



COMMERCCE STREET

Accessible Neighborhood Greenway



This project was made possible by:



ARKANSAS STATE
WALKING COLLEGE

In partnership with:



MIKE ORNDORFF
CONSTRUCTION



Planning Team:

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- Sarah Thomas | *Downtown Neighborhood Association President*
- Gabe Holmstrom | *Downtown Little Rock Partnership Executive Director*
- Mike Orndorff | *Mike Orndorff Construction Owner*
- Patricia Fry | *AARP Arkansas Associate State Director (Outreach and Engagement)*
- Heather Davis | *AMR Architects, Inc, Principal, studioMAIN Board Member*
- Everett Gooch | *Arkansas State Walking College and Rock Town River Outfitters Manager*
- Chloe Chapman | *Arkansas State Walking College and Our Little Rock Founder*
- John Landosky | *Arkansas State Walking College and City of Little Rock Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator*
- Rachel Cotner | *Arkansas State Walking College and America Walks Communications & Systems Manager*
- Nicole Smith | *America Walks Operations and Program Manager*
- Ian Thomas | *America Walks State and Local Program Director*

Table of Contents

| | |
|----|-------------------------------|
| 3 | I. Summary |
| 4 | II. Project Background |
| 7 | III. Workshop |
| 14 | IV. Pop-Up Party |
| 19 | V. Findings & Recommendations |
| 21 | Appendix |



I. Summary



Significant demand exists for walking and biking between the growing, vibrant **Pettaway Neighborhood** and the Rivermarket District. **Commerce Street** has been identified as a corridor with great potential to meet this demand by becoming an Accessible Neighborhood Greenway. As it exists today, cars are given priority and often significantly more space than required by traffic volume, resulting in **high speeds and dangerous conditions**.

A **strong and diverse grassroots coalition** has been formed to support this initiative and work to move it forward. This coalition planned and executed The Commerce Street Accessible Neighborhood Greenway Workshop and Pop-Up Party, providing an opportunity for the community to **actively participate in the planning process** and physically install a temporary solution to a primary area of concern: the 17th Street intersection.

The feedback and results are overwhelmingly positive, leading to the recommendation to:

Make the 17th Street intersection modifications permanent.

Expand traffic calming measures along the corridor.

Details of the project background, process, findings and recommendations are included on the following pages.

Summary video created by the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention:

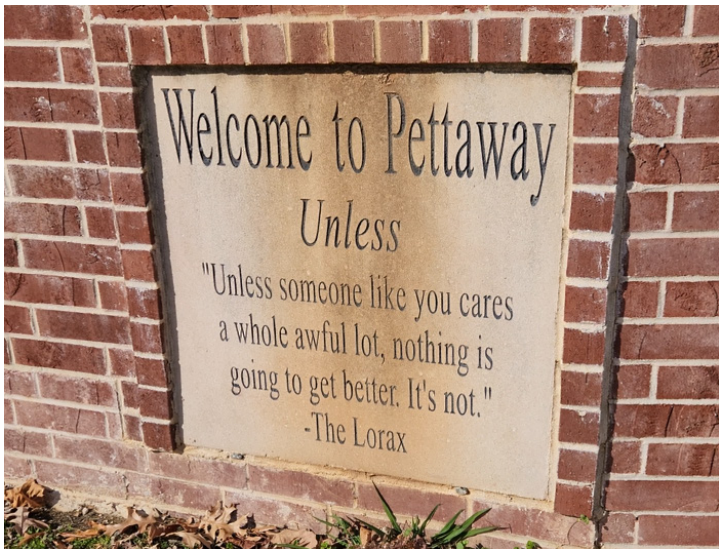
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtJUXwzArc4>

II. Project Background



When **Everett Gooch** heard repeat discussions about the difficulty of getting to the new Pettaway Square by foot or by bike, he decided to put into action the skills and strategies he learned as a Fellow of the **Arkansas State Walking College**.

Commerce Street was identified as a north/south corridor with traffic volumes significantly lower than the curb-to-curb width implies. While this provides an opportunity for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, it creates a dangerous situation in its current state, encouraging through-traffic and high-speeds.



