

**Village of Mamaroneck Walking Safety Assessment:
surrounding streets, Mamaroneck Avenue School
March 22, 2019
SUMMARY REPORT**

Background

In September 2014, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a national action plan, "[Safer People, Safer Streets: Summary of U.S. Department of Transportation Action Plan to Increase Walking and Biking and Reduce Pedestrian and Bicycle Fatalities.](#)" This plan outlines activities the Federal government seeks to undertake in concert with State and local partners to make safe walking and biking a reality for all Americans, regardless of age, income, or ability.

The *Walk/Bike Safety Assessment* is just one tool described in the Plan for States or communities with safety concerns stemming from pedestrian and/or bicyclist crashes, or the potential for such crashes. These *Assessments* involve coordinating a group of local practitioners and stakeholders to explore connected pedestrian and bicycle networks and the safety of non-motorized users; in short, a multi-disciplinary group gathers on a high-risk corridor, takes a walk together, and records their observations.

The Village of Mamaroneck Traffic Commission began utilizing these *Assessments* as part of a larger effort to become more systemic and data-driven in analyzing and recommending roadway improvements. In addition, the *Assessments* support the evaluation component of the Village's recently announced Vision Zero initiative. The Traffic Commission selected roadways in the March 22 *Assessment* based on an accumulation of resident complaints, and reinforced by the results of a parent survey facilitated by the Mamaroneck Avenue School (MAS) Administration (see map under Appendix A, and survey results under Appendix B).

Overview of corridors

The segment of Mamaroneck Avenue between the I-95 entrance/exit ramps and the intersection with Old White Plains Road is a four-lane County road in the Village. This portion of Mamaroneck Avenue is primarily commercial, comprised of local businesses, mixed office and multi-family apartment buildings, gas stations, and public buildings such as the firehouse and elementary school. Mamaroneck Avenue is a main artery in the Village, carrying hundreds of personal vehicles, large trucks, and buses each hour, and high volumes of vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle traffic during school year morning and afternoon hours. Mamaroneck Avenue also has public transit stops for the Route 60 Westchester County Bee-Line bus.

The two square blocks immediately adjacent to MAS are demarcated by New Street, Ralph Avenue, Eliot Avenue, Gertrude Avenue and Mamaroneck Avenue. Additional weekday traffic is generated by the French-American School, located on the corner of Eliot and Ralph Avenues.

While a few residences lie along these two-lane local roadways, MAS fields, parking and school grounds comprise most of the abutting property. Small and otherwise quiet roadways at other times of day/days of the week, these two blocks serve as the central route for hundreds of vehicles to drop off/pick up students at both schools during school year mornings and afternoons, and are key pedestrian routes for families approaching the schools on foot.

While a significant portion of local MAS students live within comfortable walking distance of the school, more than 75% of parents opt to transport their children via privately owned vehicle (see survey results, Appendix B).

Event overview

16 Federal, County and local participants (see Appendix D) convened at the Mamaroneck Volunteers Fire House at 643 Mamaroneck Avenue on a dry, sunny weekday during MAS school dismissal hours. Mayor Tom Murphy and Traffic Commission Chair Abigail Roberts welcomed the group. Shannon Purdy from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Region 2 then discussed pedestrian and bicyclist crash data from the national level, as well as key factors to consider in enacting a successful pedestrian/bicycle safety initiative.

A summary of the operational plan, schedule for the day, and participant instructions were also shared:

- (1) The 16 participants were divided into four walking teams, each comprised of a mix of disciplines to broaden observational perspectives; for instance, a patrol officer, public health professional, resident and Traffic Commission member.
- (2) Each team was asked to assign one reporter to record consensus observations made during the walk, and one photographer to capture pictures of the environment and people traveling along the corridor.
- (3) Two of the teams were assigned to walk Mamaroneck Avenue, one proceeding southbound from the I-95 ramps and concluding at the firehouse, and one proceeding northbound from the firehouse and concluding at the I-95 entrance ramps. The other two teams were each assigned to walk both sides of one of the two blocks adjacent to MAS.
- (4) Each team was asked to walk on the side of the road facing traffic, regardless of whether pedestrian facilities were provided.
- (5) During their walk, participants were asked to record both observations and experiences using a Walkability Assessment Checklist (see Appendix E).
- (6) At the walk's conclusion, participants reconvened at the firehouse to discuss the most pressing issues and problems they observed, as well as identify potential countermeasures.

Issues and recommendations: Mamaroneck Avenue

The ¾ mile stretch of Mamaroneck Avenue was assessed on a dry weekday afternoon. Vehicle traffic was steady and moderate; pedestrian, vehicle and bus traffic volume increased sharply as MAS and the French-American schools' dismissal proceeded after 3:00PM. Few cyclists were observed along the route during the walk, and only one rode in the roadway (albeit facing traffic).

