

OTTAWA BIKE AUDIT REPORT

11.12.24



This project was funded by a grant from AARP. The AARP Community Challenge is a grant program to make tangible improvements in communities that jump-start long-term change. It is part of AARP's nationwide Livable Communities initiative, which supports the efforts of cities, towns, neighborhoods and rural areas to become great places to live for people of all ages. To learn more, visit aarp.org/Livable.

CONTEXT & PURPOSE



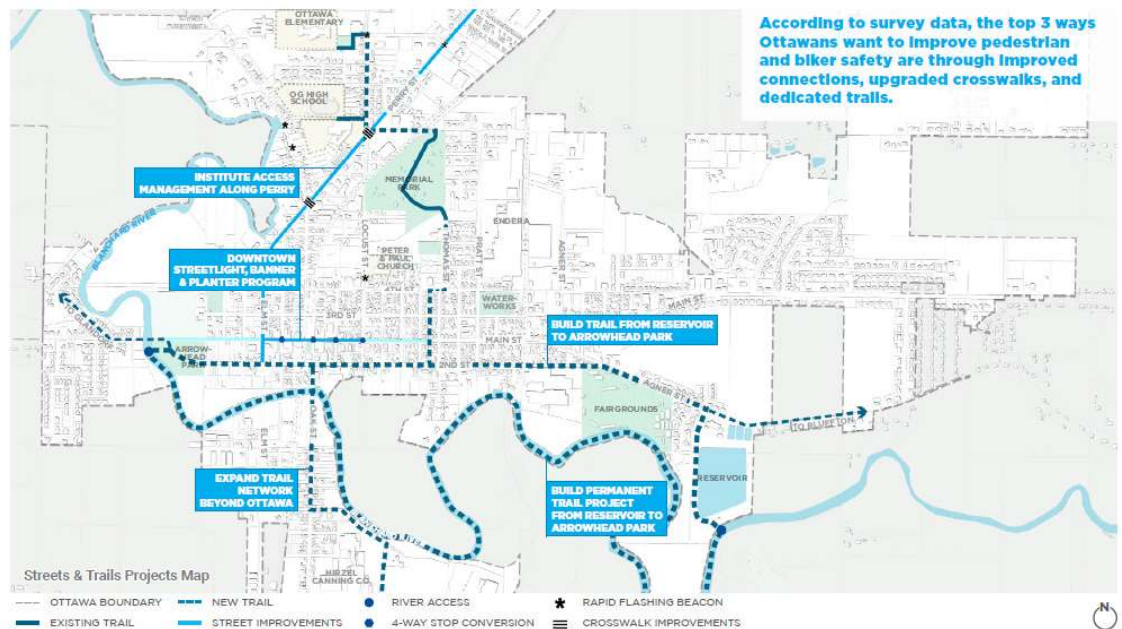
Ottawa, Ohio is the quintessential American small town. It is home to traditions, high school sports, and some of the most innovative, neighborly, and hardest-working people you will find anywhere. We've also seen challenge and hard times, but have fostered a culture of resilience. In 2021, a group of residents worked with the Village of Ottawa to create a strategic plan to guide Ottawa's growth and revitalization. Over the last two years, hundreds have rallied to transform Go Ottawa from an idea to a movement. Throughout the strategic planning process with the Village of Ottawa, our group collected over 737 responses and had 1,626 interactions with local residents. From these responses, four areas of focus were developed for the plan. One of these focus areas is to build safe bicycle and pedestrian connections between our schools, the reservoir, downtown, and the river. According to survey data, the top 3 ways Ottawans want to improve pedestrian and biker safety are through improved connections, upgraded crosswalks and dedicated trails. 71% of responses supported public investment in our public spaces.

OUR VISION

Build safe bicycle and pedestrian connections between our schools, the reservoir, downtown, and the river. Then, look further out and better connect to Gilboa and Glandorf.

PRINCIPLES + OBJECTIVES

- » Build an interconnected off-street trail network that connects neighborhoods to schools, downtown, and the river
- » Maintain clear branding, pavement markings, signage, and debris/snow clearance along the trail network
- » Calm intersections and prioritize pedestrians along key streets and Main Street in particular
- » Grow usage of the Blanchard River Float Trail as an active part of the trail system
- » Support the growing use of golf carts, eBikes, and electric vehicles
- » Broaden presence of active living in marketing Ottawa
- » Reduce reliance on school busing
- » Ensure that pedestrian comfort and safety are at the core of every street improvement