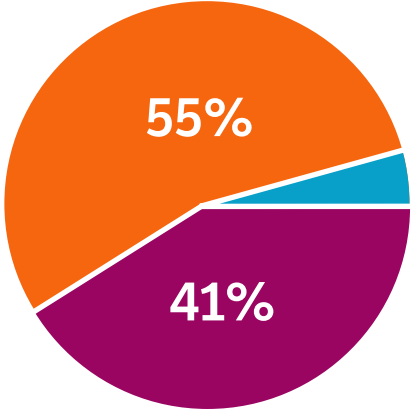
Everett's first task was to quantify the anecdotal evidence. He put together a survey of the neighborhood and received **over 50 responses**, confirming that there is significant desire to walk and bike between the Rivermarket and Pettaway Square, but significant deterrents to doing so.

Next, he reached out to Little Rock Police Department to provide a **traffic study** at the intersections of most concern based on the survey. The results were quite telling, with speeds logged consistently above the speed limits, and up to **73 mph!**

Finally, he created a coalition to move this project forward. He engaged city officials, who led him to America Walks and many other local professionals and advocates. After months of planning, **Commerce Street Accessible Neighborhood Greenway Workshop & Pop-Up Party** was developed as a first concrete step and springboard to a more walkable and bikeable neighborhood.

How is walking and biking in the Pettaway Neighborhood in general?

People drive too fast/aggressively.

