



City of Providence  
Department of Public Works  
Leo Perrotta, Director  
CC: Nate Urso, Traffic Engineer

Dear Director Perrotta:

On behalf of WalkPVD, a recently established pedestrian advocacy organization here in Providence, I'd like to thank and applaud your recent move to make use of pedestrian signal push buttons unnecessary in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Setting the pedestrian walk signals to recall mode makes the pedestrian experience safer, easier, less confusing, and more convenient.

WalkPVD implores you to make these changes permanent. A few years ago, your department set all city-controlled pedestrian signals in the Downtown area to recall mode, and the results have been strictly positive. We've also observed that at least one State-controlled intersection, the College St/Westminster St crossing of Memorial Blvd, has recently been set to pedestrian recall with a Leading Pedestrian Interval. We applaud these moves and would love to see more of the like from both the City and the State. Pedestrian push buttons for actuated signals are an inconvenience to pedestrians who do not push them in time to coincide with the traffic signal, and perhaps more importantly, they make it clear to pedestrians that they are second-class road users. For that reason, we often refer to these as "beg buttons." Some of these unfortunately do not even work as intended.

Our members have overwhelmingly expressed this concern, as evidenced by the comments on the recent Facebook post by the Department of Planning informing the public of this temporary change to the pedestrian experience. We were delighted to note that this change was so rapidly made, and again, we believe it would be better and safer to simply make the change permanent at all City intersections. Providence is built for walking as an historic and compact city, and this small change would show those of us traveling by foot that we matter, and that the City appreciates its innate walkability.

We would be more than happy to offer any insights we can, and welcome any follow-up questions or ideas. Thank you very much for your time and for considering our request.

Sincerely,  
C.J. Opperthausen  
Co-founder, WalkPVD