

# Complete Streets Makeovers In Rochester

*Common Ground Health, via a grassroots community coalition, Healthi Kids, is working towards eliminating obstacles for physical activity and increasing safety, convenience, and mobility of travel for all community residents.*

## A need for Complete Streets

The Complete Streets movement helps to ensure roads are inclusive of proper sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks. Complete Streets help make the community healthier by allowing people to safely walk and bike. Two important components of Complete Streets are traffic calming and placemaking. Traffic calming can involve narrowing lanes, realigning intersections, or adding speed humps, to encourage drivers to drive carefully. Placemaking can be anything that creates a sense of “place” or community. Placemaking can involve art, flowers, or activities, and can support the mental health and development of kids.

In Rochester, NY, in diverse neighborhoods and across socioeconomic lines, residents and business owners have been advocating for Complete Streets. Traffic safety is a major concern, as is the appearance of public spaces. Research conducted by drive2Bbetter found that fewer than 25% of pedestrians and bicyclists feel “very safe on our streets”.

## A Complete Streets Makeover program

After successfully leading a multi-partner collaboration to create the drive2Bbetter campaign, Healthi Kids helped create a second collaboration focused on individual street projects. Launched in



**A Community Workshop generates ideas for a Complete Streets Makeover**

2018, this project is called Complete Streets Makeover.

Led by ReConnect Rochester, with crucial support from Healthi Kids and Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC), a Complete Streets Makeover begins with a public call for nominations. Members of the general public nominate intersections and trouble spots that are unwelcoming to pedestrians, cyclists, and children at play. The Steering Committee that reviews the nominations is made up of transportation professionals from City of Rochester, Monroe County Department of Transportation, Genesee Transportation Council, and New York State Department of Transportation, as well as representatives from design and consulting firm Stantec, Healthi Kids, ReConnect Rochester, Community Design Center of Rochester, Center for Disability Rights, Rochester Cycling Alliance, and Regional Transit Service. From the dozens of nominations, the Steering Committee uses criteria that include the potential for improvement, crash history, neighborhood support, proximity to children,

and other factors, to select a winning nomination.

## Success breeds sustainability

The first Complete Streets Makeover took place at the intersection of Parsells Avenue and Greeley Street. Data analyzed by Common Ground Health showed that pedestrians and bicyclists in this neighborhood were more likely to be struck by cars and visit an emergency department than people walking or biking in most other neighborhoods. Residents used a community workshop to help the Steering Committee create a redesign of the intersection that would facilitate traffic calming and placemaking. Temporary speed cushions were installed, curbs were realigned using temporary materials, and the entire intersection was painted to create a giant mural representative of the neighborhood.

So far, the project at Parsells and Greeley has been a great success. Residents forged new bonds during the community paint day, and they have reported slower traffic through the intersection. Data is being collected to analyze the impact of the project. The entire process was documented in a short film and featured during a local film festival. The intersection was even featured in a National Public Radio report on colorful crosswalks.

The recognized success of Complete Streets Makeover 2018 has resulted in even more enthusiasm for Complete Streets Makeover 2019. For the second annual Complete Streets Makeover, the Steering Committee reviewed over 100 nominations, and ultimately selected the La Marketa section of North Clinton Avenue. This road segment has high volumes of pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles. It is one of the most dangerous road segments for pedestrians and bikes in the region, and is the site of a future public plaza and market.

With the input of community members, experts from Stantec are creating a street design to slow cars and add placemaking elements to the sidewalks. Healthi Kids is expanding their traffic calming library, with more rubber curbing, crosswalk paint, and other tools. City of Rochester planners recognized the value of this project in the draft comprehensive plan, Rochester 2034. By creating a true community collaboration and involving key decision-makers from government, Complete Streets Makeover is poised to enjoy continued success, in 2019 and beyond.




Residents finish painting Parsells and Greeley's Complete Streets Makeover

To learn more about our work:

Email: Mike Bulger,  
[mike.bulger@commongroundhealth.org](mailto:mike.bulger@commongroundhealth.org)

Visit: [www.healthikids.org](http://www.healthikids.org)



**Creating Healthy Schools and Communities**

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