Safe Routes To School

For Children Attending Hughes Elementary School

Photo taken by Hwang, Lennon, Knight

Syracuse Community Geography

Report Produced By

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On Behalf Of

The Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association
& Children Attending Hughes Elementary School

May 2007

Introduction

In August 2006, the Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association (OCNA) requested the Syracuse Community Geographer's assistance in evaluating walking and biking safety conditions for children attending Hughes Elementary School. OCNA members are concerned that heavy traffic, inadequate signage, a lack of neighborhood sidewalks, and faded crosswalks create an unsafe environment for children who walk and bike to school.

OCNA members suggested using guidelines and tools developed by the national ***Safe Routes to School*** program to conduct a comprehensive neighborhood assessment of sidewalks, signage, lighting and traffic. In the following months, the Community Geographer, assisted by Nicole Cofrin and students from Syracuse University, created an assessment tool and evaluated the streets and sidewalks within one-half mile of Hughes Elementary School.

This report contains the study results and recommendations. We hope to engage residents in the Outer Comstock neighborhood, children attending Hughes Elementary, and city and school officials in a dialogue about how each can contribute to improving walkability in the neighborhood for *all* neighborhood residents. In addition, we hope that the study results will be helpful in securing federal Safe Routes to School funding for safety improvements.

About Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national program that aspires to empower communities to promote walking and bicycling to school. The first SRTS program in the US was developed in 1997 in Bronx, New York. In 2000, the US Congress funded two pilot SRTS projects through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Since that time, several grassroots SRTS programs have developed across the country, and in 2005, $612 million of federal transportation monies were allocated to The National Safe Routes to School Program to fund community-based SRTS projects across the country.

On September 6, 2007 Governor Elliot Spitzer announced the availability of $32.1 in federal SRTS funding to support school-based transportation infrastructure improvements and public education campaigns across New York. NYS funding should be available in early 2008. It is our hope that the OCNA Safe Routes to School project results can be used to help Syracuse City officials and the Syracuse City School District leverage funding for our community to improve sidewalks, build safer street crossings and develop educational programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school. To learn more about the Safe Routes to School Program, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.

Benefits of Walking and Biking

There are a number of important reasons to encourage our children to bike and walk to school.

- Today, children lead increasingly sedentary lifestyles, which increases their risks for a variety of health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Walking and biking are a great way to increase children's daily physical activity.
- Physical activity before school has proven to improve attention spans and concentration abilities of children while in class.
- More children than ever before are driven to school, which has an adverse effect on traffic congestion and exacerbates air pollution around schools. As more children walk or bike, fewer cars travel through neighborhoods during high traffic hours and fewer cars congest the pick-up and drop-off points at the school.
- Walking and biking can help improve neighborhood safety and create friendlier neighborhoods as people get out and interact with one another, and take notice of their neighborhood.
- Walking and biking to school with adults prepares children to travel independently.

Despite the benefits of walking and biking to school, there are a number of reasons why children living in Syracuse and in communities across the country are walking and biking less often.

1. Inner-city neighborhood decline, crime and violence – real or perceived – may cause many parents to fear for their children's safety when walking and biking to school. Working parents, in particular, often lack the time to accompany their children on their journey to school but will not permit them to walk alone because of safety concerns.
2. Parents also often cite traffic safety concerns as a reason why their children are not permitted to bicycle or walk to school. This is a valid concern, considering that close to 5,000 pedestrians are killed in traffic every year in the United States.
3. The lack of sidewalks and crosswalks, and insufficient sidewalk snow removal during the winter months often force young children to walk in the streets with motorists, which exacerbates the potential for pedestrian injury.
4. Children with disabilities often cannot escape using transportation to school because they too often encounter barriers, such as decayed sidewalks, debris, sidewalks that end abruptly, or do not have a smooth ramp leading into the street.

Project Goals

The goals of the Outer Comstock Neighborhood Safe Routes to School project are to:

- Assess walking and biking safety conditions surrounding Hughes Elementary School. The assessment focuses on sidewalks, crosswalks, curb cuts, signage, traffic and lighting.

- Develop recommendations to improve safety conditions. Specific recommendations for city engineers, neighborhood residents, parents, and school administration are included in this report.

- Create a Safe Routes to Hughes School map for children and parents. The map highlights the safest routes for children walking or biking to Hughes Elementary School.

Approach

We used Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and visual observation to collect and analyze information relating to safety conditions in a one-half mile radius around Hughes Elementary School.

We then developed and pre-tested a Safety Audit Tool to collect standardized information about sidewalk condition, traffic, signage, and lighting within the study area. The safety audit was carried out in spring 2007.

Hughes School administration provided the home addresses of all children attending Hughes during the 2006-07 school year so that we could determine the most common routes of children walking and biking to school.

Hughes Elementary School

Hughes Elementary School is the focal point for our Safe Routes to School assessment.

Located at 345 Jamesville Ave., Syracuse, NY, the school currently serves Pre-K through 6th grade, but may expand to include 7th and 8th grade in the near future.

Study Results

Curb Cuts

A curb cut is a ramp leading smoothly down from a sidewalk to a street. Curb cuts placed at street intersections allow someone in a wheelchair or in a stroller to move onto or off a sidewalk without difficulty. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that curb cuts be put in place when municipal sidewalks are replaced.

The ADA provides a convenient checklist to ensure that curb cuts and crosswalks are ADA compliant:
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/pcatoolkit/chap6chklist.htm

We evaluated the curb cuts at every intersection within the study area. We documented where curb cuts were lacking, and when present, we evaluated whether they were flush with the street, or whether they were excessively chipped or cracked. Chipped and cracked curb cuts prohibit wheelchair and strollers from navigating sidewalks.

Examples of high-quality curb cuts found in the study area.

These curb cuts are so severely cracked and chipped that wheelchair and stroller wheels would be unable to navigate them. The curb cut featured below collects rainwater in a pool, making it difficult to cross the street at the curb cut.