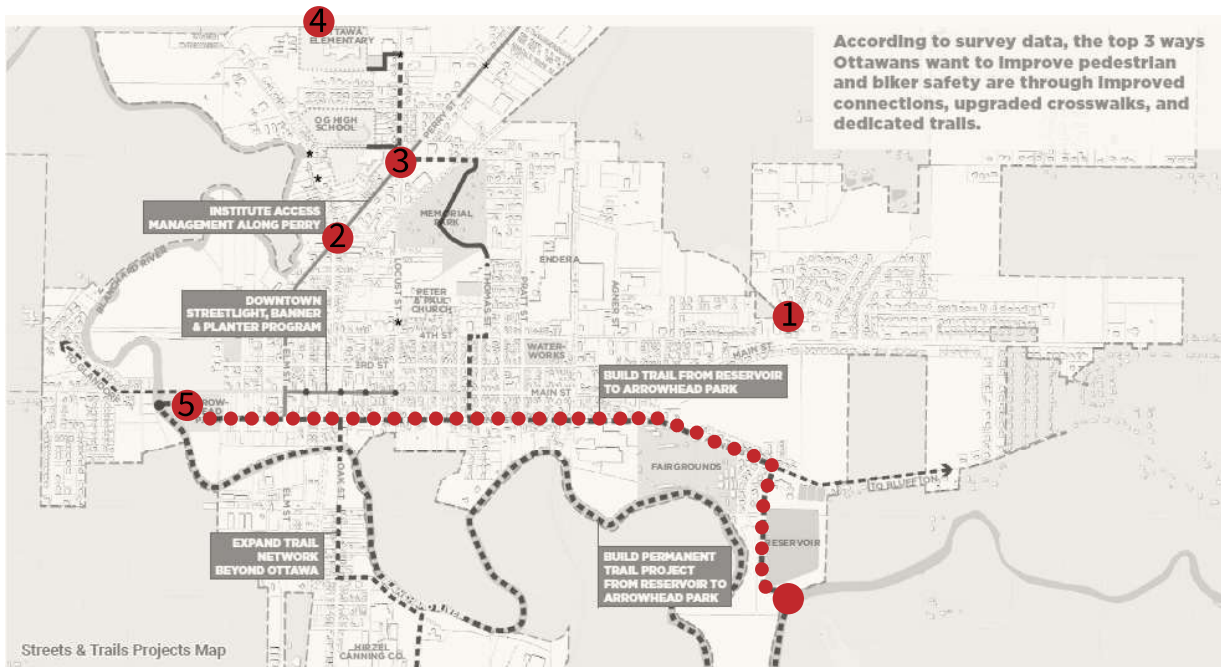


With this as our vision, Go Ottawa and the Putnam County Health Department have completed bike audits at 5 locations. Guided by the AARP Bike Audit Toolkit, over 20 volunteers were engaged to assess bikeability throughout Ottawa. The following pages will detail the findings of these audits.

A group of people are gathered in a meeting room, focused on a large whiteboard. A man in a blue shirt is pointing at a map or diagram on the board. Several other people, including a woman in a striped shirt and a man in a yellow shirt, are looking at the board. In the foreground, there is a long table with various items on it, including a laptop, a water bottle, and some papers. The room has a clock on the wall and a patterned carpet.

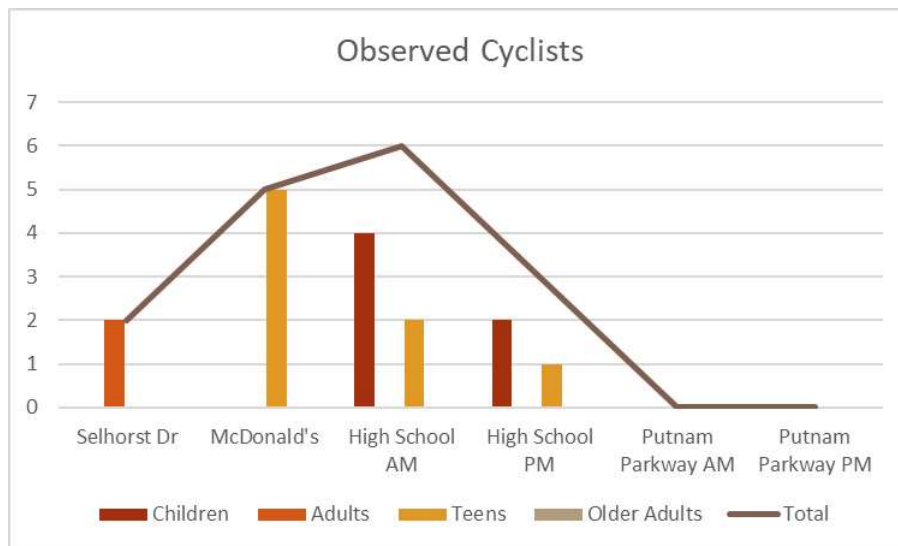
Putnam County Health Department
Putnam County Council on Aging
Medical Reserve Corp
Tawa Manor

Village of Ottawa Park Board
Community Bicyclists
Putnam County YMCA
The Meadows of Ottawa

