

**WNY**  
**Falls Prevention**  
**STEP UP TO STOP FALLS**







































































**Erie County  
Walkability Study  
September 22, 2009**

**Summary of Results  
and  
Recommendations**

November 6, 2009

# Ratings Summary

 **GOOD/EXCELLENT**
 **FAIR**
 **POOR**

Location	Crossing the Street	Sidewalks	Driver Behavior	Driver Safety	Comfort & Appeal
Black Rock – Amherst					
Black Rock – Hertel					
Fredrick Douglas Apts.					
HSBC Arena					
Julianna Apts.					
Kenmore Apts.					
Orchard Park Senior Center					
Parkside					
Riverside					
Santa Maria Towers					
Schiller Park Senior Center					
Tonawanda Senior Center					
Tosh Collins Senior Center					
Williamsville					

## **A Special Thanks to the Site Leaders:**

**Cynthia Brooks – *Catholic Health: Continuing Care Division***

**Cheryl Buttino – *Schiller Park Senior Center***

**Marianne Crapol – *Erie County Senior Services***

**Denise Dunford – *D'Youville College***

**Beverly Eagen – *The Dearborn Street Association***

**Merlene Ginger – *D'Youville College***

**Phil Haberstro – *Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo***

**Lisa Harvey – *Geriatric Center of Western New York***

**Ken Lukasiewicz – *Catholic Health: Partners in Rehab***

**Bill Parke – *Rediscover Riverside and the Black Rock/Riverside Good***

***Neighbors Planning Alliance***

**Pamela Perkins – *Rediscover Riverside***

**Michelle Richey – *Catholic Health: Continuing Care Division***

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**Patricia Watson – *Erie County Senior Services***

**Susan Udin – *Parkside Community Association***

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## Executive Summary

Over the past three years the WNY Falls Prevention Consortium has been supported by the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York to work on a multi-dimensional approach to falls prevention and awareness in Erie County. The Consortium's work involves several activities with learning collaboration between and within organizations serving older adults within Erie County and an effort to increase older adults, caregivers, and health professionals understanding of the significance of falls and how to reduce falls risk.

As the Consortium considered plans to highlight fall prevention on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, which was National Falls Prevention Day, they learned about the work of the American Association of Retired People (AARP) around Walkability and Livable Communities. AARP has worked for several years on these issues and has established their organization as a leader in engaging communities to improve livability.

A walkability study examines issues such as crosswalks and curb cuts, sidewalk hazards, and the behavior of local drivers. The target locations for our study focused on low-income older adults, and locations identified as being at highest risk for older adults. The walkability of a neighborhood greatly impacts an older adult's ability to maintain independence, functionality, and remain in their homes. This study sought to both raise awareness of falls risks found in local communities, and to encourage and foster community engagement to improve walkability.

The WNY Falls Prevention Consortium in partnership with AARP conducted walkability studies in 14 locations within the City of Buffalo and Erie County. These studies were all conducted on September 22, 2009, which was declared Erie County and the City of Buffalo Falls Prevention Day as a result of our activities.

This report will present the rationale for each selected location; provide an overall rating with a concise summary including key findings and opportunities for improvement in each of the following areas:

- Crosswalks
- Sidewalks
- Driver Behavior
- Driver Safety
- Comfort and Appeal

Upon review of the results it becomes apparent that of the 14 sites surveyed only one received “good” rating in all sections. Each of the other 13 has significant problems that could impact an older adult’s ability to utilize these neighborhoods. This survey identified some overarching needs to improve walkability within Erie County including:

- Pedestrians must be given more time to cross the street, especially when there are more than two lanes of traffic.
- Sidewalks must be repaired and updated to increase width and decrease trip hazards caused by cracking, heaving, and drainage.
- Crosswalk signals are an invaluable addition to neighborhoods but they must be maintained after installation. Several previously installed signals are no longer working properly.
- Curb cuts are only valuable when they are free of cracks, heaved sections and drainage problems. A greater attention to this detail is needed within each location.
- The behavior of drivers must be monitored more closely. Several teams noted drivers' failure to obey traffic signs and posted speed limits causing risks that effect the walkability of a neighborhood.

While this report provides only the issues identified by the volunteer surveyors at one point in time, this report seeks to set a framework to empower communities to take action within their own neighborhoods. It is hoped that this report will guide local officials into establishing a list of priorities to increase walkability for older adults and the community as a whole.

## **Background**

The Western New York Falls Prevention Consortium, supported by the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York was created in early 2007. This group began as a convening of local providers and practitioners dedicated to improving and enhancing falls prevention work within Erie County. Phase I of this group's work focused on identifying best practices and determining priorities for the future. The goal of this phase was to develop common approaches to education and screening and to create a more valuable and effective community approach to falls prevention. Moving forward the group determined two courses of action for Phase II.

A Learning Collaborative – A year-long collaborative effort with twelve teams working on areas of falls prevention including:

- Professional Education and Practice Change
- Community Education for older adults and their caregivers
- Home Safety Modification

A Social Marketing Campaign – A strategic effort to reach out to older adults, caregivers, and health professionals to increase overall understanding about the significance of falls and how to reduce this risk. The effort also provides practical steps individuals and professionals can take to reduce falls and the risk of falls.

The work of the twelve teams in the learning collaborative is still in progress. The learning's from this work will aid in the creation of a tool kit of best practices. The recommendations from this collaborative will be disseminated at a conference in late spring 2010. The social marketing campaign has taken a multi-faceted approach to increasing awareness within the community. Through the support of several local organizations this campaign continues to educate older adults, caregivers, and health professionals within Erie County.

## **Strategic Intent**

Walking is the oldest form of transportation, but far too often society overlooks this option while planning community improvement, construction or development. The "walkability" of a community is an intergenerational issue of great importance but it particularly impacts older adults in their ability to remain in their homes. We know that one out of every three people over the age of 65 will fall each year. Many of these falls will occur at or near individuals' homes. The WNY Falls Prevention Consortium would like to draw attention to the problem of falls and encourage local communities to take action to reduce the risks for falling.

As one part of their comprehensive approach, the Consortium chose to plan a study of walkability in several parts of the Buffalo area on the first day of fall, September 22, 2009. This date coincided with National Falls Prevention Day and many efforts around the country designed to increase falls risk awareness. Due to the vast size of the Buffalo metropolitan area, the Consortium focused on a selection of locations that provide opportunities for impact and visibility. The target locations focused on low-income older adults, and other locations identified as being at highest risk for older adults.

## **Approach**

The Consortium in conjunction with AARP and several partnering organizations conducted a one-day walkability survey using a tool developed and tested by AARP. A planning group consisting of falls prevention leaders within the community worked to develop and complete this survey at 14 different locations. Each location had a team of 4 to 6 volunteers wearing red walkability volunteer t-shirts and armed with clip boards, and tape measures. The survey asked the volunteers to note the specific conditions of six different areas including:

- Crosswalks
- Sidewalks
- Driver Behavior
- Driver Safety
- Comfort and Appeal
- Overall Assessment of the Location and Recommendations

Teams identified an overall rating for each of these locations to summarize their findings. The rating for each section noted above could be (A) Excellent, (B) Good, (C) Fair, (D) Poor. Although these ratings are the opinions of the volunteer groups, they help to shape a better overall understanding of the location. Furthermore, key findings were captured with a camera provided to each team.

All together 80 dedicated individuals took part in this event. Following a brief orientation, volunteers were given one-and-a-half hours to complete this survey before reconvening with the volunteers from the other locations. Upon reconvening participants were able to share their findings and observations with one another before participating in a Falls Prevention and Awareness Fair hosted by Schiller Park Senior Center.