Intersections where curb cuts are severely chipped or cracked

- Benedict Ave (from E Colvin to Oriskany)
- Colvin St (from Garfield to Jamesville)
- Colvin St (from Hughes to Lorraine)
- Colvin St (from Jamesville to Hughes)
- Colvin St (from Lorraine to Comstock)
- Comstock Ave (from Thurber to Vincent)
- Comstock Ave (from Vincent to E Colvin)
- E Brighton Ave (from State St to Thurber St)
- Garfield Ave (from W Colvin to Elk St)
- Harriette Ave (from Vincent to Boise)
- McAllister Ave (from S Salina to S State)
- McAllister Ave (from S State to Dead End)
- McClure Ave (from S Salina to S State)
- McKinley Ave (from S Salina to S State)
- S Salina St (from McAllister to Amherst)
- S Salina St (from McAllister to McClure)
- S Salina St (from McKinley to Amherst)
- Side Street off of Colvin (from Moore to Berwyn)
- Smith Ln (from Jamesville to Fork)
- Vincent St (from Comstock to Jamesville)
- Vincent St (from Goodrich to Comstock)

Intersections where curb cuts are not flush with the street

- Benedict Ave (from E Colvin to Oriskany)
- Boise Dr (from E Colvin to Lorraine)
- Colvin St (from Garfield to Jamesville)
- Colvin St (from Jamesville to Hughes)
- Colvin St (from Lorraine to Comstock)
- Colvin St (from State Street to Garfield)
- Comstock Ave (from Thurber to Vincent)
- Comstock Ave (from Vincent to E Colvin)
- Dougal Ave (One Way)
- E Brighton Ave (from State St to Thurber St)
- Elizabeth St (From State St to Garfield)
- Elk St (from S State to S Salina)
- Garfield Ave (from E Borden to Elizabeth St)
- Garfield Ave (from W Colvin to Elk St)
- McAllister Ave (from S Salina to S State)
- McAllister Ave (from S State to Dead End)
- McKinley Ave (from S Salina to S State)
- Ruth Ave (from Vincent to Boise)
- S Salina St (from E Brighton to McClure)
- S Salina St (from E Lafayette to W Corning)
- S Salina St (from McAllister to Amherst)
- S Salina St (from McAllister to McClure)
- S Salina St (from McKinley to Amherst)
- S State St (from McClure to McAllister)
- S State St (from McKinley to Amherst)
- S State St (from McKinley to Elk)
- Side Street off of Colvin (from Moore to Berwyn)
- Smith Ln (from Jamesville to Fork)
- Vincent St (from Comstock to Jamesville)
- Vincent St (from Goodrich to Comstock)

These photos demonstrate sidewalks that do not have a ramped curb cut leading from the sidewalk to the street. Persons in a wheelchair would be unable to cross the street at these intersections if they were using the sidewalk. Oftentimes, persons in wheelchairs avoid sidewalks in Syracuse altogether because of such barriers. When pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic are combined, the risk of injury and death is greatly increased.

Sidewalks

We evaluated and documented a number of different sidewalk characteristics, including whether:

1. A sidewalk exists on each side of the street.
2. The entire sidewalk is at least 3 ft. wide (as per ADA legislation).
3. In absence of a 3 ft. wide sidewalk, at a minimum there is a path that allows pedestrians to walk on the side of the street, away from motor vehicle traffic.
4. The sidewalk ends abruptly, or does not span the entire length of the street.
5. The sidewalk is made of material other than concrete (e.g. asphalt/blacktop).
6. Sidewalks are obstructed by brush, shrubs or trees.
7. The sidewalk is impossible to walk on due to excessive decay, chips, or cracks.
8. The sidewalk is possible to walk on, but navigating it using a wheelchair is <u>not</u> possible due to excessive decay, chips, or cracks.

Approximately 70% of streets in the ½ mile study radius contain some sort of pathway, regardless of condition or material, that allows pedestrians to walk separate from vehicular traffic. However, because sidewalks are in severe disrepair or end before reaching intersections, it impossible to avoid walking in the streets in some areas. We often witnessed children (and adults) walking in the streets, with traffic, where sidewalks are in poor condition or nonexistent. Hughes school officials reported that during winter months when road conditions are poor, motorists call the school to express concern for children walking in the street. Motorists are fearful of sliding on ice and hitting someone. Children that we spoke with admitted that they would rather walk in plowed streets than arrive to school with wet shoes and socks after walking on unshoveled sidewalks. We also witnessed a father pushing his disabled son's wheelchair down the street on their way home from school. He too explained that sidewalk condition forces them to walk in the street.

Below are examples of sidewalks that are 1) obstructed by overgrown brush, 2) too narrow for a wheelchair to navigate, and 3) walkable but difficult for a wheelchair to pass over.

