

Shockers skip across 17th Street

Staff Reporter

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On any given school day, Wichita State students, faculty and staff can be found playing a dangerous game of real life “Frogger” as they attempt to cross 17th Street.

Often, those jaywalking are trying to get to and from the neighborhood and parking lots near Brennan Hall.

Brennan contains offices that have been displaced by renovations, including Career Development, Counseling and Testing and the Division of Student Affairs. For those who depend on those services, traveling to the building is an annoyance that could be deadly.

The obvious answer might be to put a crosswalk or traffic signal between the main campus and Brennan. Junior Rebecca Pedrazzi agrees that something needs to be done — and a traffic signal might be the answer.

“There are more cars crossing the street, and it’s taking forever to cross the street and waiting for somebody to let you go,” Pedrazzi said, “and it’s also unsafe because you never see who’s coming from the other side of the road.

Students are not the only ones dealing with traffic. Jessica Provines, associate director for the Counseling and Testing Center also agrees a traffic signal would be beneficial.

“There is a lot of foot traffic across 17th, and I’m frequently having to dodge cars,” Provines said.

Despite being so close to campus, the City of Wichita — rather than the university — would make the decision on how to handle pedestrian movements on 17th Street, and if the placement of a signal would be beneficial.

City of Wichita traffic engineer Brian Coon said he thinks traffic signals at Yale and 17th would not meet signal warrants and could put pedestrians at risk. Due to the layout of 17th Street, pedestrians would have a greater chance of being injured, he said.

Coon said the bus stop across the street from Brennan decreases visibility. Crosswalks in front of buildings are generally not recommended, he said, and there is less than 150 feet before a left-hand turn. A signal would do more harm than good and cost around \$130,000, he said.

Some students and faculty might be unaware of the crosswalk between Fairmount and Vassar, only 500 feet from where individuals are jaywalking. A temporary solution could consist of students and staff walking further to cross safely.

“What we want students to be aware of is that driver expectation and pedestrian movements need to be combined to create a safe environment,” Coon said.

What might be attributed to laziness might be due to logistics. Visibility of the crosswalk is limited as trees next to it are overgrown and it connects directly to the tennis courts off 17th Street.

Coon said he thinks a partnership between WSU and the City of Wichita to employ Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPEd) could possibly be the best solution to the problem. They could work to reroute foot traffic, trim or remove the current row of trees, put in bigger sidewalks and attempt to increase pedestrian visibility.

“Anytime we can reach out and work with Wichita State to make pedestrians and motoring public safety is always good,” Coon said.