Residents and traffic crossing guards the walking teams interviewed along the stretch of Mamaroneck Avenue described exceedingly difficult and dangerous conditions for pedestrians trying to safely cross, especially during the morning and afternoon school rush hour. Vehicles are regularly observed exceeding the posted school zone speed limit of 20 mph, running red lights, making illegal U-turns, and many of the drivers demonstrating aggression are themselves parents fighting to enter Eliot Avenue to drop off or pick up children.

In addition, local residents reported that the flashing school speed limit signs are often active during evening, weekend or holiday hours, which makes drivers complacent about any potential enforcement of the 20 mph restriction.

Infrastructure Issues

- Where existent, sidewalks were irregular, broken and not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Curb ramps along Mamaroneck Avenue do not all align, and are not always ADA compliant, making them dangerous for users with mobility and/or vision challenges
- Few marked crosswalks existed across side streets perpendicular to Mamaroneck Avenue, despite clear, demonstrated need for pedestrian access from residential areas to transit, school, and retail
- No crosswalks or pedestrian crossing signage across the five entrance/exit ramps to



Unlit, debris and mud-caked sidewalk underneath I-95

Interstate 95, despite clear, demonstrated need for pedestrian access across these higher-speed roadway segments

- Heavy pedestrian traffic across the large, curving intersection of Mamaroneck Avenue and Old White Plains Road, with no marked crosswalk, and in direct conflict with heavy vehicle/truck traffic with limited visibility
- Sidewalk underneath Interstate 95 strewn with gravel, debris and thick muddy runoff, and overhead lights not functional, making this stretch of sidewalk very dark, even in daylight
- Shoulders along the segment are sufficiently wide for bike lanes on both sides of the road, though no bicycle lanes or "share the road" indicators exist



Westchester Bee-Line bus stop on southbound Mamaroneck Ave

- Transit stops were in decent condition, but no paved access from sidewalk to covered bus shelter, making them dangerous for users with mobility and/or vision challenges
- Tightly packed series of traffic signals along Mamaroneck Avenue not well timed to allow good flow of entering/exiting vehicle traffic during school hours, creating unnecessary congestion and frustration
- Synchronized/consistent pedestrian crossing signals do not exist

- Vehicles irregularly parked along Mamaroneck Avenue, adding to issues of limited visibility and congestion

Behavior Issues

- Vehicles observed traveling well in excess of 35 mph, especially upon approach to the Interstate 95 entrance/exit ramps, though the posted school speed limit is 20, and non-school hours speed limit is 30
- Drivers not yielding to pedestrians in marked and unmarked crossings, including one pedestrian observed walking with a group of children and pushing a stroller
- Drivers observed ignoring traffic crossing guards' direction
- One traffic crossing guard observed sitting in his vehicle while adults crossed at his posted intersection, and only emerging when he spotted children preparing to cross
- Drivers attempting to turn onto Eliot Avenue for student pick-up observed double- and triple-parking, and backing up/causing intersection gridlock onto Mamaroneck Avenue

Conclusions

The following recommendations from the assessment team are not intended to be an exhaustive list of needed improvements, but may address the most pressing needs and have a significant impact on pedestrian and bicycle safety:

- Install complete, continuous ADA-compliant sidewalks at least five feet wide along both sides of Mamaroneck Avenue
- Install highly visible crosswalks and advance pedestrian crosswalk warning signs at each of the five I-95 entrance/exit ramps. Assure crossing guards are present at these ramp intersections during morning/afternoon school hours.
- Install ADA-compliant, aligning curb ramps at corners of all residential streets perpendicular to Mamaroneck Ave
- Replace missing street signage for Eliot Avenue
- Install painted crosswalks at intersections of all streets perpendicular to Mamaroneck Avenue

- Replace the two striped yellow painted median areas at Mamaroneck Avenue and Old White Plains Road with raised medians for pedestrian refuge, using the concept design described on page 56 of the [2012 Transit-Oriented Development study](#), posted on the Village website
- Consider adding painted sharrows and “share the road” signage to indicate Mamaroneck Avenue is a shared-usage roadway with bicycles
- Consider removing street parking on the stretch of Mamaroneck Avenue between the intersection with Grand Street and the I-95 entrance ramps
- Provide training to Village of Mamaroneck Police Department on operating a pedestrian safety crosswalk/decoy initiative being conducted across New York State. Enforcement should accompany installation of new crosswalks, initially employing a “warning” phase to violators for a set period of time (e.g., 6 months), followed by issuing citations
- Kicking off in June 2019, establish a localized, pedestrian safety media campaign to coincide with enforcement activities, and consider utilizing New York State’s *See! Be Seen!* campaign materials.
- Coordinate with MAS Administration to educate parents about the benefits of a “Walking School Bus,” to provide an alternative, vehicle-free mode of transportation for parents to utilize
- Coordinate with MAS Administration to conduct a bike rodeo and helmet giveaway event, encouraging students to use bicycles
- Upgrade sidewalk access to bus shelters along Mamaroneck Avenue to accommodate wheelchairs