1

2

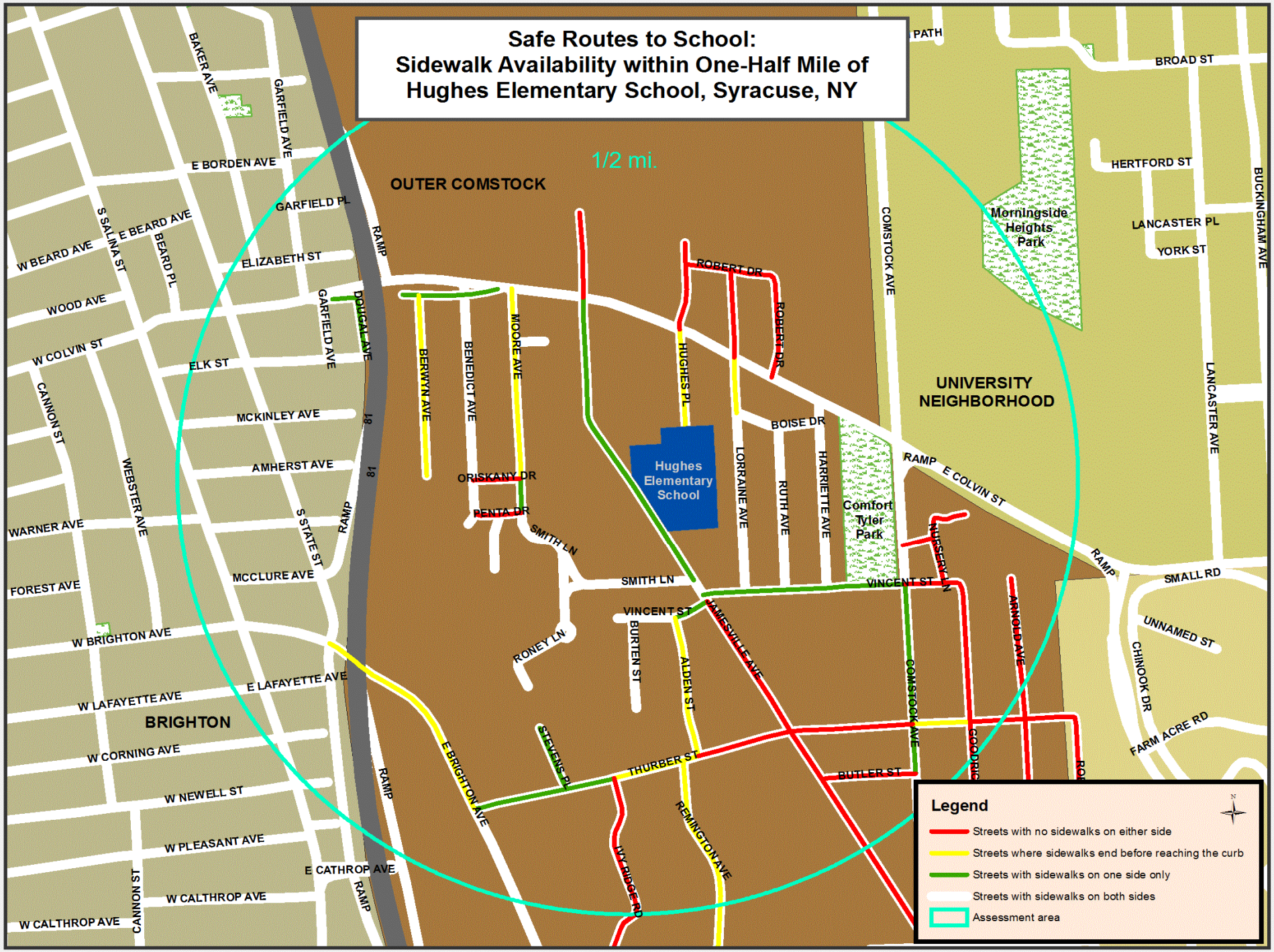
3

Where are the sidewalks?

The map on the next page shows which streets in the one-half mile study area have functional sidewalks on both sides of the street, only one sidewalk on one side of the street, partial sidewalks that end before reaching the curb, or do not contain any sidewalks at all.

Streets that do not contain any sidewalks include Roberts Dr., Oriskany Dr., Penta Dr., Ivy Ridge Rd., Butler St., Arnold Ave., Nursery Ave., Goodrich Ave., Thurber St., Vincent St., and Jamesville Ave., where the school is located.

It should be noted that of the streets that do contain sidewalks, many are in severe disrepair.


Safe Routes to School:
Sidewalk Availability within One-Half Mile of
Hughes Elementary School, Syracuse, NY
1/2 mi.
OUTER COMSTOCK
UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD
BRIGHTON
Hughes Elementary School
Morningside Heights Park
Comfort Tyler Park
BAKER AVE
GARFIELD AVE
E BORDEN AVE
GARFIELD PL
S SALINA ST
E BEARD AVE
W BEARD AVE
BEARD PL
ELIZABETH ST
WOOD AVE
W COLVIN ST
ELK ST
CANNON ST
MCKINLEY AVE
WEBSTER AVE
AMHERST AVE
WARNER AVE
S STATE ST
MCCLURE AVE
FOREST AVE
W BRIGHTON AVE
W LAFAYETTE AVE
E LAFAYETTE AVE
W CORNING AVE
W NEWELL ST
W PLEASANT AVE
E CATHROP AVE
W CALTHROP AVE
RAMP
DOUGLAS AVE
BERWYN AVE
BENEDICT AVE
MOORE AVE
ORISKANY DR
PENTA DR
SMITH LN
RONEY LN
VINCENT ST
BURTEN ST
ALDEN ST
HUGHES PL
ROBERT DR
BOISE DR
LORRAINE AVE
RUTH AVE
HARRIETTE AVE
COMSTOCK AVE
E COLVIN ST
HAMESVILLE AVE
STEVENS PL
THURBER ST
E BRIGHTON AVE
REMINGTON AVE
IVY RIDGE RD
BUTLER ST
NURSERY LN
ARNOLD AVE
COODRIC
PATH
BROAD ST
HERTFORD ST
LANCASTER PL
YORK ST
BUCKINGHAM AVE
LANCASTER AVE
SMALL RD
UNNAMED ST
CHINOOK DR
FARM ACRE RD
Legend
Streets with no sidewalks on either side
Streets where sidewalks end before reaching the curb
Streets with sidewalks on one side only
Streets with sidewalks on both sides
Assessment area

Sidewalks that a wheelchair could not navigate

Someone in a wheelchair would not be able to pass over these sidewalks because they are severely chipped, cracked, uneven, are too narrow or don't span the entire length of the street.

- Amherst Ave (from S Salina to S State)
- Amherst Ave (from S State to Dead End)
- Benedict Ave (from E Colvin to Oriskany) both sides
- Berwyn Ave (from E Colvin to Dead End)
- Boise Dr (from E Colvin to Lorraine) both sides
- Burten St (from Vincent to Dead End)
- Colvin St (from Garfield to Jamesville)
- Dougal Ave (One Way)
- E Brighton Ave (from State St to Thurber St)
- Elizabeth St (From State St to Garfield)
- Garfield Ave (from E Borden to Elizabeth St)
- Garfield Ave (from W Colvin to Elk St) both sides
- Harriette Ave (from Vincent to Boise) both sides
- Lorraine Ave (from Vincent to E Colvin) both sides
- McAllister Ave (from S Salina to S State) both sides
- McAllister Ave (from S State to Dead End)
- McKinley Ave (from S Salina to S State) both sides
- McKinley Ave (from S State to Dead End) both sides
- Ruth Ave (from Vincent to Boise) both sides
- S Salina St (from E Brighton to McClure)
- S Salina St (from McAllister to Amherst)
- S State St (from E Brighton to McClure) both sides
- S State St (from Elizabeth St to W Colvin)
- S State St (from Elk St to W Colvin)
- S State St (from McAllister to Amherst)
- S State St (from McClure to McAllister) both sides
- Stevens St (from Thurber to Dead End) both sides
- Thurber St (from Comstock to Goodrich)
- Vincent St (from Jamesville to Dead End)

Addresses where sidewalks are excessively chipped, cracked or decayed

- 100, 101, 104, 105, from 109 until the end Alden St.
- 228, 216 Amherst Ave.
- Benedict Ave. (Entire sidewalk)
- Berwyn Ave. (Entire sidewalk)
- 212, 116, 108, 113, 117, 201 Boise Dr.
- 336 E Brighton Ave.
- 1st lot on left (no number),111,121,116 Burten St.
- 240 E Colvin St.
- 102 Dougal Ave.
- Next door to 104 (no house number) Elizabeth St.
- 110, 99, 201, 203, 232, 206 Elk St.
- 309, 329, 342, 328, 318 Garfield Ave.
- 292, 272, 260, 238, 230, 212, 216, 203, 257, 281, 285, 289 Harriette Ave.
- 118, 100 Hughes Pl.
- 292, 288, 246, 272, 244, 232, 234, 218, 124, 120, 121, 221, 233, 247, 261, next door (no number) to 213 Lorraine Ave.
- 112, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120 McAllister Ave.
- 227 McKinley Ave.
- 118, 120, 129 Moore Ave.
- 108, 182, 164, 129, 153, 145, 175, 181 Ruth Ave.
- Foodway Express on S. Salina St.
- 2014, 2011, 2126, 2113, 2201, 2222, 2200, 2307, 2311, 2321, 2446, 2407, 2411, from 1906 to 1832, 1912 S. State St.
- 107, 115, 201 Stevens St.
- 229, 233, 243 Thurber St.
- 129, 128, 109, 119, 125, 129 Vincent St.

