

# Shorewood Winter Walk Audit

*Shorewood Connects*

*January, 28, 2020*



# Winter Walk Audit Report

## Introduction and Overview

As the first community in Wisconsin to earn a place in the AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities, Shorewood is a great place to live for people of any age. One of Shorewood's greatest assets is its walkability.

As a member of the network, our community is committed to doing periodic Walk Audits which are walking reviews of our village's streets, sidewalks, crosswalks and intersections. These audits help identify both the village's many strengths in walkability and areas where work can continue to be done to increase our community's walkability and accessibility to citizens of all ages and abilities. We were particularly interested in conducting a walk audit in winter to look at the accessibility of our intersections and sidewalks in all seasons.

On a Tuesday afternoon in January, Shorewood Connects facilitated a walk audit with four team captains leading approximately 30 people on walking assessments of portions of Shorewood's streets between 2-3 pm. The groups used an AARP designed assessment tool along with an added Snow and Ice assessment designed internally. The four team leaders were Janet Kreilein, Sue Kohlenberg, Shantha Jhansale, and Diane Jakubowski. Amber Miller with the AARP attended and provided warm drinks for the walkers. Elizabeth Price, Natalie Black, and the Shorewood Senior Center provided logistical support. Attendees included Dzidra Benish and Diane Jakubowski from Shorewood's Pedestrian and Bike Safety Committee and representatives of many other groups including the Milwaukee County Department on Aging, Shorewood Parks Commission, Shorewood Recreation and Community Services Advisory Committee, Shorewood Historical Society, Shorewood Woman's Club, Shorewood's Dementia Awareness Workgroup, the Shorewood Foundation, the Park People Board, and many more. It was an eye opening experience to walk the streets together!

## Findings and Recommendations

### What we do well

Sidewalks across the four areas were rated Good/Fair (12/16 points). Intersections and Driver Behavior were also rated as Good/Fair (10/16 points).

We are a pedestrian-friendly community with lots of sidewalks and the sidewalks are generally well-maintained and in good condition. Many intersections have the textured, yellow, ramps that add visibility. Other intersections have painted cross walks, flashing crossing lights, or signals and push-to-activate walk signals. Walk audit participants noted visible signage reminding people to walk bikes on the sidewalks of Oakland and Capitol. The welcomed presence of school crossing guards was also noted.

## What we can do better

**Snow and ice clearing**, across the four walk routes, was rated only Fair (8/16 points). Overall safety was also only rated Fair (9/16 points). The walk audit was conducted more than 3 days from the last snowfall, which should have allowed sufficient time for snow clearing. Nonetheless, significant obstacles were observed by all four groups.



## Snow in the Business District -

\***Snow removal** was noted as a significant problem in our business district. Many **Carriage walks** were not cleared and **large mounds of icy and snow pile up on the parkway grass** between the street and the sidewalk, making access to businesses difficult and unsafe for older or disabled residents. It is also challenging for parents who must lift strollers over snow banks to access the sidewalk.

\***Intersection ramps** were frequently blocked with slippery snow and ice making it either impossible or extremely difficult for older adults, the disabled, young children, and people using a stroller to safely cross the street in those locations.



\*Many **bus stops** were not well-cleared, with the shelters and benches inaccessible. This is a problem for older and disabled residents who frequently rely solely on public transportation to get to work and appointments and need the benches.

\***We recommend** that the Village work together with the business district to look at creative snow removal solutions to improve safety and accessibility.



## Driver Behavior -

\*Three of the four groups reported significant issues around driver behavior. Drivers were observed going at unsafe speeds on Oakland Ave., Lake Dr., and Capitol Dr. Audit walkers also noted reckless driving behavior including a u-turn on Oakland in the business district, turning right on red at Capitol and Lake Dr. (despite a sign prohibiting turning when pedestrians are present), rolling stops at multiple intersections including Menlo and Morris, and one driver running a red light. In addition, large trucks were double parked outside businesses for extended periods blocking a lane of traffic and obstructing pedestrian and driver visibility at intersections.



## Intersections/Traffic -

Several intersections were noted with **crossing signals too short** for disabled, older adults, or young families to cross. These intersections included: **Newhall/Capitol** (flasher 30 seconds), **Oakland/Edgewood** (20 seconds E-W and 30 seconds N-S), **Oakland/Shorewood Blvd** (signal only 25 seconds).

\***Menlo/Morris** was noted as problematic. While it is well-marked, it has no push-to-walk or audible signal and drivers frequently fail to stop and drive too fast. Crosswalks seem misplaced which encourages jaywalking.

\***Beverly/Oakland** feels like it's not a crossing despite the crosswalk. Speeding drivers in this area add to the danger. The addition of a flasher signal crossing might be needed.

\***Oakland/Newton**, this intersection might be considered for a signal or other traffic control to improve safety. Cars are not stopping for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

\***Oakland/Elmdale**, has a pedestrian sign but no signal. A truck was parked too close to the corner impeding visibility; flashing lights or other traffic control might be needed.

## Metro Market and Walgreens-

\* Several issues were raised about this area: (1) Flashing light crossings on Oakland is frequently ignored by motorists, (2) Metro Market entrance/exit busy with cars, difficult for both drivers and pedestrians, no stop signs, planters/wall block visibility, the addition of sidewalk markings are suggested, (3) Shopping carts on sidewalk are obstacles for pedestrians outside Metro Market (safety), and (4) Walgreens entrance/exit is also busy with cars and difficult for both drivers and pedestrians. Sidewalk markings also suggested in this location.