Issues and recommendations: New Street, Elliot Avenue and Ralph/Gertrude Avenue

The two square blocks immediately adjacent to MAS are more continuously residential than Mamaroneck Avenue, and primarily encircle the school property. Assessors also conducted this walk during the afternoon school rush hour, and described very heavy, congested traffic flow - both vehicle and pedestrian. Sidewalks along the four roadway segments were irregular and sometimes missing.

Infrastructure Issues

- Sidewalks are present, but outdated and inadequate: often narrow, damaged, collapsing, or impassable due to telephone poles or trash bags/bins. None were ADA-compliant.

- Crosswalks were absent at heavy pedestrian traffic crossings, and street parking, especially during student pick-up, blocks pedestrian pathways
- Too much and often conflicting vehicle parking directional signage, making legal parking options unclear to drivers
- Pedestrian ramps at curb corners not ADA-compliant, often damaged and hazardous, some with visible sinkholes
- Poor separation between pedestrian and vehicle traffic, with flat/collapsing curbs, creating hazardous environment for visually impaired pedestrians
- Insufficient lane length/space for buses picking up students along Gertrude Avenue, forcing school buses to double-park and have children board in the street



Sinkhole at corner of Ralph and Gertrude Avenues

Behavior Issues

- Vehicles double parking, parking on sidewalks and blocking oncoming traffic lanes along Elliot and Ralph/Gertrude Avenues during student pick-up. Many drivers behaving aggressively and not yielding to pedestrians.
- Pedestrians observed obeying traffic signals and crossing guards where they were present, but many had to run in order to avoid being struck by impatient/aggressive vehicles
- No visible enforcement of parking restrictions, and no system for command and control of massive, congested vehicle pickup lines along crowded small local roadways



Chaotic, three-lane vehicle congestion at intersection of Elliott and Ralph Avenue

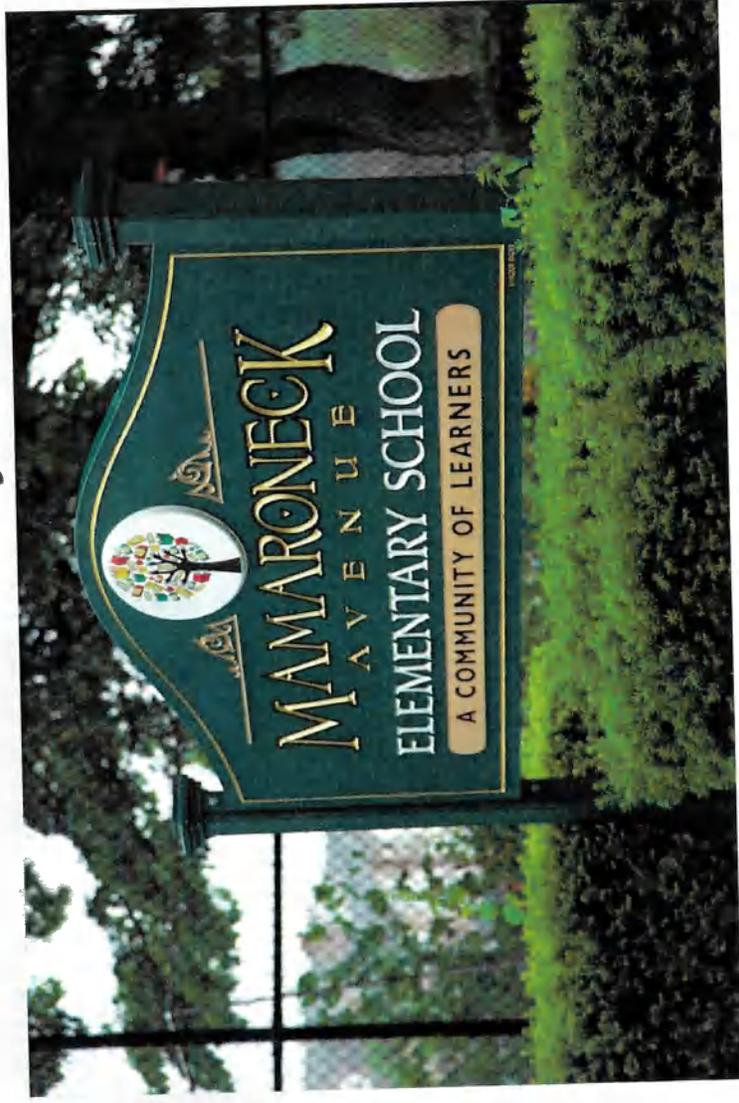
Conclusions

The following recommendations from the assessment team are not intended to be an exhaustive list of needed improvements, but may address the most pressing needs and have a significant impact on pedestrian safety:

- Install complete, continuous ADA-compliant sidewalks at least five feet wide along one side of New Street, Elliot Avenue, and Ralph/Gertrude Avenue
- Install or repair/repaint well-marked crosswalks at intersections with greatest pedestrian traffic

- In consultation with Traffic Commission and key Village personnel, consider revising system for school pick-up and drop-off along the roadways encircling the school to prevent vehicles from using more than the right lane that immediately abuts school property. Provide training to school administrators, staff, students and parents, and solicit parent volunteers clad in highly visible safety vests to assist with rapid, fluid, student pick-up and drop-off system.
- Place uniformed crossing guards to direct vehicle traffic during school morning/afternoon hours at key points along Elliott, Ralph and Gertrude Avenues to assure vehicles continue to move slowly and safely in a single lane until their student has been retrieved
- Extend bus lane on Gertrude Avenue to accommodate all six small school buses in a single lane that abuts the sidewalk for children to safely enter/exit
- Engage MAS Administration and community champions to initiate “Walking School Buses” for parents and children
- Engage community champions and/or the Village of Mamaroneck Police Department to develop a bicycle safety education campaign for local youth; seek grant funding for bike helmet distribution and a potential bike rodeo event
- Provide training to Village of Mamaroneck Police Department on operating a pedestrian safety crosswalk/decoy initiative being conducted across New York State. Enforcement should accompany installation of new crosswalks/upgrading of existing crosswalks, initially employing a “warning” phase to violators for a set period of time (e.g., 6 months), followed by issuing citations
- Kicking off in June 2019, establish a localized, pedestrian safety media campaign to coincide with enforcement activities, and consider utilizing New York State’s *See! Be Seen!* campaign materials.

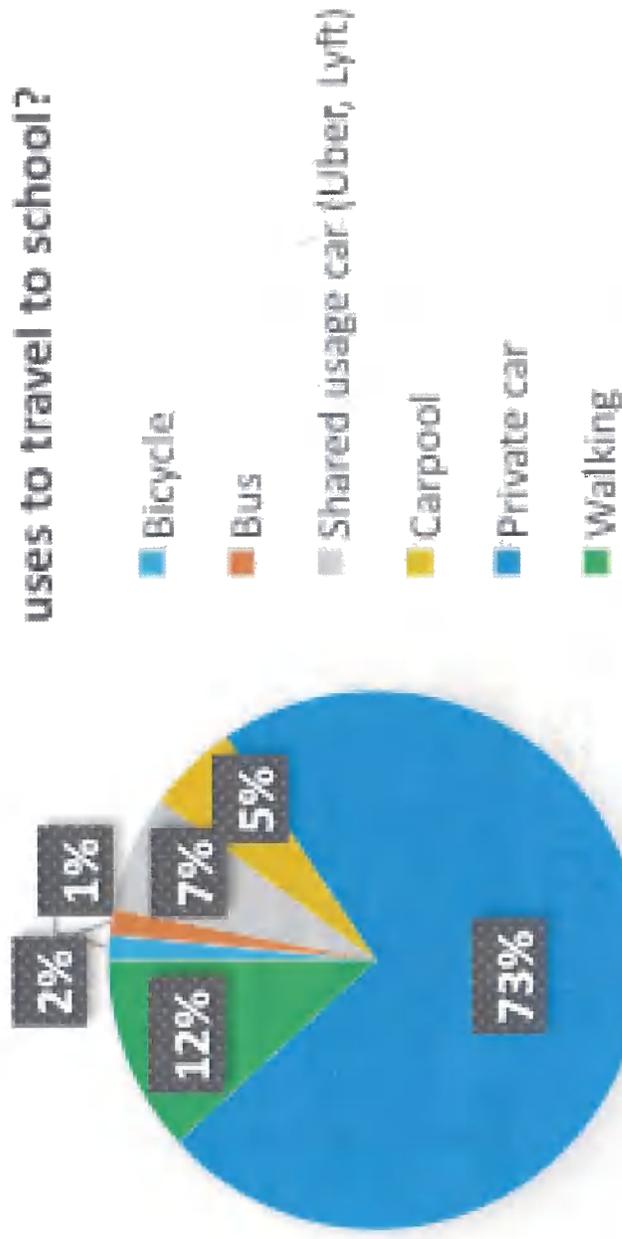
Mamaroneck Avenue School traffic safety survey



