

AGENDA: TSC 2/2/15

ITEM NO. 4: Consider request to establish NO PARKING along the north side of 6th Street for approximately 50 feet east of Mississippi Street.

Staff Report:

1. Although parking is prohibited along the north side of 6th Street, there is recessed parking within the 6th Street right-of-way between Indiana Street and Mississippi Street.
2. When vehicles are parked in the recessed area near Mississippi Street, sight distance can be obstructed, depending on the number of, and size of, vehicles parked there.
3. There has been one (1) reported crash at this intersection during the past three (3) years involving southbound and westbound vehicles.

MINUTES: TSC 2/2/15

ITEM NO. 4:

Consider request to establish NO PARKING along the north side of 6th Street for approximately 50 feet east of Mississippi Street.

Woosley reviewed the information provided in the staff report.

Public Comments:

Jen Unekis, 707 W. 4th Street, read a prepared statement (attached.)

Jamie Howard, Manager of Bob's Imports, 714 W. 6th Street: I think with the traffic coming-out of the school, there should be a stoplight; the front is for my older clients to provide a short walk to the door; sometimes we get busy and can't shuffle cars around; if you stop at the stop sign, you can see through the sidewalk area; when people park in front of Fleetwood next to me, that's when it gets obstructed; if I could do like a time limit, at least 15 minute parking, I really need those three spots.

David Unekis, 707 W. 4th Street: We did record a video and posted it on YouTube that can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGtIThysAAA>; even when you can see behind parked cars, there is an alley just to the east and Indiana Street where cars come out and turn west; if you do see cars coming over the hill behind parked cars, you lose them behind the parked cars; I encourage you to take a look at the video; I think a 15 minute zone is better than doing nothing, it would certainly prevent overnight parking.

The video was shown on the screens in the room.

Jen Unekis: I don't know how 15 minute parking would be regulated; if it occurs when school is getting-out, the view would still be limited for that traffic.

Amber Nickel, 310 Northwood Lane: I hope the city can work with the business and the school, but, it is a nasty little intersection; I've had near accidents there; it is really pretty dangerous.

Commission Comments:

Commissioner Devlin: I totally agree with the idea that that is a dangerous intersection.

Commissioner Harrod: My personal opinion would be to step up to it gradually, rather than just erasing parking in front of Bob's Imports; I would go with the suggestion that we make it a 15 or 20 minute zone.

Commissioner Koprince: I think that is a wise move at this point; I'm hesitant to just wipe-out the parking spots without trying something less, acknowledging that this is a problem intersection.

Commissioner Rothrock: I think this is a good step to balance the needs.

Commissioner Boley: I think we should give this a chance to work.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER HARROD, SECOND BY COMMISSIONER BOLEY, TO RECOMMEND ESTABLISHING A 15 MINUTE PARKING ZONE FOR 50 FEET IN THE RECESSED PARKING AREA ON THE NORTH SIDE OF 6TH STREET, EAST OF MISSISSIPPI STREET, THE MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

David Woosley

Sent: Fri 1/9/2015 12:59 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am writing you to discuss a safety concern I along with other neighbors from the Pinckney neighborhood have had for years regarding safe visibility turning (especially east) at the corner of sixth and Mississippi (between Pinckney School and Bob's Import). The owner of Bob's usually has a variety of large cars parked in front of his business along 6th St. If vehicles are pulling out onto sixth you basically can't see at all past the cars until the front of your car is pretty much into the intersection. I feel that if the two car lengths closest to the intersection were eliminated from parking in front of his business it would make turning east much safer.

I was discussing this with a member of the Traffic Safety Commission a few months ago and he suggested talking to the owner first.

I did talk to the owner and his reasoning was that those spots are important spaces for cars he is selling. I gave him a variety of options for places to park his cars. One was to park them along the side of his business instead, since visibility is very similar to what he has in front of his business. Eliminating the two parking spaces in front of his business closest to the intersection, but he didn't seem to think there were any other options he liked as well. I totally understand that he has limited parking but he usually has a couple of broken down cars that have not moved in months along the side of his business.