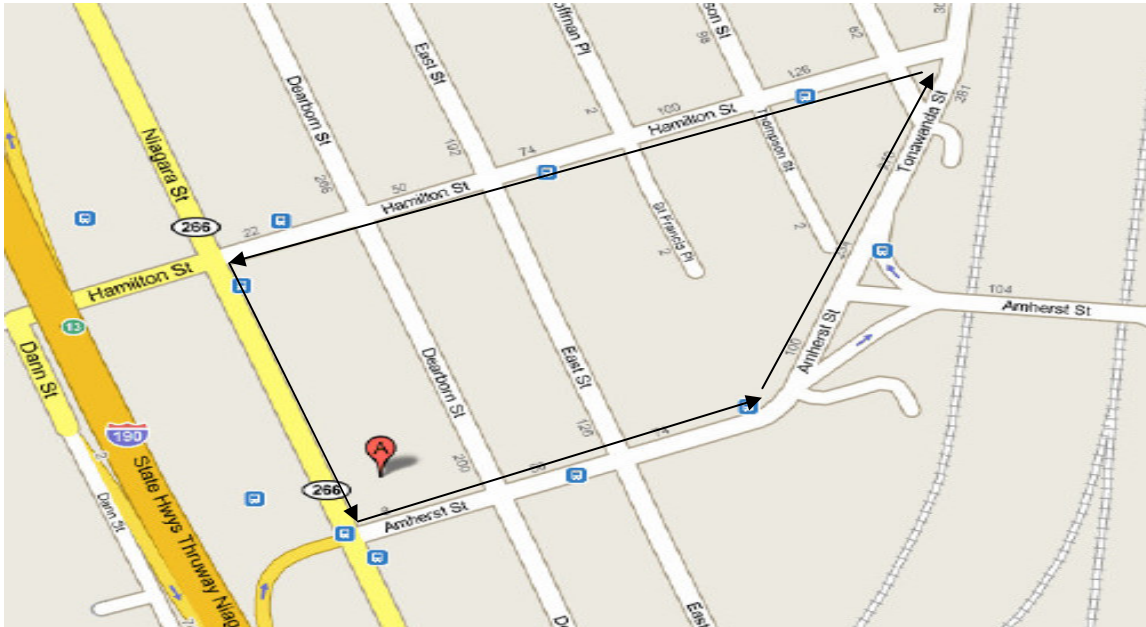


## **Impact**

Through this community approach, the Consortium strives to achieve increased community awareness of the impact of walkable communities on the older adult population of Erie County. Although our efforts are focused on reducing the falls risks for older adults, improving the walkability of neighborhoods is beneficial for all generations. The results of the walkability survey are summarized below for each of the 14 locations. The results presented in this report represent the findings and opinions of the teams conducting the survey. The information was provided individually by each site leader and compiled by the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York. Each site leader has been provided the opportunity to review these findings to ensure accuracy of information and recommendations. Although this assessment was not a comprehensive assessment of each study location, it serves as a summary of the overall conditions and a guiding framework for areas that need improvement.

## **Black Rock – Amherst St.**

(Amherst St. to Tonawanda St. to Hamilton St. to Niagara St)



### **Rationale**

After a lengthy group discussion the local community group felt that this route was the best choice. This route covers those streets that are most walked to access public transportation, stores and other businesses in Black Rock.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* The general condition of the crosswalks indicates they are in need of repair, replacement, or creation. The current condition is not conducive to handicap accessibility. For this section the team gave an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- None of the Niagara St. crosswalks have signals.
- Crosswalks are either not marked or poorly marked.
- The Stop sign at Tonawanda St. and Amherst St. is not observed by cars.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* General condition of the sidewalks indicate they are in need of repair and replacement. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Sidewalks are not wide enough for two people to walk side by side.
- Sidewalks have broken and heaved areas in need of repair.
- The sidewalk to Market Square Park is in need of several repairs. Currently exposed drain pipes and drainage/vent holes exist.

- Between Dearborn St. and Amherst St. there is only one handicap accessible curb cut, leaving pedestrians stranded in the road.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Problems were identified with drivers not obeying the posted laws. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- There is a dangerous turn at Tonawanda St and Amherst St.
  - Stop sign is often not obeyed by drivers.
  - Pedestrians are at risk due to this behavior.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – See Above

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement* – See Above

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – Generally the area appears to be stable and livable. The team noted a loss of local business and an increase in vacant buildings. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

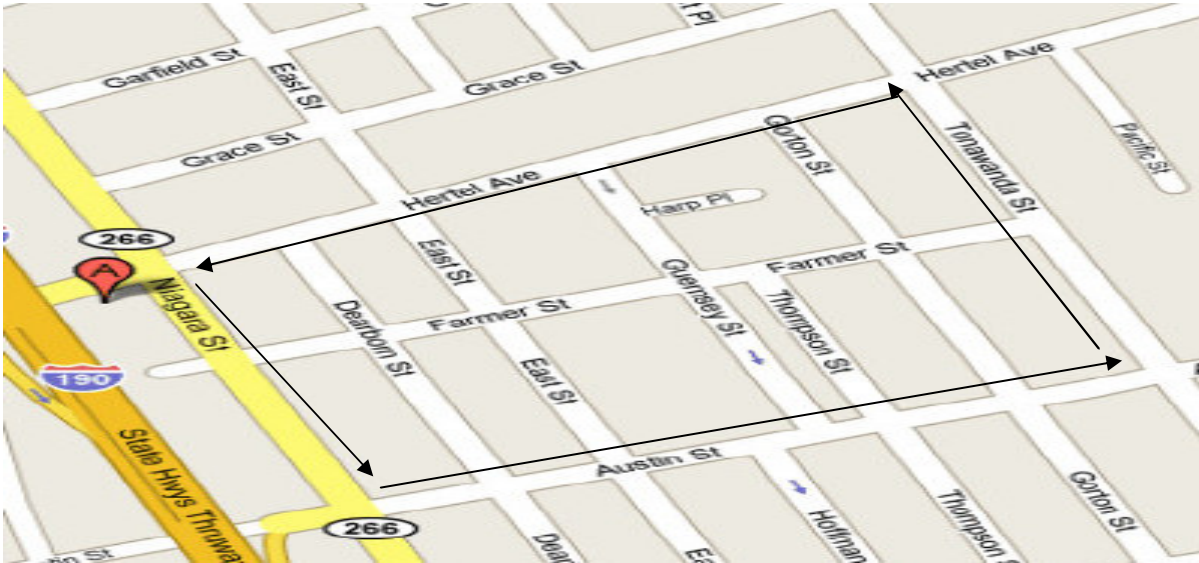
- There is a lack of benches in and around Market Square Park.
- Some homes appear run down and in need of general maintenance.
- Some trash could be found on the route.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Heaved and broken sidewalks should be repaired.
- II. Holes for vent/drainage pipes should have covers placed over them.
- III. Crosswalk signals need to be installed and/or repaired to help ensure pedestrian safety.
- IV. Speed limits should be lowered or better enforced to reduce speed on this route.

## **Black Rock – Hertel Ave**

*(Hertel Ave to Tonawanda St. to Austin St. to Niagara St.)*



### **Rationale**

Hertel Ave represents one of the main routes that connects pedestrians to major roads and retail. This route is frequented by older adults accessing local business following the use of the local bus.

### **Crossing the Street**

Summary- The general condition of the crosswalks indicates they are in need of repair or replacement. Several hazards were identified that impede a pedestrian's use of the crosswalks. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### Key Findings

- When on Austin St. crossing Tonawanda St. pedestrians are given a maximum of 14 seconds. This does not allow enough time for pedestrians of normal abilities to cross.

### **Sidewalks**

Summary – The team found most sections of sidewalk to be in need of repair. Several sections were heaved, cracked, or overgrown. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

#### Key Findings

- There is no curb cut from Farmer St. to Tonawanda St
- At 163 Austin St. there is a large section of sidewalk missing.
- On Austin St. the team measured 49 feet of sidewalk in need of repair

### **Driver Behavior**

Summary – The primary finding regarding driver behavior involved failure to stop at posted stop signs. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### Key Findings

- The Stop sign at Austin St. and Thompson St. is often not obeyed by drivers.
- The Stop sign at Austin St. and Dearborn St. is often not obeyed by drivers

### **Driver Safety**

Summary – See Above

Key Findings – See Above

### **Comfort and Appeal**

Summary – The area was noted to be in need of trees, grass and landscaping. There was also a need for benches and bus stop shelter. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### Key Findings

