



Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Walkability Improvement Program

Geneva Walkability Action Plan

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make
COMMUNITIES

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En Español

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City of Geneva Walkability Action Plan

Introduction

This Action Plan presents the findings and recommendations from the Walkability Audit conducted for the City of Geneva for the Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Walkability Improvement Program. The goal of this Action Plan is to identify potential physical improvements, education/encouragement programs, and policies to support walking and bicycling in Geneva.

Geneva is a city in Ontario and Seneca counties, with a 2010 population just over 13,000 residents and approximately 4.3 square miles. Key walking and bicycling destinations include: Seneca Lake and the Lakefront Park, Hobart & William Smith Colleges, McDonough and Ridgewood Parks, Gulvin Park, and Geneva Middle School, High School, and North Street School, and the downtown shopping area.

A working group was convened with representatives from Genesee Transportation Council staff, local officials and interested residents. The working group members gathered on December 11, 2014 to observe existing conditions and identify issues and opportunities in Geneva.



Walk audit participants discuss community opportunities

This Action Plan is intended as a framework to guide next steps for improving walkability and bikeability in Geneva. It reflects recommendations made in a short period of time and should not be mistaken for a comprehensive plan for radically altering the number of people walking and biking in the town. In addition, many identified alternatives require additional study to evaluate the feasibility of the approach. The preliminary recommendations are focused on projects that could be implemented in the next three to five years.

Walkability Audit Process

The walk audit was conducted in two stages as a one day event. The first meeting included a windshield tour with the walk audit facilitator and several members of the community. This tour allowed for a wider tour of the community and some initial observations prior to the walk audit. The working group met the following day to conduct the walk audit. The meeting began with a presentation and discussion of benefits related to improved

walkability within a community and a description of possible improvements and examples from other cities. The working group then conducted a walking tour of the community. The group discussed opportunities and issues along the tour, such as parklets, sidewalk improvements, overall safety, and gaps within the network. Upon return from the walking tour, the working group broke into sub-groups and was given maps of the community to begin formulating ideas for improvement. This included projects, policies, and programs. After these mini groups had a chance to develop these ideas, each reported back to the larger working group. Possible next steps were discussed and the facilitator concluded the Walk Audit.



Members of the working group discuss recommendations

Existing Conditions and Alternatives Considered

Participants at the Walkability Audit identified a variety of issues and opportunities throughout the village.

Map Number	Location	Issue	Alternatives Discussed
1)	Route 14	Difficult Crossing	a) Install a series of rectangular rapid flashing beacons b) Install curb extensions
2)	Intersection of Main, Castle, and Milton	Busy/dangerous 5-way intersection	c) Install a roundabout
3)	Hwy 5 & 20	High Speeds Cuts off access to Lakefront park	d) Road diet e) Reduce speed limits f) Pedestrian bridge
4)	Lakefront (near Hobart and William Colleges)	No pedestrian/bicycle access or connections to destinations. There is an existing trail but it is unpaved and not well advertised.	g) Build a paved trail along the rail ROW (rails with trails) to connect destinations along the lake
5)	School areas	Encourage students to walk or bicycle to school or to the bus	h) Create an organized walking school bus program where groups of students can walk to schools or collected area bus stops i) Engage students and parents in identifying routes and projects for improvements j) Provide education on safe walking behavior k) Add sidewalks on both sides of roads adjacent to schools

Map Number	Location	Issue	Alternatives Discussed
6)	State Bike Route 14	No bicycle facilities	l) Install bike lanes m) Slow vehicle speeds n) Reroute on to Milton St to Pulteney St to Jay St and back onto Hwy 14 south of the city o) Work with town to address gaps
7)	Intersection of Castle and Geneva	Difficult Crossing	p) Add pedestrian signal q) Install refuge island
8)	Brook Street Park	No ADA access	r) Install ramp at crosswalk on Brook St to allow for ADA Access s) Install sidewalks on east side
9)	Pedestrian Tunnel under rte 5 & 20	Limited, isolated access from west tunnel. Not used to potential	a) Extend complete street to south end of Exchange Street b) Provide safe new rail crossing at south end of Exchange Street/Lake Front Drive
10)	East of S. Main Street at 5 & 20 Bridge	Sidewalk ends abruptly	a) Install complete sidewalks
9)	City-wide	Sidewalk network is incomplete and often ADA deficient	a) Sidewalk infill projects and ADA improvements
10)	City-wide	Traffic Calming	t) Install curb extensions at locations throughout the city (see map for recommended sites)
11)	City-wide	Snow Covered Sidewalks	a) Create a snow volunteer program to assist with snow removal
12)	City-wide	Lack of bicycle and pedestrian information	a) Create a map with biking and walking routes

Preliminary Recommendations

Many beneficial and achievable alternatives were discussed at the Walk Audit. The Preliminary Recommendations are the projects considered the top priority for village-wide walkability and safety, which can be manageably pursued in the next three to five years. This section advises the city and GTC on potential projects, programs, and policies that will improve the walking and bicycling environments in the community.