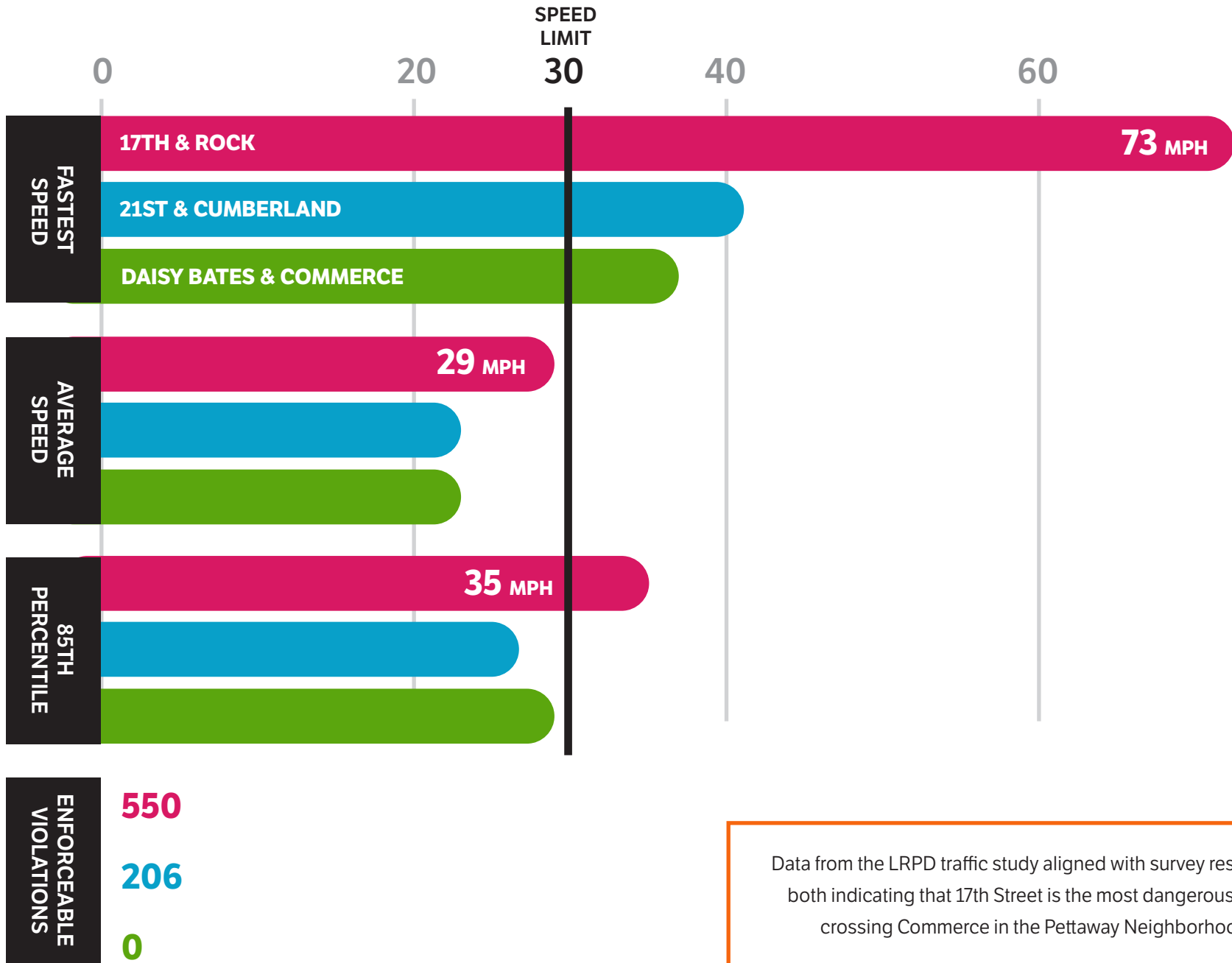


- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

“I am always anxious trying to cross 17th Street.”

LRPD TRAFFIC STUDY DATA

FALL 2023



Data from the LRPD traffic study aligned with survey responses, both indicating that 17th Street is the most dangerous street crossing Commerce in the Pettaway Neighborhood.

III. Workshop



A public workshop was held on December 8th, 2023 from 9:00am - 4:45pm at the Gospel Lighthouse Pentecostal Church, located on the 1600 block of Commerce, just north of the Pop-Up Party site.

Invitations were extended to residents and business owners of the Pettaway neighborhood and other surrounding areas of downtown Little Rock, as well as representatives of the City of Little Rock and all other partner agencies.

Volunteers and professional staff from partner organizations were present, along with 2022 and 2023 Arkansas State Walking College Fellows.

8 HOURS

38 PARTICIPANTS

32 ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED

Workshop Goals:

- 1** Move the Commerce Street Accessible Neighborhood Greenway project forward
- 2** Center the needs and concerns of neighbors in the planning process and foster shared ownership by the community
