

Hendersonville – Hyman Heights & US 25 Walking Audit – April 10, 2006



The Walk Wise, Drive Smart project is a community-wide effort to promote safe, healthy walking in Hendersonville, NC neighborhoods. Helping address areas such as Hyman Heights and US 25 are important to developing community-wide solutions. Observations and recommendations from this audit are intended to inspire broader attention to walking conditions in Hendersonville.

Walking Audit Participants:

Hyman Heights neighborhood residents, city BiPeds and transportation advisory committee members, NCDOT staff, City of Hendersonville Public Works director, Council on Aging representatives, Centraliana Council of Governments, Program on Aging - UNC School of Medicine, UNC Highway Safety Research Center, and America Walks/Feet First.



The Audit Crew starts off at Opportunity House

Top Observations:

- US 25 is an extremely challenging street to cross throughout this area. It constitutes an absolute barrier for all but the most agile, determined, or fearless pedestrians.
- Traffic appears to be cutting through the Hyman Heights neighborhood due to an environment that is unfavorable to not only pedestrians, but also to drivers. These drivers are less likely to be respectful of the neighborhood's residential character.
- Hendersonville's commitment to 20 mph speed limits indicates a strong agreement that it is important to create a pedestrian-friendly environment both on US 25 and in residential areas, despite the limits of older design standards and current driver behavior.

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Top Recommendations:

1. Integrate pedestrian concerns along US 25 with NCDOT's current effort to implement an updated and coordinated traffic signal system for the 48 signalized intersections throughout the city. Mark crosswalks at every intersection along US 25. They are all legal crosswalks—make them safe.
2. Connect planning efforts for new residential and commercial development with the city's principles of growth and the recommendations that emerge from Hendersonville's Pedestrian Master Plan (expected to be completed Summer, 2006).
3. Establish connections between the needs of school-age youth and senior pedestrians along this corridor. Opportunities exist in the new North Carolina Safe Routes to School program.
4. Immediate action is possible with respect to improving pedestrian crossing in this area, including signal retiming, crosswalk markings, pedestrian countdown signals, and signage.
5. Though many improvements are possible area-wide, one approach to improvements could be to establish at least one priority safe walking route per neighborhood, with that route vetted through a public, neighborhood participation process.

