

February 15th, 2011

Walk Safely Milwaukie Project Report

Presented to PSAC by the Ardenwald/Johnson Creek Neighborhood District Association

The following information was collected utilizing an online questionnaire located at the Ardenwald.org website. Emails were sent to the AJC NDA mailing list informing residents of the presence of the questionnaire and explaining its purpose and goals. The questionnaire received twenty responses over the twelve days it was active (February 1st through 12th).

A series of questions were asked to better understand general walking and biking behavior. An emphasis was placed on identifying factors that influence these activities, such as infrastructure, behavior, and weather.

Participants were free to write whatever they pleased and were in no way limited to multiple choice options. The challenge associated with this freedom is finding a way to categorize and analyze the collected data. This report attempts to organize the answers on a per question basis. A bullet point format was used in an attempt to make the results easy to understand. Identical or similar answers are represented by noting in parenthesis the number of participants who mentioned that item. Some questions also include notes in an attempt to draw some conclusions from responses.

It is our hope that PSAC will be able to leverage the information shared by our neighbors as they examine and discuss the NDA WSMP reports in February and subsequently begin the project development phase in March. This program presents an opportunity to pool data from all of Milwaukie's NDAs and make informed decisions about funding projects that bring the greatest benefit to our residents.

Where do you walk or ride a bike most often? What design aspects or features make these streets pleasant or troublesome for walking or biking?

The information below shows a heavy use of the major roads with a gradual reduction of use as the streets become smaller and more distant from the bigger roads (no surprises there). Sidewalk and automobile traffic issues were by far the most frequently noted problems. Sidewalks are either missing in many highly utilized locations, or are broken, uneven, and blocked by poles. Traffic concerns were dominated by speeding, noise, and a failure to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks.

- SE 32nd Ave (13)
 - Auto traffic does not stop for pedestrians at crosswalks
 - Sign posts and telephone poles in sidewalks
 - Sidewalks and bike lanes increase the safety on 32nd
 - Sidewalks are narrow and uneven

- SE 42nd Ave (10)
 - No bike lane
 - Sidewalks are like a roller coaster
- SE Roswell St (10)
 - Cars travel too fast on the new road
 - Traffic slower than on JCB, so walking is more pleasant
- Springwater Trail (8)
 - Near 32nd
 - SE Sherrett St. entrance
- SE Johnson Creek Blvd (7)
 - Traffic is too fast – too much noise
 - Too many cars
- SE 45th Ave(5)
 - Traffic is too fast – dangerous for small children
- SE Harrison St (5)
- SE 29th Ave (4)
 - Uncontrolled 4-way stops (right of way not understood or ignored)
 - No sidewalks
 - Potholes and general neglect
 - Visibility issues at some corners (vegetation and light poles)
 - Less traffic and fewer speeders than 32nd
 - Good access route to the Springwater Trail
- SE 36th Ave (4)
- SE 37th Ave (4)
- SE Harvey St (4)
 - Needs sidewalks
 - No shoulder room to walk on the south side of the street
 - Parking on north side makes walking dangerous
 - Signs direct cyclists to take this route as well
 - Traffic moves quickly (cut through to 42nd)
 - TriMet buses use this street and there are no sidewalks for pedestrians
 - Water Tower Park is not a safe destination w/o sidewalks
- SE Balfour St (3)
- SE King Rd (3)
 - Sidewalk problems
- SE Van Water St (3)
 - No sidewalks
- SE Olsen St (3)
- SE 28th Pl (2)
- SE 40th Ave (2)
 - Sidewalks are ok, until they end after King Road
- SE Rockwood St (2)
- SE Wake St (2)
- SE 33rd Ave(1)
- SE 34th Ct (1)
- SE 41st Ave(1)
 - No sidewalks
- SE Fieldcrest St/Dr (1)
- SE Filbert St (1)

- SE Floss St (1)
- Linwood (1)
- SE Mason Ln (1)
- SE Monroe St (1)
- SE Tacoma St (1)
- Highway 224 (1)
 - Need a safe and comfortable way to cross the expressway for downtown access
 - Sidewalks and bike lanes increase the safety on JCB

What/where are the most significant physical barriers to walking or biking in your neighborhood?

Sidewalk problems easily trump the other physical barrier concerns. Once again the main focus is on a general lack of sidewalks and issues with existing ones. Speeding, poor lighting, and a lack of shade trees also received some attention.

- Lack of sidewalks (12)
 - Parked cars force you into the street
- Bad sidewalks (7)
 - Uneven or broken
 - Blocked by poles and mailboxes
 - Too narrow
- Speeding cars (3)
- Lack of shade trees (3)
- Poor lighting (3)
 - Street lighting
 - Springwater trail lighting
- Lack of bike lanes (2)
- Vegetation blocking corner visibility (2)
- Traffic cutting through neighborhoods to avoid main streets (2)
- Street Crossings (1)
 - 32nd was specifically mentioned
- Noisy traffic conditions (1)
- Potholes (1)

What are the most important non-physical barriers to walking and biking in your neighborhood?

The overall opinion is that safety and generally poor weather conditions represent the largest non-physical barriers to walking and biking. Some of the safety concerns, such as a lack of sidewalks and bike lanes, definitely deserve a mention in the physical barrier category as well.

- Safety (9)
 - Harvey Street and JCB were mentioned specifically
 - Speeders on 37th between King and Harvey
 - Drivers not paying attention
 - Crosswalk right of way issues
 - Lack of sidewalks
 - Lack of bike lanes
 - Untrimmed vegetation along streets creates an obstruction

- Poor Weather (8)
- Lack of time (4)
- Boring neighborhoods (3)
 - Lack of vegetation
 - Unattractive or poorly maintained homes

What types of street improvements and features do you think could make walking and biking more safe or pleasant at these specific locations?