- 3** Plan for safe pedestrian and bicycle access to Downtown Little Rock as new traffic patterns develop due to the I-30 Crossing Project
- 4** Inspire, educate, and expand capacity of Arkansas State Walking College Fellows

Workshop Agenda (PART ONE)

Coffee

9:00 AM

Welcome
Doniell Clayborn | *Pettaway Neighborhood Association*

Remarks:
Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.
Ward 1 Director Virgil Miller
State Representative Denise Ennett

9:15 AM

Workshop Overview
Ian Thomas | *America Walks*

Acknowledgments:
Arkansas Department of Health
Metroplan

Visions for Commerce Street Corridor

9:30 AM

Framing Presentations

Project Overview
Everett Gooch | *Arkansas State Walking College*

Neighborhood Perspective
Doniell Clayborn | *Pettaway Neighborhood Association*
John Hendrick | *Downtown Neighborhood Association*

Local Non-Profit & Advocacy Perspective
Patricia Fry | *AARP Arkansas*
Chloe Chapman | *Our Little Rock*

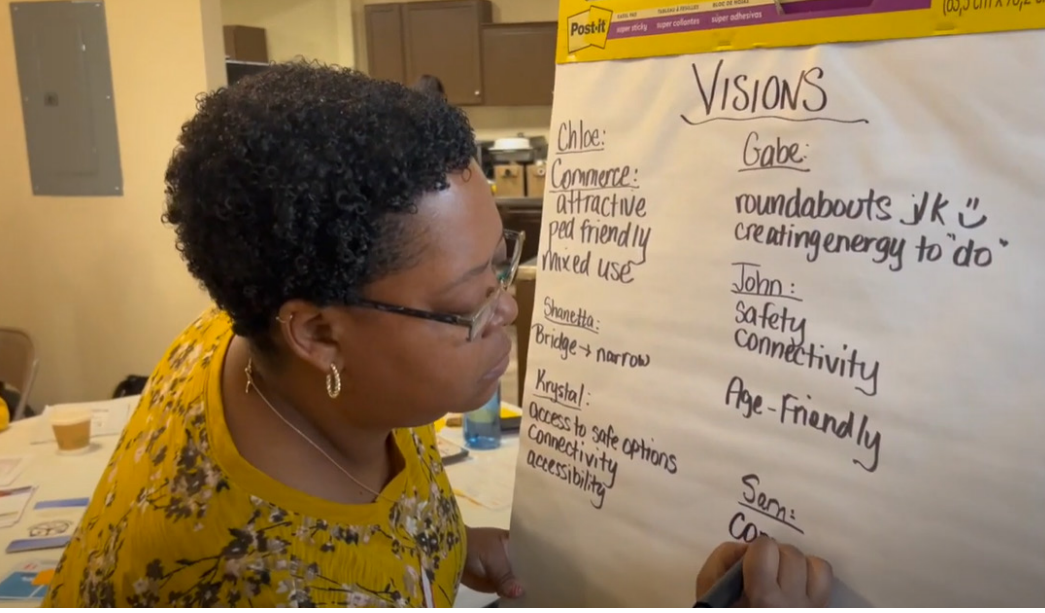
Local Business & Development Perspective
Gabe Holstrom | *Downtown Little Rock Partnership*
Mike Orndorff | *Mike Orndorff Construction / Developer*