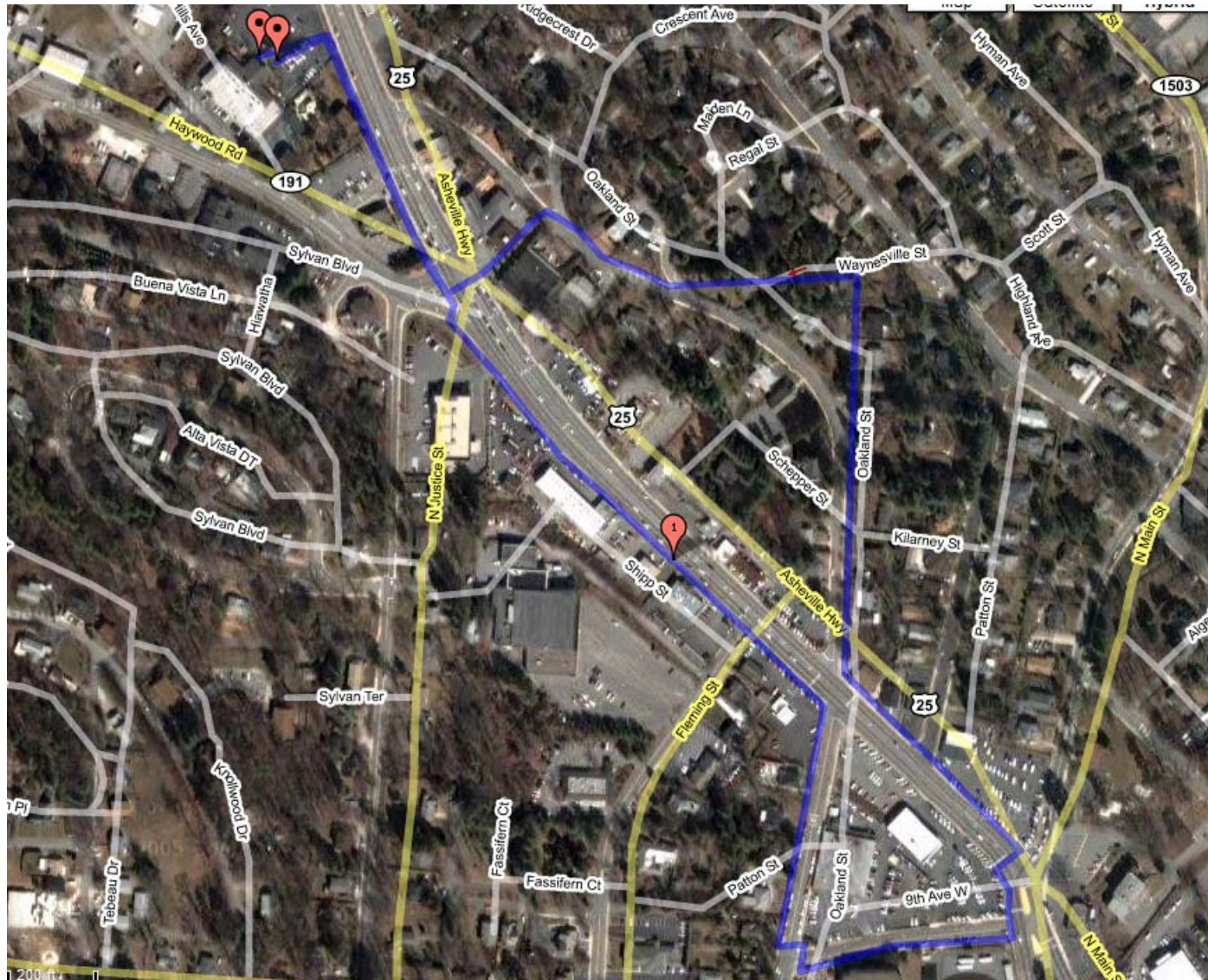


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Download this report from: www.feetfirst.info (look at Hendersonville "News" item for link)

Aerial Photo of Audited Route: 1.3 miles through commercial, residential and school areas.



You can map and save your own walking routes at: <http://www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=114087>









Item Key

Issues and action items are labeled with four color-coded icons that identify what action is recommended to make improvements. Additionally, as most of the action recommended is in the public domain, each item includes a specification for the category area that can facilitate coordination with or by the appropriate local or state agency.









- ★ - citizen or business initiative could solve this problem
- ☎ - existing programs can be tapped to make improvements
- 📄 - policy change or new funding may be required to implement changes
- ⌘ - informational - action not necessary, but opportunities may exist




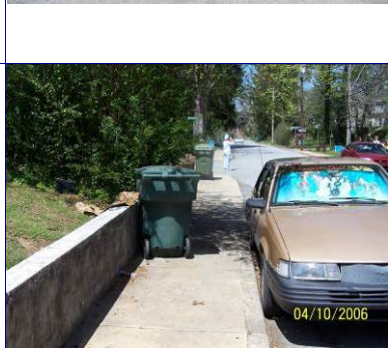
Issues and Action Items

Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
1 📄	Opportunity House	<i>Access to Businesses and Community Center.</i> Pedestrian access to and from the street at Opportunity House is typical for businesses along the stretch. The parking lot separates the sidewalk from the building entrance and includes a steep grade that is a challenge to climb and also blocks the visibility of entering drivers entering from US 25. New pedestrian-friendly design standards often involve putting the building face close to the street to facilitate access and improve the feel of the neighborhood.	Access	
2 📄	Rte. 25	<i>Buffer & Walkway Width</i> There is no buffer for the walkway along US 25. This creates hazards for pedestrians and an uncomfortable environment for drivers as well. Notice how members walk away from the street where possible. Passing vehicles can be seen shifting over toward the lane divider, as well.	Walkways	





Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
3 📞	NC 191 & US 25 intersection	<p><i>Crosswalks missing.</i> This intersection provides no marked or signalized crossings across US 25. This is a legal crosswalk, but does not afford any facilities to make crossing here a safe option. Marking crosswalks and adding pedestrian signal heads (especially countdown signals) is recommended. Many other state highways would recognize every signalized intersection as a legitimate place for pedestrians to cross the highway.</p>	Crosswalks	
4 📞	NC 191 & US 25 intersection	<p><i>Signal timing is inadequate for crossing on foot.</i> The fact that this intersection establishes legal (though unmarked) crosswalks does not mean that it is presently safe to cross here. We crossed US 25 departing from the pork chop island on the north side in a platoon, and waving at the waiting drivers who received a green before we could finish crossing. Large crosswalk spans are enhanced by the installation of ped-heads with countdown signals. New MUTCD recommendations under review will establish timing standards for flashing “don’t walk” at a 3.5 ft/sec pace and the total time (with “walk” phase) at 3.0 ft/sec.</p>	Signal timing Example photo --> (Courtesy Dan Burden)	
5 📞	NC 191 & US 25 intersection	<p><i>Crosswalk across 191 S/B entrance to S/B 25 appears unsafe due to driver behavior.</i> Drivers here were observed to completely ignore the requirement to yield. A curb extension, high visibility crosswalks, targeted enforcement, stop lines, advance educational signage, and other such treatments could improve compliance.</p>	Driver compliance with yield to peds	
6 📞 ★	Oakland & Crescent	<p><i>Traffic speed & volumes on residential streets.</i> Residents of Hyman Heights note that speed, traffic volume, and one-way non-compliance problems are significant and attributable to cut-through traffic between US 25 and points to the east. There is poor connectivity and “permeability” due to the historic street grid and topography of the area. The current one-way streets was an initial attempt to mitigate this problem and further action may be warranted. This is an opportunity for traffic calming & citizen action.</p>	Traffic Calming	











Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
7 	Oakland & Regal	<p><i>Extreme sidewalk slope at corner.</i> This slope is beyond the limits of a wheelchair or scooter's capabilities and would preclude turning onto Regal. The older walkways are not designed to be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act standards. It could be a good citizen-initiative to document or map sections of sidewalk throughout the community for future prioritization. This location may not be a top priority, but is an example of a barrier for wheelchair users.</p>	Walkways	
8 	Regal	<p><i>Blind curve.</i> This street was reported to be a location where vehicle speeds are excessive. This could be a good location for enforcement efforts.</p>	Visibility	
9 	Hyman Heights	<p><i>Contrast between residential & commercial areas.</i> The complete separation of residential and commercial land uses between the US 25 business corridor and the residential neighborhood result in drivers entering the area with an inappropriate mental framework. Mixed-use development on US 25 could be a desirable improvement. Communities across the country are establishing mixed-use standards for new commercial development.</p>	Land Use	
10 	Waynesville Street	<p><i>Wrong way driving.</i> There was some mention of an occasional wrong way driver. Signage or traffic calming may improve this situation. Simple features such as chokers or just paint and signs can improve compliance. A traffic calming plan for Hyman Heights, however, is likely to offer better results than making only isolated changes.</p>	Driver compliance	