He did agree that visibility is limited turning East due to the cars he parks there. His suggestion was that when I come up to the stop sign that I should back my car up or take into account I will not be able to see, far enough back to see behind the cars he has parked (sometimes three deep). Then, when you see a gap between his cars or behind them to pretty much just go for it. Blindly pulling out into traffic. Which is weird, and scary, because this is a version of what I already do when I have no other options. Which I don't think is in any way safe. I told him that one of these days someone is going to pull out in front of a car and get killed. He once again said he needed those spaces to sell his cars and he didn't think there was anything he could do.

A large part of my concern is that people who drop off and pick up children at Pinckney school use that intersection multiple times a day. Mississippi St. is actually one of the better intersections to pull out onto 6th in that area because the visibility looking down 6th street to the east and west is not obstructed by hills like they are at other locations east of the school. There is the option of going to Maine St. (where there is a light) to turn but people usually don't do that because it adds quite a bit of distance to the direction you are trying to go if you are wanting to go east from Pinckney school. Usually people just deal with not being able to see very well and hope for the best or end up turning west and then immediately turning left and going through the neighborhoods on the south side of 6th. I am not suggesting that all parking be removed from the front of his business, just the two spots closest to the intersection.

Thank you, and please feel free to call if you have any other questions.

Jen Unekis
785-766-1469





Mississippi St

W 6th St

40-59

Indiana St



I would like to thank David Woosley for fielding my questions regarding the process.

I would also like to thank all of you for reviewing my petition to remove the parking spaces closest to the intersection in front of Bob's Import.

I have lived in the Pinckney Neighborhood for over 15 years and have a child who attended Pinckney School.

There are a number of safety concerns.

The 1st concern is visibility.

You cannot see to safely turn because the parked cars obstruct your view. Sometimes you have a gap to see behind the cars if you back up far enough and position yourself just right. And sometimes you can see through the windows of the cars parked there.

Your alternative is to pull out past the cross walk area to try to see past them. Putting your car very close to the oncoming traffic from the east.

When you do this people behind you assume you are going to go at any moment. You risk getting hit from behind from someone who is trying to essentially go next. This is a frightening proposal because it could push you into the oncoming traffic. It also makes you feel rushed in your decision to go.

2nd concern is the crosswalk.

A. Cars driving from the east down 6th street turning onto Mississippi don't have a clear view of what is happening on Mississippi St. until they are turning. There are many pedestrians that use the sidewalk to cross Mississippi St.

B. Cars oftentimes pull up past the crosswalk area in that intersection to turn onto 6th in order to see past the parked cars. As you are waiting for a unobstructed gap to pull out (looking east) sometimes pedestrians have walked into the intersection. You are so concerned about seeing to pull out you may not even notice them until they are in front of you. Especially joggers coming from the west because they are coming up so quickly.

I know that Bob's Import uses those spaces for his business parking. But he doesn't seem to be concerned about the safety issues that the intersection has. I did talk to him personally and he seemed to agree that you can't see very well.

I decided to bring it up to the Traffic Safety Commission when the owner of Bob's Import recommendation was to do what so many of us do already. Back up far enough to see behind the parked cars and then pull up to the stop sign, glancing at the oncoming traffic as you go for it.

And, this is what people usually do. The letters I have show this too.

You pull up trying to see behind the parked cars, or through the windshields of the parked cars. When you think you can see, you start to go. If you are trying to turn east you hope the gap is open and if it isn't you make a last minute decision to go west and route yourself through the neighborhoods south of 6th st. The other wild card is of course the turning lane. People driving east and wanting to turn onto Mississippi. When you are so focused on the traffic coming from the east you don't pay very close attention to people who are coming from the west. When people are in the turning lane you sometimes don't see them until you are getting ready to turn.