City of Little Rock & Bike-Ped Little Rock Perspective
John Landosky | *Little Rock Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator*

Arkansas Department of Transportation Perspective
Kim Sanders | *ARDOT Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator*

National Perspective
Nicole Smith | *America Walks*





24th to 19th Streets

19th to 14th Streets

14th to 8th Streets

8th to Riverfront Park

Commerce Street Accessible Neighborhood Greenway Workshop
Small-Group Discussions, Part 1: Corridor Analysis

Which section of the Commerce corridor is your group studying?
8th to Downtown

What features of this section of the Commerce corridor support walking, rolling, and biking?
current city path listed but not fully accessible/safe (signs)
unknown fully

What safety and comfort issues need to be addressed along this section of the Commerce corridor?
path from Fine Arts/commerce to 4th st. connection (avoid arm) - city bike path
parallel parking issues
wheelchair/vision/hearing impaired access
crosswalks w/sound (speech/beeps)

How might you use the Commerce corridor if improvements were made?
Weneter only to LE
- raised sidewalks in busy locations would help

Commerce Street Accessible Neighborhood Greenway Workshop
Small-Group Discussions, Part 2: Design Concepts

Which section of the Commerce corridor is your group studying?
8th to Downtown

What did you learn from your walking or biking audit?
Lots of sidewalk and ramps in disrepair

What ideas do you have for improving safety and comfort along this section of the Commerce corridor?
Road diets & bike lanes w/signage

How will you illustrate these ideas, and then "sell" them to the community and to decision-makers?
Show the speed study & crash survival rates. Use a mural with photos.

Refer to Appendix for all completed worksheets

Workshop Agenda (PART TWO)

- 11:00 AM **Small Group Discussions - Corridor Analysis**
Break Corridor into 4 segments, small group for each
Worksheet 1
- Lunch**
- 1:30 PM **Commerce Corridor Walking & Biking Audits**
AARP Walk Audit ToolKit
Worksheet 2
- 3:00 PM **Small Group Discussions - Design Concepts**
Group presentations of observations & ideas
- 4:15 PM **Wrap-up and Next Steps**
Ian Thomas | *America Walks*
- SS4A Process & Funding Opportunity
Bernadette Rhodes | *Metropolitan Senior Regional Planner*
- Pop-Up Party
Heather Davis | *AMR Architects*
- 4:45 PM **Close**

24th to 19th Streets

GROUP MEMBERS

- John Landosky
- Rachel Cotner
- Jeremiah Cotner
- Emma Cotner
- Finley Vinson
- Becky Adams
- Nikki Crane-Hasty

KEY FEATURES & PARTNERS

- Pettaway Square
- Neighborhood Center
- On Bus Route
- 20 housing units being added now, plans for 140-160 unit development to come online in future. Could add up to 800 people to the area in the next few years.
- Our House (nearby)

OBSERVATIONS & IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Commerce Street is 38' wide from 21st to 22nd (wider than 21st Street)
- Existing speed bumps on 21st, but bulb-outs needed. Truck observed speeding during audit.
- 22nd to 24th need sidewalks. This portion is very wide, could have parallel parking as well
- 21st has speed bumps but trucks still speed
- Driveways are inconsistent
- Very aggressive cars even in slower area



19th to 14th Streets

GROUP MEMBERS

- Doniell Clayborn
- Patricia Fry
- Bernadette Rhodes
- Shanetta Agnew
- Heather Davis
- Solomon Quarm

KEY FEATURES & PARTNERS

- Lighthouse Pentecostal Church
- Scholastic Academy Pre-School
- Eastside Church of Christ
- Bus Route (turns northward on Commerce from 14th)