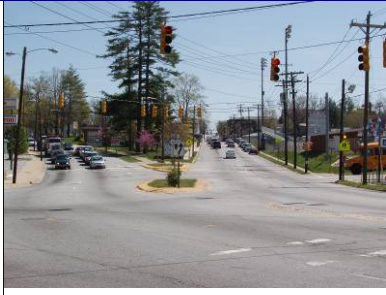



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11 ☞	Waynesville St & Oakland Ext	<i>Old Patton Memorial Hospital.</i> This is one of the historical features of the neighborhood. (One member of our crew was born at this hospital, which now appears to be a private residence.)	Historical interest	
12 ☞	Hyman Heights	<i>Walking loop</i> An informal walking loop exists as a sort of promenade through the neighborhood. The route runs (counterclockwise) along Oakland extension to Oakland St to Killarney to Highland to Waynesville.	Walking routes	
13 📞	Killarney Street	<i>Lack of Compliance with One-way Street</i> Residents noted that drivers turn the wrong way on Killarney with great frequency. Here, we observed that sign placement and marking could be improved. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Do not enter" sign too far back and small (stop sign also in location that makes it hard to see). • One-way sign could be closer to corner on post. • Short stop line placement for correct way traffic makes the street look like it is two-way to approaching drivers: instead, extend stop line across full street width. • Add a one-way directional arrow on pavement. 	Signage & Pavement Markings	
14 ★	All sidewalks in area	<i>Trash Cans on Sidewalk</i> This is permissible according to Hendersonville ordinances, but it reduces sidewalk width and creates an obstacle for users. An education campaign could be launched by neighborhood councils and the Public Works department to communicate that trash cans may be placed off the sidewalk in front yard or in parking areas and still be successfully emptied.	Public Education (Public Works)	












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15 	Lot at Schepper & Oakland & 25	<p><i>Proposed Walgreens development</i></p> <p>Concerns were raised about a proposed Walgreens drug store that would take over the car lot at the corner of US 25 and redevelop residential property all the way to Schepper. Several options exist for neighborhoods opposed to this development:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counter the NIMBY image (Not in my back yard) by gathering information about community clashes with Walgreens around the United States. A simple Google search yields numerous stories of similar clashes. This contest should not be simply about opposition at this particular location. It can highlight trends in how a corporation may be disregarding the quality of a local conditions and should set a precedent for other Hendersonville neighborhoods and beyond. 2. Establish a list of specific demands from the neighborhood. New development can be a positive force that creates good things for the community, but to accomplish that, it is often a negotiation. Other communities have succeeded in getting mitigation money on the order of \$50,000 to improve walking conditions and streetscapes. 3. Consider this as a test case that can help establish new or improved standards for the City of Hendersonville. New development can be a positive force of change, especially with your leadership. 	Land Use	
16 	End of Schepper Street	<p><i>Burger King Trail</i></p> <p>It was noted that this path that connects the dead end of Schepper with US 25 is a location for littering and other activity. The presence of this pedestrian connectivity is a positive asset in the community. The Hyman Heights neighborhood could reclaim this path through a clean-up and improvement work party. Likely such an effort could attract support from businesses such as Burger King itself.</p>	Litter	










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17 	Oakland Street Sidewalk	<p><i>Telephone pole in sidewalk</i> This obstruction narrows the sidewalk. Future utility work should be monitored to ensure that it does not reproduce these obstacles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36" clearance on the walkway is required by ADA 	Walkways	
18 	Oakland & US 25	<p><i>Curb radius at intersection</i> The large curb radius at this intersection creates a long crossing for the crosswalk across Oakland. Several problems arise from this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By allowing drivers to turn less than 90 degrees, they do not slow when turning off US 25. • The distance to cross Oakland is excessive. • Speeds turning onto Oakland should be slowing to 20 mph, not zooming through. 	Street geometry	
19 	Oakland & US 25	<p><i>Visibility of pedestrians at corner</i> The signage here blocks the view and mobility of pedestrians (and vehicles) approaching US 25. Changing the standards to make it sure that such a view blocker does not occur in the future could be a task for the city's planning commission. NCDOT may also already have restrictions on the books that provide a means for eliminating unsafe signage.</p>	Commercial Sign Standards	
20 	Oakland & US 25	<p><i>Immaculata Catholic School & Hendersonville Middle School Crossing</i> We learned after the audit that Immaculata parents had been requesting that this intersection be upgraded to include crosswalks for middle school students. Apparently, these parents' pleas were ignored, making it an insult when the mid-block crosswalk was painted for the car dealership. This request deserves a response.</p>	Safe Routes to School	









