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First Ward intersection now safer for pedestrians and cyclists

Two intersections on Hamburg Street are now a whole lot safer for pedestrians and cyclists thanks to GObike Buffalo, the Western New York Land Conservancy, and the First Ward Community Center.

Over the last few months, the Land Conservancy has been talking with residents, businesses, and community leaders about how to reuse the abandoned DL&W rail corridor—known locally as the Dell—that runs from Canalside to the Buffalo River near Solar City. They hope to convert this formerly industrial landscape into an inspiring linear park and nature trail. During their many conversations with the community, concerns about pedestrian safety at nearby intersections, particularly the Hamburg Street intersections at South Park and O’Connell, came to light.

“I have seen several accidents, including one that drove through our fence at Undergrounds, and so many other close calls at these intersections,” says Sara Heidinger, President of the First Ward Community Center. “We’ve been talking with the Land Conservancy about the community’s needs a lot lately as we plan a possible new trail along the Dell. Making sure that pedestrians are safe going to and from the trail is a big concern.”

So the Land Conservancy reached out to GObike Buffalo, who has made a huge impact on the safety of City of Buffalo streets over the last few years. GObike had the perfect solution. On May 26th, GObike Buffalo and the Western New York Land Conservancy staff, volunteers helped install temporary street features, including painted bump outs with shamrocks on the pavement. Now, motorists are slowing down for people and kids who are crossing Hamburg Street.

“It’s a simple change, but it makes a big difference,” said Justin Booth, Executive Director of GObike Buffalo. “We are happy to team up with the Land Conservancy and make this intersection in First Ward safer for users on bikes, on foot, and more.”

GObike has been a powerful local advocate for Complete Streets, a nationwide effort to ensure that when a roadway is constructed or repaired in the City of Buffalo, equal consideration is given to commuters of all kinds – including bicyclists, pedestrians, public transportation users, children, people pushing baby strollers and the disabled.

“Mazurek’s Bakery has been a part of the First Ward since 1933,” said Ty Reynolds, bakery owner. “The intersections along Hamburg Street can be pretty dangerous. We are excited to see this positive change taking place in our neighborhood. It’s really important to us that customers are able to get in to all the local businesses, and to get home safely to their families.”

As you drive around the city, be on the lookout for evidence of GObike's efforts. Painted bike lanes, sharrows, and, now the painted shamrocks at the intersection of South Park and Hamburg, are making Buffalo a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists alike.

GObike Buffalo is working to build a thriving, dynamic, and connected Buffalo by promoting biking, alternative transportation options, and improved streetscapes to create positive impacts on health, our environment, our streets, and the overall quality of life for all residents.

The project was made possible with support from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds at the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo and the Population Health Collaborative of Western New York, and was installed by volunteers from the Western New York Land Conservancy, Old First Ward residents, and GObike Buffalo.

The Western New York Land Conservancy is a regional, not-for-profit land trust that permanently protects land with significant conservation value in Western New York for future generations. The Land Conservancy envisions a future in which open spaces, working lands, wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty are cherished and protected as part of the landscape and character of Western New York. The Land Conservancy is accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission and is one of 1000+ land trusts nationwide, including 90 in New York State. Land trusts have protected 56 million acres of land. For more information on upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, or the mission of the Western New York Land Conservancy, please call (716) 687-1225 or visit www.wnylc.org.

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