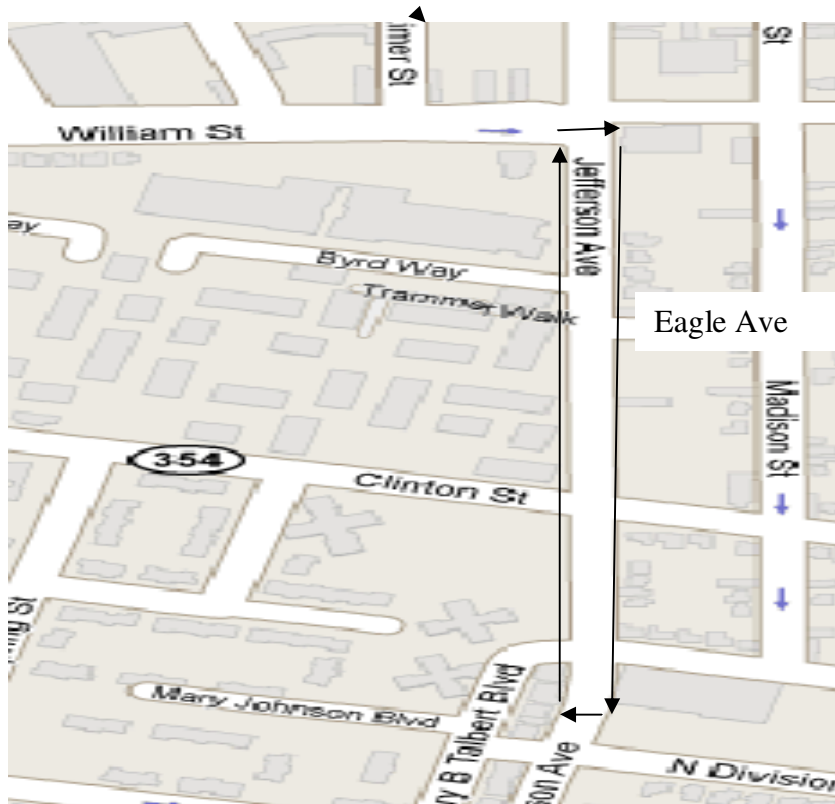
- Niagara St. and Hamilton St. are in need of trees and grass.
- Bus shelters and benches should be installed on Hamilton St. and Niagara St.
- Trash found on Hertel Ave.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Pedestrians need to be provided more time to cross Tonawanda St.
- II. The work that has begun to improve Hertel Ave and Tonawanda St needs to be continued to increase pedestrian safety and walkability.
- III. Driver behavior should be monitored more closely as several drivers were observed not following posted traffic signs.

## **Frederick Douglas Senior Housing**

(Jefferson Avenue between William St. & Mary B. Talbert Blvd)



### **Rationale**

The Fredrick Douglas Senior Housing Complex was identified by Erie County Senior Services as a location that would benefit from increased attention and awareness of the issues that impact the local older adult population. The housing complex has undergone staff decreases and security has been removed from this building. Local older adults requested a survey in this location.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary* - Several problems were identified while crossing the street in this location including lack of crosswalk markings, lack of a safe place to cross the street and limited time to get across the street. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Pedestrians are only given 30 seconds to cross Jefferson Ave; this is not enough time for an individual with normal abilities to cross this street.
- The main intersections on the route - William St. and Jefferson Ave and Clinton St. and Jefferson Ave. did not have pedestrian signal.

## **Sidewalks**

*Summary* – The overall width of the sidewalks was seen as a strength although problems with cracks and curb cuts were identified. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- When curb cuts exist they do not line up across the street.
- No curb cuts possess textured surfaces to aid in use by visually impaired individuals.
- The sidewalk on Jefferson St. is broken and cracked creating a fall risk.
- Several sections of sidewalk are obstructed by low hanging trees.

## **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – The main concern indicated involved drivers stopping in crosswalks. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Drivers often stop in the crosswalk inhibiting pedestrian passage.
- A driver was observed failing to yield while a pedestrian was crossing a parking lot entrance leading to a near accident.

## **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – Signs were unclear to both pedestrians and drivers. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Drivers are not given turn instructions and/or turn lanes. This was noted to create a confusing situation to both drivers and pedestrians.
- Cars were observed exceeding the posted speed.

## **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – Minimal problems were identified in this location. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of EXCELLENT.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

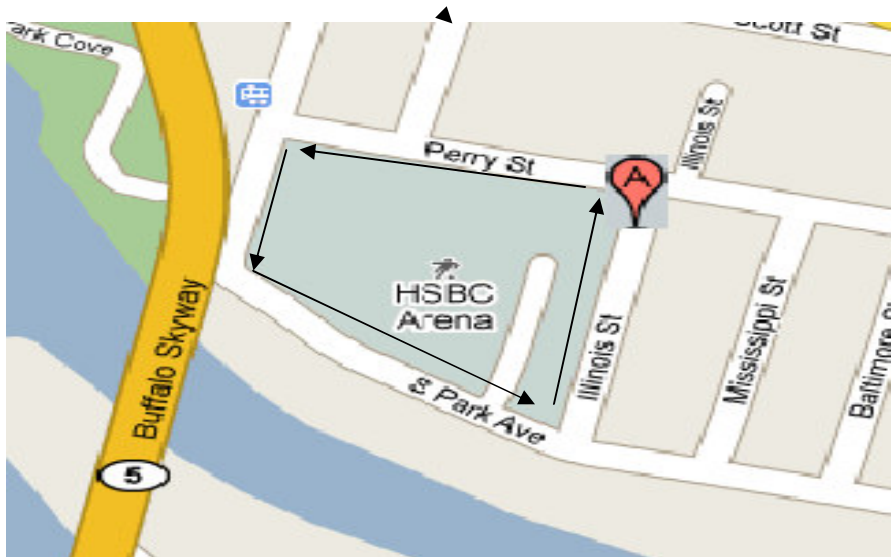
- Minimal trash, graffiti, and vacant buildings.
- None of the bus stops had shelter or benches.

## **Recommendations**

- I. Pedestrian signals need to be installed at the intersections of William St. and Jefferson Ave. and Clinton St. and Jefferson Ave.
- II. Improve pedestrian crosswalks with the addition of markings on the road.
- III. Curb cuts should match up so that individuals are able to utilize them most effectively.
- IV. Involve the community and local leadership to achieve recommended changes.

## HSBC Arena Location

(Perry St., Illinois St. and South Park Ave. surrounding the Arena)



### Rationale

The HSBC Arena serves as the primary location of special events and sporting events within Erie County. As older adults age it is important they continue to be able to access such events in a safe manner. This location was recommended by an older adult who had recently fallen while exiting this building.

### Crossing the Street

*Summary-* Overall this location lacked crosswalk signals or markings to allowing safe travel to the neighboring streets. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- A hole was found crossing from Perry St. to Illinois St that posed a fall hazard, especially for those using adaptive equipment.
- The crosswalk to the Metrorail is not marked.
- No traffic signals are located in the immediate area making crossing to other locations difficult for pedestrians.

### Sidewalks

*Summary* – Several hazards were identified with the sidewalks including cracks and uneven surfaces. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Cracks in the sidewalk leading to the rail tracks were poorly patched creating an uneven surface.



- After stepping down from the sidewalk to parking in front of the building there is another small curb that poses a tripping hazard.
- The wheel chair ramp to the Metro rail is too steep. It was measured at 32 inches high by 28 feet long. The standard slope would require the ramp to measure 32 feet long.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Minimal findings were noted regarding driver behavior, although no activity was occurring at the arena at the time of study. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Drivers do not stop at the stop sign between South Park Ave and Illinois St.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – No findings indicated as the survey took place when no event was taking place.

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement:* None

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – This location lacked some items that lead to comfort and appeal. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

