

South Street Safety Committee

Walkability Audit - Working Document for improving the safety for drivers and pedestrians

Driving Behavior Concerns:

- Many serious accidents along the curve of South Street and along the stretch of South Street from Mountain Avenue to Marion Avenue
- Speeding above the 35 mph speed limit
- Drivers not stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks at several locations: Oldwood, Woodland, Floral, Diane Ct.
- Drivers making dangerous left turns (northbound) onto South Street out of: Hansell, Candlewood, Ethan, Southgate
- Drivers playing “chicken” trying to beat others at Central Ave and South Street intersection turning East or West onto Central from South
- Drivers going around stopped vehicles waiting to turn or stopped for pedestrians, driving on the shoulder of the road
- Several serious accidents in that section of South St in the last 3 months, caused by speeding and/or driving under the influence.
- Drivers consistently drive over the local speed limit in that section of South St. The problem has worsened after new asphalt was installed.
- Drivers failing to stop for pedestrians trying to cross South St both in front of Oldwood Rd and Woodland Rd.
- Poor visibility for drivers to see pedestrian crosswalk in Oldwood Rd and South St while driving north on South St. This occurs because the crosswalk is located right after a curve and a slope.
- Frequently cars stop in the middle of the road, waiting to cross upcoming traffic to enter their driveways or entering/exiting St. Andrews Church/School.

Pedestrian Safety Concerns:

- Jaywalking in several locations between crosswalks: Oldwood, Woodland, Floral, Diane Ct, Central, Marion
- Pedestrians walking on the EAST shoulder of South from Woodland to Oakwood
- Poor visibility of pedestrians at Woodland Ave at night/morning, in the dark hours. Many pedestrians wear dark clothing.
- Poor visibility at crosswalk at Oldwood due to hilly nature of South Street going North or Southbound. The terrain undulates, and the crosswalk is in a dip, making the crosswalk hard for cars to see until they are on top of it, coupled with a bend in road north of the crosswalk.
- Sidewalk observations East side of street from 352 to 546 above the Faith Lutheran church:

- Walking on the road in section from number 418 to number 352 and from 476 to 546 where there is **no sidewalk on the east side**. Continuous sidewalks from Oakwood to Woodland on the east side would be very beneficial.
- Sidewalks on East side of street going Southbound from 418 to 476 are:
 - uneven, e.g tree root lifting pavers south of 476
 - Vegetation inhibits walking on sidewalks e.g. small tree growing over sidewalk at low level at edge of 418, large bamboo area of vegetation curving out into sidewalk area and large weed growth blocking middle of sidewalk area
 - Several pavers are cracked and some crumbling away
 - Sidewalk by 476 is on a downward and sideward slope leaving a 7-8 inch drop from sidewalk pavers to sidewalk grass before road -a potential pedestrian hazard
- Jaywalking in section between Oldwood Rd and Woodland Rd occurs where there are no crosswalks where the sidewalk ends. As pedestrians cannot get to the crosswalks without having to walk on the road/or are having to cross to the West side to get to a usable sidewalk prior to reaching a crossing.
- Oldwood Rd and Woodland Rd. crosswalks are quite busy when trains arrive and depart and have some school walkers. We regularly observe cars speeding and not stopping for pedestrians trying to cross (including children patiently waiting to cross the road holding the fluorescent flag).
- Poor visibility for pedestrians to see up coming traffic while using the crosswalk on South St. and Oldwood Rd. This occurs because the crosswalk is located right after a curve and a dip in the road.
- School age children have a need to cross the road but many parents are wary of allowing them to cross the road because of car speeds and safety concerns, despite the children following good road crossing safety etiquette in crossing.
- Jogger running on the road on South St (east side), instead of the sidewalk. The sidewalk is blocked by high vegetation (bamboo) and fallen tree limbs between Oakwood Dr and Oldwood Rd.