Addresses where sidewalks are made with material other than concrete (e.g. asphalt)

- 100,101,109 Alden St.
- 151, 213, 217, 216, 220, 221, 228 Amherst Ave.
- Benedict Ave. (Every property on street, both sides)
- 108, 100 Boise Dr.
- Berwyn Ave. (Entire sidewalk)
- 115, 119, 120, 112 Burten St.
- 708, 1124 E Colvin St.
- 308 Dougal Ave.
- 336 E Brighton Ave.
- 111 Elizabeth St.
- 321, 325, 345, 347-9, 353, 310, 350, 328, 525, 508 Garfield Ave.
- 280, 238, 203, 205, 221, 225, 231, 241, 251, 257, 267, 271, 277, 281 Harriette Ave.
- 131, 137, 141 Hughes Pl.
- Every house except 254 is asphalt on Jamesville Ave.
- 292, 284, 286, 252, 218, 200, 128, 101, 121, 211 Lorraine Ave.
- In front of Cole Muffler,104,107, 201 McAllister Ave.
- Corner lot (no number),118 McClure Ave.
- 158, 115, 111, 218, 211, 233 McKinley Ave.
- Roney Ln. (Entire sidewalk)
- 182, 117, 135, 137 Ruth Ave.
- 2707, in front of Dunk and Bright, 2858, 2846, 2924, in front of Cole Muffler, 2501, every property from McKinley St. to Amherst Ave. S Salina St.
- Between 2014 and 2022, 2010, 2011, 2415, 2420, 2201, 2218, 2107, 2117, 2121, 2127, 2122 S State St.
- Smith Ln. (Entire sidewalk)
- 114 Stevens St.
- 225, 269 Thurber St.
- Corner of Alden St. and Vincent St., 204, 218, 222, 230, 314, 324, 336, 340, 147, 149 Vincent St.

Targeted Sidewalk Construction

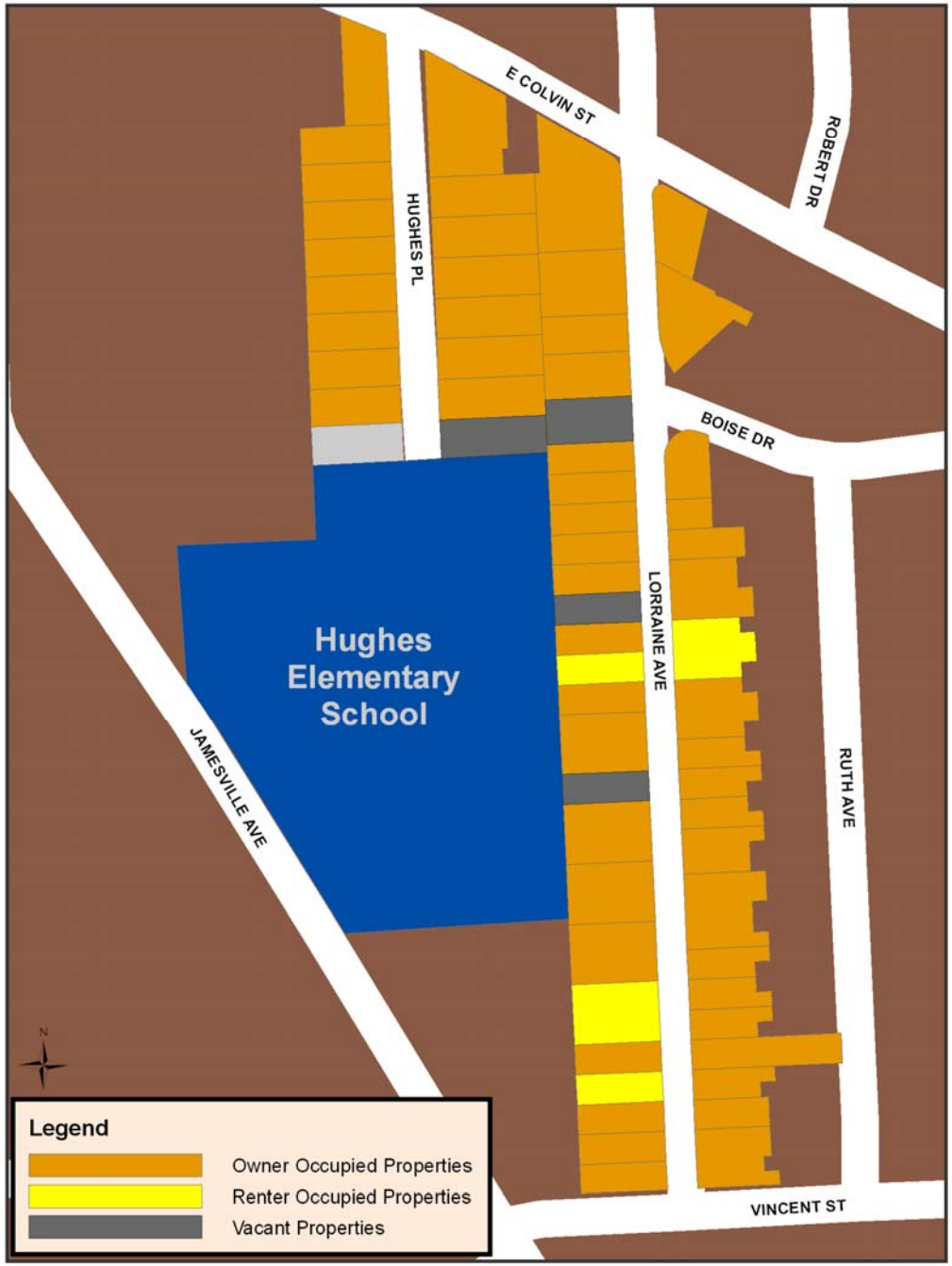
Within the City of Syracuse, repair and upkeep of sidewalks is the responsibility of individual property owners.*

This city ordinance makes it very difficult to maintain good quality sidewalk networks because the majority of property owners do not want to bear the financial burden of repairing and maintaining the sidewalk(s) adjacent to their properties.

However, when property owners join together to repair a contiguous stretch of sidewalks, especially those that are used by several children and community members, there are mechanisms available to help lessen the financial burden of maintaining sidewalks. Typically, when a stretch of sidewalk is replaced at one time, the cost is reduced. In addition, residents can lobby for Syracuse Neighborhood Initiative funding to repair sidewalks where pedestrian traffic is heavy and the need for a sidewalk is great.

The map on the next page demonstrates two streets where pedestrian traffic is heavy as a result of children traveling to Hughes School, and where a majority of homes are owner occupied. In our assessment, it makes practical sense to work with property owners to repair the entire length of sidewalks on Hughes Place and Lorraine Avenue.