This intersection has been brought up in the Pinckney community for years. Many people drive to Maine in order to safely turn. All because of one business wanting to have two extra and convenient parking spots in front of his business. Many times you see the same cars parked there so I am assuming it is not just for customers. Sometimes he does have cars for sale there. But, he doesn't have them marked very well as For Sale. The times that he has it has been a hand written sign in thin sharpie in one of the windows. Also, he is not a car lot. Someone who started his business to sell cars. It is a sideline of his business.

I have considered the alternative of maybe allowing only small cars to park there. But from what I have been told by people who drive smaller cars their view is obstructed even when small cars are parked there. I drive a minivan. Sometimes I can see over the cars. But sometimes not. In the end I am not sure how many parking spaces is enough. Usually the cars that park there pull all of the way to the closest spots by the intersection so I haven't had any experience with what seems to be a safe amount.

The other issue is that Mississippi is the safest place to pull out east of Maine St. if it had an obstructed view. The rise of the hills obstruct your view along sixth farther east and then when you get close to the stop sign on Kentucky St. the stop sign creates problems along with people trying to turn onto south onto Tennessee.

This is a problem. One that I fear is just a mater of time before a really bad accident happens at 6th and Mississippi St. Especially since Pinckney School is at that intersection.

February 2, 2015

Dear members of the Lawrence Traffic Safety Commission board,

I am writing in support of limiting the parking spots at the NE corner of 6th & Mississippi Street. The visibility at this intersection is very bad. When drivers are leaving Mississippi Street and attempting to enter 6th Street, it is very difficult to see if cars are coming down 6th Street when cars are parked in front of Bob's Imports. The speed with which 6th street drivers drive, coupled with the amount of traffic on 6th street (since it is a major Lawrence thoroughfare), makes this intersection even more dangerous. When cars are parked on 6th street, drivers are forced to ease out into the roadway to see around the cars and hope to find an opening in traffic to enter 6th street. I often find myself going out of my way to use a red light at Maine just to avoid this safety concern. When there are no cars parked in those spots, it is much easier to see if oncoming traffic is approaching. Thanks for considering a change to parking rules on this intersection.

Ailecia Ruscin

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Ailecia Ruscin
{Owner, Oh! Snap! Photography}
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February 2, 2015

Dear members of the Lawrence Traffic Safety Commission board,

I am concerned with the visibility at the corner of 6th & Mississippi. I am both a resident of the 400 block of Mississippi & a parent of a child who attends Pinckney Elementary School. When cars are parked in the two 6th Street parking spaces in front of Bob's Imports, it is almost impossible to see if traffic is coming down 6th Street without entering the roadway. The parking spots are directly in the line of sight of drivers sitting at the Southbound stop sign. When vehicles are not parked there, it is easy to see if it is safe to pull onto 6th Street. In addition, because of the hill on 6th street, 6th street drivers are also unable to see cars exiting Mississippi Street. Because of this, Mississippi Street drivers (who are plentiful especially around school drop off times) need to be able to clearly see the traffic coming over the hill on 6th Street to safely enter the roadway.

Thanks for considering this safety concern. I appreciate your service on the board.

Sarah Heironimus

From: **Melanie Harvey** mharve14@jccc.edu
Subject: letter
Date: February 2, 2015 at 1:34 PM
To: Jen Unekis j_unekis@hotmail.com

To whom it may concern:

Currently, the only time it is safe to pull out onto 6th street from the North side on Mississippi St is at a time where there are no cars parked in the first two spots in front of Bob's imports. I have lived at 5th and Mississippi St for more than two years and was very surprised to find parking was allowed there the first time I tried to exit onto 6th street from Mississippi. I now avoid the intersection, but that is difficult. For one thing, parents drop kids off at Pinckney Elementary School on Mississippi. After that, they should be able to turn right onto 6th (forget turning left), but it can't be done safely. I do sympathize with the business owners as they probably struggle to find adequate parking, but this really is a serious safety issue. Frankly, I'm surprised the city has not installed a light at that intersection to help with school traffic. It really is only a matter of time before a devastating accident occurs. Please consider a reasonable solution to this problem. Currently there is zero visibility at the intersection. You just have to close your eyes and go for it...completely reasonable, right? This is not an exaggeration.

