

2024-2025

MILWALKEE WALKS ANNUAL REPORT



Program successes



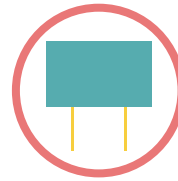
1000+
Residents engaged
at events



24
Crosswalk
actions



3
Media
stories



700+
Yard signs
distributed



310k+
Social media
views

Select special projects



Walks in the Playfields

New program in City of Milwaukee Parks throughout the summer. Partnered with Bike Fed's Mobile Bike Repair to engage with hundreds of kids and residents through games, art, and education.



Walk Audit Training

Hosted walk audit trainings in several communities and collaborated with disability rights organizations to host "walk and roll" events.



Changing the Streets

Hosted several events to promote resident voices and artists in making streets safer.

What is MilWALKee Walks?

MilWALKee Walks is a program of the Wisconsin Bike Fed that educates drivers and pedestrians about pedestrian rights and safety in the midst of an ongoing national and local pedestrian safety crisis. We serve communities across Milwaukee County, focusing on those areas with high rates of pedestrian fatal and serious injury crashes.



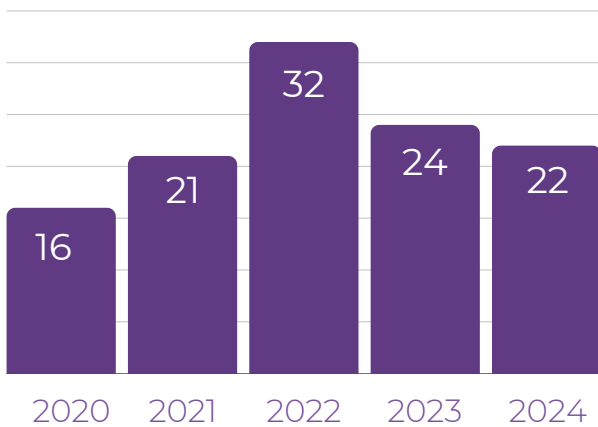
Program Activities in 2024 - 2025

The MilWALKee Walks program consists of activities designed to engage drivers, pedestrians, and the broader community on the issue of pedestrian safety. In this report, we document program activities - although this is not an exhaustive list! Thank you to our many community partners for making our work possible.



115

pedestrians were killed in the last 5 years in Milwaukee.



Crash Reports & Education

Each year, MilWALKee Walks staff read the **crash reports** involving pedestrians killed or seriously injured in Milwaukee County. Staff then create charts to communicate this information over social media and other channels. Reading these reports helps to inform our work by better understanding the behaviors that may have led to crashes.

Walk Culture Ambassadors

Many thanks to our eight **Walk Culture Ambassadors**: Eric, Kimberly, Gordy, Ceth, April, Henry, Jessye, and Ousia. Each worked in their neighborhoods and collaboratively across the County.

This position hosts program activities, is a contact regarding pedestrian safety in their neighborhoods, and encourages other residents to join activities as volunteers.

Ambassadors this year hosted activities such as crosswalk actions, walk audits, playfield programming, and more.

Hit-and-run crashes account for

57%

of Milwaukee County pedestrian fatalities in 2024.





Walk Audits

We assisted with walk audits across the city, focusing on high injury networks and corridors of concern. Ambassadors identified issues with streets, lighting, and sidewalks showing needed improvements. The audits also educated residents on reporting these concerns.



Resident Meetings

We held citywide meetings with residents and partners to discuss street safety and calming measures, exploring solutions and identifying steps for safer streets.



Partnerships

Partnerships are a key part of how we reach residents across the county. This year, we partnered with 1000 Friends to conduct walk audits with two of their Transportation Academy Groups. We also attended and/or spoke about the important of pedestrian safety at meetings across the county, such school nights in Cudahy; the Milwaukee Pedestrian Bicyclist Advisory Committee; National Night Out; farmer's markets in Whitefish Bay; undergraduate courses at MSOE; and more!

Trainings & Outreach

Crosswalk actions are often the “introduction” to the issue of pedestrian safety. For deeper engagement, our program conducts and attends trainings, walks, and other events, often in collaboration with partner organizations. These efforts allow us to have more substantial conversations with community partners and residents, thus bringing the importance of pedestrian safety to stakeholders across the city. Here are some examples of this work.