*Syracuse City Ordinance, Section 24-3



Hughes Place and Lorraine Avenue contain entrance ways to Hughes School but there are not two full sidewalks on both sides of the streets, and the sidewalks that do exist are in ill-repair.

According to tax records, it appears that the homes on both streets are almost entirely owner occupied.

Therefore, it may be advantageous to discuss options for collectively replacing the sidewalks with property owners on these streets because they are regularly utilized by children walking to school.

Signage

The frequency and locations of children at play, speed limit, reduced school zone speed limit, crosswalk warning, and school zone signs were recorded for each of the 71 street segments in the study area.

Only one Children at Play sign was observed on Elk St between Dougal Ave. and S. State St. This was surprising given the number of children that were witnessed in the neighborhood, the number of toys observed in residents' lawns, and the 2000 Census, which indicates that there is a sizable population of children below the age of 18 residing in the area.

Unless otherwise posted, the motor vehicle speed limit throughout the City of Syracuse is 30 miles per hour. As demonstrated by the graph on the next page, speed limit signs are posted with frequency throughout the study area.

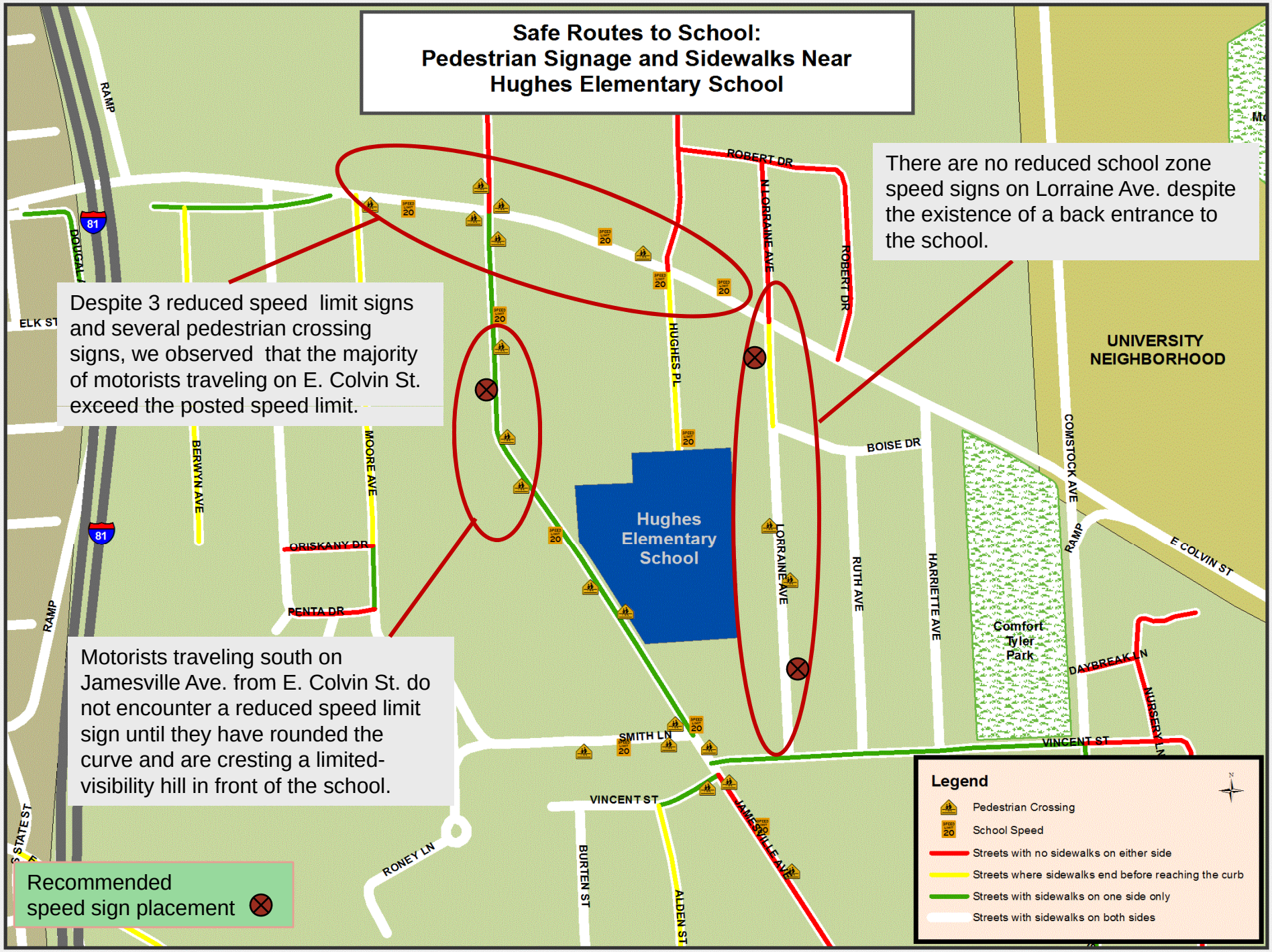
Nineteen speed limit signs were observed in the ½ mile study area. About one-half of the speed limit signs are located on the streets leading to Hughes Elementary School.

School Warning & Crossing Signs

As the map on the next page demonstrates, there are several signs to alert motorists to pedestrian crossings and school entrance ways in the area surrounding Hughes School.

However, motorists traveling south on Jamesville Ave. (from E. Colvin St.) do not encounter school zone signs until after rounding the curve and cresting the hill. In fact, there are more school warning signs for motorists traveling north on Jamesville Ave. away from the school then there are traveling south, toward the school. School zone signs on Jamesville Ave. might be more effective if they were placed 200 yards closer to E. Colvin St.

There are no reduced speed signs on Lorraine Ave., despite the existence of a back entrance into the school. School crossing signs alert motorists to the Lorraine Ave. entranceway, but there are no reduced speed signs on Lorraine Ave.