Thanks.

Melanie Harvey

Hi Jen, here are my comments for the traffic safety commission:

When I stop southbound at the stop sign at 6th and Mississippi street, my drivers side window is parallel with the edge of the building for Bob's import. I have a 2004 Chevy Malibu, so it is not a particularly large vehicle, however it is not as tall as SUVs and some minivans. I cannot see anything beyond the corner itself if i am stopped where I am legally obligated to stop to not block the pedestrian crosswalk. In order to see down 6th street enough to turn right, I have to pull my car into the pedestrian crosswalk to see past the edge of the building. Most days there are vehicles parked in the parking spaces in front of Bob's Import. When this is the case, I have to pull forward to look between the parked vehicle and the building to see if there is a gap in oncoming traffic. Then I have to hope no one switches lanes into the lane I will be turning into as they come past Bob's where I have a blind spot. The best way to know I won't get into a traffic accident is if there is someone turning left from 6th Street onto Mississippi, then I know I can floor it to turn west onto 6th street. However, most of the time there is not a car coming so I have to hope that I am not in an accident. The cars are parked there at all times of the day and all days of the week, not just customers during business hours, so this is a real concern for the neighborhood. I usually avoid this intersection if at all possible because it is so hard to turn safely onto 6th street, even turning right to head westbound. The safest option is to go 3 blocks west to Maine Street in order to enter 6th street, but once I enter the 500 block of Mississippi, there is no option but to use that intersection. Turning safety is not just a concern for people turning left to head eastbound on 6th street, but also for the people turning right to head westbound. Visibility is poor or nonexistant depending on the quantity and size of the vehicles parked in these spots. Occasionally there are oversize construction trucks parked in front and there is no possible way to turn in any direction safely at this intersection.

Thank you,

Rebecca Cook

Dear Traffic Safety Commission,

I wanted to send you a quick message to say that I agree with your concerns about the visibility issues at the corner of 6th and Mississippi, due to the vehicles parked immediately east of the intersection. I have a first grader at Pinckney, and there have been times, especially in the morning when I'm dropping her off, that it has been totally impossible to see traffic coming from the East. Sometimes, there have been large vehicles parked there that completely obstruct the view, and other times, there are smaller vehicles parked there that make it difficult to see.

I noticed this morning that there was one vehicle parked in the problem area, even though there was plenty of space behind it - if it had been parked 20 feet back, it wouldn't have been obstructing the view at all.

Traffic, at 8 in the morning, on 6th Street, is incredibly congested - I never even attempt to make a left turn out of that intersection, even though that's the direction I need to go to get to work...so, the situation is bad enough without not being able to see if there are cars approaching from the East. My solution to the problem thus far has been to stop far enough back that I can see around vehicles parked in the aforementioned spots, but that shouldn't be the case - if I forget to do so, and cars stack up behind me (as they often do), I find myself in a dangerous and impossible situation.

Bridgett Walthall, Pinckney Parent

Here you go!

Mr. Woosley,

My name is Kate Gleeson and I live in the Pinckney neighborhood. I have for years been concerned about the intersection of Sixth and Mississippi streets and the cars parked in front of Bob's Imports. When I approach the intersection from the north, it is almost impossible to see westbound traffic because of the cars parked there. The cars are often very large and block the view entirely. I honestly am shocked that this situation has been going on for so long, although I know the city has a lot of issues to deal with. It seems especially dangerous because it's right in front of an elementary school and there are frequently children and lots of traffic each afternoon when school lets out.

I am no traffic engineering expert, but there has to be something Lawrence could do as a compromise for this intersection. It is definitely dangerous, and I always worry someone will be hurt or worse. Please consider making a change here for my safety and the safety of many others.