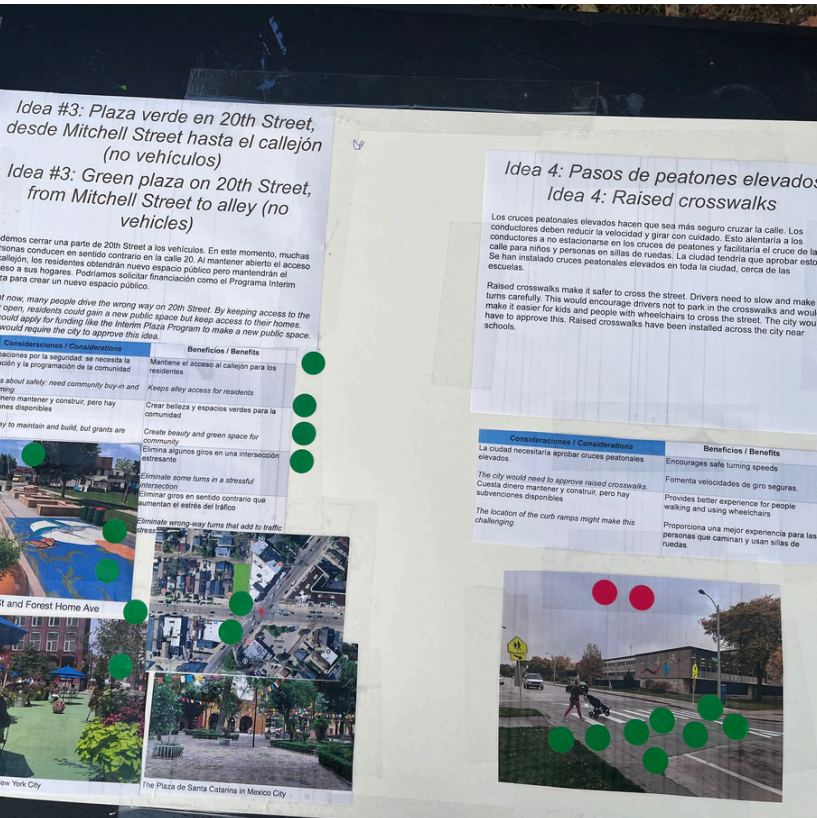


BEAUTIFYING GALENA STREET'S TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the National Center for Safe Routes to School, the Bike Fed worked with local artist CK Ledesma, middle school students, and the local community to beautify traffic circles and curb extensions along Galena Street in Milwaukee's near northside. This project was meant to raise awareness of the purpose of traffic calming countermeasures, and to create a sense of pride and ownership over them, especially for local students and their families.

We collaborated closely with our colleagues who run the Bike Fed's Safe Routes to School program. They led the workshops with middle school students at Bethune Academy to brainstorm motifs for the artwork and conduct geometry lessons to design artwork to fit the scale of the traffic circles and curb extensions.

In addition to helping with a street clean up and painting, MilWALKee Walks Ambassadors led the effort to collect data before and after the project completion. Ambassadors studied speeds along Galena Street, determining that speeds slightly decreased after installing the artwork. They also conducted an intercept survey and talked with 29 residents about the project's impact. The majority of residents impacted (81%) felt that the artwork had improved the street, saying things like "It's beautiful!" and that it "Looks much prettier and brighter." The City of Milwaukee's Multimodal Unit collaborated on this data collection effort, which will be used to better inform future City projects.



IMAGINING A BETTER BLOCK ON MILWAUKEE'S SOUTHSIDE

Continuing our long partnership with Muskego Way Forward, we collaborated on a visioning session and community event about safer intersections. The intersection of Mitchell Street, Muskego Avenue, and 20th Street is notorious for dangerous driving and difficult access to the local businesses on it.

We first identified this intersection as an area of interest because of a fire that had destroyed one of the largest buildings on the block. This event, while tragic, led the community to wonder how the block could be improved. Muskego Way Forward hosted engagement sessions with local stakeholders to identify a few key ideas for the street.

For our final event in October 2024, MilWALKee Walks staff then came up with ways to collect feedback, such as “voting” posters and incorporating the Traffic Calming Lending Library to spur conversation. Residents were excited about raised crosswalks and a potential plaza conversion for 20th Street, which currently sees a great deal of wrong-way traffic. Muskego Way Forward, the local alders, and the City will continue the conversation!



ATKINSON & CAPITOL WALK 'N' ROLL

Imagine 40 people walking and rolling along one of Milwaukee's most challenging intersections – including high schoolers, representatives from multiple government agencies, local elected officials, and disability rights advocates! MilWALKeE Walks hosted this event in April along the Atkinson and Capitol intersection, next to the Atkinson Library.