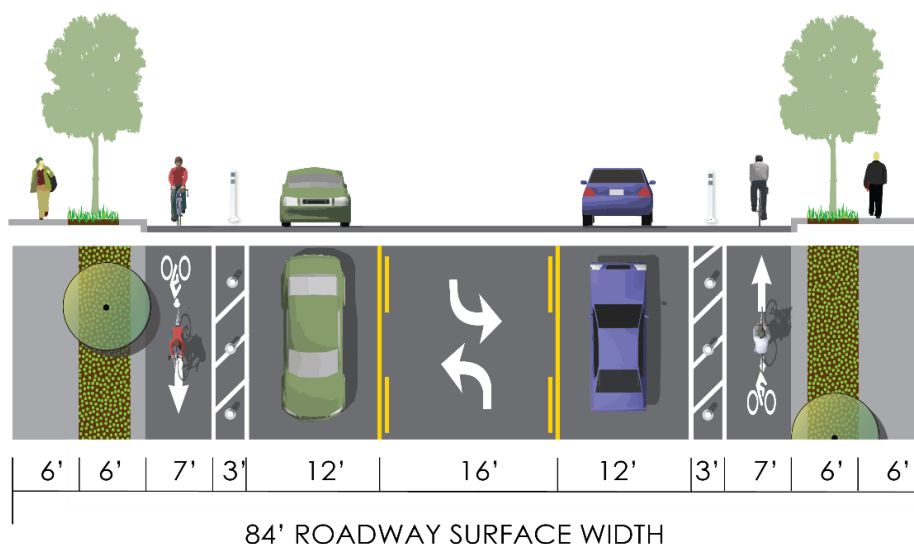
Infrastructure Programs

Road Diet Feasibility Study for Hwy 5 & 20

A road diet is reconfiguration of the roadway involving a reduction of the number of lanes. Road diets provide a number of benefits when implemented properly:

- Improved safety (19-47 percent reduction in overall crashes)¹
- More consistent traffic flow (speed differential reductions)
- Bicycle and pedestrian benefits

For Highway 5 & 20 a road diet would reduce the number of lanes from five to three lanes. There are multiple ways that the roadway space could be reallocated and Figure 3 demonstrates one potential option. A feasibility study would be required to evaluate the effectiveness and configuration of the road diet for Highway 5 & 20.



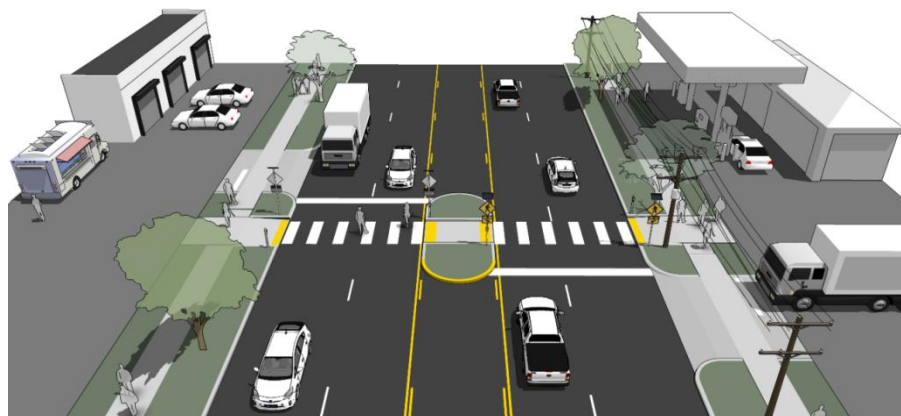
Potential cross section of Hwy 5 & 20 after a road diet

Install Traffic Calming and Improve Crossings on Route 14

Traffic calming treatments can be used to reduce vehicle speeds so that motorists and bicyclists generally travel at the same speed, creating a safer and more comfortable environment for all users and neighbors. The City should use sanctioned engineering approaches, such as medians, streetscapes, curb extensions, traffic circles, traffic controls and bike lanes to protect the street from high speeds, and pedestrian/vehicle conflicts when warranted.