Brief analysis of parent responses
January 2019

How MAS students travel

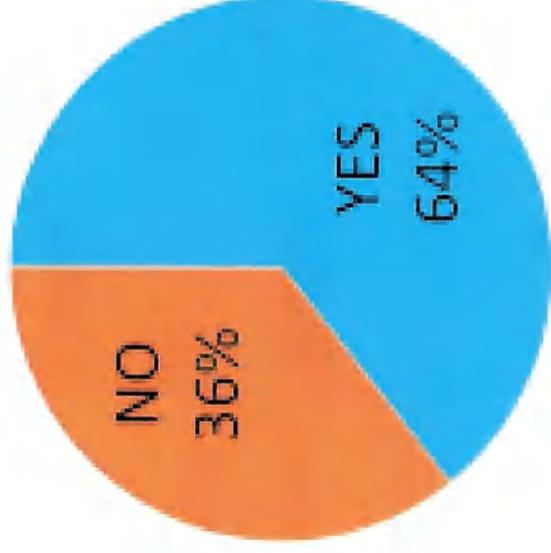
What is the primary mode your child uses to travel to school?



n=128

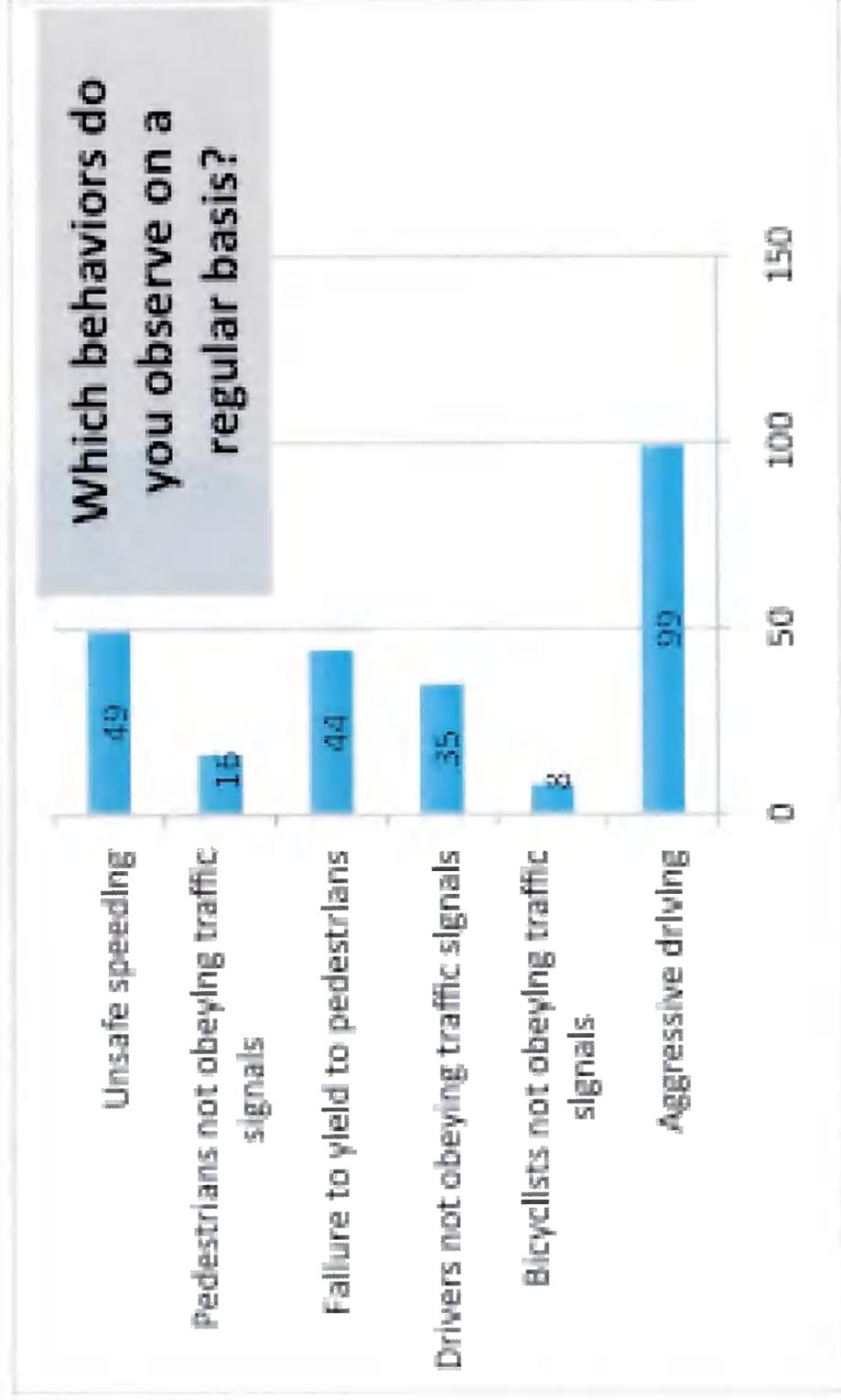
Safety: contributing factor?