Safe Routes to School:
Pedestrian Signage and Sidewalks Near
Hughes Elementary School
There are no reduced school zone speed signs on Lorraine Ave. despite the existence of a back entrance to the school.
Despite 3 reduced speed limit signs and several pedestrian crossing signs, we observed that the majority of motorists traveling on E. Colvin St. exceed the posted speed limit.
Motorists traveling south on Jamesville Ave. from E. Colvin St. do not encounter a reduced speed limit sign until they have rounded the curve and are cresting a limited-visibility hill in front of the school.
Recommended speed sign placement
Hughes Elementary School
UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD
Comfort Tyler Park
ROBERT DR
N LORRAINE AVE
HUGHES PL
BOISE DR
COMSTOCK AVE
E COLVIN ST
RUTH AVE
HARRIETTE AVE
DAYBREAK LN
NURSERY LN
VINCENT ST
SMITH LN
JAMESVILLE AVE
ALDEN ST
BURTEN ST
RONEY LN
ORISKANY DR
RENTA DR
MOORE AVE
BERWYN AVE
ELK ST
S STATE ST
RAMP
81
Legend
Pedestrian Crossing
School Speed
Streets with no sidewalks on either side
Streets where sidewalks end before reaching the curb
Streets with sidewalks on one side only
Streets with sidewalks on both sides

Crosswalks

A pedestrian crossing or crosswalk is a designated point on a road at which some means are employed to assist pedestrians wishing to cross. Crosswalks are designed to keep pedestrians together where they can be seen by motorists, and where they can cross most safely with the flow of vehicular traffic.

Pedestrian crossings are often at intersections, but may also be at other points on busy roads that would otherwise be perilous to attempt to cross.

This photo shows the crosswalk in front of Hughes Elementary School. Weather and wear have left the crosswalk barely visible to motorists. Nearly every crosswalk in the study area is similarly faded and in need of repainting.

Crosswalks in need of painting

- Berwyn Ave (from E Colvin to Dead End)
- Colvin St (from Garfield to Jamesville)
- Colvin St (from Jamesville to Hughes)
- Colvin St (from Lorraine to Comstock)
- Colvin St (from State Street to Garfield)
- Comstock Ave (from Acorn Path to E Colvin)
- Comstock Ave (from Thurber to Vincent)
- Comstock Ave (from Vincent to E Colvin)
- Dougal Ave (One Way)
- E Brighton Ave (from S Salina to State St)
- E Brighton Ave (from State St to Thurber St)
- Garfield Ave (from W Colvin to Elk St)
- Jamesville Ave (from E Colvin to Vincent)
- Jamesville Ave (from Vincent to Thurber)
- McClure Ave (from S Salina to S State)
- S Salina St (from E Brighton to McClure)
- S State St (from E Brighton to McClure)
- S State St (from Elizabeth St to W Colvin)
- S State St (from Elk St to W Colvin)
- S State St (from McClure to McAllister)
- Smith Ln (from Jamesville to Fork)
- Vincent St (from Comstock to Jamesville)
- Vincent St (from Goodrich to Comstock)

Streets where motorists exceed the speed limit

Unless otherwise posted, the Syracuse citywide speed limit is 30 MPH. The school zone speed limit is 20 MPH.

Roughly one-third of observed motorists did not appear to obey the posted speed limit. Excessive speed was most frequently observed by motorists traveling on Jamesville Ave., E. Colvin St., Comstock Ave., E. Brighton Ave., Moore Ave., S. Salina St., and S. State St.

Heavy Traffic Flow

We classified streets as having heavy traffic flow when more than 10 cars drove by during a 2-3 minute period. Heavy traffic flow was observed on streets listed to the right.

Despite heavy traffic, the majority of observed motorists on these streets appeared to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and obeyed posted stop signs, stop lights and yield signs.

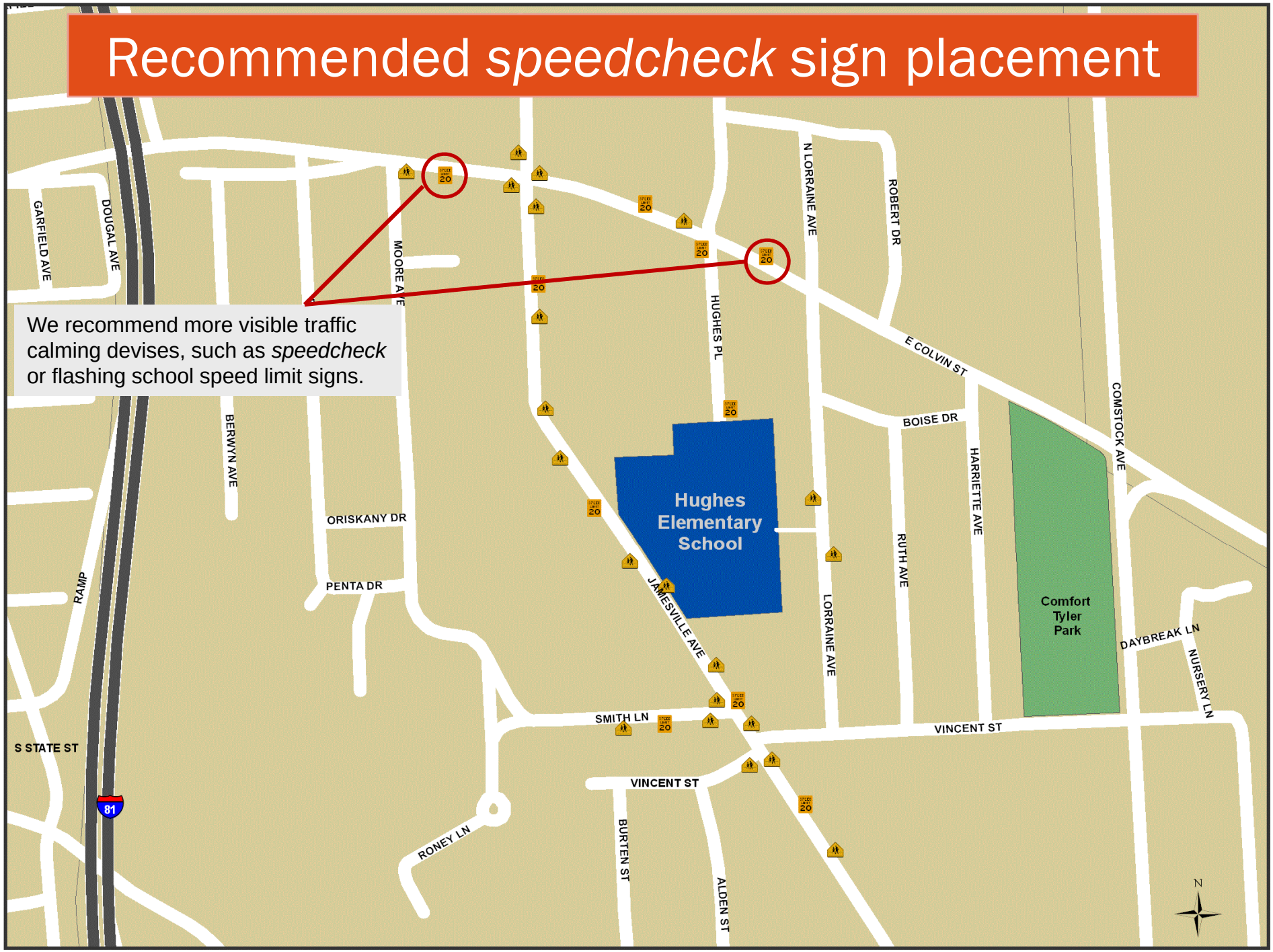
- E. Colvin St.
- Comstock Ave.
- E. Brighton Ave.
- Hughes Pl.
- Jamesville Ave.
- McClure Ave.
- Moore Ave.
- Off of E. Colvin from Moore to Berwyn
- S. Salina St.
- S. State St.
- Thurber St.
- Vincent St.