Infrastructure Concerns

- Lack of sidewalks from Woodland to Oakwood on the EAST side of the street and what crosswalks there are on the East side of the street are in poor condition/some areas encumbered by vegetation/weed growth/uneven due to tree roots and would not be useable for pedestrians with strollers or the disabled.
- Lack of signage for newly installed crosswalks at: Oldwood, Floral, Diane Ct, Marion
- Lack of speed limit signs going North or Southbound on Glenside Ave (above Mountain Ave before it turns into South Street) Northbound:
 - 35 mph speed limit sign on East side opposite Candelwood
 - Yellow bend in road suggested speed of 30 mph sign opposite Hansell

- No crossing warning for Oldwood crossing currently in place, only moveable road cone warning in road just above crossing, which would not give sufficient time to slow speed down hill.
- Lack of crosswalks for church goers and school children going to Faith Lutheran Church (near Oakwood) or St Andrews School/Church (Between Hansell and Ethan)
- Lack of a bike lane for cyclists and commuters on both East and West side of South Street
- Street lights for night visibility are on EAST side only from Central-South intersection to Southgate and then WEST side only from Southgate up to Mountain ave causing particular concerns at poor visibility crosswalks such as Woodland and Oldwood.

Suggestions for changes, both long and short-term

- Enforcement of existing regulations with ticketing
 - drivers who do not stop for pedestrians in the crosswalks
 - jaywalking of pedestrians not using crosswalks
 - Enforcement of existing speed limit on South St.
 - Enforce speed limit of 25 mph along Marion Ave. As downtown becomes busier, more drivers are speeding on cut through Streets. Same for Oakwood.
- Traffic Calming
 - Narrow the [travel lanes](#) to help calm speeding and traffic (South Street).
 - Concrete blocks on the South and North corners of Ethan and South Streets to protect the telephone poles and pedestrians at those corners. They've been replaced many times.
 - Use LED traffic signs to show speed of driver - permanent installment?
 - Paint Speed limit warnings on the road in this section.
 - Encourage the use of Everdrive app among ALL New Providence residence who drive to increase awareness and decrease speeding around town
 - Narrow South Street in the section between Oldwood Rd and Southgate painting middle lane for turns.
 - Bike lanes - to narrow South Street and allow safe passage for cyclists who frequent the road both North and Southbound for training and commuting
 - Create left turn lanes with left turn arrow for both Southbound and Northbound traffic on South Street at Central Ave intersection
- Reducing speed limit to 30 mph (or 25 mph) for the length of South Street between Mountain Ave and Springfield Ave. With a speed limit of 35 cars often drive 45, 50 or more
- School zones
 - Have St. Andrews section of South Street (between Hansell and Ethan) be designated as a 25 mph "school zone" (also include all other private schools in town i.e. St. Luke's, Sproutlings, Sante Fe, Presbyterian, Our Lady of Peace)
 - Install school zone and pedestrian signs on South St. close to St. Andrews Church/School.

- Police enforcement zone around school to limit distracted driving, speeding, and driving under the influence.
- Place signage Northbound and Southbound for Oldwood, Floral, Diane Ct, Marion crosswalks (especially Oldwood)
- **Crosswalk Improvements:**
 - Ensure crosswalks are adequately lit on both sides of the street to improve drivers pedestrian visibility through installation of additional lighting. Ideally for all crosswalks but especially for both Oldwood and Woodland crossings where driver visibility is already poor due to road curvatures/gradients and non daylight hours present additional risks.
 - Raised pedestrian crosswalk strips for every crosswalk along South Street from Mountain Ave to Springfield Ave
 - install additional crosswalks to reduce Jaywalking potential examples opposite St Andrews Church School or Ethan Drive to better accommodate children getting to school/churchgoers/commuters and Southgate road
 - Woodland crossing:
 - Install Flashing warning light of upcoming crossing for drivers round the corner further up the hill before they reach the crossing so that they have already slowed their speed down before reaching the crossing when in use (Similar to warning light in Summit coming up Morris Ave hill by Overlook Hospital approaching Mountain Avenue traffic lights)
 - Push button stop light (like in front of Lord and Taylor in Westfield) for crosswalk at Woodland
 - Per general crosswalk suggestion add a street light to Woodland and South Street intersection on both East and West side of the street to increase visibility of commuters trying to cross South Street during dark times of day morning/evening commute (Crossing visibility to drivers coming down the hill when dark is poor looking to the West side of the road as no street light on that side of street coupled with oncoming car headlights coming uphill towards the crossing blinding them).
 - Crossing bridge for pedestrians at Woodland
 - Oldwood crossing:
 - Crossing visibility to drivers is poor due to gradient/curve in road driving north and southbound. Consider repositioning crosswalk/adding additional/alternate crossing in front of St Andrews Church/School, Ethan Drive Install signage to warn drivers driving north on South St of upcoming crosswalk on Oldwood Rd.
 - Similar to Woodland suggestion Install Flashing warning light of upcoming crossing for drivers coming from the South before they reach the crossing as most speed has already been picked up by vehicles travelling from mountain Ave down the hill. This will help ensure that they have already slowed their speed down before reaching the crossing when in use.

