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FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## **Walk Audit: Weeks Armstrong Neighborhood, Rocky Mount, NC**

**Date of audit:** Thursday, July 15, 2021

**Observation period:** 9:20-10:00am

**Audit route:** See attached map

The Y recognizes the importance of regular physical activity in the fight against chronic disease. Walking and wheelchair rolling are great ways for many people of all ages to be physically active. Walkable communities make it inviting, easy, and safer to be active. The Y, in partnership with the Rocky Mount Housing Authority, offered a 6-week walking club program in the neighborhood this spring to help residents get moving, increase energy levels, improve fitness, and enjoy fellowship outdoors. A walk audit looks for ways to improve walkability, including assessing pedestrian safety and comfort, and was the perfect way to celebrate the walking club.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This is a beautiful neighborhood with residents who regularly use walking as active transportation to get to school, work, and shopping as well as for exercise and socialization. However, there are challenges impacting their safety and potentially deterring some community members from walking more. Having a more walkable community would support increased health and active transportation for the families living, playing, and working in this area.

Based on the walk audit findings, we want to highlight opportunities to make meaningful improvements quickly.

- **Speeding**

Speeding was a consistent problem on Raleigh Blvd and Stokes St. We recommend installation of a radar speed sign that lets drivers know their speed and reminds them of the posted speed limit for those roads.

- **Crossing Raleigh Blvd**

Pedestrians crossing Raleigh Blvd safely is a major concern. Multiple residents have been struck by motor vehicles. A suggestion is to put a crosswalk with flashing lights from the Weeks Armstrong side of Raleigh Blvd to the bus stop on the opposite side of the street. This would allow residents to more safely cross to the bus stop and Family Dollar store on the other side of the street.

Repainting the current crosswalk at the intersection of Raleigh Blvd and Stokes St and increasing crossing time may encourage pedestrians to cross at the intersection.

- **Crosswalks**

Adding crosswalks as detailed in the report below could quickly increase safety and pedestrian awareness.

- **Bike/Walk Lane**  
Adding a walk/bike lane within the neighborhood could increase safety and encourage residents, including children and seniors, to get out and walk more safely.
- **Sidewalks**  
Create and implement a plan to repair sidewalks over time by grinding down, replacing, or painting warnings on areas of sidewalk that are trip hazards.
- **Dumpster Location**  
The prominent placement of dumpsters in the neighborhood across Raleigh Blvd decreases the comfort and appeal for walkers as well as for residents. Stakeholders may be able to work together to find suitable, less prominent location for the dumpsters.

**OBSERVATIONS:** This section provides a detailed account of our audit findings.

#### **Crossing Streets and Intersections**

- Large pothole on Pinehurst Dr near the playground
- No crosswalk on Pinehurst Dr to access the playground or to cross between the Rocky Mount Housing Authority Office and the OIC Building
- No crosswalks across Pinehurst Dr at either neighborhood entrance
- No crosswalk to access the bus stop in front of Family Dollar store, although people often cross Raleigh Blvd at this location and staff reported that multiple residents have been struck by motor vehicles crossing Raleigh Blvd
- Crosswalks at intersection of Raleigh Blvd and Stokes St need to be repainted; difficult to see
- Pedestrian signal allows 18 seconds to cross – too short for children or slow walkers to cross
- No median in Raleigh Blvd (4 lanes of traffic)
- No crosswalk at the corner of Stokes and Hunter Streets

Suggestions:

- Paint crosswalk at playground area and add sign that vehicles must yield to pedestrians in crosswalk
- Paint crosswalks on Pinehurst Dr at both entrances in line with sidewalk
- Add crosswalk with flashing lights to bus stop on Raleigh Blvd
- Repaint crosswalks at the intersection of Raleigh Blvd and Stokes St
- Increase time for crossing at pedestrian signal to allow more time to cross safely
- Consider adding median to Raleigh Blvd
- Paint crosswalks at the intersection of Hunter and Stokes Streets to improve safe access to Baskerville Elementary
- Repair pothole on Pinehurst Dr near the playground