Thank you,
Kate Gleeson

415 Illinois Street
Lawrence KS 66044
785-393-9140
katejgleeson@gmail.com

Hello,

I am writing to express my concern over the cars parked at the intersection of 6th and Mississippi. In my own experience, it is a difficult and lengthy process to turn after taking my child to school because one must park at the exact right location to get a small window of view and then count the oncoming cars to determine when it is safe to turn right. I actually need to turn left at that corner, but it is completely impossible in my small car. I simply cannot see enough to feel safe, so I take a longer way around to get to work--adding at least 10 minutes onto my travel time.

I am not only concerned for myself, but for others facing this same issue. Just last week, I saw a car pull out at the wrong moment and it was nearly rear-ended by an unseen oncoming vehicle. This was after-school pickup, so there were children in the car. If the cars were not parked in front of Bob's Imports, the lines at the stop sign would move smoothly, and we would not have to grit our teeth and throw caution to the wind in getting our children to and from school.

Sincerely,

Breanna Krueger
Pinckney Parent

To Members of the Traffic Safety Commission regarding the petition to eliminate parking spaces closest to the intersection on the north side of 6th and Mississippi.

Even though our kids have graduated from Pinckney, I clearly remember the problems with this intersection. On more than one occasion, I pulled out from the stop sign, turning right (west), only to discover a car coming very fast from the east. Once I distinctly remember bracing to be rear-ended by a car that was going considerably faster than the posted speed limit. Luckily we escaped with a loud honk and squealing tires.

I am a careful driver, and all the more so with my kids in the car. This was not an issue of being inattentive or careless - it was an issue of being unable to see far enough east to determine if a car was coming, especially cars that are speeding.

It is definitely a neighborhood issue - not just a school issue. It seems entirely reasonable to me that the owner of the car shop could find a way not to park vehicles in those spaces closest to the intersection.

I truly hope the City can be of assistance with this.

Thank you,

Stacey White

Dear Traffic and Safety Commission,

The intersection at 6th and Mississippi is dangerous. When I drop my daughter off at Pinckney I now take extra time to turn around and go to the light at 6th and Maine. The 6th and Mississippi intersection is always blocked by parked cars in front of the auto repair shop and the lawn mower shop. When it's sunny out, the glare makes it more difficult to see passed the parked cars and the oncoming traffic. Until this issue is fixed I will spend extra time going to a safer intersection after leaving Pinckney, which is not ideal as I have to go to work. I hope this issue can be fixed for the safety of Pinckney students, staff, and neighborhood residents.

Thank you,

Serita Miller

David Woosley and members of the Traffic Safety Commission:

I would like to express my full support for the petition to change the parking regulations in front of Bob's Imports at 6th and Mississippi. I am a strong advocate of small businesses, but the vehicle situation in this location is a serious safety issue.

I live in Old West Lawrence and my children attend Pinckney Elementary School. We are fortunate to be able to walk to school using the Pinckney Tunnel, but with two active boys we often drive after work to pick them up from Boys & Girls Club at the school.

I become anxious every time I pull up to the intersection, but especially during the evening commute. The cars parked in front of the business create a zero visibility situation for anyone trying to cross 6th Street. Turning left is generally completely infeasible, but turning right is really not much better. I have struggled to peer through the windshields of cars parked there just to try to see if there is any oncoming traffic, which is generally moving at highway speed.

I do not wish to tell the business owner how to sell vehicles. There must be alternatives, however, that would be more effective and would not create such an unsafe situation. I have witnessed several near misses recently because drivers have to either inch out or accelerate rapidly onto a highway, trying in vain to see around multiple parked vehicles that completely obscure the oncoming traffic.

