



Fort Lawn Walkability Assessment

April/May 2019



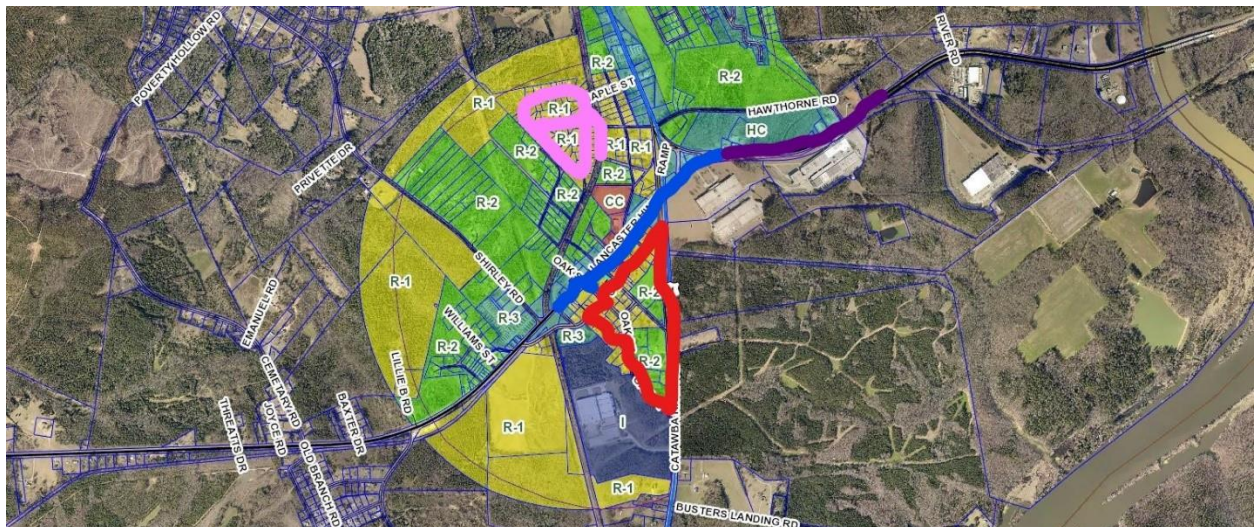
Background

Eat Smart Move More Chester County (ESMMCC) partnered with Fort Lawn's Heart and Soul Team to host a walkability assessment in the Town of Fort Lawn. The groups conducted two assessments, one on April 30th and the other May 7th. The purpose of a walkability assessment is to determine opportunities for safe pedestrian and biking activity and identify any barriers that may exist. This report identifies challenges for safe pedestrian activity on Main Street, several side streets, business areas of Hwy. 9, and the neighborhood near the existing playground. It also provides recommendations for improvement. The recommendations are not exhaustive and are based on the group's experience during the assessment process.

A walkable environment creates a more livable, engaged, and healthier community. Benefits can include increased property values, attracting tourists, and an increased sense of pride for residents. A more walkable community also increases general safety as increased pedestrian activity creates more "eyes on the street." Walking to destinations rather than driving will increase the physical activity of residents while reducing vehicle emissions, which will improve the overall health of the community.

Assessment Area

- **Red** is the **recreational walkers' route** (Main St. /Old Hwy 21/Church St. /Pleasant Ave.)
- **Blue** and **Purple** are the **destination routes** to Gas Station, Dollar General, and Post Office on Highway 9.
- **Pink** is a **neighborhood route** to/from the playground (Sunnyside & Hillsdale St.)



Overall Impressions

Overall the areas accessed have the potential to be very walkable. The neighborhoods felt safe and there was lighting present.

The Sunnyside/Hillsdale community is very low traffic and offers a flat walking route even though no sidewalks exist. This neighborhood felt safe during the assessment but there were a few homes that had fenced in dogs that were barking. The park is a great destination in the neighborhood but lacks a designated parking lot.

A nice sidewalk exists along part of Highway 9 but there are areas of concern and maintenance issues. The sidewalk does not extend to the Dollar General and the post office, and many citizens walk in this area. The speed limit is 45 MPH, but many vehicle/trucks were going much faster, which poses a danger to both pedestrians and other motorists.

Challenges for Safe Pedestrian Activity

The greatest barriers discovered during the walkability assessment were (1) pedestrian crossings and intersections; (2) overgrown vegetation; (3) cracked or uneven walking surfaces and sidewalks; (4) missing or poorly-graded ADA curb cuts with detectable warning surfaces (DWS); lack of sidewalks to major businesses.

1. Pedestrian Crossings & Intersections



Crosswalk needed in front of Fort Lawn Community Center safely cross to picnic area.
There is also a need for a crosswalk and/or signage for residents to cross Hwy. 9 safely to access the sidewalk.