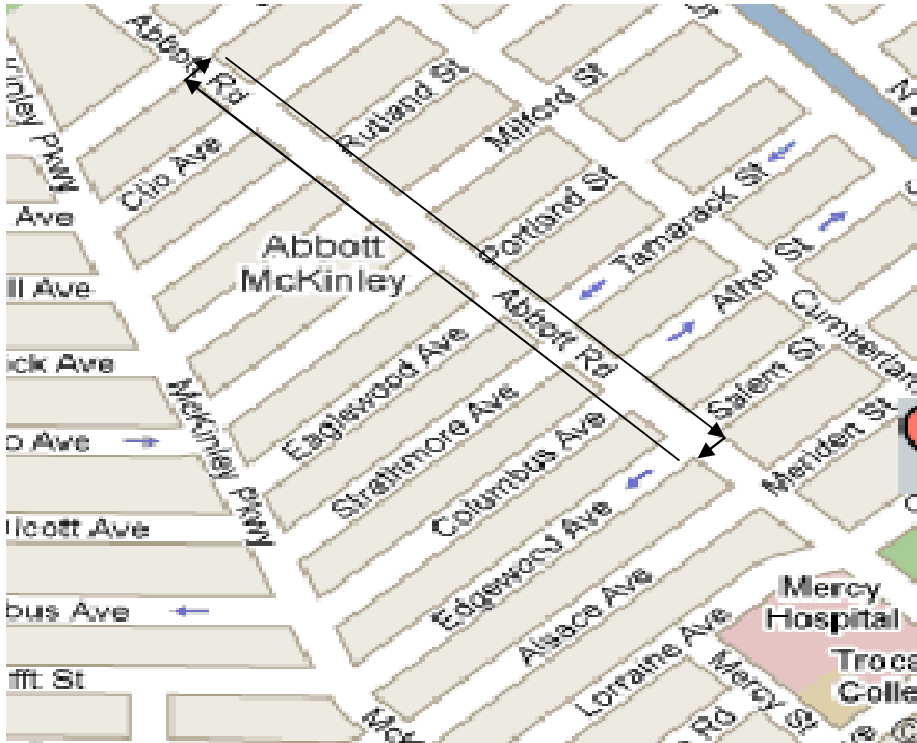
- No benches or places to rest exist in this location.
- No shelter at the bus stop in front of the arena.
- Graffiti was identified on Illinois St.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Changes should be made to the front of the Arena. If someone was to try to drop off someone there is no curb cut or wheelchair ramp to permit entrance.
- II. The Metrorail station should be on the side of the Arena. The current location creates several hazards to use.
- III. Monitor driver's behavior around the Stop sign on Illinois St.
- IV. Button activated crosswalk signal should be installed to assist as pedestrians attempt to cross into parking lots and other locations.

## **Julianna Apartments**

(Abbott Road between Clio Ave. and Alsace Ave.)



### **Rationale**

The Julianna Apartments are located close to Mercy Hospital and the Tosh Collins Senior Center. This is a location where several people can be seen walking regularly yet there exists a lack in basic walkability needs. Staff at the Tosh Collins Senior Center indicated a concern for this area.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* Signals do not allow adequate time to cross the street and pedestrians must walk too far to cross safely. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Pedestrians are given only six to eight seconds to cross Abbott Rd.
- Pedestrians must walk six blocks between signals to cross Abbott Rd. safely.
- There are several parked cars on Abbott Rd. that block sight of traffic and inhibit pedestrian's ability to cross the street.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* Cracks in the sidewalk and uneven surfaces were the largest hazard identified. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Curb cuts are damaged and cracked creating a hazard to anyone using them.

- Only two curb cuts are colored and textured providing assistance to the visually impaired.
- Low hanging tree limbs impede a pedestrian's ability to utilize the sidewalks.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Cars are exceeding the posted speed. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Cars exceed recommended speed on Abbott Rd.
- Because crossing signal is too short cars are often pulling into the crosswalks while pedestrians are still utilizing them.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – See Above

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement* – See Above

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – The overall comfort of this location was viewed positively. There was no loitering, graffiti or trash located on the route. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

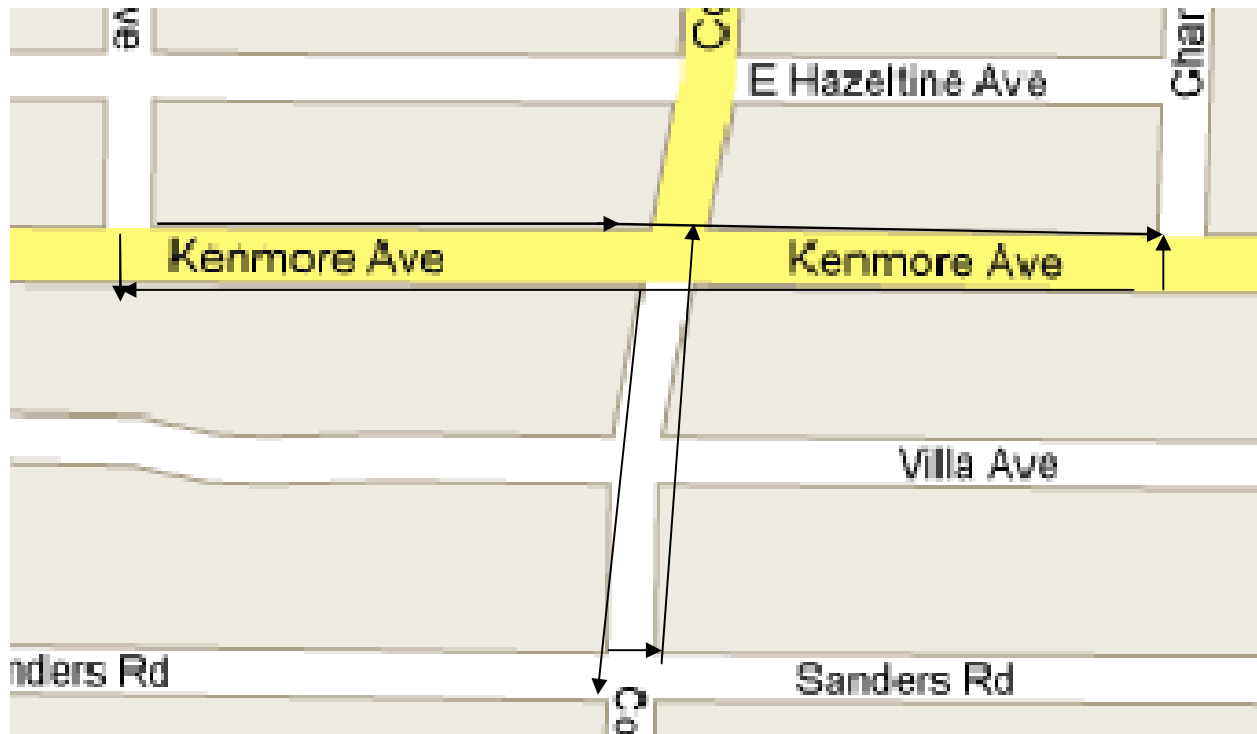
- All mature trees are located on only one side of the street.
- There are no benches for pedestrians to utilize.
- There is only one bus stop shelter located on the route.
- Businesses in the areas do not maintain their lawn and landscape.

### **Recommendations**

- I. The crossing signals on Abbott Road need to be increased in length. The current length leaves individuals of normal abilities stranded in the middle of the road when the light changes color.
- II. Recommended speed limit needs to be enforced to ensure pedestrian safety.
- III. Curb cuts need regular maintenance and/or improvement to ensure handicap accessibility.
- IV. Businesses should be encouraged to maintain the adjacent sidewalks and clear them from overgrown grass and weeds.

## **Kenmore Village**

(Kenmore Ave. and E. Hazeltine Ave. between Charleston Ave. and Rowley Ave.;  
Colvin between Kenmore Ave. and Sanders Rd)



### **Rationale**

Kenmore Ave and Colvin Ave were identified as both high traffic streets and streets often used by the older adults in the area. Kenmore Village senior housing complex is located on this route and it represents what the older adults of this neighborhood would encounter while walking to various local businesses.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* Overall crossing the street has been identified as difficult given the allotted time. This issue was further compounded by poorly marked crosswalks and drivers failing to yield to pedestrians. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- When crossing Colvin Ave and Kenmore Ave pedestrians are given just six to seven seconds before the light begins to flash.
- Several intersection do not have crosswalk signals or the signals are in need of repair (Colvin Ave and Kenmore Ave; Saunders Ave and Colvin Ave).

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* Most sections of sidewalk were found to have significant fall risks present. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- The south side of Saunders Rd. has drainage pipes/vent pipes in the sidewalk that are not covered creating a fall risk.
- There is no curb cut from Villa St. to Colvin Ave.
- The sidewalk on Kenmore Ave near Torches Restaurant is only 25" wide.
- On Colvin Ave towards Saunders Ave a section of sidewalk had a 2" elevation creating a hazard to pedestrians.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Drivers in this area are described as being aggressive and are noted to fail to follow the posted signs. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- One driver was witnessed driving in reverse 100' and through a crosswalk.
- Drivers fail to yield to pedestrians.
- Drivers fail to obey the "No Turn on Red" sign putting pedestrians at risk.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – As noted above drivers were witnessed making maneuvers that placed pedestrian safety at risk. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Pedestrian signals make it difficult to determine which direction a pedestrian can cross.