Is your choice of travel mode impacted by safety concerns?

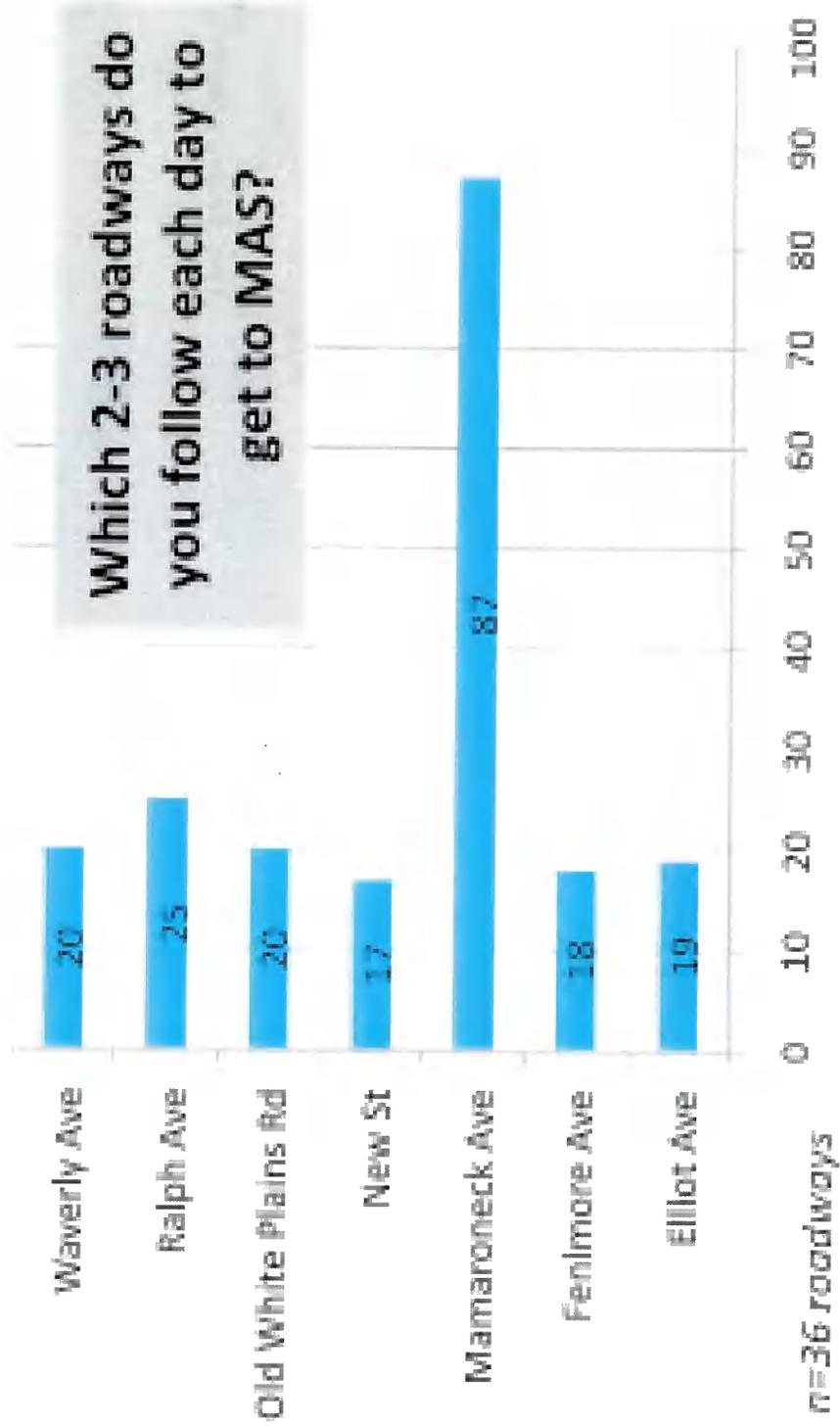


n=98

Specific concerns



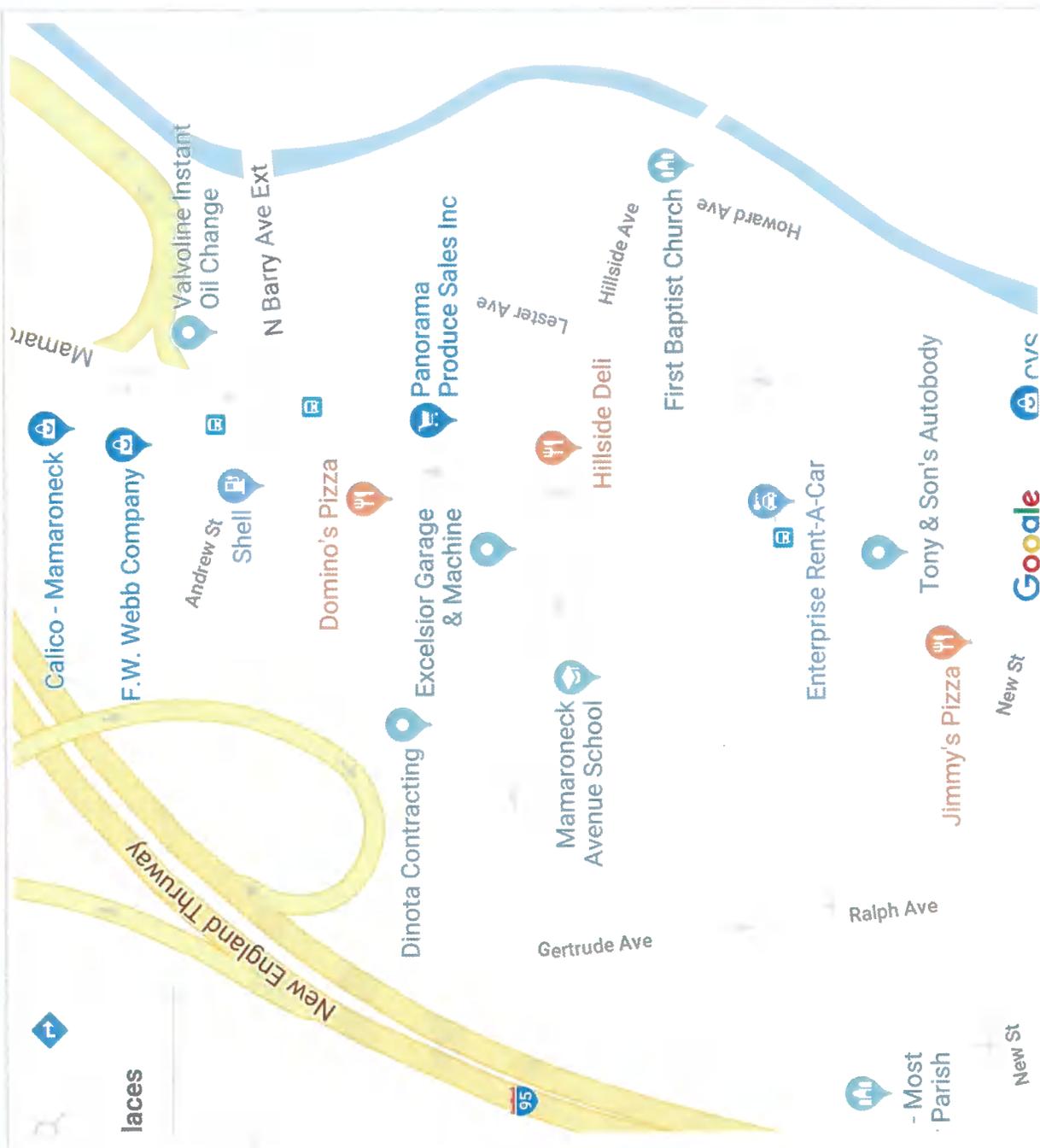
Most common routes



Potential Walking Safety Assessment corridors

New Street, Ralph/Gertrude, Elliot Ave

Mamaroneck Ave between I-95 and New Street



**Walking Safety Assessment: Mamaroneck Avenue School
surrounding streetscape**
Friday, March 22, 2019

*Volunteers Firehouse
643 Mamaroneck Ave
Mamaroneck, NY 10543*

AGENDA

- 2:00PM Welcome, participants!
- Background, opening remarks – *Shannon Purdy, U.S. DOT NHTSA Region 2, and Mamaroneck Traffic Commission*
- Introductions - *all*
- 2:20PM Distribution of “walking pod” assignments, and discussion of observational process and key roles
- 2:30PM Participants depart en route to assigned walking sites
- ~ 3:30PM Participants reconvene in community room
- “Pod” facilitators summarize their group’s observations
 - Contact information and assessment prompt tools collected
- 4:00PM Next steps, questions and answers, adjourn

Village of Mamaroneck
**Walking Safety Assessment:
Mamaroneck Avenue School**

**Friday, March 22, 2019
2:00-4:00PM**

**Volunteers Fire House
Mamaroneck, NY**

PARTICIPANTS: Mamaroneck Ave Group 1 (MA1)