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21 📞	US 25	<p><i>“Closed Loop” Signal System planned for US 25</i></p> <p>The NCDOT Sylva transportation control center is presently establishing the specifications for a new coordinated system of 48 traffic signals along US 25 and US 64 through Hendersonville. This is a tremendous opportunity to include pedestrian detection, count-down signal heads, and pedestrian-friendly signal timing for the area. The city manager is advised to send a letter to the NCDOT division director demanding that the community’s pedestrian needs be incorporated into this system .</p>	Traffic Signals	
22 🚶	US 25 East Side	<p><i>Sidewalks in terrible condition.</i></p> <p>These sidewalks are narrow, oscillating, adjacent to the roadway with no buffer, and are not compliant with ADA standards. Normally, new development is the means for upgrading sidewalks, but with a car dealer at this location that day may be many years away. Hendersonville & NCDOT should collaborate to determine a means for upgrading these sidewalks through TIP or other funding.</p>	Walkways	
23 📞	US 25 @ Patton	<p><i>Excessive crossing distance.</i></p> <p>This wide side-street crossing is a significant barrier to walkability. Wide crossings like this can be eliminated through the use of curb extensions, which will simultaneously reduce speeding on residential streets. Sometimes there is a concern about dramatic bulbouts that slow traffic exiting a major corridor (due to potential for rear-end crashes), but (a) this is a lower-speed portion of US 25, and (b) an asymmetrical curb bulbout on the Northeast corner could be very effective.</p>	Crosswalk	
24 🌟	Boyd Car Dealership	<p><i>Cars parked onto and blocking sidewalk.</i></p> <p>These vehicles are illegally parked. The dealer will have several incentives for doing so: (a) greater visibility for vehicles for sale, (b) more space in the lot, and (c) the lack of wheel stops makes it hard to determine where to stop. The city and community should extend a kind but firm hand to the dealership prior to ticketing all of the cars on the sidewalk. Make them a partner in improving the area.</p>	Parking	

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25 📞	US 25 between Patton & 5-points	<p><i>Mid-block crosswalk markings a safety hazard.</i></p> <p>The design of this mid-block crosswalk makes it likely that at some point in the future there will be a pedestrian injury due to the inability of a driver and a pedestrian to see one another. If Carla departs across the street here, the truck would block the line-of-sight of traffic in lane 2. Multiple-threat crashes can be reduced by adding a stop line, high-visibility crosswalk markings, and a raised center median.</p>	Crosswalk	
26 📞	5 points intersection	<p><i>Curb ramps, timing.</i></p> <p>When this intersection was improved several years ago, pedestrian signal heads were added. However, the curb ramps were not upgraded, making it dangerous and inconvenient for a wheelchair user to cross. Our scooter user tipped onto 2 wheels when using a car lot driveway to mount the sidewalk about 20 feet south of the marked crosswalk. High visibility crosswalk markings and 8-foot advance stop bars are also needed.</p>	Crosswalk	
27 ✨	5 points intersection	<p><i>Risky behavior of high school students crossing.</i></p> <p>While observing this intersection, at least four sets of pedestrians crossed in the center of the intersection, away from the crosswalks. When confronted, these girls stated that they were heading to the Boys & Girls Club behind the northeast corner. Several factors appear to be influencing this behavior: (a) lack of high visibility markings, (b) presence of refuge median on south side of intersection, but no similar refuge for the north side of intersection, (c) poor crosswalk design on and from east side of 5-points establishes poor habits when crossing in reverse direction. Design improvements and a collaboration with Boys & Girls Club around education of HS students is suggested.</p>	Pedestrian Education	
28 📞	5 points intersection	<p><i>Right turning vehicles onto Ninth St.</i></p> <p>This curb has disappeared! Behind this curb, there are major view obstructions in the form of multiple utility poles. Vehicles turning right from US 25 to Ninth could be endangering pedestrians. A leading pedestrian interval, utility pole removal, and improved curbing are suggested.</p>	Curbing	

