

Shorewood Spring Walk Audit

Shorewood Connects

June 7, 2022



Spring 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 proud of its commitment to conduct periodic walking reviews of our village's streets, sidewalks, paths, crosswalks and intersections. These audits help identify both the villages' many strengths in walkability and areas where work can continue to be done to increase our community's walkability and accessibility to residents of all ages and abilities.

This is Shorewood's second audit and it is a follow-up to a successful Winter Walk Audit in February of 2020. This audit was facilitated by Vashti Lozier of Shorewood Connects and was co-sponsored by the Parks and Public Spaces' Pedestrian and Bike Sub-committee, the Elder Services Advisory Board, and the Shorewood Senior Resource Center. Using the AARP's Walk Audit Took Kit assessment instrument, our group of community volunteers looked at the safety and accessibility of Shorewood for people navigating our streets and sidewalks.

Approximately 32 residents participated. The walk took place between 2:30 - 4 pm on a warm spring day when school was still in session at dismissal. Shorewood Police Chief, Heather Wurth, and Shorewood Senior Resource Center Director, Elizabeth Price, were on hand to welcome participants along with Hanna Seegers of the Parks and Public Spaces Committee. After a brief introductory meeting, the auditors fanned out across Shorewood in four groups on different routes including parts of Oakland Avenue, Capitol Drive, Lake Drive, Wilson Drive, the Oak Leaf Trail, and in the areas around Atwater Elementary, Lake Bluff Elementary, Shorewood Intermediate, and Shorewood High School. Participants included Village Trustees, Eric Couto and Kathy Stokebrand, Parks and Public Spaces members, Gary Brunk, Mary Jorgenson, and Hanna Seegers, and Elder Services Advisory Board member, Katie Gnau, and chair, Sue Bronson.

Findings and Recommendations

What we do well

Receiving top marks and rated as good/excellent were the condition of sidewalks and overall safety (3.25/4.0 and 3.33/4.0, respectively) across the four routes observed. Also impressive, although slightly lower, were the ratings of good/fair for intersections and driver behavior (both 2.75/4.0).

Shorewood is connected by a large network 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. Friendly and skilled crossing guards provided safe crossings for students and families walking home from school. In addition, drivers were generally conscientious, watching for pedestrians, especially at designated crossings. White, striped crosswalks on Lake Drive and elsewhere provide safer

crossings for pedestrians. The walk audit volunteers noted the friendliness of other pedestrians on their routes as well as attractive landscaping, particularly on Wilson Drive and Capitol Drive.

The Signaling History art installation on signal boxes was noted as a beautiful and welcome addition to our community.

What we can do better

Sharing the Road - Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety - Our volunteer raters noted the challenges around pedestrians, bicycles, strollers, scooters, skateboards, e-bikes, motorized wheelchairs/ scooters, and cars sharing the roadways and sidewalks. Volunteers saw cars speeding on Oakland, running a red light on Capitol, and busy/congested roads. With the roads busy in the summer and drivers distracted, bicyclists may fear that the roadways are not safe, which may push some bicyclists onto the sidewalks. In Shorewood, bicyclists under the age of 12 are allowed on the sidewalk. However bicyclists of all ages, especially when riding on the sidewalk, pose a risk to pedestrians, particularly our oldest, youngest, and differently abled residents. Jay walking was observed on Oakland, just north of Edgewood, and around the schools.

Suggestions by our audit volunteers include:

- * Continued advocacy for bicycle lanes and providing a safe place for bicyclists on the street
- * Repainting and adding additional “Walk Your Bike” decals on sidewalks in the business district and by schools
- * Consider adding speed limit signs (their absence was noted by auditors)
- * Remove parking near corners, particularly on Oakland and Capitol in the business district. It impedes visibility.
- * More education/ awareness for children and adults about bicycle safety, rules of the road, and courtesy including the importance of walking bikes on the sidewalks when pedestrians are present, walking bikes in crosswalks, and riding on the street after age of 12.
- * Additional education and awareness for drivers about safely sharing the road with bicycles
- * Consider adding additional on-street handicap parking spots in business district



Oak Leaf Trail (bike/pedestrian path) - The Oak Leaf Trail is a huge asset to the village and the residents but with pedestrians and bicycles sharing this path, it is a busy place where bicycles (some traveling very fast) and pedestrians may collide.

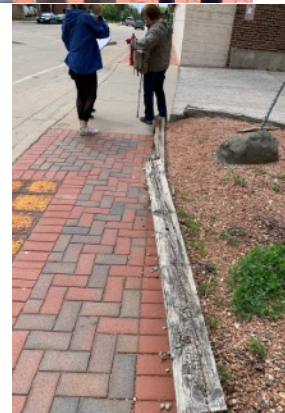
Suggestions by our audit volunteers include:

- * Raise awareness that bicyclists on the trail need to warn pedestrians before passing
- * Add yield sign for bicycles entering the bike path at Olive

Sidewalks - While most sidewalks were in good condition, there were sidewalks and crosswalks which were cracked, broken, or uneven. Concern was raised about pedestrian access to the Police Station, particularly by sight-impaired residents who do not drive, because of discontinuous sidewalks on Wilson Drive on the west side of the street. Other points of concern included narrow sidewalks and areas of erosion.

