City of Olean, New York Inclusive and Accessible Street Redesign Project

Public Health Issue

- Thirty percent of the estimated 78,000 residents living in Cattaraugus County, New York have a disability.
- The City of Olean, located in Cattaraugus County, has seen economic downturn in recent years with new development going toward the west end of town.
- Approximately 15,000 vehicles a day use the Route 16 corridor that intersects with North Union Street in the center of the City of Olean.
- The city explored streetscape redesign, including traffic calming measures aimed at increasing commerce, new business, and walkability along 3,600 feet of North Union Street.
- This street redesign was compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and was Department of Transportation approved, yet residents who experienced physical, hearing, or visual limitations could not cross the street safely.

Program Action

- Residents with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments met to discuss the new street design with Directions in Independent Living (DIL), a disability advocacy organization, through the support of NACDD’s Disability Inclusion and Healthy Communities grant.
- DIL staff facilitated a meeting with the City of Olean’s mayor, city council members, and visually impaired residents of the city to share accessibility and inclusion concerns with decision makers.
- The mayor and city council sought funding for placement of new Pedestrian in Crosswalk (PIC) mechanisms along the 3,600-foot area.
- Solar powered Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacon PIC signage, designed for people with mobility, hearing, and visual impairments, were purchased and installed in four locations in the new streetscape.

Impact

- The streetscape redesign now provides four traffic roundabouts for vehicular traffic, as well as safe and accessible crosswalk signage in four locations.
- These built environment and traffic calming changes helped to revitalize the downtown area through new businesses, commerce, development, and increased pedestrian traffic.
- All Olean residents, including people living with mobility, hearing, or visual impairments, can now safely cross the busiest section of the town in all four locations.

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