Please do not allow this situation to continue until someone is seriously injured.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jenny Skillman
715 Tennessee Street

From: jessicaminor06@yahoo.com
Subject: Letter for meeting
Date: February 1, 2015 at 3:52 PM
To: Jen Unekis j_unekis@hotmail.com

I am writing this letter in support of removing the parking spaces in front of Bob's Imports. I have lived on Mississippi Street for almost eight years and have very rarely felt safe using this intersection. There is no way to properly see oncoming traffic when vehicles are parked so closely to the corner. I often have to gauge what I can see through the windows of these vehicles parked at Bob's, hope for the best, and pull out. Turning from this corner can be especially tricky between the hours of 7:30-9:00 (sunrise, school drop-off, and morning commute) in the morning and 4:30-6:00 in the evening (when people are headed home).

I understand that the owner of Bob's would like to use this space to park cars for sale, and I can sympathize. However, I don't feel the sale of his cars is more important than my mini-van full of children that I take through the intersection daily.

Thank you for taking their future into consideration when making this decision.

Chris and Jessica Minor

Sent from my iPhone

As the father of 4 young boys, i have had children attending Pinckney Elementary for the past 7 years. In that time I have witnessed many 'near miss' accidents due to people not being able to see around cars parked in front of Bob's Imports. I have personally made multiple turns where I have been scared for the welfare of myself and my children because I couldn't not see around vehicles peeked in front of Bob's Imports. Whether large or small, when a vehicle is placed into the line of sight of a driver, it makes for a safety issue. Please help.

Thank you,

Andrew Lees

Dear Mr. Woosley,

I've had children in attendance at Pinckney Elementary School since 2007. I'm not sure whether cars have gotten taller or I have gotten shorter, but I do know that the line of sight from Mississippi Street east down Sixth has gotten progressively worse during the past eight years.

I use Sixth Street daily, and each time I make the turn after dropping off or picking up my kids I feel like I'm rolling the dice. I drive a Honda Pilot, which is a fairly substantial SUV that rides high off the ground. Even in that vehicle I frequently find it nearly impossible to see around the cars parked in front of Bob's Imports at the west end of the shop. The best I can do is inch my car out into the right-off-way, and even then I never feel like I'm 100 percent sure it's clear.

I'm disappointed that the owner of Bob's Imports won't willingly work with Pinckney parents and the Pinckney neighborhood to find a viable solution to this problem. For that reason I would ask the traffic safety commission to consider removing the two parking spaces in front of Bob's that are closest to Mississippi Street.

I encourage you or members of your staff to attempt the turn from Mississippi Street onto Sixth during both morning and evening rush hour. I'm certain it will enable you to understand the gravity of our concern.

Thank you for your time,

Andrea Albright
607 Louisiana

From: **angie jackson** omegam17@gmail.com
Subject: 6th & Mississippi Letter
Date: February 2, 2015 at 11:42 AM
To: Jen Unekis j_unekis@hotmail.com

To Whom It May Concern

This letter is in regards to a traffic safety issue at the intersection of 6th and Mississippi streets. Although I am not presently a resident of Lawrence I spent the last 20 years living there and for 6 of those years my daughter was a student at Pinckney Elementary school. Needless to say we used the intersection at 6th and Mississippi on an almost daily basis. Unfortunately, when large vehicles are occupying the spaces in front of Bob's Imports on 6th, it is almost impossible to see oncoming traffic from the east as one is waiting to pull out onto 6th street from Mississippi. The combination of low visibility, and heavy often fast moving traffic would certainly seem to increase the potential for traffic accidents. I feel, therefore that removing the parking spaces in front of Bob's Imports would greatly reduce traffic risks at that particular intersection. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,
Angie Jackson

Sent from my iPhone

I agree with the proposition to remove 2 parking spots on 6th street in front of Don's Auto. I pick my daughter up from Pinckney everyday and everyday I feel like I am risking it driving into traffic because of the inability to properly view 6th street to the east. By removing 2 spaces I would feel safer turning onto 6th street and hopefully other drivers would too. Please seriously consider this proposal.

Theresa Shetler Logan