Suggestions by our audit volunteers include:

- * Continued surveillance and repair of sidewalks including both concrete sidewalk squares and the bricks at intersections and in cross walks for deterioration, breaks, cracks, raised/uneven areas, and areas of erosion to minimize tripping hazards
- * Consider connecting areas with discontinuous sidewalks in the Village. Observed locations include Wilson Drive by Kingo Lutheran Church, on Wilson Drive by the Shorewood Police Department, and on Capitol Drive in the area below the bike path bridge by Corner Bakery
- * At River Park, add signage or other cues to make clear to pedestrians how to get into the park from the street without cutting through the parking lot.
- * Address sidewalk issues near the AT&T building on the north side of Capitol (near Oakland) which include areas of erosion at the edge of sidewalk, an unfilled mud jacking hole, bricks in need of replacement, disintegrating railroad ties, and a general narrowing of the sidewalk.
- * Add benches and shelters to bus stops (Oakland/Murray, Olive/Wilson, Wilson/Capitol, etc.)



Intersections & Pedestrian Crossings - Our volunteers observed that designated, striped, crosswalks on Lake Drive and throughout the Village help pedestrians cross safely. Lighted intersections with pedestrian signals typically provided enough time for pedestrians to cross with a couple of exceptions. Observers noted the absence of push-to-activate walk lights and audible signals in many areas.

Suggestions by our audit volunteers include:

- * Repainting crosswalks on a regular rotation; many are faded and ignored by motorists
- * Add more pedestrian crossing signs
- * Check all non-skid areas near street corners for wear. Repaint curb cuts

Intersections of note:

- * Capitol (east of Oakland) has a large number of crosswalks in a small area. Might be difficult for drivers to attend to the many crossings.
- * Corners at Capitol and Oakland have no buffer to traffic for pedestrians waiting to cross

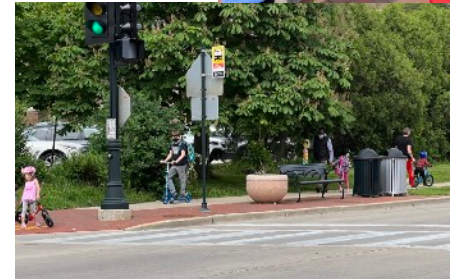
- * Intersection of Capitol and Stowell by the Shorewood Animal Hospital is difficult to cross without a 4-way stop
- * Intersection of Murray/Shorewood Blvd by the library does not have a painted crosswalk. This is a highly traveled crossing both by youth and older residents
- * Absence of press to cross buttons with audible signal at some intersections in the business district
- * Intersection of Oakland/Edgewood (crossing east -west) and at Oakland/Shorewood Blvd (crossing east-west) time to cross is too short for many pedestrians
- * Intersection of Oakland/Shorewood Blvd, where SHS students gather to cross (SW corner), is very shallow. Bump outs here might be beneficial
- * Oakland Avenue at Menlo and Beverly are difficult to cross for SIS and SHS students. Pushbutton for crossing and audible signals or bump outs might be helpful

Areas Around Schools - Walk auditor noted friendly and helpful crossing guards. Although the environment was generally safe, there were several dangerous behaviors noted in and around the schools at dismissal. They included cars double parking, pedestrians/children crossing mid-block instead of at designated crossings, bikes and other wheeled transportation on the sidewalks alongside pedestrians, as well as some unsafe driving including distracted drivers and cars nosing into crosswalks.



Suggestions by our audit volunteers include:

- * Increase awareness and education of students and families around bicycle rules and pedestrian safety, particularly around riding on the sidewalk and care for pedestrians, rules of the road, and safely crossing at intersections
- * Add a sidewalk/path for pedestrians and/or bicycles at Shorewood Intermediate School from sidewalk up to the track and teacher parking lot
- * Create clear signage and cueing in the area of the service driveway by the SHS administrative building. What are the acceptable uses of this driveway (i.e., cars, pedestrians, bikes)
- * Continue to provide clear signage and cueing for pedestrians and bikes crossing at Shorewood Blvd to safely access the high school without cutting through the parking lot



Aesthetics - New landscaping and rain gardens are welcome additions on our streets. Of concern, especially in spring, was trash gathering in rain garden enclosures, the accumulation of cigarette butts, and the encroachment of shrubs and trees into sidewalk areas from private property. Bubblers would also be a welcome addition.

Suggestions by our audit volunteers include:

- * Consider open/functional bathrooms and bubblers at Hubbard, River Park and other locations throughout the village
- * Clean out trash rain gardens on Oakland and Capitol in the spring
- * Remind property owners and businesses to trim hedges, shrubs, and trees so that they do not block the sidewalk or visibility. A number of issues with this were noted throughout the village and business district.