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – The location possessed trash and vacant buildings, which impacted the overall appeal. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- No bus shelters are located on Saunders Ave and Colvin Ave.
- Garbage was overflowing from all receptacles and could be found on the route in several locations.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Time allotted to cross Colvin Ave and Kenmore Ave needs to be increased.
- II. Crosswalk signals need to be installed or repaired to prevent pedestrian risk.
- III. Condition of the sidewalks needs to be improved to remove several cracks and uneven surfaces.
- IV. Drainage and/or vent pipes located in the sidewalk need covers.

## **Orchard Park**

(E. Quaker St. to N. Buffalo Rd. to Princeton Pl. to Linwood Ave.)



### **Rationale**

Orchard Park is a suburb where several people often drive to their desired location. The area around the senior center poses the greatest potential for individuals to walk. This location was surveyed to determine the conditions surrounding the senior center including the path to local businesses most frequently utilized by older adults.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* Although most items that create a safe crosswalk existed including push button signal systems and marked crosswalks it was indicated that often pedestrians did not have adequate time to cross. This section received an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- All signals were 22 seconds long; this was not enough time for individuals with normal abilities to cross.
- Cars are noted attempting to drive around pedestrians in crosswalks.
- The crosswalk signal near the Rite Aid was off the sidewalk and hidden behind a bush.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* Several sidewalks were noted to have problems that impeded a pedestrian's ability to utilize them, including cracks, limited curb cuts, and the need to extend some sidewalks. This section received an overall rating of GOOD.

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- When walking on route 240 towards the shopping center the sidewalk ends prior to reaching the center.
- No curb cuts were found on Princeton Pl and Linwood Ave.
- The sidewalk on Linwood Ave is noted as being in very poor condition. This is the sidewalk in front of the senior center creating a fall risk.

**Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Some problems were identified with drivers being impatient and attempting to maneuver around pedestrians. This section received an overall rating of FAIR.

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Drivers were observed slowly rolling through stop signs and into crosswalks instead of coming to a stop and allowing pedestrians to cross.
- Drivers appear to be speeding on route 20A and route 240.

**Driver Safety**

*Summary* – Limited driver safety problems were identified beyond speed. Traffic volume was not noted to be too high and signs were clear to drivers and/or pedestrians. This section received an overall rating of GOOD.

*Key Finding & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Cars were noted to be speeding on route 20A and route 240.

**Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – No problems noted. The area has several items that lead to comfort and appeal including well maintain landscape, benches, adequate trash receptacles and no graffiti. This section received an overall rating of EXCELLENT.

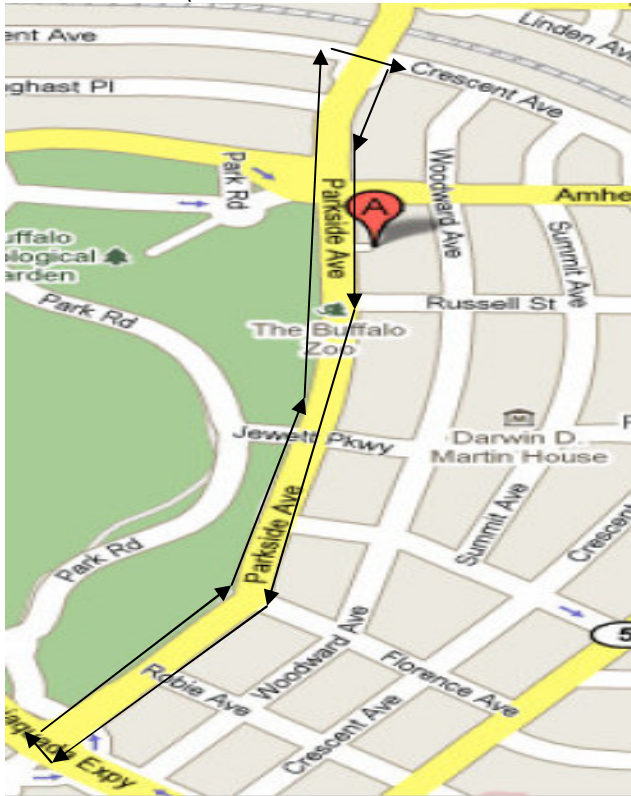
*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement* - None

**Recommendations**

- I. Extend the sidewalk to include the shopping center located on route 240.
- II. Improve the sidewalk on Linwood Ave to improve older adults' ability to access the senior center. This includes repairing cracks and heaved sections and the addition of curb cuts on each end of the street.
- III. Extend the length of time given to a pedestrian to cross the street beyond 22 seconds.

## Parkside

(Parkside Ave. between Crescent Ave and Scajaquada Expwy)



### Rationale

This location contains major intersections, such as Agassiz Circle, where Route 198 (the Scajaquada Parkway) crosses Parkside Ave which greatly impact pedestrians. This area is a good representation of stores and restaurants as well as private dwellings that often impact the lives of older adults.

### Crossing the Street

*Summary-* Crossing the street, especially the Scajaquada Expressway was indicated as extremely difficult for pedestrians. Problems also existed with crosswalk signals. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- When crossing route 198 (Scajaquada Expressway) pedestrians are only given a total of 33 seconds to cross seven lanes of traffic before the light changes.
- The north/south side of Parkside Ave and Jewett Pkwy does not have a pedestrian signal.
- There is no crosswalk marking from Parkside Ave to Amherst St.

### Sidewalks

*Summary –* Some parts of this route have received new sidewalks and curb cuts which greatly improves the walkability of this section. The remainder of the route



is in need of similar improvements. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- There is only about 50ft of sidewalk from Parkside Ave to Jewett Pkwy. The rest of the path does not contain a sidewalk.
- There is no curb cut from Parkside Ave to Jewett Pkwy.
- Sidewalks not replaced on Parkside Ave have several cracks and heaved sections.

**Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – This area is of mixed use, with pedestrians crossing into the local college and with drivers entering onto the Thruway. This creates a safety hazard for pedestrians. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

*Key Finding & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Drivers do not obey traffic signals.
- Drivers appear to be speeding.
- Drivers do not yield to pedestrians in the crosswalks.

**Driver Safety**

*Summary* – Traffic volume is high in this area as is pedestrian traffic. Unclear signs create confusion for pedestrians. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Unclear signs on Parkside Ave and Route 198 create confusion for pedestrians.
- Parkside Ave has too much traffic.

**Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – Delaware Park creates great appeal for Parkside Ave but there is a lack of benches and trash receptacles on this route. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

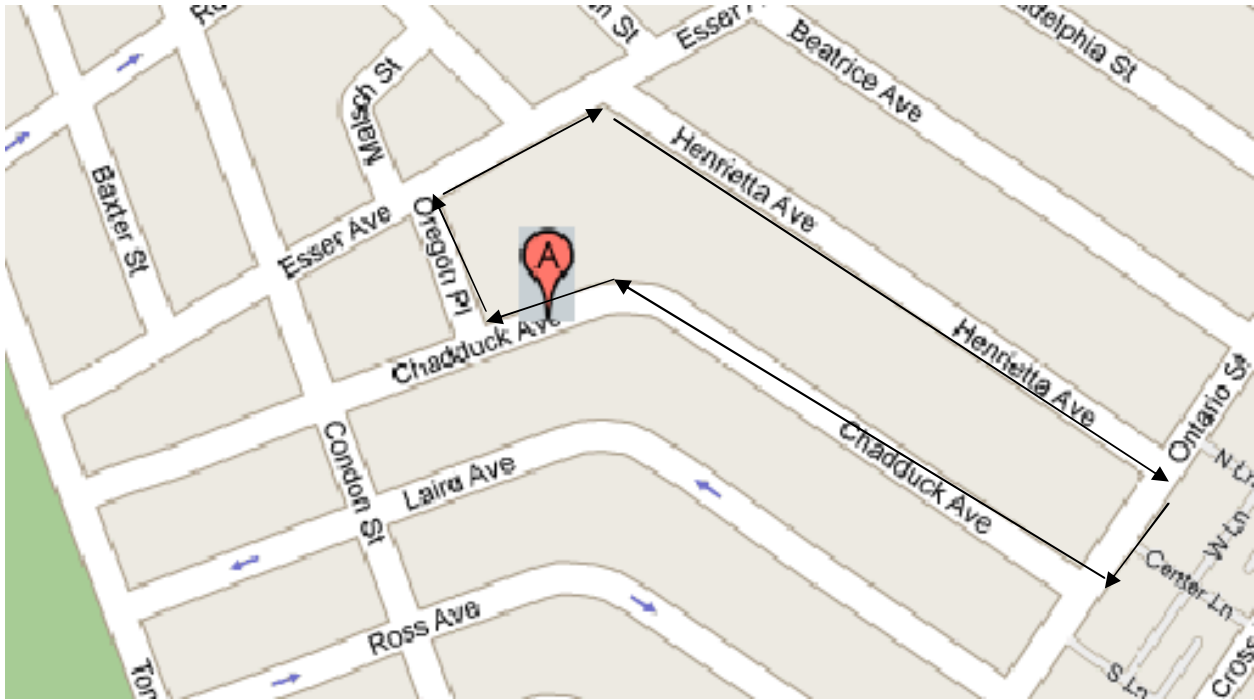
- There are no bus stops located on Parkside Ave.
- A moderate amount of trash was found on Parkside Ave.
- Graffiti located on 297 and 315 Parkside Ave.

