



Worcester Regional Research Bureau
Center for Community Performance Measurement

College Hill
Spring 2005 ComNET Neighborhood Review:
From Data to Action

June 1, 2005

Worcester Regional Research Bureau

What is ComNET?

Computerized Neighborhood Environment Tracking

A systematic process to record the physical conditions in your neighborhood that may require attention.



What have we accomplished?

- **Citywide, more than 12,700 problem conditions have been identified since 2001.**
 - **Abandoned vehicle hotline established**
 - **Mass Electric response within 48 hours**
 - **City plan for repaving streets and sidewalks**
- **City Planner uses ComNET data in the development of neighborhood plans.**
 - **ComNET has led to increased community participation.**
 - **Neighborhood associations use ComNET data to improve conditions that are not the responsibility of local government.**



What conditions are tracked?

Animals

Benches

Bridges

Buildings

Bus Stops

Catch basins

Crosswalks

Curbs

Dumpsters

Fire Hydrants

Institutions

Lampposts

Parking Lots

Vacant Lots

Mailboxes

News boxes

Parking Meters

Planters

Public Telephones

Sidewalks

Street Signs

Stores

Streets

Traffic/Pedestrian Lights

Trees

Tree Pits

Utility Covers

Vehicles

Waste Baskets

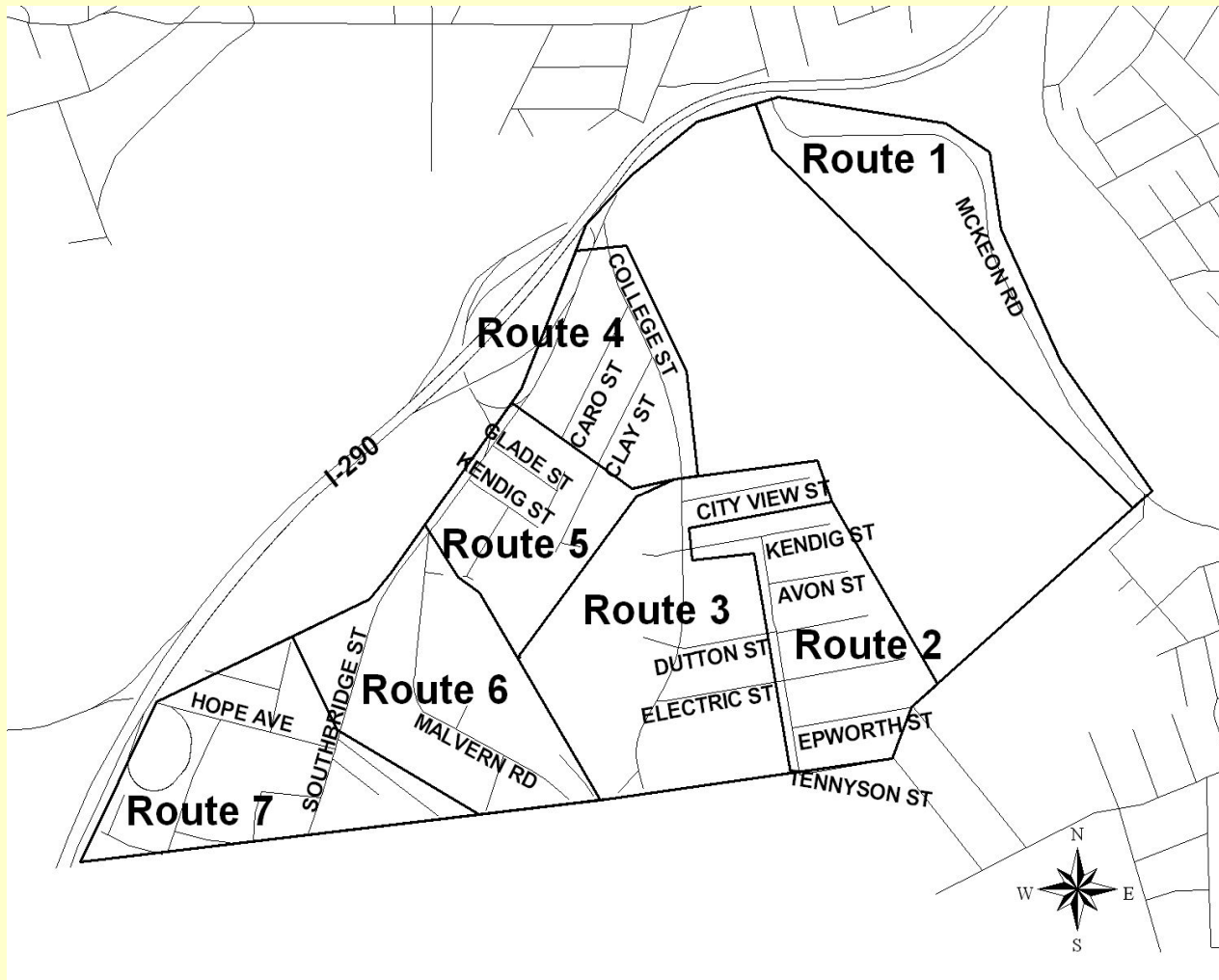


ComNET Results for College Hill

- **Two ComNET surveys have been conducted in the College Hill Neighborhood:**
 - **Initial survey conducted in Summer 2003**
 - **Follow-up survey conducted in Spring 2005**
- **Presentation**
 - **Summarize data from recent survey**
 - **Identify areas of improvement**
 - **Identify areas where problems remain or have increased**
 - **This information helps community residents and City officials understand the problems in the neighborhood and assign appropriate priority to those problems**