E. Colvin St. is a particularly busy traffic corridor connecting the Southside to the Syracuse University South Campus and university neighborhoods. Three 20 MPH speed limit signs – one for motorists traveling east, and two for motorists traveling west – appear to provide little cautionary incentive for motorists to drive slowly.

SPEEDCHECK-1520F installed on Nike campus (Shown with solar power option)

To address this, we suggest alternative traffic calming devises, such as replacing the existing speed limit signage with *speedcheck* or flashing speed signs. *Speedcheck* signs are proven to be more effective traffic calming devises. The map on the next page shows where these signs might be most useful.

Recommended *speedcheck* sign placement



Lighting

Ample street lighting was documented on all but 7 of the 71 assessed street segments.

However, it should be noted that street lighting is intended for motorists and is not meant to light pedestrian pathways. No sidewalks in the assessment area have pedestrian lighting.

Street segments with no street lamps

- Hughes Pl .(from E. Colvin to Dead End)
- Jamesville Ave. (from Dead End to E. Colvin)
- Lorraine Ave. (from E. Colvin to Robert)
- Robert Dr. (from E. Colvin to Hughes)
- Roney Ln. (from Fork to Dead End – including the roundabout)
- Smith Ln. (from Fork to Penta)
- Smith Ln. (from Jamesville to Fork)

The Interstate 81 overpasses at E. Brighton Ave. and E. Colvin St. are two areas that lack street lighting. In addition, the E. Brighton Ave./ I-81 overpass area does not have a sidewalk. Consequently, pedestrians walking through these high-traffic corridors at night are at risk.

Both pathways are regularly used by students walking from the Southside to Hughes School. We also observed several community members walking under the overpasses after dark.

E. Colvin St. and I-81 overpass

E. Brighton Ave. and I-81 overpass

Study Recommendations

Recommendations for Neighbors

1. **Place trash and lawn debris on the grassy area between sidewalks and streets, not on the sidewalk**. On trash removal day, we noted several trash cans and lawn debris littering the sidewalks, creating obstacles for pedestrians. Obstacles force pedestrians (especially wheelchairs and baby strollers) to walk amidst traffic. When pedestrians and motorists must share the road, the risk of injury is greatly increased.

Recommendations for Neighbors

2. **Drive the posted speed limits, especially in school zones**. Motorists traveling Jamesville Ave, E. Colvin St, and Comstock Ave, in particular, regularly disregard posted speed limits. Traveling at excessive speeds decreases motorists' ability to stop quickly. Hang up those phones while you're at it!

3. **Yield to pedestrians**. Motorists should stop and allow pedestrians to safely cross the street at all crosswalks.

Recommendations for Neighbors

4. **Be visible in your neighborhood or volunteer to chaperone children walking to school**: Simply being outdoors during the hours that children walk to and from school can help to create a safer environment. Studies show that in neighborhoods where residents are frequently outside milling about, there is less street crime. "It takes a village" can go a long way toward creating a caring neighborhood where everyone looks out for each others' children.

5. **Volunteer to lead a "walking school bus".** A walking school bus is a group of children that walk to and from school in a group. The 'walking school bus stops to pick up children along the route, just as a real school bus would. Walking school buses accompanied by an adult have proven to be a safe alternative for walking to school in many communities across the country.

Recommendations for Neighbors

6. **Trim hedges and shrubs that encroach onto sidewalks**. Several homes have hedge rows, low hanging trees and plants that have grown out onto the sidewalk. Overgrown shrubs decrease the width of sidewalks, rendering them impassible for wheelchairs and strollers.

Addresses where sidewalks are obstructed by shrubs or brush

- 100, 103, 112 Boise Dr.
- 108 Berwyn Ave.
- 115 Amherst Ave.
- 145 E. Brighton Ave.
- 164, 168, 178 Ruth Ave.
- 199 Elk St.
- 257, 2311 S. State St.
- 239 Thurber St.
- 241 McKinley Ave.
- 288, 289, 296 Lorraine Ave.
- 289, 292 Harriette Ave.
- 529 Garfield Ave.
- Corner of Ruth and Vincent
- Entire length of Smith Lane

Recommendations for Neighbors

7. **In the winter months, shovel sidewalks as often as needed**. Syracuse law require residents to clear snow and ice from sidewalks by 6:00 p.m. of the day following accumulation. For safety's sake, daily snow removal is often necessary in Syracuse. We witnessed children walking in the street during heavy snow accumulation because so few residents regularly shovel their sidewalks. Children admitted that they preferred to walk in the street rather than get their socks and shoes wet walking along snow covered sidewalks.

Recommendations for Neighbors

8. **If your sidewalk is in disrepair, consider having it replaced**. Maintaining sidewalks is the responsibility of property owners in Syracuse. Concrete is the only acceptable material for sidewalk replacement. Asphalt, tarvia, and blacktop are prohibited.

   The City's Sidewalk Assessment Program allows property owners to pay for sidewalk repair and replacement over a ten-year period, at an annual finance rate of 7.4%. The cost is incorporated into annual property tax bills. Under this program, the city arranges for construction, and guarantees the sidewalk for two years.

Reporting Unsafe Sidewalks

To report the location of a dangerous sidewalk or crosswalk, call **448-CITY** (448-2489)

Non-ADA compliant curb cut on Lorraine Ave.

Faded crosswalk at Hughes Pl. and E. Colvin St.