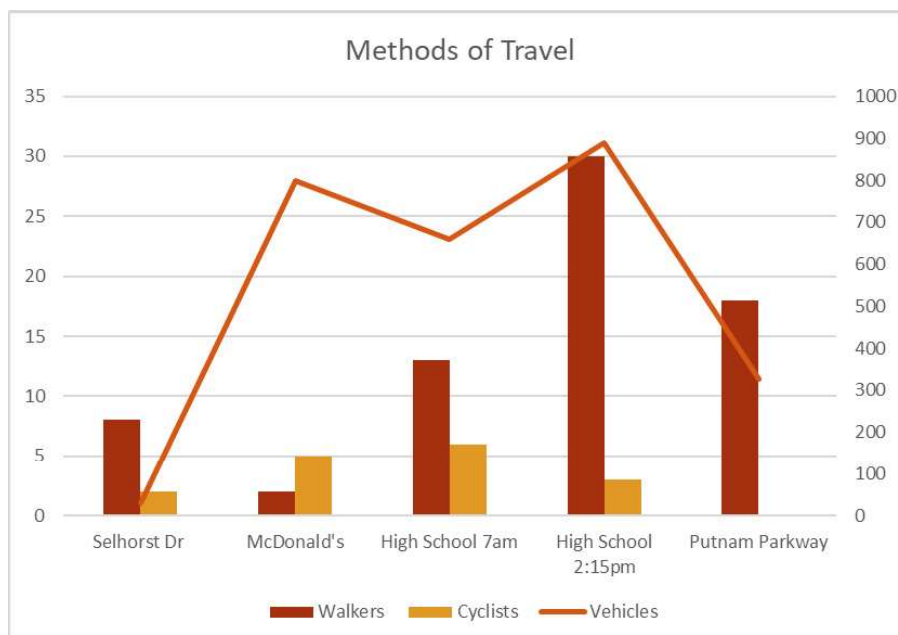


Location 5: 2nd Street: This is in the strategic plan as the first phase of a bike trail between Arrowhead Park and the Ottawa Reservoir.

SOME THEMES



Most cyclists observed were either teens or children, riding on the sidewalk. Very few, if any, were wearing helmets. Because of the chosen locations and times of day, most were traveling to or from school. The vast majority were on two-wheel standard bicycles, but some had three-wheel or electric cycles. Walking seemed to be a preferred method of travel over biking at most audited locations.

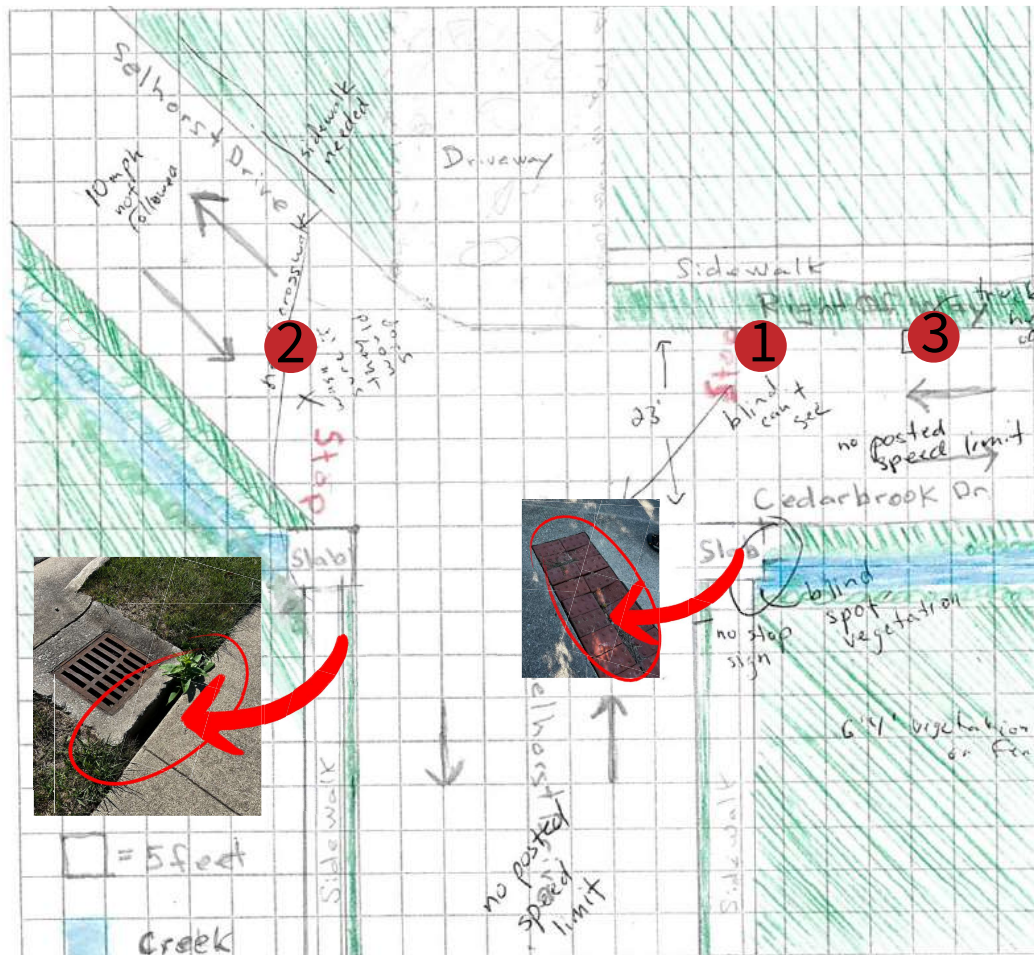


Overall themes for improvements that were noted throughout the audits include increasing signage for vehicles indicating the presence of pedestrians and/or cyclists. Most audits noted the need for crosswalk signals to either be repaired, added, or updated. Nearly all audit locations noted the need to add or improve crosswalks and sidewalks. The addition of bike parking at area businesses would help to promote a bicycle friendly community. The last notable theme would be to slow the speed of vehicle traffic.

