

June 19, 2019

Alderman Michael Murphy
City and County Carjacking and Reckless Driving Task Force, Chair
200 E. Wells St.
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: Recommendations to City and County Carjacking and Reckless Driving Task Force

Dear Alderman Murphy,

Pursuant to our conversation a few weeks ago at the workshop on Reckless Driving at Bradley Tech, I have several ideas to propose for the Task Force to consider. These ideas are in collaboration with a group that grew out of the work of the MPS Drive Council. MPS Drive has been the force implementing driver's education in Milwaukee Public Schools. We invite you to take a look to see how they can be implemented within the work of the Task Force.

Convening of Stakeholders

With regard to the issue of reckless drivers, there are many stakeholders that we need to have at the table helping to process a new approach. We recommend a diverse group of participants that includes law enforcement, youth, youth organization, insurance representatives, first responders, victims of reckless driving/carjacking, offenders of reckless driving/carjacking, elected officials, district attorney's office, municipal and circuit court judges, media personnel, city/county agencies (in particular, the Office of Violence Prevention and the Department of Public Works), public schools, community-based organizations, department of transportation, criminal justice researchers, bicycle organizations and neighborhood watch groups.

It would be appropriate for the City of Milwaukee, in particular the Task Force, to convene this group of stakeholders. Currently, there are various groups working on the topic of reckless driving in silos. It is clear that there is a widespread concern throughout the community. The act of bringing everyone together to speak with one voice has a much more powerful influence than any of us working separately. We believe, the City has the resources available to harness all of these efforts in a way that can be comprehensive.

Focused Deterrence Strategy

In the mid-1990s, Boston Ceasefire was implemented. It was a strategic measure to reduce gun violence in Boston. It used the concept of focused deterrence which operates from the premise that a person who may commit an offense is less likely to do so if the consequences outweigh the benefits. It was quite effective in that there was a significant reduction in gun violence in the first year of its implementation.

The concept of a community speaking collaboratively has the possibility of having a substantial impact. The use of credible messengers in collaboration with various constituents of the community to influence behavior can also be a creative way to reach youth that are often misunderstood. For example, some young people are influenced by the music regarding reckless driving. By including musicians in a way

that they can help reframe the dialogue is a possible way to reach youth in a language that they may understand.

Further, it is critical for those in positions of power to learn the language of our youth. We continue to operate from the premise of what we know as opposed to being open to exploring from the realm of what we don't know. Our continued strategies of working from what we know have continued to be ineffective on a significant scale. It is time for us to be innovative and seek visionary methods that have not been tried creating some new possibilities. We need participants who are able to speak and reach youth in ways that they can appreciate. In some instances, this has been in the form of "interrupters", individuals who have a specific role of identifying and reaching out to youth who may be at risk for engaging in offensive behaviors.

One successful example of the focused deterrence is a group out of Massachusetts, ROCA. <https://rocainc.org/> They have been engaged in tireless efforts over the last several decades doing outreach to a designated youth population and crafting programs to transform the lives of many young people altering their predictable realities into new possibilities, creating a win/win for the youth, their families and the community.

Seeking their consultation and that of data researchers who have been successful with the focused deterrence model will be a new way for us to look at the issue of reckless driving and carjackings.

Speaking with One Voice

Reckless driving is in essence, a public health crisis in Milwaukee. People are afraid to drive. On any given day we are all endangered by the multitude of traffic violations including speeding, running stop lights/signs, passing on the right and not yielding the right of way. We are daily hearing stories of crashes due to this wanton disregard for safety of all on the roads. Consequently, different groups have attempted to address the issue in a number of formats. Community groups, the police department, the common council, youth groups and others have been on the news expressing their concerns and articulating different strategies to address the issue. I recommend that in a convening of stakeholders that we can create a synergy of speaking with one voice that is more impactful than different groups speaking in silos. Our voices are much stronger when united with the same message.