OBSERVATIONS & IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- No one stops at stop sign at 14th
- Curb cuts / ramps generally present
- Pretty good lighting overall, except from 14th-15th
- 14th - 15th was the poorest infrastructure overall.
- 17th street traffic feels very fast.
- Bernadette walking with vest on and still almost got hit twice. Very little attention is paid to pedestrians.
- Interesting crosswalk at 14th & Commerce. It needs to be repainted to be more visible, but would love to have more artistic crosswalks like this!
- Crosswalks are needed throughout area
- Sidewalk from 17th-19th has nice landscape buffer





14th to 8th Streets

GROUP MEMBERS

- Chloe Chapman
- John Hendrick
- Chris Woodward
- Joan Hendrick

KEY FEATURES & PARTNERS

- Bridging the I-630 divide
- AMFA
- Macarthur Park
- Firehouse Museum & Hostel
- MacArthur Museum of Military History
- Stonestrow Brewing

OBSERVATIONS & IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Commerce Street Bridge: very wide, no on/off ramps at this location so very little traffic. Needs some sort of shade / canopy to make appealing to walk across. Needs better lighting.
- Pedestrian bridge: traffic is VERY loud below
- Build paths through Macarthur Park along "desire" lines
- Signage needed from Commerce - what exhibits are happening at AMFA? How to get to Military Museum?
- 9th Street is the issue to cross, whether taking Ferry or Cumberland northward. Right now, Ferry feels best, but Cumberland, with some modifications, has more potential as a true pedestrian connector to the river.
- Rock Street is "rocky" for pedestrians
- New sidewalk next to AMFA / beautiful views of park





8th to Riverfront Park

GROUP MEMBERS

- Everett Gooch
- Justin Vess
- Blake Tierney
- Kim Sanders
- Krystle Merry

KEY FEATURES & PARTNERS

- Rivermarket & Riverfront Park
- Main Library - Central Arkansas Library System
- Rock Region Metro Travel Center
- Historic Arkansas Museum
- Central Arkansas Water
- Little Rock Housing Authority
- New greenspace left over from I-30 on-ramp demo

OBSERVATIONS & IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Opportunity to connect residents to the river
- Commerce Street breaks here, and Cumberland seems to make the most sense as a preferred pathway.
- Rev Room Gates - opportunity for main entrance to Riverfront Park
- Cumberland is a partial 1-way; convert to 2-way preferred.
- Cumberland does not have traffic to support 4-lanes. Road diet to 3 lanes. Parking could remain on 1-way portion. Would only require paint!
- Lights south of 4th could be 4-way stops.

IV. Pop-Up Party





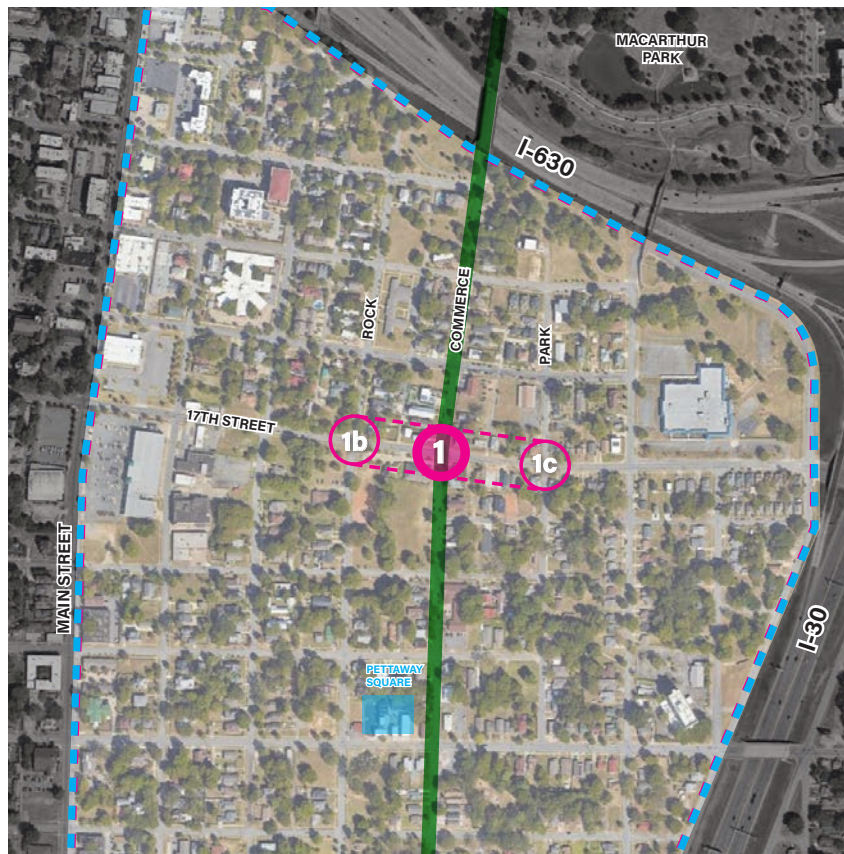
The Pop-Up Party was held December 10th, 2023 from 11:00am - 3:00pm. The 1600 block of Commerce was closed to through-traffic for this time period to allow volunteers to use the street for material preparation and to display the maps and ideas generated during Friday's workshop.