There also seems to be a need for a community cycling education program. Our group heard many fears of riding on the roadway and witnessed many unsafe riding practices. Educating potential riders about wearing bright clothing, helmets, riding single file, having lights, and many other safe riding practices can encourage more riders in our community, while also making existing riders more safe.

SELHORST DRIVE

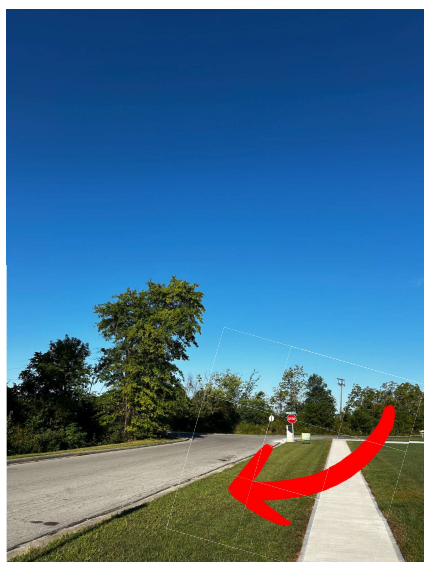
8.12.24 @ 9AM



1. Issue: Blind spot
Recommendation: Routine trimming of vegetation & litter pickup. Also recommend adding stop sign to incoming traffic side to decrease speed and help with blind spot.



2. Issue: No sidewalk or crosswalk. Residents walking on road with potential for incoming traffic not to see right away.
Recommendation: Add sidewalk to North side, along with crosswalks at each side of intersection.



3. Issue: Truck often parks close to stop sign decreasing visibility at corner.
Recommendation: Add red curbing for no parking distance from stop sign.



Circled areas represent potential hazard areas for cyclists and walkers.

SELHORST DRIVE

Selhorst Drive was the only location from our audits where adults were observed cycling. Cyclists road on the street at this location as well, leading us to focus our improvements on the roadway. In our kick-off meeting, residents noted that this was a well-traveled bike pathway from residents in the neaby subdivision. We also heard about a Tawa Manor resident that had been struck by a vehicle at this intersection. Our audit found 3 interventions that could be accomplished in the short-term that could improve safety at this location. These include improving the visibility around the corners and reducing incoming vehicular speed. Looking at the future of this intersection, additional sidewalks and crosswalks will help pedestrian safety. A few minor sidewalk hazards were noted, but since most cyclists were on the road - these have lower priority (although they are still tripping hazards for pedestrians).



Observation	Suggested Improvement	Short, Medium, or Long Term
Blind Spot at Cedarbrook Dr stop sign; Interviewed residents noted high anxiety here	Routine trimming of vegetation & litter pickup	S
No sidewalk on North side of Selhorst Dr; Residents walking on road with and against traffic flow	Add sidewalk with crosswalk	L
Speed limit not followed for incoming traffic from 224	Add stop sign coming in from 224 - making it a 3-way stop	S
Truck often parked close to intersection on Cedarbrook decreasing visibility	Add red curbing for no parking distance from stop sign	S
No strong connection to riding into town	Make sidewalks wider & make sure snow is not piled in pathway from Bowling Alley	L & S
No crosswalks at any side of intersection of Cedarbrook and Selhorst	Add crosswalks to each side	M
Accessibility pavers are sinking causing hazard	Reset	M
Potential hazard at stormwater inlet if tire goes off sidewalk	Fill in the gap	M

8.19.24 @ 2PM

8.19.24 @ 2PM



3. Issue: No bike parking at retail establishments
Recommendation: Promote a bicycle friendly business campaign to encourage retailers to provide bike parking



1. Issue: Crossing signals:
Missing on Partner's First
side and not working on
McDonald's side

Recommendation: Add to Partner's First side and fix light on McDonald's side



2. Issue: Multiple cyclists observed crossing 65 from 8th Street. This is also where most vehicles are completing their right turn.
Recommendation: Could this be a signalized crossing?

Circled areas represent potential hazard areas for cyclists and walkers.

MCDONALD'S INTERSECTION

The McDonald's intersection was discussed during our kick-off meeting because of the anxiety cyclists experience at this intersection. It was also noted that a resident from Tawa Manor routinely rides through this area with her three-wheel trike and her tires get stuck at the edge of the sidewalk. Most of the cyclists observed were going to either McDonald's or Marathon for snacks. We did not observe any crossing at any of the crosswalks: they either stayed on the sidewalk or crossed at a location further from the intersection. In the short to medium-term, we can improve the crosswalks with heightened visibility and fixed crossing signals. If a bike lane is not feasible, we recommend widening the sidewalks and adding more buffer between sidewalk and road, especially at the corner of McDonald's.