- Reduce need to jaywalk
 - Extend sidewalk on the East side of South St from number 418 to number 352 and from 476 South to 546. This will provide sidewalks from Oakwood to Woodland, reducing pedestrians jaywalking.
 - Re-do existing sidewalks between 418 to 476 to enable able bodied, disabled pedestrians and pedestrians with strollers to use the sidewalk eliminating issues noted in “*Sidewalk observations East side of street from 352 to 546 above the Faith Lutheran church*” section.
 - Enforce frequent trimming of bamboo vegetation blocking the sidewalk, opposite number 479 (east side sidewalk).
 - Install crosswalks on South St in front of St. Andrews Church/School, Ethan Dr and Southgate Rd.
 - Since crosswalks can take years, consider a shared-use path adjacent to the main roadway as an interim substitute for a sidewalk
 - Would pervious sidewalks reduce the amount of frost heaving?

Other actionable items we believe will help

- Obtain Police reports of accidents on South Street and study cause and severity of accidents over the past 5-10 years
- Track and obtain speeds of drivers at the bottom (by both Woodland Ave and opposite St Andrews Church where speeds have already been picked up due to downhill gradient) to see the TOP speed of cars going Northbound on South Street using speed strips rather than police presence radar guns to obtain more realistic speed ranges for further study/suggestions..
- Do walkability studies of South Street and all side streets (Oakwood, Oldwood, Ethan, Southgate, Woodland, others?)

Recommendations and Observations Regarding Woodland-Greenwood Area (as drafted for the overall walkability study) by E. Waters

Recommendations

- Walkability of the Woodland-Greenwood area (west of Livingston Avenue) would benefit from the narrowing and improved demarcation of automobile traffic lanes and addition of clearly marked pedestrian-bicycle shared use shoulder areas on the streets.
- Crosswalks should be added to the intersection of Woodland and Greenwood to safely connect shared use pedestrian-bicycle lanes.
- Street parking should be limited or disallowed on the curving stretches of road mentioned below.

Broad Observations – based on walking Woodland area at 8:15am on Wednesday, 10/31/2018

- There are almost no sidewalks, marked shoulders, crosswalks, or stop signs – exceptions are noted – and the hills and curves cause limited sight lines for vehicles and pedestrians
 - There is a single yield sign at the intersection of Greenwood and Woodland, aimed at traffic merging from Greenwood
 - There is a stop sign for Greenwood traffic at the intersection of Livingston Ave which is currently obscured by foliage
- Only one stretch of Woodland has painted lanes for car traffic – this is the only visible demarcation of any sort in the whole area
- I didn't notice any speed limit signs during my walk
- Overall walkability is OK for experienced adults, but not unaccompanied children – there is no space set aside for pedestrians and nothing to indicate to drivers where pedestrians should be

Woodland Ave (walking from South Street to Livingston Ave)

- No sidewalk on south side of street
- Sidewalk on north side extends only a few hundred feet from South Street to 141 Woodland Ave
- Sidewalk on north side ends just short of the sharp downhill curve toward Greenwood
- A car was parked on the downhill curve at the time of my walk and I frequently see cars parked there
- Between Greenwood and Livingston on Woodland, as you travel toward Livingston, there is a long sweeping uphill curve to right – the sight line is limited and a walking child on the inside of the curve could be at risk
- Overall there was limited traffic at the time of my walk, but there is no secure space for children to walk or cross the streets

Greenwood Ave (walking from Livingston to Woodland)

- Overall good sight lines on straight road
- Woodland-Greenwood intersection has no stop sign so cars can just drive through, and there is no crosswalk or anything else to indicate how pedestrians should navigate it