Walk audit participants mentioned that crossings are currently difficult on Route 14. A series of rectangular rapid-flash beacons (RRFB's) could be installed along Route 14 to create comfortable crossings. Figure 4 displays a typical

RRFB crossing, which light uses LED lighting to ensure that motorists are aware a pedestrian is present.



A crosswalk with a RRFB installed

¹ Federal Highway Administration. *Road Diet Informational Guide*. November 2014.

Install a Roundabout at the Intersection of Main, Castle, and Milton

Roundabouts are a circular intersection designed with yield control for all entering traffic, channelized approaches and geometry to induce desirable speeds. They are used as an alternative to intersection signalization.

It is important to indicate to motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians the right-of-way rules and correct way for them to circulate, using appropriately designed signage, pavement markings, and geometric design elements.

Typical guidelines:

- 25 mph maximum circulating design speed.
- Design approaches/exits to the lowest speeds possible.
- Encourage bicyclists navigating the roundabout like motor vehicles to “take the lane.” This term is often used to describe bicyclists riding closer to the center of the travel lane, discouraging motor vehicles from passing.
- Maximize yielding rate of motorists to pedestrians and bicyclists at crosswalks.
- Provide separated facilities for bicyclists who prefer not to navigate the roundabout on the roadway.

Figure 5 displays a single lane, five-way roundabout. The design could be implemented to accommodate the five-way intersection of Main, Castle and Milton.



A Single Lane, Five-way Roundabout

Adopt Supportive Policies

Work with NYSDOT to Reroute State Bike Route 14

NYS Bike Route 14 is already routed on a parallel street to NYS Route 14 through the northern portion of Geneva. Consider working with NYSDOT to continue NYS Bike Route 14 on parallel streets south of Milton Street, such as Pulteney Street. Pulteney Street is a lower volume, local road that will be more comfortable for the average cyclist.

Citywide Sidewalk Improvement Program

Walk audit participants repeatedly cited improvements in the sidewalk network as a priority. Make sidewalk improvements to infill and repair stretches of the walkway network, giving priority to hazardous sidewalks and missing curb ramps, and whenever possible protecting street trees by avoiding root damage. A study should be conducted on existing sidewalk conditions to allow for prioritization of projects. Since the sidewalks are the considered the responsibility of the property owners in the City, a formalized inspection program that ensures regular inspection of sidewalks could be a viable option.

Snow Removal Program

Snow and ice represent seasonal challenges to bicycling. When snowplows remove snow and ice from roadways, it is usually deposited on roadway edges. This creates a very difficult bicycling environment by narrowing the curb lane or blocking the bike lane.

While trails are plowed in the winter, they are low priority and it may take several days before they are cleared.

Ice on the roadway presents a more serious challenge to cyclists than motorists. Proper drainage for snowmelt, and more aggressive treatment of roadway surfaces in freezing temperatures may help increase the cycling season for some hardy riders. Timely removal of traction sands and winter debris will also improve cycling conditions and stormwater quality.



Many cyclists ride year-round in snowy climates.

Education and Encouragement Programs

Walking Tours

Hosting regular walking tours can encourage healthy lifestyles by promoting walking as a viable option for transportation and recreation. This campaign could include some of the following events/outreach:

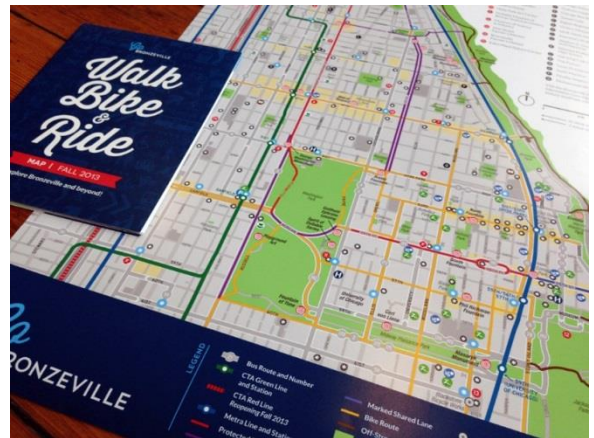
- Organized walks to the Farmers' Market
- Regular walks to local parks or in the Seneca Lake State Park
- A table at the Farmers' Market providing information about walking, bicycling, and transit routes in the neighborhood, as well as resources for bicycling such as helmet, light, or bell give-aways
- Walking tour that emphasizes and highlights the architectural features of the city, such as the red brick historic district.