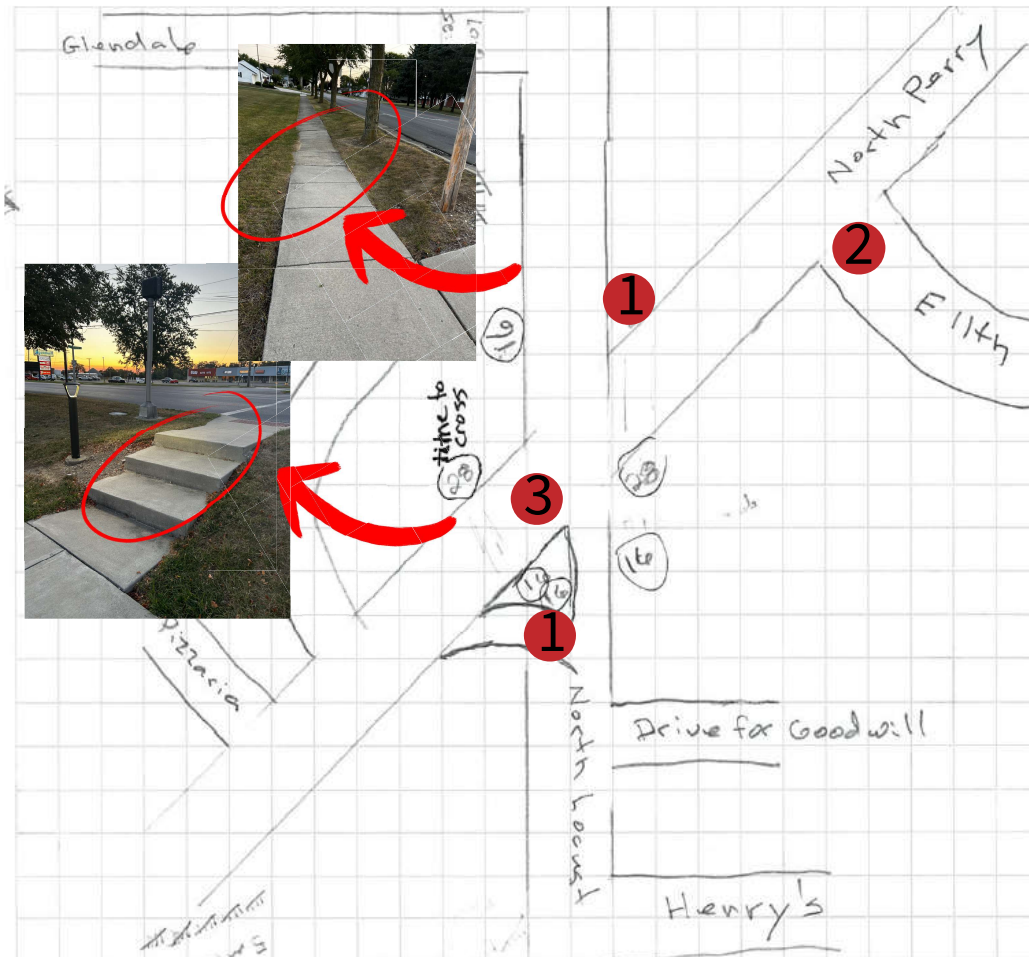


Observation	Suggested Improvement	Short, Medium, or Long Term
Sidewalks are tight, with short area at corner that has no buffer between sidewalk and road. No bike lanes so sidewalk is more common path.	Add bike lane or wider sidewalks (some sidewalk repairs needed). If sidewalks, make sure there is a barrier along entire path.	L
No crossing signal at Partners First side of intersection & crossing signal on McDonald's side of Partners First is not working.	Add crossing signal back (looks like there used to be one) and fix crossing signal light. (countdown/audible kind would be ideal)	M to fix existing, L to move towards countdown/audible
Left turn signal time on Defiance is uniform at all times of day despite much lower traffic flow in off-peak times	Opportunity to reduce signal time based on time of day	L
Right turn at pedestrian island is not used - they turn before gas station at 8th St. At 8th is also where cyclists were observed crossing 65 instead of at crosswalks.	Signalized crossing at 8th St	L
No signage alerting drivers to pedestrians/bicyclists	Add signage at key points of intersection	M
No bike parking at McDonald's. Common route end point. Bikes left on ground.	Promote a bicycle friendly business campaign to encourage retailers to provide bike parking	S

HIGH SCHOOL INTERSECTION

9.5.24 @ 7AM

9.5.24 @ 2:15PM

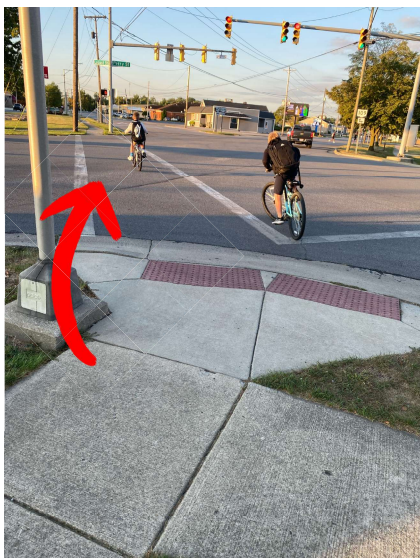


1. Issue: Crossing signals:
Missing at 109 side and not working at Locust/Revitalize side

Recommendation: Add to 109 side and fix light on Locust side. Also recommend adding crosswalk from pedestrian island to Revitalize. (This was noted in traffic study.)



