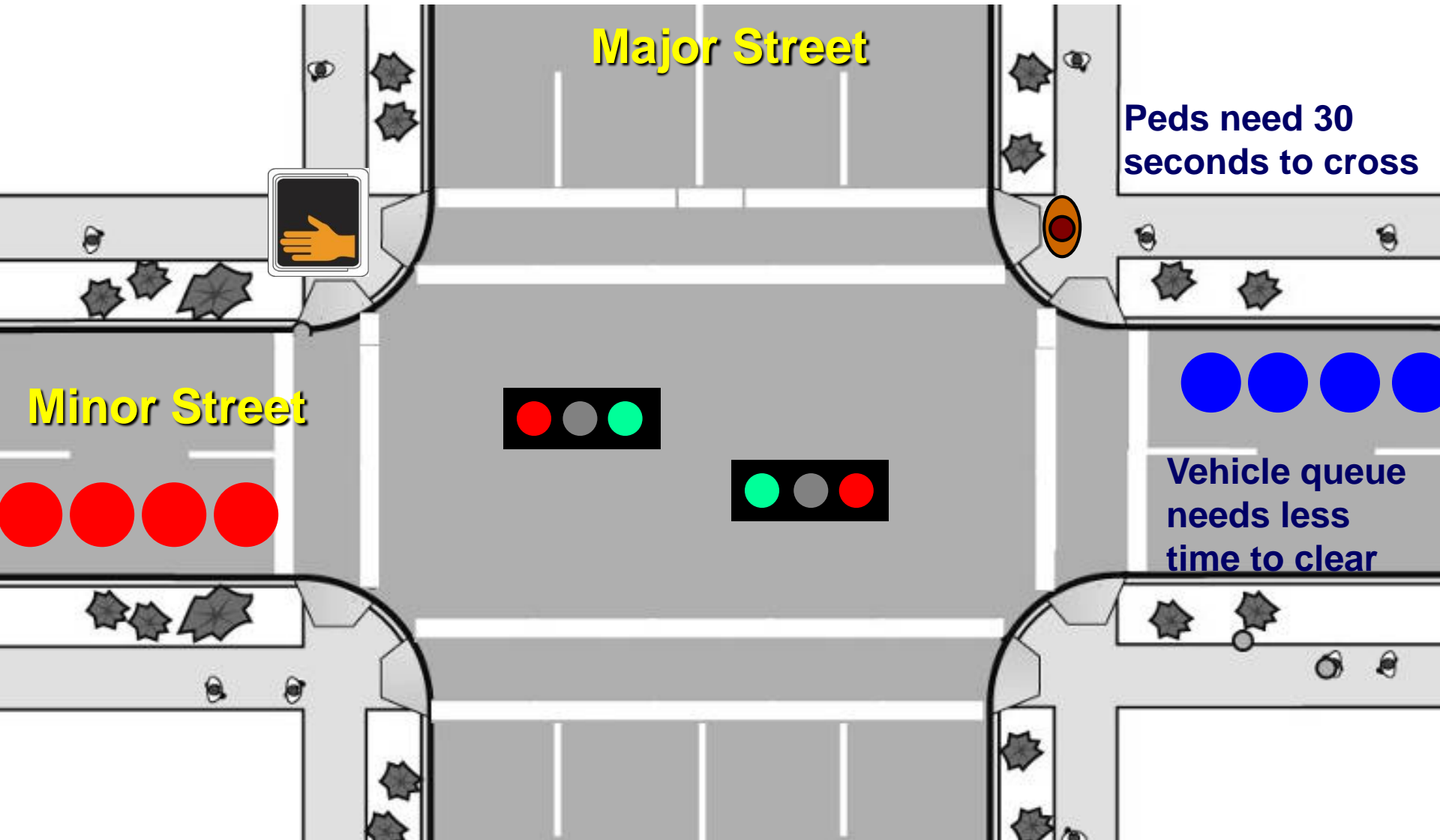
6-69

Salem OR

LPI : WALK comes on at least 3 seconds prior to the green signal; pedestrians enter crosswalk before turning vehicles arrive there.

# Where do the extra 3-5 seconds come from?

6-70



# Exclusive Ped Phases or LPI and Accessible Ped Signals

6-71

- Without APS, pedestrians with vision impairments cross by listening to vehicle movement
- With an exclusive ped phase or LPI, the walk signal does not coincide with vehicle movement
- Use APS with LPI or exclusive ped phases





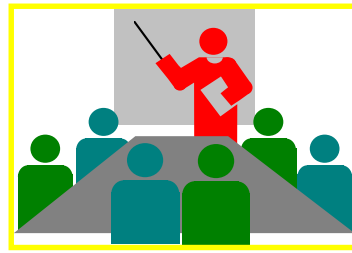


6-72

Gridley CA

- These peds waited 3 cycles before turning drivers let them cross as legally required. LPI would give them a head start.
- $CMF = 0.95$  (CRF: 5%)

# Discussion



6-73

- ☐ Do you restrict right turns on red where appropriate?
- ☐ Do you use Exclusive Pedestrian Phases or LPIs?

# Learning Outcomes

6-74

You should now be able to:

1. Explain why traffic signals don't "guarantee" safety; they assign the right of way
2. Identify signal timing techniques that favor pedestrian crossing
3. Identify major conflicts: concurrent turn movements
4. Select protected turns to improve ped safety



**6-75**

**Questions?**