#### **Sidewalks**

- No sidewalks on Pinehurst Dr, Minnie Knight Ln, or Veteran's Cir
- Areas of broken and cracked sidewalk noted on Raleigh Blvd, Stokes St, and Hunter St  
Some areas of sidewalk are notably uneven either between broken pieces or segments of sidewalk causing trip hazards (see photo)
- Sidewalk between Pinehurst Dr and Raleigh Blvd is very close to the street where vehicles travel at high speeds
- Curb cuts aren't textured or marked for people with visual impairments at the intersection of Otis Ln and Stokes St
- Curb cut out at Minnie Knight Ln is a little high
- Good news: the locations where there were sidewalks were free of blockages or obstructions

Suggestions:

- Grind down, replace, or paint warnings on areas of sidewalk that are trip hazards

- Add sidewalk within Weeks Armstrong neighborhood as funding allows (may be a grant opportunity)
- Consider painting a walking and/or biking lane in the street along Pinehurst Dr, Victory Ave, Shirley Leak Ave, and Minnie Knight Ln if street width safely permits



### **Driver Behavior**

- Driver did not come to a full stop at the intersection of Hunter St and Stokes St
- Police not often observed monitoring for speed in the area during morning hours
- Speed limit is 35mph on Raleigh Blvd but drivers appear to be going much faster
- Driver observed speeding down Stokes St towards Baskerville Elementary School

### **Suggestions:**

- Radar speed sign to let drivers know their speed and remind them of the posted speed limit
- Increased police presence to deter speeding if radar speed sign not effective at deterring speeding
- Add speed bumps to Stokes St between Raleigh Blvd and Baskerville Elementary School
- Request city planners and engineers to evaluate Raleigh Blvd and Stokes St for potential traffic-calming solutions

### **Safety**

- Cars speeding on both Raleigh Blvd and Stokes St
- No "Children at Play" sign near the playground on Pinehurst Dr. One child and two senior residents have been hit by vehicles in the Pinehurst Dr and Raleigh Blvd intersections area and there have been multiple motor vehicle accidents
- Children's bicycles noted out by the roads
- Speed bump with faded paint on Minnie Knight Dr

### **Suggestions:**

- Radar speed sign to let drivers know their speed and remind them of the posted speed limit
- Increased police presence to deter speeding if radar speed sign not effective at deterring speeding
- Add "Children at Play" signs near playground and around the neighborhood
- Add blinking caution lights at or near the intersection of Pinehurst Dr and Raleigh Blvd near the neighborhood entrance by the playground
- Consider adding a walk/bike lane to roads within the neighborhood
- Repaint speed bump so drivers can see it more easily and be reminded to drive slowly

### **Comfort and Appeal**

- Some litter, especially on Raleigh Blvd and Stokes St
- Attractive trees planted along Raleigh Blvd, currently too small to provide shade but may eventually grow big enough to provide some shade for walkers.
- Several trees have died
- Stokes has some shade from trees that felt great on this warm summer morning
- There is a nice green space on Stokes St with a large, attractive cedar tree
- Dumpsters in prominent areas on Stokes St near St Francis Ct, reducing comfort and appeal of walking in this area

- A young man was observed walking to McDonalds for work and earlier this week a young woman was observed walking to her job at Hardees.
- Rocky Mount Housing Authority (RM-HA) staff confirmed that children walk to school regularly.

Suggestions:

- Install public trashcan on E Raleigh Blvd, perhaps next to the new bus stop and one on Stokes St near bus stop to potentially reduce litter on those streets
- Replace dead trees along E Raleigh Blvd
- Mileage markers along the route so walkers can keep track of their distance
- Investigate alternatives to dumpsters in prominent locations on Stokes St
- Launch a plogging or plalking group (<https://keepmassbeautiful.org/what-we-do/litter-prevention-cleanup/plogging-plalking-and-pliking.html>)



Mr. Macklin, RM-HA CEO, addressing Walk Audit participants



Mayor Sandy Roberson and Josephine Joyner, neighborhood resident and Y Walking Club member



Walk Audit participants



Evaluating Pinehurst Dr near the playground



Pinehurst Dr near the playground



Potential location for crosswalk to playground and Children at Play sign on Pinehurst Dr