Our collaboration with Independence First was a smashing success. Additionally, collaborating with Alderwoman Andrea Pratt, we were able to incorporate students from Rufus King High School, who brought their experience navigating the world as students who are visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing, and who have cognitive impairments. Independence First clients also joined us, bringing their experience of navigating transit, inaccessible curb ramps, and more.

This intersection is due for safety improvements from a federal Safe Streets and Roads for All grant. The consultant team on that project joined us, allowing for this educational experience to also inform upcoming pedestrian safety investments and to bring attendees' attention to future projects.



ART AND COMMUNITY ON A NEW BIKE BOULEVARD

The City of Milwaukee invested in making South 37th Street safer for all residents through new countermeasure such as a traffic diverter, mini traffic circles, and curb extensions. To celebrate this and to use the new infrastructure as a teaching tool, MilWALKee Walks partnered with VIA CDC and local artist Yesi Perez to create community-centered art around the traffic circle at Scott Street, art at each of the four sidewalk corners, and then to create a hands-on screenprinting workshop to celebrate the Silver City neighborhood.

In advance of painting, VIA CDC and MilWALKee Walks hosted a block party event that included bike education and a family bike ride. Yesi Perez sought community input on the motifs that would become the art: flowers, biking, hearts, the skyline of the neighborhood, a sombrero, and more.

Several weeks later, staff and volunteers completed the painting. VIA CDC hosted another celebratory block party, complete with food and screenprinting. The event was a huge success, and neighbors were more engaged and aware of why traffic safety infrastructure had been installed.



A WALKING WORKSHOP WITH MCFI CLIENTS

We hosted a four-week workshop with adult clients with brain health issues at MCFI, Milwaukee's Center for Independence. All of these clients are non-drivers and many find navigating traffic to be stressful both due to cognitive delays or due to physical impairments, such as use of a walker or wheelchair.

We spent our initial classes reviewing basic pedestrian safety education such as when to cross a street. We then discussed different kinds of crosswalks, such as marked and unmarked crosswalks, letting clients lead the discussion about their experiences at both. Additionally, we learned that many clients wanted to report challenges with streets to the city, so we educated them about different kinds of infrastructure and how to report issues such as potholes, broken walking signs, and short traffic signals.

The City of Milwaukee's Multimodal Unit came to present about its Mobility Plan, providing a typically hard-to-reach group with an opportunity to provide real feedback about their challenges and desire for transportation independence. Finally, on our last day, we put our education to work and conducted a walk audit, complete with reporting identified challenges to the city through its reporting app.



“WALKS IN THE PLAYFIELDS” ALL SUMMER LONG

In partnership with the Bike Fed’s Mobile Repair program, we held seven weeks of pedestrian safety programming at parks across the City of Milwaukee. Milwaukee Rec hosts activities and free lunches for kids and families throughout the summer at these sites, so many kids came up to us looking to learn more about walking and biking safety.

We used components of the existing Bike Fed Walking Wisdom curriculum and adapted it for more informal engagement. Older kids loved our Safety Safari, where they had to find traffic-related items (such as yield signs and crosswalks) and then answer trivia questions; the card-matching game that required reading information about infrastructure; and “Raised Hand/Walking Person,” a version of “Red Light/Green Light” to teach kids about always using the walk signal at traffic lights. The youngest kids loved our walking and biking safety related coloring sheets.

Kids of all ages (and adults!) loved our large paper asking, “What would a safe street look like to you?” Throughout the week at each location, attendees would add to the imagination of more walkable and safe neighborhoods.



THANK YOU TO OUR PROGRAM PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT

- 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
- AARP
- Amani United
- Bublr Bikes
- City of Milwaukee - DPW & Vision Zero
- Coalition for Safe Driving MKE
- Cudahy Health Department
- Dominican Center for Women
- Independence First
- Jackson Park Community Association
- Lawrence University
- MCFI
- Milwaukee County DOT
- Milwaukee Recreation
- Muskego Way Forward
- Near West Side Partners
- Northwest Side CDC
- Safe and Sound
- Sixteenth Street Health Center
- Sherman Park Community Association
- VIA CDC
- Village of Greendale
- Village of Whitefish Bay
- Washington Park Neighbors
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Safety
- *And many more, including countless volunteers and supportive residents*