The City can develop a Facebook page and/or advertise community walks via a newsletter or e-news. Holding regular walking events can encourage residents to experience more existing trail and park facilities, and discover new routes to destinations.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Maps

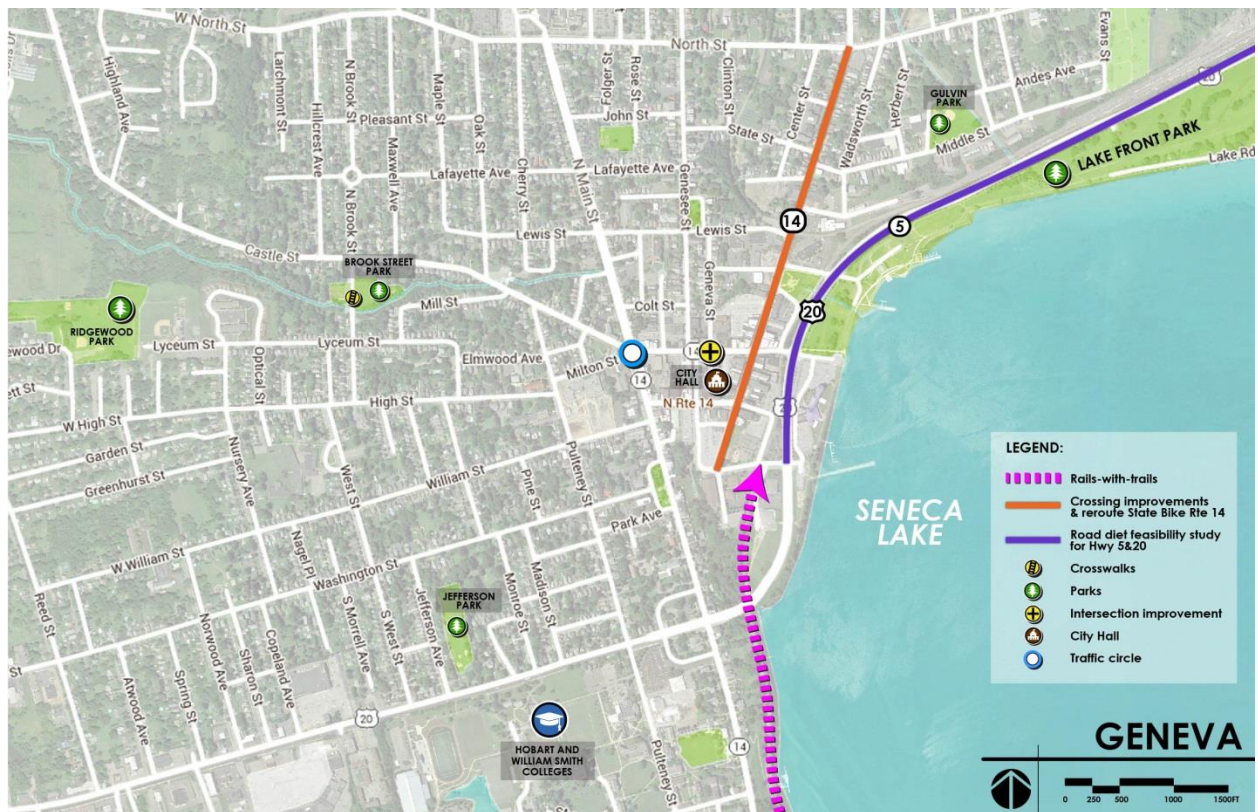
Bicycling and Walking Maps encourage visitors to bike and walk in the neighborhood by providing route and facility information and highlighting walking and bicycling destinations in a convenient and attractive format. A map should be developed that focuses on existing amenities, services, shopping districts, parks and community gardens. Bicycle facilities can be added to the map as they are developed. This information could be made into a brochure, which could be printed on paper or made available online as an interactive map to promote cycling and walking.

Once the map is produced, it should be made available online and distributed to residents by mail, at local bike shops, and/or at community events such as those recommended here. The bike map can also be promoted through flyers in utility bills, city newsletters, and other community media outlets. The map should be updated every few years to incorporate new bikeways or other changes.



Example of a walking and biking map.

Geneva Walkability Action Plan



City of Geneva Walkability Recommendations Map

WALKABILITY CHECKLIST

How to Evaluate Your Community

The following checklist provides guidance on what to look for when assessing your community's walkability.

