

'Texting lane' just for laughs, but issue serious

April 2 2012

(AP) -- The sidewalk lanes for the digitally distracted may be a joke but officials in Philadelphia want the public to know the issue is no laughing matter.

Lines on some [sidewalks](#) near City Hall now designate part of the pavement as "e-lanes" suitable for chronic [texters](#) and digital music aficionados - although only through the end of the week.

The April Fools' Day prank is one way city officials, in particular Mayor Michael Nutter, are trying to draw attention to the danger of inattentive [pedestrians](#).

The lines, [signage](#) and sidewalk graphics - depicting a pedestrian peering down at a hand-held device - will stick around part of John F. Kennedy Boulevard through the week.

A bogus video released for the new lanes shows Nutter being cut off mid-interview by an oblivious pedestrian, played by Streets Department Deputy Commissioner Steven Buckley.

"Sidewalk safety is important," Nutter noted just after his mock interview was disrupted. The video also features a rowdy band of anti-texting protesters.

All kidding aside, officials said distracted pedestrians are a serious issue the city plans to address.

More information: Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities E-Lanes video: <http://phillymotu.wordpress.com/>

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Citation: 'Texting lane' just for laughs, but issue serious (2012, April 2) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-04-texting-lane-issue.html>

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