2. Issue: 11th St: No crosswalk & curb cut not in direction of travel; left-turn vehicles cannot see they are in school zone
Recommendation: Add crosswalk and add school zone signage facing 11th St



3. Issue: Pedestrians in traffic for long time

Recommendation: Change to perpendicular to road to decrease length. (Also recommended in traffic study)



Circled areas represent potential hazard areas for cyclists and walkers.

HIGH SCHOOL INTERSECTION

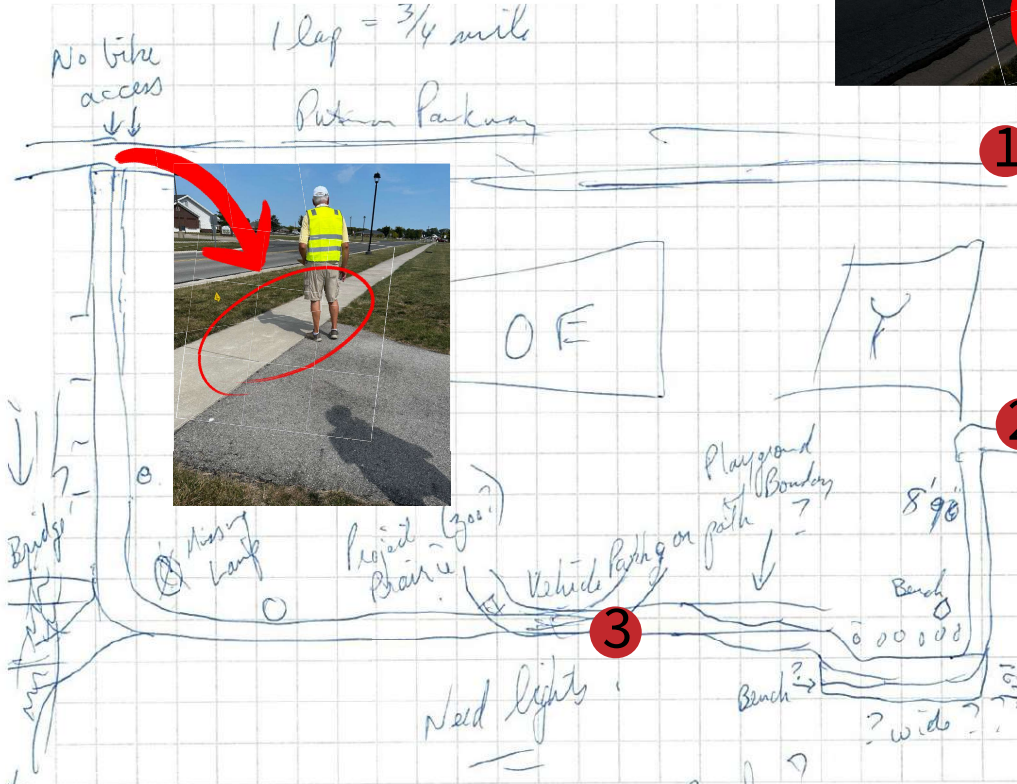
The high school intersection was chosen because of its proximity to proposed future bike pathway connecting our schools and because of the anxiety cyclists feel at it. Most observed cyclists were en route to an elementary school. Several pedestrians were observed en route to the high school. 11th Street was felt to be the highest hazard. One pedestrian waited 5 minutes before being able to cross traffic. There was also a near collision observed. We would strongly encourage adding a crosswalk with a signal at this location for both cyclists and pedestrians. This could be coupled in the long-term with a wide path towards the park for the future bike trail. There are also opportunities for crosswalk & signal at the pedestrian island. One of the existing crossing signals did not work, while another appeared to be removed and needs replaced.