Wood St. and Hwy 9



Willowbrook St. and Hwy 9

Additional crosswalks needed at similar crossings at:

- Shirley Rd. and Hwy 9
- Oak St. and Hwy 9
- Elm St. and Hwy 9



Crosswalk needed (difficult/dangerous crossing) at Hwy 21 and the Marathon Gas Station. Pedestrian Island needs new paint and weed removal, No ADA accessibility.



No crosswalk at Corner of Main and Church Street

2. Overgrown Vegetation

Overgrown vegetation may limit pedestrian visibility and access.

Note: The State of SC contracts out the grass mowing along Highway 9. This means the Town of Fort Lawn doesn't have control over when it is mowed. The day we walked, the grass was not too high, but it was stated that it has been seen much higher, which impedes foot traffic. People have been seen stepping out into the busy road because the grass was too high to walk through.



Underpass at Hwy 9 & 21 – grass has grown onto the sidewalk making it difficult for pedestrians (walking or wheeled) to pass through. The sidewalk narrows due to the overgrown grass, making it difficult for all pedestrians to access.



Church Street



Oak Street

The grass is overgrown on both Church and Oak Street. Pedestrians are forced into the road.

3. Broken, Cracked, Uneven and Gaps in Sidewalk

Cracked or uneven walking surfaces and sidewalks create tripping hazards for pedestrians and restricts rolling for walkers/wheelchairs.



Sidewalk ends abruptly



(before the Wagon Wheel restaurant)



In front of Rowell House: Cracks in sidewalks/Dip in sidewalk and incline



Corner of Main and Oak



5586 Main St. – uneven sidewalk and drain with drop off



5608 Main St. – uneven sidewalk, not level with grass



Hwy 9 - from Southern Roots (hair salon) all the way to Marathon Gas Station (Sidewalk needs to be cleaned of grass and fire ants)

Areas of cracked/uneven sidewalk (at Holiday Hotel and at Elm Ave)

4. ADA-Compliant curb ramps (detectable warning surface)

Curb ramps ensure a person with a mobility disability can travel from a sidewalk on one side of the street, over or through any curbs or traffic islands, to the sidewalk on the other side of the street.



Corner of Main and Church St. – no ADA-compliant curb



The sidewalk along Hwy 9 – ALL crossings need ADA-compliant curb ramp with DWS

- Shirley Rd. and Hwy 9**
- Oak St. and Hwy 9**
- Elm St. and Hwy 9**
- Wood St. and Hwy 9**
- Willowbrook and Hwy 9**

Other Challenges – Area of Concern

Heading West on Highway 9, there is a heavily walked path for pedestrians going to and from destinations such as the Dollar General, Post Office, gas station, etc. This part of the route does not offer a safe pedestrian route and would be extremely challenging for anyone using a wheelchair or stroller; there are no sidewalks until after crossing the Hwy 9 & 21 intersection. The speed limit is 45 mph and many motorists are driving faster than that, which is a danger for pedestrians.

On the day of the assessment the grass was cut but, in many instances, this is not the case; pedestrians have been seen walking in the road because the grass was too high.





Slope along route, grass was 'soggy' from recent rain - may indicate some drainage issues.



There is an open space near the gas line, which is needed for trucks to access this area. This may hinder the possibility of a sidewalk being added to this portion of the route.



Also pictured is a manhole cover, which was covered with overgrown grass. This indicates that a sewer line runs underneath; would need to be considered if a sidewalk were to be added.





Major Area of Concern – Where Hwy 9 and 21 meets

- Dangerous intersection for cars and pedestrians
- Need for signage
- Need marked crosswalk for pedestrians and ADA curb cuts w/DWS
- Sidewalk needs to be extended to the crossing
- Grass needs to be cut under the bridge
- Debris and trash pick-up needed
- Sidewalk under the bridge is very narrow (no room for wheelchair or stroller)

Recommendations for Improvement

- **Consistently mark crosswalks to provide safe and easy crossing where appropriate.** Consider putting in reflective and/or high visibility crosswalks to signal to drivers that pedestrians may be present. This will also provide clear directions for pedestrians crossing the road.
- **Repair cracked, broken, and uneven sidewalk** to reduce the potential liability and provide easy travel accommodations for all users, including people with disabilities.
- **Remove overgrown grass and weeds from sidewalks and spray for fire ants.**
- **Install ADA-approved curb cuts with detectable warning surfaces** where they do not exist.
- **Remove sedimentation and overgrown vegetation from sidewalks and curb ramps.**
- **Adding signage to alert drivers that pedestrians may be present in the area.**
- **Install pedestrian level lighting where appropriate to improve safety.**
- **Conduct neighborhood or county/town trash pickup day(s)**
- **Consider adding designated parking lot/space at the Park**

- **Add sidewalks, if possible, between major destinations.**

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