Evaluating intersection at Pinehurst Dr and Raleigh Blvd



Evaluating Raleigh Blvd



Uneven sidewalk



Dumpster in center of neighborhood



Intersection without crosswalk at Baskerville Elementary



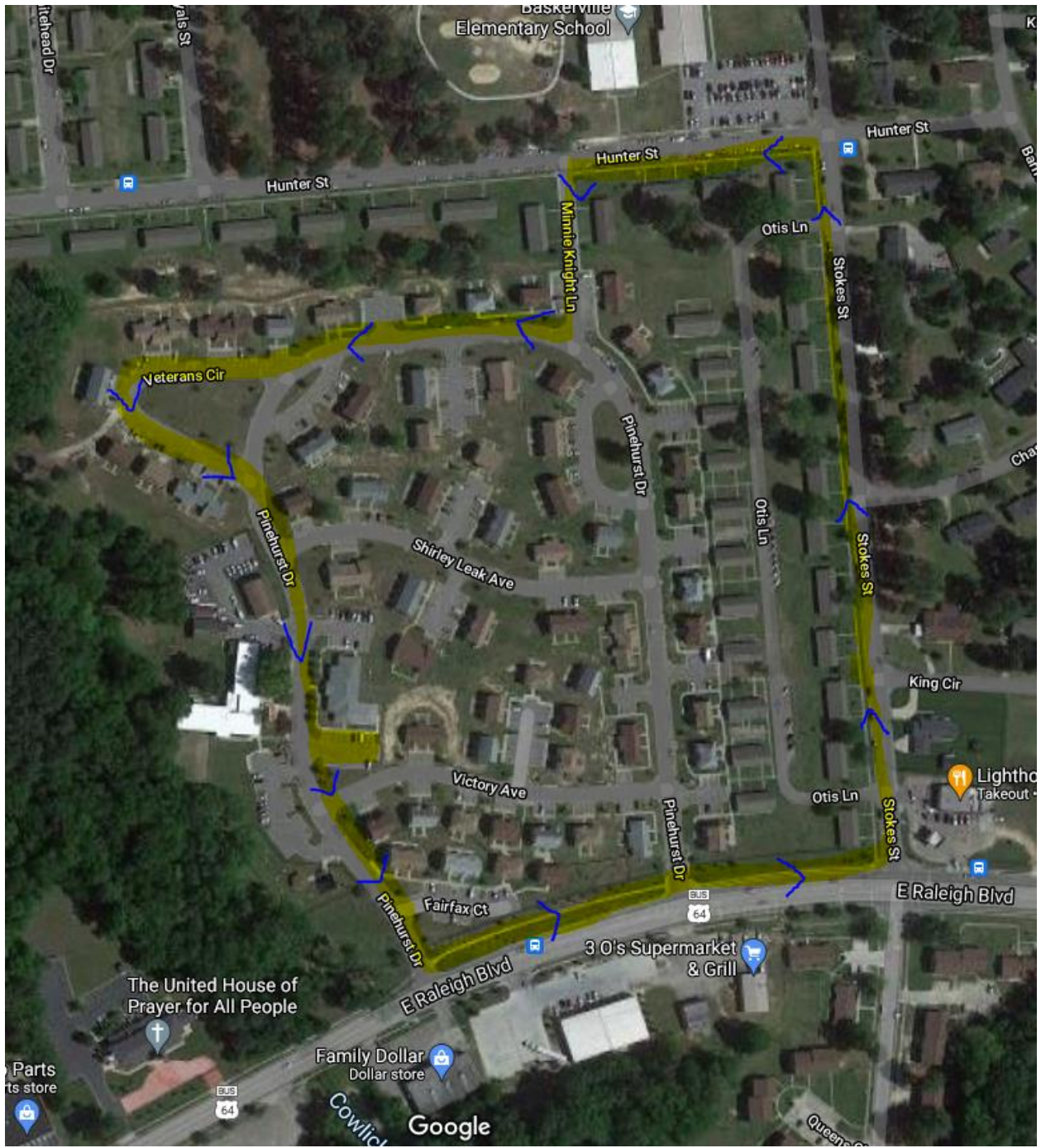
Speed bump with faded paint



Child's bike



Neighborhood resident walking to work



Walk Audit route