The desire for sidewalks appears to be the main focus once again. Sidewalks, crosswalk safety, street maintenance, and more shade trees were mentioned the largest number of times.

- Sidewalks & Crosswalks (15)
 - Focus on busy streets, smaller streets might be okay
 - Enforce pedestrian rights at crosswalks
 - Relocate posts and utility poles so they don't block the sidewalk
 - Need a better crosswalk at 37th and King
 - Planting strips between sidewalks and streets
- Streets (8)
 - Fix potholes
 - Repave streets with no sidewalks and crumbling edges
 - Improve lighting
 - Add vegetated medians
 - Add bike lanes
 - Add bulb-outs
 - Improve side streets to get pedestrians and bikers off of the busy main roads
 - Speed bumps (Roswell was mentioned specifically)
- Shade trees (7)
- Springwater Trail (5)
 - Improve lighting
 - Better connection with the neighborhood at Sherrett Street
 - Bike and pedestrian friendly paving connection
 - Lighting
 - Trash can
 - Resting area/shelter
- Public Art (4)
 - Some want art (2) because it adds interest, but...
 - Some don't want art (2) because it requires maintenance and attracts vandals.
- Walking groups or clubs (4)
- Automobiles (2)
 - Limit parking on the north side of Harvey St.
 - Limit parking to one side of the street near the Ardenwald School on school days
 - Vigorously enforce existing speed limits
 - Discourage cut through traffic that doesn't belong in the neighborhood
- Weather Shelters along major streets to sit out rain storms (2)
- Informational handouts, mail, or PSA (2)
 - Explain why we pay the same tax rate as people in cities, local counties, and neighborhoods, but we don't have sidewalks or storm drainage.
 - Make a PSA about stopping for pedestrians
 - Make a PSA about paying attention to your surroundings while walking

- Improve vision at intersections (1)
 - Trim or remove problem shrubs and trees
 - Move utility poles that block or limit vision

What types of educational programs or encouragement campaigns could help people overcome these barriers and increase the frequency of walking and biking?

Many participants were either not interested in this question or simply had no ideas. The ideas that were submitted are worthy of additional attention. The response stating educational programs are not effective is definitely worth some scrutiny. Are some kinds of programs more effective than others? If so, we should definitely focus on those.

- Not sure or not interested in participating (9)
- Special Events (4)
 - Bike to school
 - Organized bike rides to local parks
 - “How far can Milwaukie walk” campaign. Choose a place to walk to in the world and then walk an equivalent distance while staying in Milwaukie.
- Newspaper articles about the benefits of regular walking/biking. (1)
- Signs (1)
 - Speeding alerts
- Incentives (1)
 - Coupons for local merchants for walking/biking to their shops
- Educational programs are not effective. People will utilize the most convenient method to get around. (1)

How would you describe the general driving behavior and traffic problems in your neighborhood?

- Lots of speeding by residents and others. (4)
- Most drivers are reasonable, but there’s always a few who go too fast. (4)
- Neighbors drive carefully, but people cutting through drive too fast. (3)
- Most traffic is from residents: many are cautious due to the lack of sidewalks, however there are always some who drive too quickly and don’t give walkers/bikers enough space. (1)
- Drivers are courteous for the most part on side streets. Major streets suffer from excessive speeds and failure to observe stop signs. (1)
- Acceptable – no real problems. (1)
- Real Iowa manners in general. JCB is screwed up enough to be lovable. (1)
- Most drivers are very considerate of pedestrians. (1)

What are the specific locations where driver behavior is particularly problematic?

For the most part, major streets once again received the most scrutiny. Speeding is the biggest perceived issue, followed closely by crosswalk problems. Crosswalk concerns appear to be related to the failure of drivers to stop for pedestrians or the lack of crosswalks at popular crossing areas.

- SE 32nd Ave (8)
 - Crosswalks
 - Speeding

- SE Johnson Creek Blvd (5)
- SE 42nd Ave(4)
- SE Harvey St (3)
 - Speeding between 32nd and 40th.
- SE Roswell St (3)
 - Speeding
 - Crosswalks
- SE Van Water St (2)
 - Crosswalks
 - Speeding
- SE 37th Ave (2)
 - Speeding
- SE 41st Ave(1)
 - Speeding
- SE Harrison St (1)
 - Speeding down the hill towards 32nd
- SE Wake St (1)
 - Unable to fit two cars due to parking near Ardenwald School parking lot entrance

What types of enforcement, educational programs, or street design projects do you think could improve driver behavior and/or calm traffic at these locations?

- Sign campaign (5)
- Speed bumps (4)
- Crosswalk enforcement by police (3)
- Increased citations for speed violations (3)
- Sidewalks (3)
- Rumble strips (2)
- A movable speed monitor that displays driver's speed (2)
- Traffic calming islands with vegetation (2)
- Bike lanes (1)
- Narrower streets (1)
- More stop signs (1)
- Limit truck traffic to main streets only (1)
- Remove vegetation that blocks vision on corners (1)
- Congestion calms traffic (1)
- Allow parking on one side of the street only (1)

The residents of the AJC NDA would like to thank PSAC, the City of Milwaukie, and our fellow NDAs for the time and effort they are expending on the Walk Safely Milwaukie Program. Each person who responded to our questionnaire demonstrated that they cared enough to be a partner in this endeavor. Please contact me if any questions arise concerning the content of this report. I'll do my very best to provide additional information and clarifications as needed.

Thank you,

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