- Sidewalks
 - Is there a continuous sidewalk network, or are there gaps?
 - Are sidewalks wide enough? (5' minimum; 6' preferred; wider in heavily traveled areas, such as near schools or in downtown business districts)
 - Are sidewalks in good condition? (no cracks, heaving, etc.)
 - Are there "goat trails" (dirt paths) that show where paths or sidewalks are needed?
 - Is the sidewalk clear of obstacles, such as overgrown shrubbery, drainage grates, signposts, and utility poles?
 - Is there a sufficient buffer between the sidewalk and the traffic, taking into consideration traffic speeds? (a wider buffer is needed along higher speed / higher volume roadways) Note: parking lanes, bike lanes or street furnishings can also serve as a buffer.
 - Are the sidewalks maintained, and kept clear of snow in the winter?
- Crosswalks
 - Are crosswalks clearly marked and visible?
 - Are there crosswalks at locations where people want to cross (access to key destinations)?
 - Is the street comfortable to cross or is the width intimidating?
 - Do crosswalks include pedestrian signals allowing sufficient timing to cross? Are there count-down timers to indicate time available for crossing?
 - What is the condition of the curb ramps? Are they oriented properly (perpendicular to the street) or do they lead the pedestrian into the middle of an intersection?
 - Curb extensions or 'bulb-outs' both shorten the distance pedestrians must cross through the traffic lanes, and increase visibility of pedestrians to drivers, due to the increased height.
 - Crossing islands or medians can facilitate crossing wide roadways, by providing a pedestrian refuge. As a best practice, the crosswalk cut through the island should angled so that pedestrians, by design, are required to face towards on-coming traffic before crossing the road.
- Environmental
 - Is the sidewalk pleasant: are there shade trees, awnings, landscaping, lighting, etc.?
 - Is the sidewalk safe, with appropriate lighting, traffic speeds, community policing?
 - Is the sidewalk interesting: does the route has a mix of land uses, activities, or is it monotonous?
 - Is the sidewalk purposeful, providing access to important destinations, such as parks, schools, shops, libraries, etc.?

- Bicycle Network
 - Are designated bike lanes, or 'sharrows' provided as appropriate to the roadway?
 - Are the bike lanes wide enough for traffic conditions (minimum 5 feet)?
 - Are the bike lanes clearly and appropriately marked?
 - Are the bike lanes in good condition and free from obstructions such as improperly oriented storm drains? (Drains should be oriented so that the 'slots' in the grate are perpendicular to the bicyclist's tires.)
 - If designated bike lanes are not provided, is there an "offset" of at least 4 feet between the curb and the edge line of the travel lane (to provide minimal, non-designated bicycle space)?
 - Are there bike facilities, such as bike parking or lockers, at important destinations?
 - Does the community have a bicycle parking policy or has it adopted appropriate land use code language?
 - Multi-use paths can be a good solution, accommodating both bicyclists and pedestrians in a separated pathway. Such paths need to be wide enough to accommodate both modes: a minimum of 8 feet is needed, and 10 to 14 feet is preferred.
- Transit Network
 - Are the bus stops located appropriately (i.e. providing convenient access to destinations, such as downtowns, parks, etc.)?
 - Are safe pedestrian crossings available nearby?
 - Are bus stops linked to the sidewalk network, or do passengers disembark on the side of the road or onto a lawn?
 - At high usage bus stops, are there benches, a covered bus stop or other improvements?
 - Are bus stops accessible in winter months, or are they obstructed by snow piles and ice? (This can be determined visually in season, but should also be verified through a review of the community's snow removal policies).
- ADA / Universal Design
 - Are sidewalks wide enough to accommodate two wheelchairs passing each other (minimum 5 feet width)?
 - Where feasible, are grade changes relatively consistent and not too steep?
 - Are cross slopes at intersection ramps and driveway crossings designed such that they will maximize stability for wheelchair users? (Excessive cross- or side slopes tend to direct wheelchair users off their intended path, 'downhill' into the street in many cases.)
 - Are surfaces smooth and free from obstacles?
 - When decorative paving is used, is a clear 'through-lane' provided through the center of the paved walkway?
 - Are there detectable warnings to alert pedestrians with visual impairments to intersections?
 - Are there flat 'landing areas' as transitions between crosswalk ramps and the sidewalk?
 - Do curb ramps provide access directly to crosswalks or direct the user into the street?

- Traffic Calming
 - Are traffic lane widths appropriate to the context? Narrower lanes reduce speeds naturally; conversely, motorists are more likely to speed when lanes are wide.
 - Are curb radii (turning distances at corners) appropriate? Tighter curb radii slow traffic. Excessively wide curb radii can function as unofficial right turn lanes and encourage drivers to travel through the intersection without stopping.
 - Adding visible pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure tends to slow traffic.
 - Street trees, streetscaping, public art, gateway treatments and buildings facing the street create a sense of 'arrival', 'enclosure, and 'place'. Drivers naturally reduce their speed in these environments.
 - Roundabouts, mini-traffic circles and chicanes are other options for slowing traffic.
 - Traffic calming features greatly reduce the risk of fatalities.