The Pop-Up installation was put in place at the 17th & Commerce intersection. This specific intersection was chosen based on survey feedback and traffic study data indicating that it held the greatest safety risk and concern for the community.



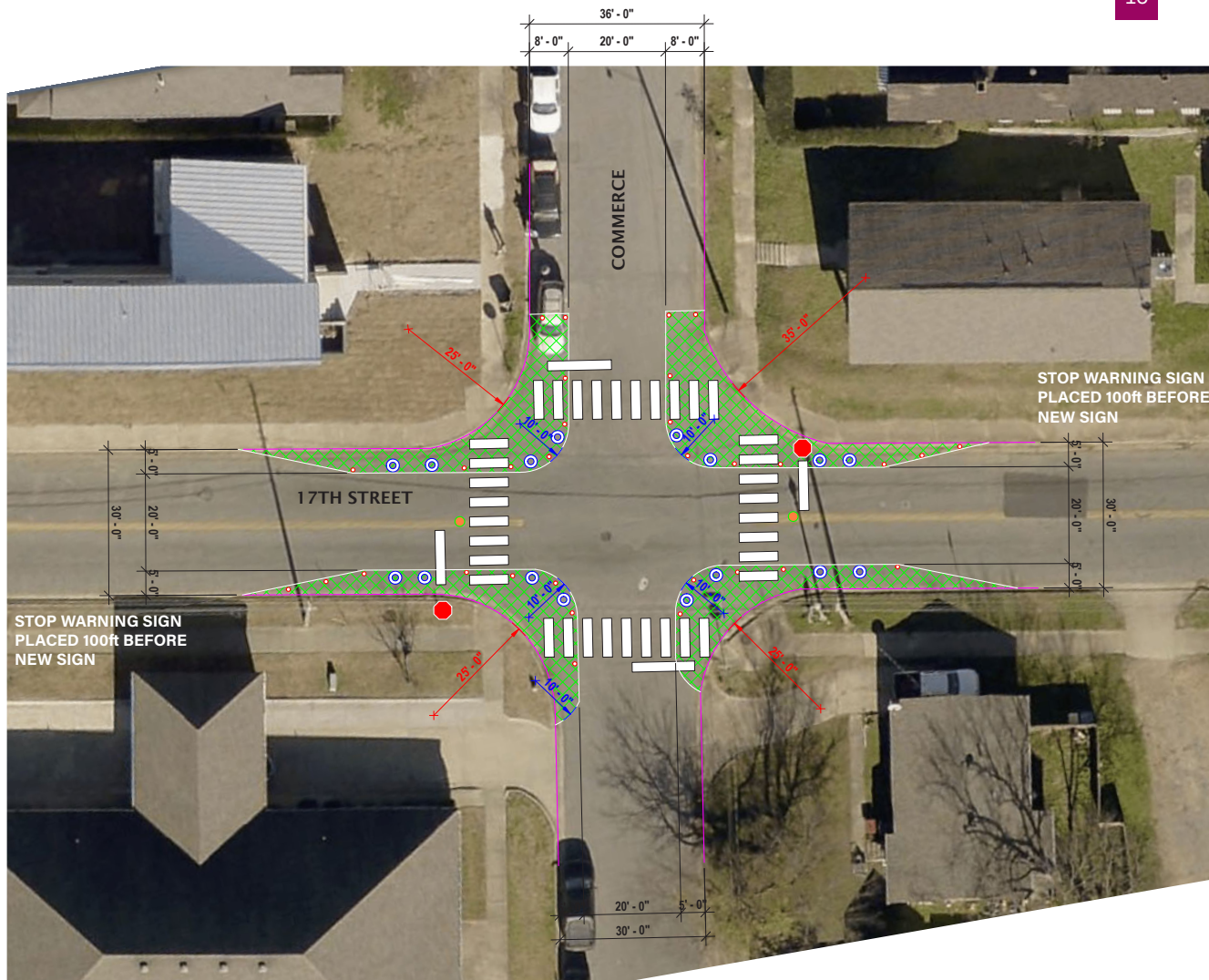
Volunteers began by measuring the curb bulb-outs and crosswalks and marking them with spray paint. Nylon string was stretched from marked points as a simple method for holding a straight line. Volunteers, neighbors and community members of all ages carefully painted the bulb-out outlines with a 4" roller, and the crosswalks with 12" rollers. While the paint was wet, the crosswalks were sprinkled with glass beads for added reflectivity. Tire stacks were transformed into colorful works of art with spray paint. Finally, temporary stop signs and "stop ahead" warning signs were put in place, completing the installation.