Observation	Suggested Improvement	Short, Medium, or Long Term
No crosswalk across 11th street and curb cut not angled to street. Also observed two cars turning onto 11th nearly collided.	Add crosswalk	M
Crosswalk across 65 to parking lot is a long time in traffic	Move to right angle across - less time needed for crossing; this is also recommended in traffic study	M
School zone: was not followed by 65'ers and not seen by those coming from 11th St	Add signage facing 11th St.	S
No signage alerting drivers to pedestrians/bicyclists	Add signage in key areas.	M
Crossing signal crossing 109 is missing and crossing signal crossing Locust was not working	Add crossing signal back (looks like there used to be one) and fix crossing signal light. (countdown/audible kind would be ideal)	M to fix existing, L to move towards countdown/audible
Pedestrians crossed Locust behind traffic and not at crosswalk	Make existing crosswalk artistic to encourage use and draw attention to it.	M
No crosswalk from pedestrian island to Revitalize	Add crosswalk; this is also recommended in traffic study	L
Steps to get to high school & sidewalk sloped/uneven along 109	Add handrails and potential 'runnel' for steps. Ramp to sidewalk to replace stairs with sidewalk repairs.	S for handrails, L for ramp

PUTNAM PARKWAY

9.11.24 @ 7AM
9.11.24 @ 2PM



1. Issue: No crosswalks across Putnam Parkway
Recommendation: Adding minimum crosswalk at 109, across 109 and near Library. (Also recommended in Traffic Study.)



2. Issue: Crossing signal does not work at different times of day; Most observed pedestrians did not use button; Vehicles did not yield
Recommendation: Check power system to ensure lights work on peak times; Education for pedestrians



3. Issue: At drop-off/pick-up vehicles block path; multiple lights broken on path; no access to drinking water or trash receptacles
Recommendation: Shift drop-off/pick-up lane; fix broken lights and add amenities such as water fountain, trash cans and benches along path



Circled areas represent potential hazard areas for cyclists and walkers.

PUTNAM PARKWAY

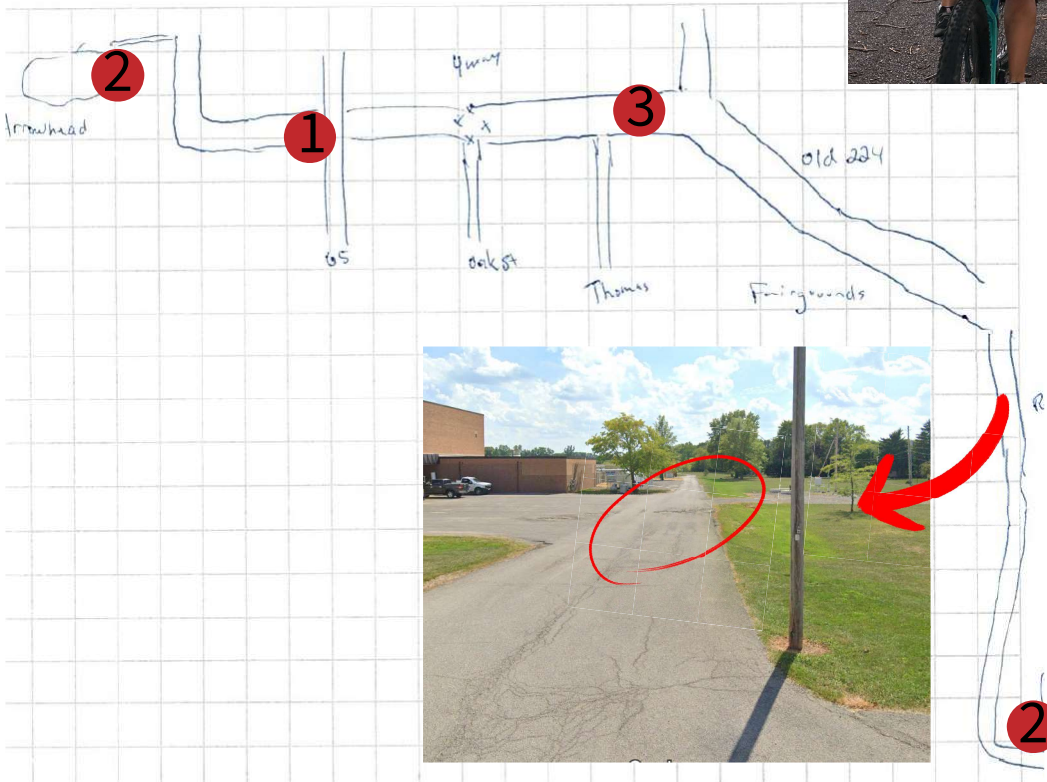
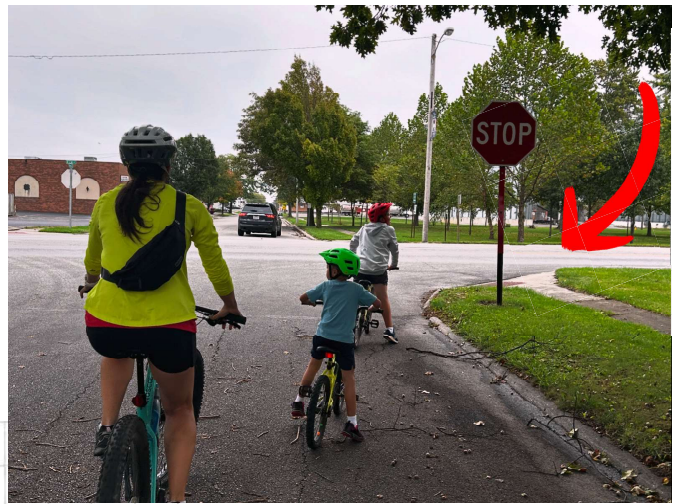
Putnam Parkway was selected as an audit location because of its proximity to the proposed bike route, along with the number of services for seniors and children provided on the road. The largest observation of note was that over two audit time periods, zero cyclists were observed. We had expected at least a few riders going to the elementary school or the YMCA but did not have any. Putnam Parkway being spliced between two heavy trafficked roads creates a large barrier for cyclists. There is a signalized crossing at the Glen Meadows intersections for pedestrians, however, many do not use the button and many vehicles do not stop for the pedestrians. It was also noted that the lights did not come on at multiple hours of the day. There were several pedestrians observed, but most crossed at 109/Putnam Parkway without crosswalks.