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29 📞	5 points intersection	<p>Roundabout?</p> <p>This intersection is just too darn complicated. It appears to be a good candidate for a roundabout. With the investments slated for the corridor's signalization, and the large land area already available here, a modern roundabout design should be investigated by NCDOT and the City. Modern roundabouts can be excellent for pedestrians because traffic flows slowly enough that drivers automatically yield to pedestrians at crosswalks.</p>	Intersection Design	
30 🚶	Behind school	<p><i>Students parking on residential streets.</i></p> <p>Neighbors on the street behind the high school complained of the continuous battle for parking due to volumes of high school students parking there. Designating this as a "residential parking zone" would be an ideal opportunity to discourage teenage driving. A special zone could be created in which a limited number of student permits could be sold, thus subsidizing the residential signage and program.</p>	Parking	
31 🚶	Fleming & US 25	<p><i>Old Ingles Store.</i></p> <p>Empty parking lots and closed businesses are terrible signs for a community and create dead-spaces without eyes on the street. The Tipping Point, by Malcolm Gladwell describes how a community can make statements in the way it responds to or ignores such issues.</p>	Land use, Art, Private Development	
32 🚶	US 25	<p><i>Right of way marker.</i></p> <p>The street right-of-way (or ROW) almost always extends beyond the paved area. One gage of this is where the utility poles are located, but on US 25, we saw a rare marker. The ROW for US 25 appears to have been expanded to the north at some point in the past. It's usually less onerous to acquire property on only one side of the street than on both sides.</p>	Concept of right-of-way	 

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33 	US 25	<p><i>Trip hazards.</i> The sidewalks on our walk did not have many significant cracks, but this water meter cover is protruding in a way that made it a hazard to walkers and wheelchair users. When one is walking so close to the highway, tripping would be not only injurious, but also potentially life threatening.</p>	Walkway	 
34 	US 25	<p><i>Driveway standards.</i> Hendersonville standards have changed since the driveways along US 25 were built, and a legacy problem now exists. The sidewalk should always continue through the driveway without dropping down to the driveway level. The sidewalk material should also continue through the driveway, providing drivers with a double cue that they need to yield to pedestrians in the sidewalk when entering or exiting. For a solution, we will have to await new development or government funding.</p>	Driveways	
35 	US 25	<p><i>Driveway Access to Eckerds.</i> Concerns were raised about drivers entering Eckerds by turning left from northbound US 25. This location appears particularly hazardous. NCDOT reported that they would examine crash history to determine whether a left turn restriction (e.g., in the form of a raised center median) is warranted here.</p>	Access Control	
36 	US 25	<p><i>Faded Pavement Markings.</i> High visibility crosswalk markings can be striped so as to minimize wear due to tire abrasion. April can be a time of year when markings are in their worst condition, after a season of snow, but before maintenance has moved into full swing. One NCDOT engineer indicated they are experimenting with new more durable marking treatments that may reduce the annual fading observed here.</p>	Pavement Markings (NCDOT, City Public Works)	

Item	Location	Description	Category	Photo
37 	Suntrust bank	<p><i>Handrail requirement.</i></p> <p>Due to the drop-off from the sidewalk to the parking lot, a hand-rail should have been installed here at the top of the brick wall. Suntrust Bank would be advised to make this improvement.</p>	Walkways	
38 	Suntrust Bank	<p><i>Cut-through traffic to Druid Hills.</i></p> <p>Participants noted that drivers routinely turn right off US 25 through this parking lot to reach the West side neighborhoods including Druid Hills. Representatives of Druid Hills noted that the traffic calming measures within their neighborhood have been extremely effective. One person noted that the reduction in cut-through traffic now means that they are more comfortable with their children again playing out in front of their houses.</p>	Access Control	
39 	The New Ingles on US 25	<p><i>Lack of nearby crosswalk.</i></p> <p>Though we did not walk here during the audit, one participant noted that there is no crosswalk near the new Ingle's on US 25. Because having a grocery store nearby has been found to be the single greatest generator of pedestrian activity (University of Washington Urban Form Lab study), we recommend that NCDOT, Hendersonville, and the property owner collaborate to identify a way to add a crosswalk at this location. Additionally, all new grocery stores should include accommodations for pedestrians.</p>	Crosswalks & Land Use	



Contacts & Project Information

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For information about pedestrian advocacy resources for communities outside of Washington State, we recommend that you contact the national coalition of pedestrian advocacy organizations, **America Walks** at:
Web: www.americawalks.org
Email: info@americawalks.org
Tel: 617.367.1170 (Boston, MA)

Feet First is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It is our mission to promote the rights and interests of pedestrians and to encourage people to enjoy the pleasures of walking. Feet First works to build walkable communities across Washington State.

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