45 VOLUNTEERS & VISITORS

AGES **2** TO **72**



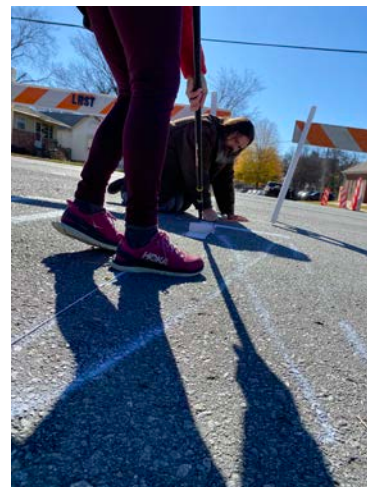


LEGEND

- NEW STOP SIGN
- REFLECTIVE VERTICAL DELINEATOR POST
- PAINTED TIRE STACK (3 HIGH)
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SIGN
- EXISTING CURB
- TEMPORARY CURB EXTENSION (INFILLED WITH COLORED PAINT) W/ WHITE PAINTED EDGE
- CROSSWALK (WHITE REFLECTIVE PAINT)

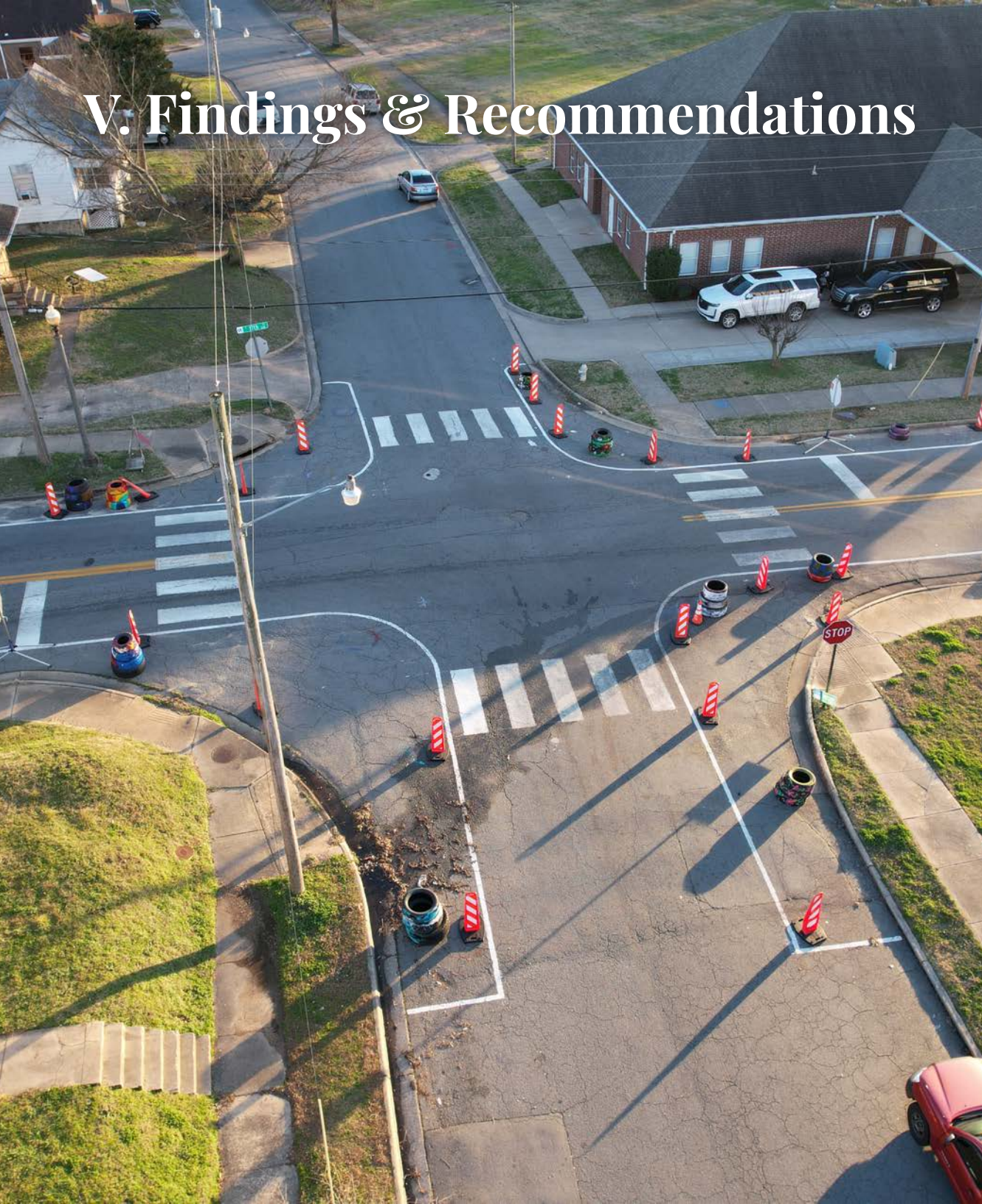
Material List

- 50 used tires
- 32 reflective delineators
- 2 “stop ahead” warning signs
- 2 stop signs
- 2 pedestrian crossing signs
- 4 temporary sign stands
- 5 gallons white traffic paint
- 50lb bag glass beads
- 4” and 12” paint rollers with extension handles
- spray paint (multiple colors)
- tape measurers
- nylon string





V. Findings & Recommendations



The Pop-Up installation remained in place for 2 months. During that time, a public survey received over 20 responses providing **overwhelmingly positive feedback**.

A traffic study was also conducted by LRPD with the Pop-Up in place, providing clear evidence of **significantly reduced speeding** when compared to the original study.

The Commerce Street Accessible Neighborhood Greenway Workshop brought together city leaders, stakeholders and advocates to work together toward a shared goal.

The Pop-Up provided an opportunity for the community to get involved in making an immediate, tangible difference, while providing an opportunity for proof-of-concept for **future permanent change**.



85%

of survey respondents found the traffic calming installation to be **highly favorable** or **favorable**.

With the traffic calming installation, the project area is:

More Safe

90%

More Functional

80%

More Visually Appealing

80%

My family and I feel much safer walking across 17th Street and we are grateful to the city for this installation.

I've definitely **noticed traffic slowing down** on 17th Street because of the installation!

I think the biggest thing and what I'm most excited about is that **the noise level is much less**. I can tell that it has slowed folks down and they aren't racing through,

Recommendations

Immediate Permanent Changes:

- 1** **17th & Commerce:** Make 4-way stop permanent, and infill bulb-outs with colorful designs.
- 2** **17th & Rock and 17th & Park :** Add painted bulb-outs, crosswalks, and crosswalk signage.
- 3** Paint **crosswalks** at all existing 4-way stops along corridor.

Pop-Up Tactical Changes:

- 1** **Cumberland:** Road diet from 4th Street - President Clinton
- 2** **Commerce Street Bridge:** Road diet
- 3** **21st Street:** Add bulb-outs, crosswalks, crosswalk signage.



Appendix

- i. Permit Drawings
- ii. Workshop: Worksheet 1 & 2
- iii. Workshop: AARP Walk Audit ToolKits
- iv. Community Survey Results - Before
- v. Community Survey Results - After
- vi. Traffic Study documentation - Before
- vii. Traffic Study documentation - After
- viii. Everett Gooch's Report