**Recommendations**

- I. Allow more time for pedestrians to cross Route 198 (seven lane road).
- II. Add flashing lights or increased signage to notify drivers of upcoming crosswalk on Route 198.
- III. Repair and/or install four missing pedestrian crosswalk boxes.

## **Riverside**

(Henrietta Ave. to Oregon Pl. to Chadduck Ave. to Ontario St.)



### **Rationale**

Rediscover Riverside, a local group of engaged residents is working to revitalize this neighborhood. This area was selected not only because it is the center of Riverside, but also because it offers several resources to rebuilding this neighborhood. Lastly this area represents a diverse group of streets including local areas where individuals are striving to age in place with community support.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* Crosswalks and crosswalk signals did not exist in several locations and often pedestrians were not given adequate time to cross the street. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Crossing from Ontario St. to Chadduck Ave. there is no crosswalk signal or markings.
- Pedestrians are given 20 seconds to cross Ontario St. which is not enough time for people of normal abilities to cross.
- Pedestrians are given 17 seconds to cross Chadduck Ave.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* The overall condition of the sidewalks was noted to be crumbling, heaved, and/or cracked. There were also several sections where the width of the sidewalk was diminished due to grass overgrowth. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- In 21 different sections on this route the sidewalk was heaved up due to tree roots.
- There is no curb cut from Chadduck Ave. to Oregon Pl.
- A section of sidewalk on Chadduck Ave. was measured to be raised up 4".
- Several residents park over the sidewalk inhibiting passage.
- A 49" sidewalk was reduced to 30" due to severely overgrown grass and weeds.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Drivers were noted to be generally distracted while on this route. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Driver observed running a red light.
- Drivers do not stop before turning right on red.
- Drivers stop in the crosswalk (or where a crosswalk should be).

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – The main problem identified involved unclear signs creating confusion to drivers. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Ontario St. and Chadduck Ave have parking signs that force cars in the wrong direction creating confusion and danger.

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – Although different items were identified that detracted from the overall comfort and appeal of this location the largest problem involved a vacant lot creating a "war zone" like appearance. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

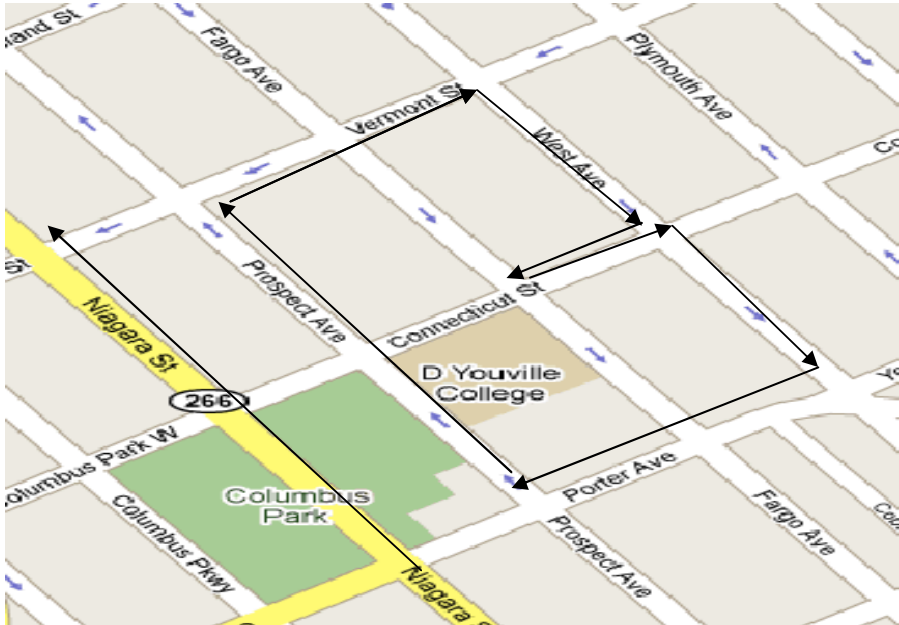
- The vacant lot on the corner of Ontario St. and Chadduck Ave is muddy and creates a war zone like appearance.
- The bus stop on Ontario St. and Chadduck Ave does not have shelter.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Create a cross walk from Ontario St. to Chadduck Ave by adding markings on the road, curb cuts, and crosswalk signals to improve accessibility
- II. Maintain and/or resolve the vacant lot on Chadduck Ave and Ontario St.
- III. Improve overall condition of sidewalks to decrease number of obstacles (21) encountered by pedestrians.

## **Santa Maria Apartments**

*(Prospect Ave. to Niagara. to Fargo Ave. to Connecticut St. to Porter Ave.)*



### **Rationale**

Santa Maria Towers is nestled in a neighborhood that is a mix of stability, gentrification, and uncertainty. Strengths of the area include vibrant block clubs, community gardens, Holy Angels Church, D'Youville College, and the 174<sup>th</sup> Armory as well as being the gateway entrance to the Peace Bridge. The community, including its seniors, seeks to make the streets safer, enhancing its appeal to residents and visitors and improving opportunities for more retail.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* In general crosswalks lacked appropriate markings on the street, signals often did not work or did not allow pedestrians ample time to cross and cars were often in the crosswalks. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Pedestrians are given a maximum of 15 seconds to cross Porter Ave.
- Crosswalk signals on Porter Ave, West Ave, and York St. do not work
- At the corner of Vermont St. and Fargo Ave there is a section of street at the crosswalk that is heaved up and inhibits crossing.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* The sidewalks on this route contained several locations that were heaved, cracked, and narrow. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- There is a large drop in the sidewalk from 127 Vermont Ave to 129 Vermont Ave.
- The sidewalk on Fargo Ave was measured at 46” making it too narrow for a wheelchair to pass.
- At 508 West Ave. near the National Grid Building there were tires dumped on the sidewalk inhibiting passage.
- A total of 15 different locations on the route were noted to have cracked and/or heaved sidewalks that created a fall risk.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Speeding and inappropriate parking were two of the largest problems identified in this location. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Drivers were observed failing to stop at posted stop signs.
- Drivers appear to be speeding.
- Fargo Ave and Vermont Ave need “Children at Play” signs to alert drivers.
- Cars do not obey one side street parking creating narrow streets that are dangerous to drivers and pedestrians.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – See Above

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement* – See Above

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – Graffiti, trash and vacant lots were some of the main concerns raised by the team. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- There are vacant lots at 131 – 137 Vermont Ave and 500 – 506 West Ave that needs to be cleaned/maintained.
- Bus stops at the corner of Porter Ave at York St., and Porter Ave at West Ave do not have shelter.
- Trash was noted to be an especially large issue at the corner of Connecticut St. and West Ave.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Increase the length of time allotted for pedestrians to cross Porter Ave.
- II. Increase the width and improve the condition of the sidewalks located on Fargo Ave.
- III. Creation of crosswalks and the addition/improvement of crosswalk signals especially at Porter Ave, West Ave, and York St.

## **Schiller Park**

(Genesee Street between Floss Ave. and Olcott Pl. and into neighboring Bell Rd. and Lang Ave)



### **Rationale**

Schiller Park Senior Center was the location of the kickoff event associated with the walkability event. Several staff and older adults noted the frequent use of these streets to get to and from the senior center and to local businesses. Currently a large portion of the regular senior center users walk to the center.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* Genesee St. has recently undergone several improvements to create a more walkable neighborhood. The only issue noted by the team was that this effort has not expanded into the side streets and neighborhoods. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- None of the new crosswalk signals contain an audible feature.
- When crossing the street there are sections where water drains poorly creating pooling and puddles.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* The overall condition of the sidewalk and the width of the sidewalks were noted to be a positive feature to this location. In some locations cars were noted to be blocking the use of sidewalks. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- At Genesee St. and Rogers St. a car was noted to be blocking the sidewalk.