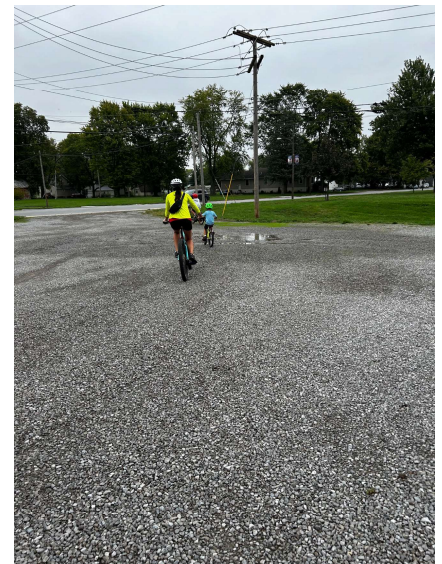
Observation	Suggested Improvement	Short, Medium, or Long Term
No crosswalks across Putnam Parkway and no crosswalk across 109 at housing complex.	Add crosswalks at 109 & Putnam Parkway, as well as at least one somewhere near the Library. Consider artistic crosswalk at Library.	M
No signage alerting drivers to pedestrians/bicyclists	Add signage at key locations	S
Broken lights along walking path behind school	Fix lights	S
Crosswalk signal at Meadows Glen not working many times of day and not being used	Check power system to ensure lights work on peak times; Education plan for pedestrians	S
No sidewalk after the Meadows or Library so no connection to Rte 15	Add sidewalk	L
No drinking fountain or trash receptacles along walking path and opportunity for more seating	Add at least 1 trash receptacle. Benches donated over time. Drinking station added in future.	Trash & Bench - S Drinking Station - L
Path ends abruptly for bicyclists when it comes back out to Putnam Parkway	Is there opportunity to connect to new development behind the Meadows?	L
Walking path is blocked by vehicles during drop off and pick up	Shift lane for drop off and pick up	M

2ND STREET

9.30.24 @ 9AM



1. Issue: Hazardous intersections at 65, Oak and Thomas
Recommendation: Can we go under 65? Crossing signals at others?



2. Issue: No restrooms at Reservoir, access to water along trail or bike parking at either end
Recommendation: Add small amount of bike parking at both end points in short-term; longer term look at additional amenities



3. Issue: Potential obstructions throughout. West of tracks at Car-E-It, obstructions lie more on South side of road and East of tracks obstructions lie more on North Side of road. On road obstructions include parked cars. Off road include: utility poles, trees, mail boxes, driveways
Recommendation: Multimodal trail that starts on North side then switches to South before Fairgrounds



Circled areas represent potential hazard areas for cyclists and walkers.

2ND STREET

As part of the Go Ottawa Challenge, we provided a survey to participants. The results were varied whether there should be a bike lane or a multimodal path, however, all agreed this pathway is a great potential trail for the area. There was a comment that the length would be pretty short for a bike trail. One idea that came from our bike audit was to use the Reservoir as a keyhole loop for the trail - giving cyclists two options: ride around the top and back or ride to the rear and park. Key areas of concern from both the audit and surveys were the 65 crossing, Car-E-It railroad tracks, and the Fairground intersection. If path were to be a bike lane on road, parked cars were a safety concern. If multimodal path, driveways are the larger concern.



Observation	Suggested Concepts for Trail
Crossing 65 will be issue. Oak & Thomas intersections also pose hazards.	Can we go under 65? Signalized crossing for Oak & Thomas.
Potential obstructions along path include: utility poles, trees, mailboxes, and driveways. West of Car-E-It tracks has less obstructions on North side of street. After the tracks, there seem to be less obstructions on South side of street.	Can we start on North and have a crossing at some point?
Fairgrounds intersection also potential hazard unless switch is made prior	Switch to south side of street for multimodal path before Fairgrounds to help with safety through that intersection
Current sidewalk is in need of repairs.	Utilize the need for these repairs to move forward with repaving of wider multimodal path.
Potholes at Reservoir cause a hazard for cyclists	Fill in & pave over. Could we pave all the way to rear of Reservoir?
No bike parking at either end of potential trail or access to drinking	Limited bike parking to be added at Arrowhead and Reservoir. Drinking water station to be added along path in long-term.
No public restrooms at Reservoir	Add seasonal port-a-let service similar to Arrowhead Park