Community Campaign

We recommend a community campaign that incorporates all stakeholders and uses the various mediums available to get the message out that reckless driving will not be tolerated. The campaign consists of community engagement in aldermanic and police districts inviting input from residents. It involves the use of social media, radio, television, billboards, written materials, canvassing, public service announcements, and every other medium.

We can invite participation of youth and the creative arts community to help design different modes of outreach including creating of an app, painting murals and designing interactive measure that promote safe driving. We can also encourage competitive activities among our youth to help address the best ways to curb reckless driving. We are only limited by our creativity.

Driver's License Recovery

A related challenge that we have in this arena is the number of people who are operating vehicles without valid driver's license. There are some successful models that have helped people regain their license after suspension, however we continue to see so many new people enter the system which doesn't really allow us to alleviate the problem. The lack of a driver's license has become a barrier for people in many segments of their life. By imposing driver's license penalties, we have unwittingly created a system where driver's licenses are no longer valued by a significant part of our population. The number of offenses where one is operating under suspension is simply incomprehensible. We need to increase universal driver's education more broadly within our public schools and research some cutting-edge measures that provide for reprieve and education for a large group of people who have fallen through the gap. There is something wrong with a system that makes it so easy for one to have their license suspended and so overwhelming to retrieve it.

There is an argument to be made that the time where a driver's license was a privilege is no longer the status quo. The new posture is that it is a right, especially given all of the purposes that a license serves. This becomes even more persuasive when you consider that our transportation systems are limited for people to access school and employment. We have to find some ways to break the cycle outside of the normal ways we do things. Taking a risk to implement a system that forgives the suspensions in certain circumstances may be a way to begin to redress some of the inordinate number of people that feel they have no choice than to operate while their license is under suspension. It is certainly worth exploration and research.

Prevention and advocacy in the schools

One of the recommendations that surfaced in the MPS Drive Council is to incorporate a curriculum of behavioral life skills in health classes within Milwaukee Public Schools. This should be implemented as soon as the 4th or 5th grades.

Additionally, youth can be enrolled in the advocacy and training of their peers on preventive measures and the value of safe driving with the reward of community service credits.

These ideas along with the use of interactive games or simulators to promote safe driving are just a few ways we can make a shift in what we are experiencing on our streets.

Vision Zero

In the course of our work we came across a network that is taking on safe driving in different communities. It is Vision Zero. It is a strategy first implemented in Sweden in the late 1990s. Several United States' cities have incorporated it and are seeing positive results. It is another approach for us to review and consider. It integrates enforcement, education and engineering using a core set of principles as a guiding force. <https://visionzeronetWORK.org/>

Restorative Practices

One of the processes that have become popular in recent years is restorative justice. It is used in the criminal justice arena as a way to give the victim and community a voice. It is premised on practices of indigenous populations seeking to restore right relationships. One of our challenges in using this model, is that the essence of restorative justice is lost in our effort to expedite a result. The true intention of restorative practices is relational. The work is not just about restitution, but relationships. When there

has been a harm to someone from a violent/criminal act, the entire community is harmed. The reckless driving issue is a classic example of this. We are all impacted. We are all traumatized when we are on the streets and witnessing the disregard of the rules of the road. It is a call for all of us to be involved and participate in creating safety on our streets. It is an occasion for us to restore relationships and integrity to our roads. It is imperative if we are to successfully share the roads with one another.

Further, the use of restorative practices is not just programmatic. It is really most effective when it becomes a way of life -in our work, home and community. It is the only way for there to be a paradigm shift in our community. We invite the Task Force to look at how these practices can become more common place than isolated efforts to address harm.

Conclusion

These are just a few ideas. They incorporate concepts the Task Force is working on such as engineering of our streets, increasing enforcement and engaging in community education. All of these are necessary to address the concern. However, we benefit from first recognizing we must do something dramatically and creatively different. We must be willing to include everyone and learn a language that we don't know by embracing those who can assist us in learning how to more effectively communicate with our youth and young adults.

We hope you will give these ideas serious consideration.

With much appreciation for all efforts to make our community safe,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Celia M. Jackson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Celia Jackson