- On Crossman St. a motorcycle was noted to be blocking the sidewalk.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – This road receives a large mix of traffic from local to several large trucks. Few issues were identified by the team. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Driver noted to make a sudden screeching stop at a stoplight.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – See Above

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement* – See Above

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – The largest findings around comfort and appeal involved spots of graffiti and vacant/rundown buildings. Some loitering and suspicious activity was also noted. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

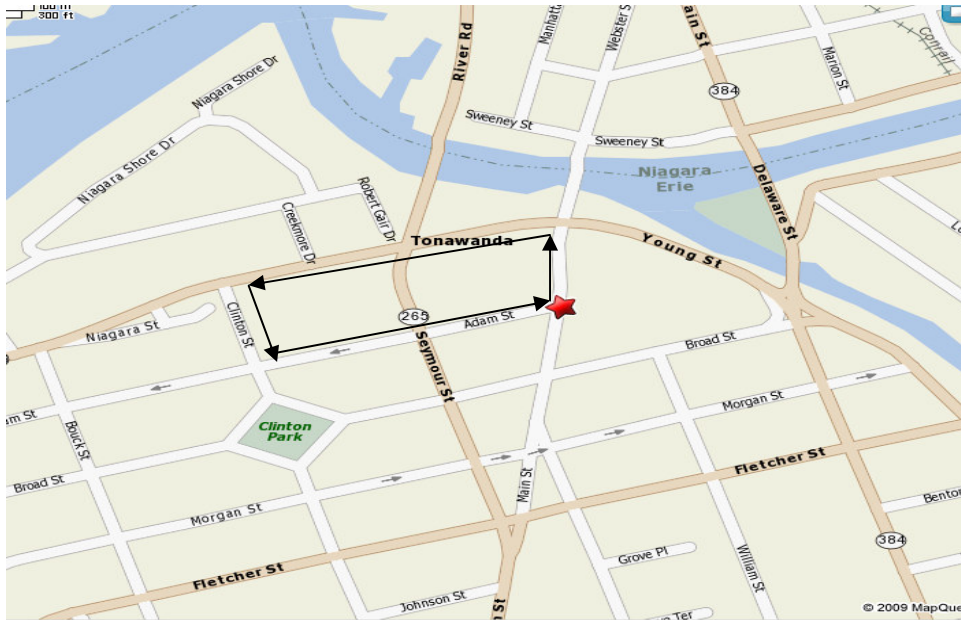
#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Trash was found on Genesee St.
- Only one bus stop on Genesee St. has a shelter.
- Vacant and rundown buildings are found throughout Genesee St.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Create a covered bus shelter closer to the senior center.
- II. Repair the railing outside of the Schiller Park Senior Center entrance.
- III. Install audible crosswalk signals.
- IV. Create a bike lane.

## **Tonawanda Senior Center** (Main St. to Young St. to Seymour St. to Adam St.)



### **Rationale**

This location was chosen because of the significant number of older in the area. The Tonawanda Senior Center and Tonawanda Towers are located on Main St. This area also has several destinations frequented by older adults and within walking distance. The area also promotes walking with bike/walking paths along the river and Tonawanda Creek.

### **Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* When crossing the street at this location the team noted an overall inability to cross within the allotted time. Further cars were seen proceeding into the crosswalk or parking in the crosswalk inhibiting passage. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Pedestrians are given only 10 seconds to cross Seymour St. which is a four lane road.
- The team was unable to cross any of the streets within the allotted time.
- The crosswalk signal on the north side of Young St. did not change and allow pedestrians to cross. The team waited through two lights to verify.
- None of the crosswalk signals contained audible signals.
- The crosswalk signal push button to cross Niagara St or River Rd was set back forcing pedestrians to travel on uneven surfaces to reach button.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary –* Overall fewer problems were found with the sidewalks than were found with the curb cuts. The team identified drainage and location problems with these items. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.



### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- The sidewalk on Adams St. is less than 5' wide and was measured at 3' 5"
- Curb cut was located 300' from the handicap parking spot.
- Curb cuts did not have proper drainage creating pooling and puddles and the base of each cutout.
- The planter in front of McDonalds takes up a significant portion of the sidewalk.
- Sidewalk surfaces changed to brick in front of store entrances on Main St. creating uneven footing in some areas.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – Drivers often neglected to follow the rules of the road or yield to pedestrians. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Most drivers neglected to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.
- Most drivers stopped in the crosswalk rather than behind it.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – Cars rolling through the lights when turning right on red was indicated as the primary problem. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Cars speed too fast around corners and are often not mindful of potential pedestrians crossing.
- Drivers often perform a rolling stop instead of a full stop.

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – Some issues with graffiti and trash were identified by the team, but overall the comfort and appeal was viewed positively. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

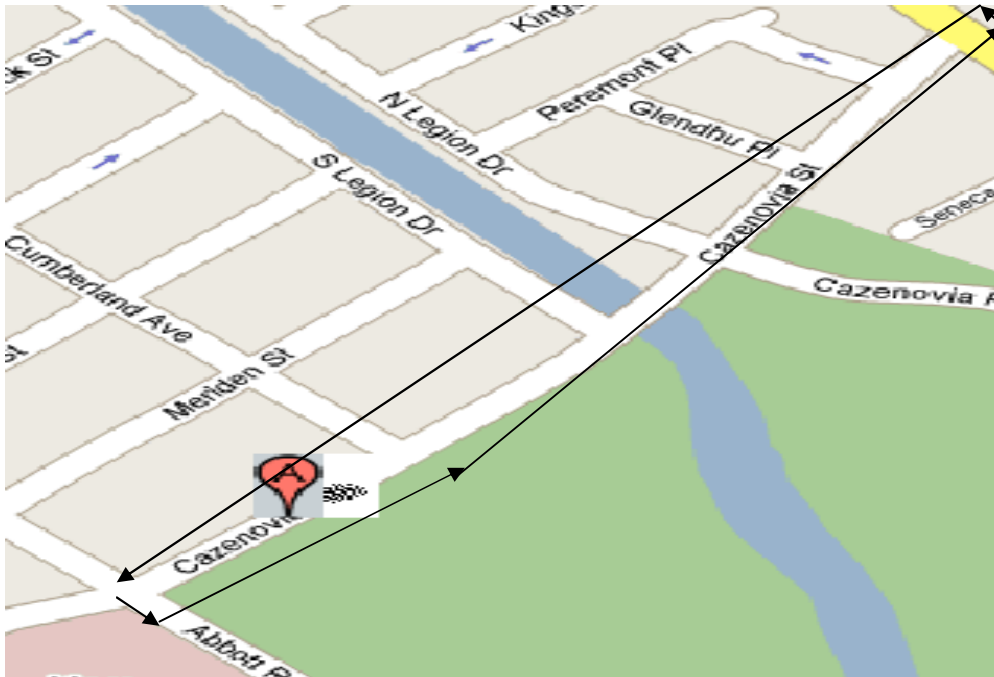
### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Graffiti found on empty phone booths and the bus stop in front of McDonalds.
- Litter found in front of Rite Aid.

### **Recommendations**

- I. Increase the length of time provided to pedestrians to cross the street.
- II. Introduce "No Turn on Red" signs to improve time available for pedestrians to cross.
- III. Improve and/or introduce curb cuts on the route to ensure handicap accessibility.

**Tosh Collins Senior Center**  
(Cazenovia St. between Seneca St. and Abbott Rd.)



**Rationale**

This route was selected because it possesses several senior specific services and includes the highly utilized Cazenovia Park. Erie County Senior Services notes this location to be of growing importance to older adults and those who provide services to this population.

**Crossing the Street**

*Summary-* The primary concern identified on this route involved the time provided to pedestrians to cross the street. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Crosswalk signals do not work and do not notify pedestrians of appropriate times to cross.
- There is no crosswalk signal at Cazenovia St. and Legion Dr.
- Pedestrians are given only seven seconds to cross the street. This was not enough time for individuals of normal abilities to cross safely.
- Crosswalks are not marked.
- The crosswalk nearest to the Tosh Collins Senior Center is in need of repair.
- The crosswalk signals do not have audible signals.