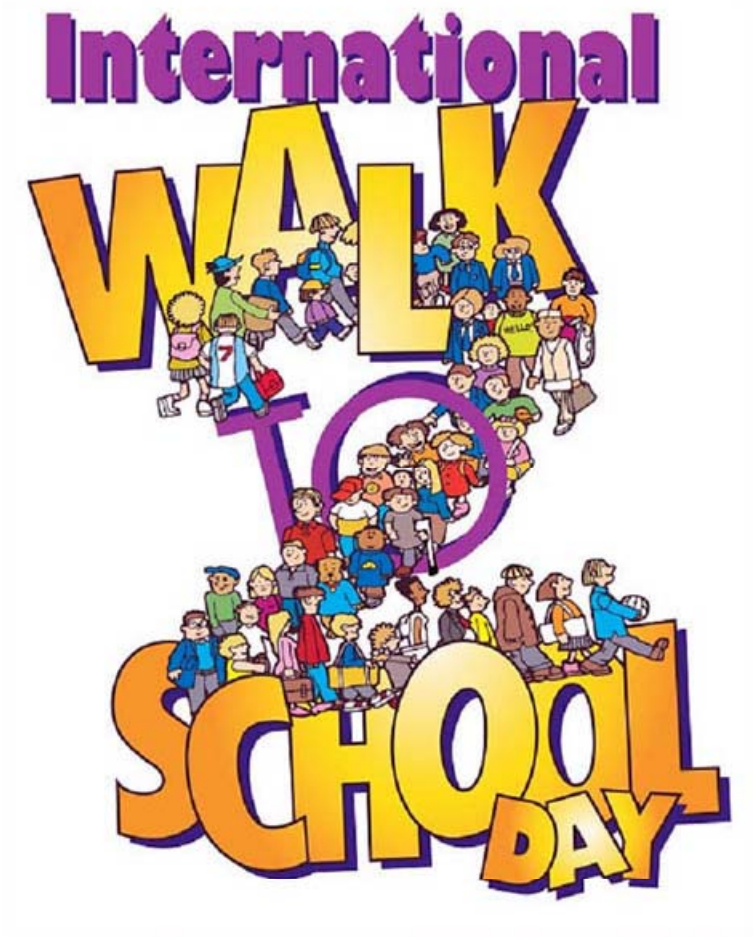
Recommendations for School Officials

Participate in International Walk to School Day on October 3, 2007.

1. Use lesson plans, activities, and flyers developed by the Safe Routes to School program to teach good safety habits.

   Initiative your own Safe Routes to School program to educate children, parents and community members about the benefits of walking and biking and the importance of pedestrian safety.

   To learn more and download materials:
   www.saferoutestoschool.org
   www.iwalktoschool.org
   www.walktoschool-usa.org/



Recommendations for School Officials

2. **Help parents and children to organize walking school buses and bicycle trains**. A walking school bus and bicycle train both consist of groups of students accompanied by adults that walk or bicycle a pre-planned route to school. Routes can originate from a particular neighborhood. They may operate daily, weekly or monthly. Often, they are started in order to address parents' concerns about traffic and personal safety while providing a chance for parents and children to socialize.

   Information on how to organize walking school buses and bicycle trains can be found at: www.walkingschoolbus.org/ and www.saferoutesinfo.org/guide/walking_school_bus/index.cfm

3. **Designate one school exit for walkers and bikers and one for buses and cars**. To eliminate potential injuries, require all children that walk and bike home from school to exit the school through the Jamesville Ave. exit. This exit is where the crossing guard is posted. Children leaving from the Hughes Place exit are not monitored. In addition, the Hughes Pl. exit is the pickup place for children leaving school in cars. Injuries are more likely when children leave on foot through a parking lot where parents are pulling in and out to pick up children.

Recommendations for School Officials

4. **Set up bike racks to encourage children to bike to school**. The lack of a secure parking space for bikes keeps many children from riding their bike to school. Leaving a bicycle unattended, even for a short time, can result in damage or theft. Functional bike racks that are conveniently located encourages people to ride bikes. To learn more about functional bike racks, visit: www.bicyclinginfo.org/pdf/bikepark.pdf

5. **Teach children bicycle safety.** Several lesson plan and activity resources are available online, including materials provided by www.bicyclinginfo.org and the 10 Smart Routes to Bicycle Safety: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/10Smartroutesbicycle/

Recommendations for City Engineers

"Engineering" broadly refers to design, implementation, operation and maintenance of traffic control devices or physical measures. To safely walk or bicycle to school along a street or separate path, or to cross a street along the way, children need well-designed, well-built and well-maintained facilities. Engineering improvements can foster children's safety and enable more bicycling and walking. Effective improvements do not always require substantial funds. For example, signs and paint for crosswalks are relatively inexpensive and can make a big difference. Other engineering improvements will require substantial time and financial commitment, such as sidewalk construction and maintenance, pedestrian lighting, and the implementation of certain traffic calming devises. Safe Routes to School federal funding is available to help offset the costs of engineering improvements.

Overall, we recommend that Jamesville Ave., Hughes Pl., and Lorraine Ave. be given priority with regard to any improvements to crosswalks, sidewalks, and signage because they are the entry points to Hughes School and utilized by the greatest number of children.

Recommendations for City Engineers

1. **Repaint existing crosswalks**. A list of crosswalks in need of repainting is included on page 34 of this report. We recommend replacing the existing faded double-line crosswalks on Jamesville Ave. (at the school's front entrance) and at the intersection of Jamesville Ave. and E. Colvin St. with cross-hatch crosswalks. Cross-hatch crosswalks are more visible to motorists.

Recommendations for City Engineers

2. **Implement improved traffic calming devises on E. Colvin St**. One calming devise to consider is replacing school zone speed limit signs with flashing light speed signs or *speedcheck* signs. Suggested locations for these devises are indicated on the map on page 38.
3. **Post reduced speed signs on Lorraine Ave**. A number of children were witnessed entering Hughes via the pathway on Lorraine Ave. School zone speed signs may help alert motorists to children walking to school along Lorraine Ave.
4. **Add street lighting to E. Brighton Ave. and E. Colvin St. / Interstate 81 overpasses**. Children from the Southside must walk under the I-81 overpasses going to and from school. This area is dark and potentially dangerous.
5. **Continue upgrading curb cuts so that they are compliant with America Disability Act legislation**. Curb cuts in need of repair are listed on pages 17 and 18. Many additional intersections lack curb cuts altogether.
6. **Do not obstruct sidewalks on trash removal day**. Informing trash collectors that they should not place emptied trash bins on sidewalks can greatly reduce obstacles.

Recommendations for City Engineers

And most importantly…

7. **Work with Syracuse City School District officials to apply for federal Safe Routes to School funding**. In early 2008, $38.1 million dollars will be available in NYS to assist local communities to make safer routes to school. The funding can be used to support infrastructure and non-infrastructure improvements (e.g. municipality sidewalk improvement, educational campaigns and law enforcement). Funding proposals *must* demonstrate partnership between the municipal government and school districts in order to be considered.

   For more information, contact the NYS Safe Routes to School Coordinator: http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/contacts/NY.cfm

To Learn More

If you are interested to learn more about the National Safe Routes to School Program, visit:
http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/

To learn more about Syracuse Community Geography, visit:
www.communitygeography.com

Acknowledgements

- Gloria Sage: President, Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association
- Board members of the Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association
- Iverna Minor: Principal of Hughes Elementary School
- Frank Fiello: Former Principal of Hughes Elementary School
- Matt Tisser, Dana Roberts, Rob Magliaro, Amy Work: data collection assistance
- Karen Ventrone: Syracuse University Government and Community Relations