

Dear Road Wizard: The newly finished intersection at Eagle and Ustick roads eliminated the free-running right turn from Ustick onto Eagle. Now we must stop on red before turning right. It seems harder and less safe to enter Eagle traffic now. Why was this done? V.@

I love free-running right turns myself, so I'm very sorry to bear the news that these are doomed to disappear.

Traffic engineers have realized that drivers tend to forget that pedestrians have the right-of-way across the free-running lane. This puts pedestrians, who don't tend to forget this, at more risk as they try to cross the intersection. For drivers, the data on sideswipes and collisions downstream of free-running rights shows that driver judgment can be all-too imperfect.

Free-running rights in urbanizing areas will go extinct first because pedestrians proliferate there. Typically, the occasion of a major rebuild or upgrade of the intersection is the trigger for trampling on our free-running rights.

Dear J.K. and 28th Street drivers: I've been keeping an eye out for changes on State Street at 28th, where the engineer at ACHD said he would use road paint and signs to identify a "keep it clear" zone at the intersection.

Eye got bored! Called ACHD. The project is a-bubble on the stove, but has proven to be more complicated than it first appeared. The skip stripes on the concrete pavement probably will have to be removed, and they have a constituency. One of State's thru lanes splits. Applying or removing stuff to/from the pavement now requires helpful weather.

Also, more than one cook is at the stove, and they aren't unanimous about how to execute the Road Wizard's mission, which is to help 28th Street drivers enter State during the morning commute when they have a green light to do it!

Dear Road Wizard: Why are there two 36th Streets? The most easterly one (the old one) runs about a half a block right into the Albertson's supermarket. A little farther west, the "real" one leads north to Hill Road. Why didn't the old one get renamed? T.@

This could be another case of Urban Bizarreness. Current members of the Ada County Street Naming Committee might be unable to find anything preventing them from changing it officially to "Old 36th" or something else. You (and I) placed it on the Committee's agenda; let's see what happens.

Dear Road Wizard: Does ACHD have anything to do with allowing all the billboards that show up along our streets? A lot of them are way out of place and just make the city look trashy. T.A.@

No. Traffic authorities that promote safety aren't enthusiastic about billboards. Experts design them deliberately to distract a driver's attention from the task of operating the car. The messages have nothing to do with helping you find or identify your destination.

The county and the cities regulate billboards. All of them forbid any signs on ACHD's (i.e., the public's) right-of-way. If you see any, report to ACHD at 387-6140.

Dear Road Wizard: Please remind drivers to clean snow and frost off all their windows and lights! I can't believe how many people drive without doing this. It's very unsafe! T.@

No kidding. If you can't see, you're impaired. If others can't see you, you might as well be a sitting duck during hunting season.

Dear V.B.: I forgot to mention last week that the Locust Grove widening project, which has commenced, will connect between Franklin Road and Fairview Avenue.