Matt da Silva, Planning Department
Tom Murphy, Mayor
Shannon Purdy, Traffic Commission
Luis Zarate, resident/CRC

mdasilva@vomny.org
tmurphy@vomny.org
Shannon.purdy@dot.gov
lzarate@crcny.org

PARTICIPANTS: Mamaroneck Ave Group 2 (MA2)

Jennifer Gonzalez, resident
Abby Roberts, Traffic Commission
Ilana Wagner, Westchester Cty Transportation
Karin Weisburgh, League of Amer Bicyclists

jenniferegonzalez@outlook.com
abbyroberts46@gmail.com
irw3@westchestergov.com
kweisburgh@gmail.com

PARTICIPANTS: New/Ralph Group (NR)

Kira Akulova-Nickerson, resident
Liz Karpiloff, resident
Alex Auld, AKRF, Inc.
Ed Zagajeski, Traffic Commission

kira.akulova@gmail.com
Elizabeth.karpiloff@verizon.net
aauld@akrf.com
efzagajeski@aol.com

PARTICIPANTS: Gertrude/Ralph Group (GR)

Greg Cutler, Planning Department
Lilliana Diaz-Pedrosa, resident
Chris Jaeger, Police Department
Kelly Taylor, resident

gcutler@vomny.org
ldiazpedrosa@gmail.com
cjaeger@vompd.com
kelly@kelsobeer.com

Walkability Assessment Checklist

Date: _____

Data Collector: _____

Instructions: Please fill out this questionnaire as best as you can and include observations in the comments area. Your comments and observations are very valuable to us and will enhance the final report of the assessment. Additional space is provided at the end.

A. Streets

Pedestrian Assessment	Yes	No	Comments
Are sidewalks provided along the street?			
If no sidewalk is present, is there a walkable shoulder (e.g. wide enough to accommodate cyclists/pedestrians) on the road or other pathway/trail nearby?			
Is the sidewalk width adequate for pedestrian volumes?			
Is there adequate separation distance between vehicular traffic and pedestrians?			
Are sidewalk/street boundaries discernable to people with visual impairments?			
Will snow disrupt pedestrian access or visibility?			
Is the path clear from both temporary and permanent obstructions?			
Is the walking surface adequate and well-maintained?			
Are sidewalks/walkable shoulders continuous and on both sides of the street?			
Are measures needed to direct pedestrians to safe crossing points and pedestrian access ways?			
Is the sidewalk adequately lit?			
Is the visibility of pedestrians walking along the sidewalk/shoulder adequate?			
Are there any conflicts between bicycles and pedestrians on sidewalks?			

B. Street Crossings

Pedestrian Assessment	Yes	No	Comments
Do wide curbs lengthen pedestrian crossing distances and encourage high-speed right turns?			
Does a skewed intersection direct drivers' focus away from crossing pedestrians?			
Are pedestrian crossings located in areas where sight distance may be a problem?			
Do raised medians provide a safe waiting area (refuge) for pedestrians?			
Are marked crosswalks wide enough?			
Do railroad crossings accommodate pedestrians safely?			
Is the crossing pavement flush with the roadway surface?			
Do turning vehicles pose a hazard to pedestrians?			
Do traffic operations (especially during peak periods) create a safety concern for pedestrians?			

C. Pedestrian, Bicyclist and Driver Behavior

Pedestrian Assessment	Yes	No	Comments
Do drivers look for and yield to pedestrians at marked and unmarked crosswalks?			
Did observed pedestrian behavior increase the risk of a pedestrian collision?			
Are buses, cars, bicycles, and pedestrians separated on the site and provided with their own designated areas for travel?			
Are travel paths and crossing points for pedestrians properly signed and/or marked?			
Did observed driver behavior increase the risk of a pedestrian or bicyclist collision?			
Are cyclists riding with the flow of traffic, and are they wearing helmets/safety gear?			
Can disabled or elderly pedestrians easily navigate this roadway?			
Is there visible enforcement of traffic laws (crossing guards, speed or red light cameras, police traffic enforcement) in the area?			

D. Transit Areas

Pedestrian Assessment	Yes	No	Comments
Are there bus stops along the route, and are they sited properly?			
Are safe pedestrian crossings convenient for transit and school bus users?			
Are shelters appropriately designed and placed for pedestrian safety and convenience?			
Is the seating area at a safe and comfortable distance from vehicle and bicycle lanes?			
Do seats (or persons sitting on them) obstruct the sidewalk or reduce its usable width?			
Is a sufficient landing area provided to accommodate waiting passengers, boarding/alighting passengers, and through/bypassing pedestrian traffic at peak times?			
Is the landing area paved and free of problems such as uneven surfaces, standing water, or steep slopes?			
Is the nearest crossing opportunity free of potential hazards for pedestrians?			