## **Sidewalks**

*Summary* – The sidewalks were noted to be cracked and in need of repair. This route possesses several different surface materials, which are noted to become troublesome to individuals. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Cumberland Ave near Cazenovia Park has a wheelchair accessible curb cut that is cracked and deteriorating.
- Broken sign posts are located on the sidewalks and stick out as pedestrians utilize this area.
- Older adults are noted to utilize a path through the park rather than the street. This path was not surveyed.
- Many individuals note this area to be poorly maintained and/or shoveled in the winter months.

## **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – The apparent speed of drivers in this area was noted as the largest concern. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of POOR.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Cars are seen speeding.
- Cars often stop in the crosswalk inhibiting pedestrian crossing ability.

## **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – See Above

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement* – See Above

## **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – The overall comfort and appeal of this location was viewed favorably. The presence of Cazenovia Park makes this an enjoyable and well traveled location. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

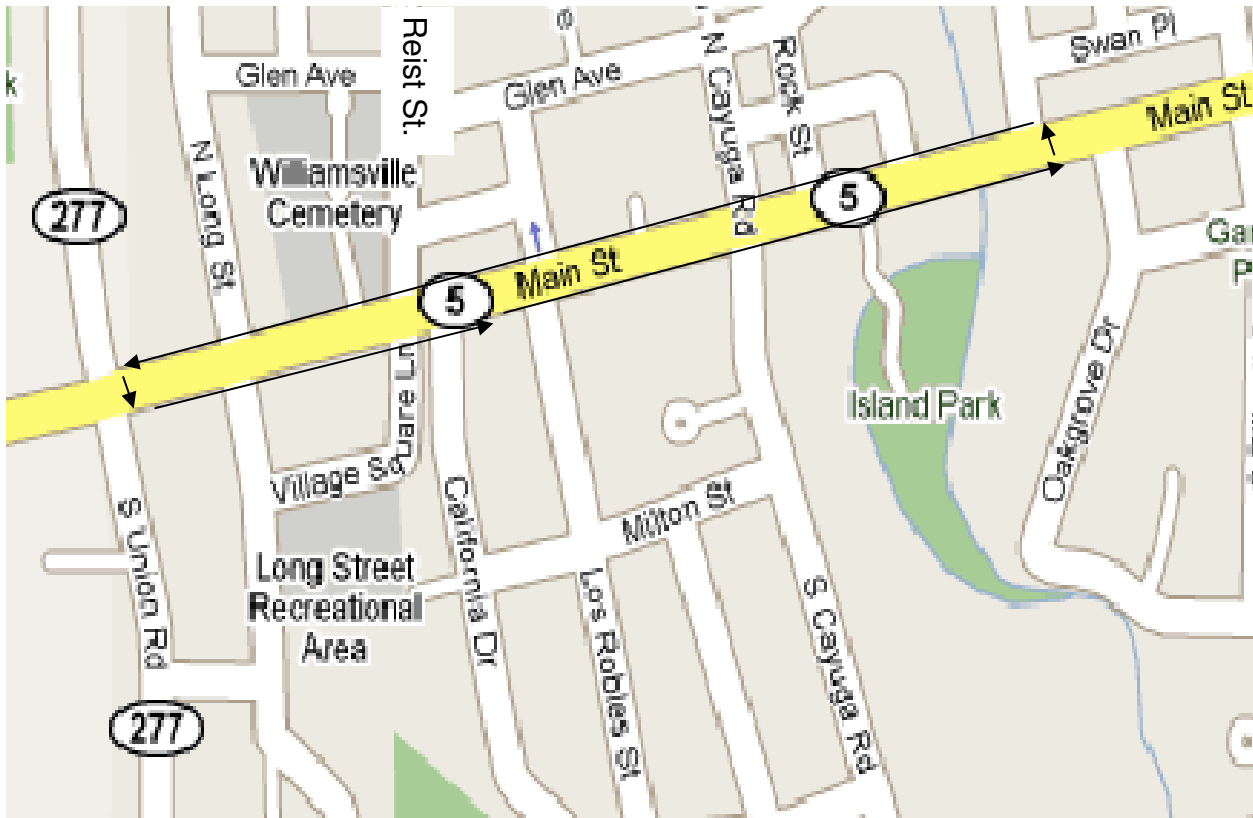
- Dogs were observed to be unleashed while in the park.
- The bus stop does not have adequate light.
- There are no benches or places to rest on this route.

## **Recommendations**

- I. Increase the length of time provided to pedestrians to cross Abbott St.
- II. Increase the length of time provided to pedestrians to cross Cazenovia St
- III. Install and/or repair crosswalk signals at Cazenovia St. and Legion Dr.

## Williamsville

(Main St. between S. Union Rd. and Mill St.)



### Rationale

Williamsville offers several opportunities for older adults living on or around Main St. This location was identified by several organizations serving older adults as a central location that greatly impacts the older adults, especially those residing in the Village Square Apartments.

### Crossing the Street

*Summary-* Crossing the street in this location proved to be difficult for several reasons including length of time provided to cross the street, locations to cross the street, and inoperable crosswalk signals. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of FAIR.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- At Main St. and Union St. the pedestrian crosswalk signal does not work.
- A signal to cross the street closer to Village Square apartments need to be installed.
- Pedestrians are given a maximum of 20 seconds to cross Main St. This was completed by persons of normal abilities but those with limited abilities will need more time.

- There is a bus stop at Reist St. but the closest crosswalk is ¼ mile away.

### **Sidewalks**

*Summary* – The overall width and condition of the sidewalks was viewed favorably by the team. Some uneven surfaces and obstacles were identified. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- There is no curb cut to cross Village Lane.
- Water drains create uneven surfaces on sidewalks.
- At 5355 Main St. there is a hole in the sidewalk creating a trip hazard.

### **Driver Behavior**

*Summary* – This location was noted to experience a high volume of traffic and drivers were observed failing to follow the posted laws. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of GOOD.

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Drivers do not obey traffic signals.
- Drivers appear to be speeding.
- Drivers often stop in the crosswalk.

### **Driver Safety**

*Summary* – See Above

*Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement* – See Above

### **Comfort and Appeal**

*Summary* – The team identified comfort and appeal to be a major strength of this location. For this section the team indicated an overall rating of EXCELLENT

#### *Key Findings & Opportunities for Improvement*

- Bus stop at Reist St. does not have shelter

### **Recommendations**

- I. Provide pedestrians with more time to cross Main St. at each crosswalk.
- II. Install a second crosswalk at Mill St. and Main St. so that pedestrians with limited abilities can cross safely.
- III. Provide a location to cross the street closer to Village Square Apartments.
- IV. Ensure crosswalk signals are working as designed.

## SUMMARY

The WNY Falls Prevention Consortium embarked on a journey to inform and educate the community about the falls risks that exist within our local neighborhoods. Through this journey we have been provided the opportunity to work with and educate a vast portion of Erie County on the prevalence of risk found within the streets and sidewalks we utilize every day. The WNY Falls Prevention Consortium seeks to improve older adults' ability to age safely in the community by limiting risk for falling. To do this we must look beyond professional practice and personal behavior changes to include the condition of our local environment.

Through this work several problems in immediate need of attention to improve pedestrian safety were identified. Some of the overarching issues suggest:

1. Pedestrians must be given a longer amount of time to cross the road safely.
2. If there is a curb cut installed on one side of the road there must be a curb cut on the other side so that individuals do not become stranded.
3. Crosswalk signals must be repaired or installed to assist pedestrians so they may cross the street safely.
4. Curb cuts are only effective when they are free of uneven surfaces and obstacles that impede their usage.
5. Sidewalks must be maintained and improved. The current condition of many sidewalks within the City of Buffalo and Erie County create a great obstacle for individuals.
6. The behavior of drivers must be monitored more closely. Several teams indicated concerns regarding drivers in crosswalks and general disregard for posted traffic signs.

The hard work and commitment of several volunteers, local community groups and local organizations has led to the creation of an assessment of the current conditions impacting walkability in Erie County. This framework serves as a road map to improving the neighborhoods and streets utilized by older adults. Although we have worked to examine this issue based on the impact it has on older adults, it is well known that these issues equally impact every citizen of a neighborhood. The results presented in this report can unite and empower a community to begin to improve walkability for the betterment of all residents.