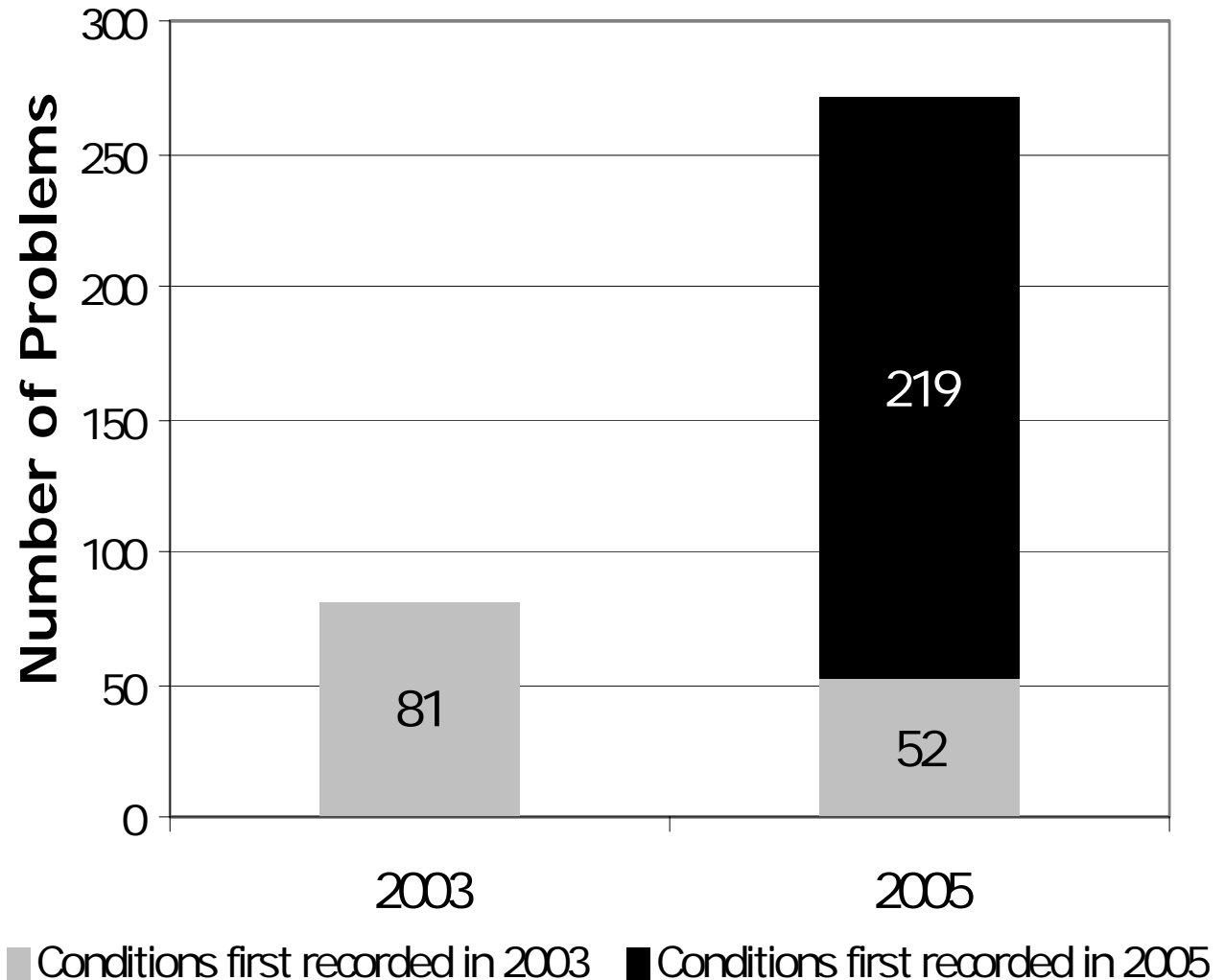
Map of College Hill Routes



Incidents Recorded and Resolved, College Hill

Each year the City and the community resolve problems from previous years, and each year new problems are observed in the neighborhood.

This graph shows how many problems have been resolved from the first survey as well as the number of new problems added this year.



ComNET Results for College Hill (Cont.)

- A total of 300 problem conditions and 12 assets were identified during the surveys.
- About two-thirds (64%) of all problems recorded were street and sidewalk problems.
- Problems are grouped according to the “responsible agency” – this is the agency within City government responsible for addressing the issue.
 - About three-quarters of the problems identified are the responsibility of the Department of Public Works.
- Some problems fall outside the scope of City government. These are the problems designated as “community responsibility” and it’s up to members of the community to find ways to address these issues.
 - About 12% of the problems identified in College Hill are “community problems.”



The Good News: 29 Problems Resolved

- The follow-up survey conducted in College Hill revealed that 29 of the 81 problems identified in 2003 were no longer present.

Agency	Problems Identified in 2003	Problems Resolved by 2005	
	#	#	%
Community	14	10	71
Code Enforcement	3	2	66
Parks and Recreation	4	2	50
Public Works	60	15	25



The Good News: 29 Problems Resolved

- **3 abandoned vehicles**
- **11 locations with overgrown weeds/vegetation**
- **4 street problems**
- **8 sidewalk problems**
- **3 locations with litter**

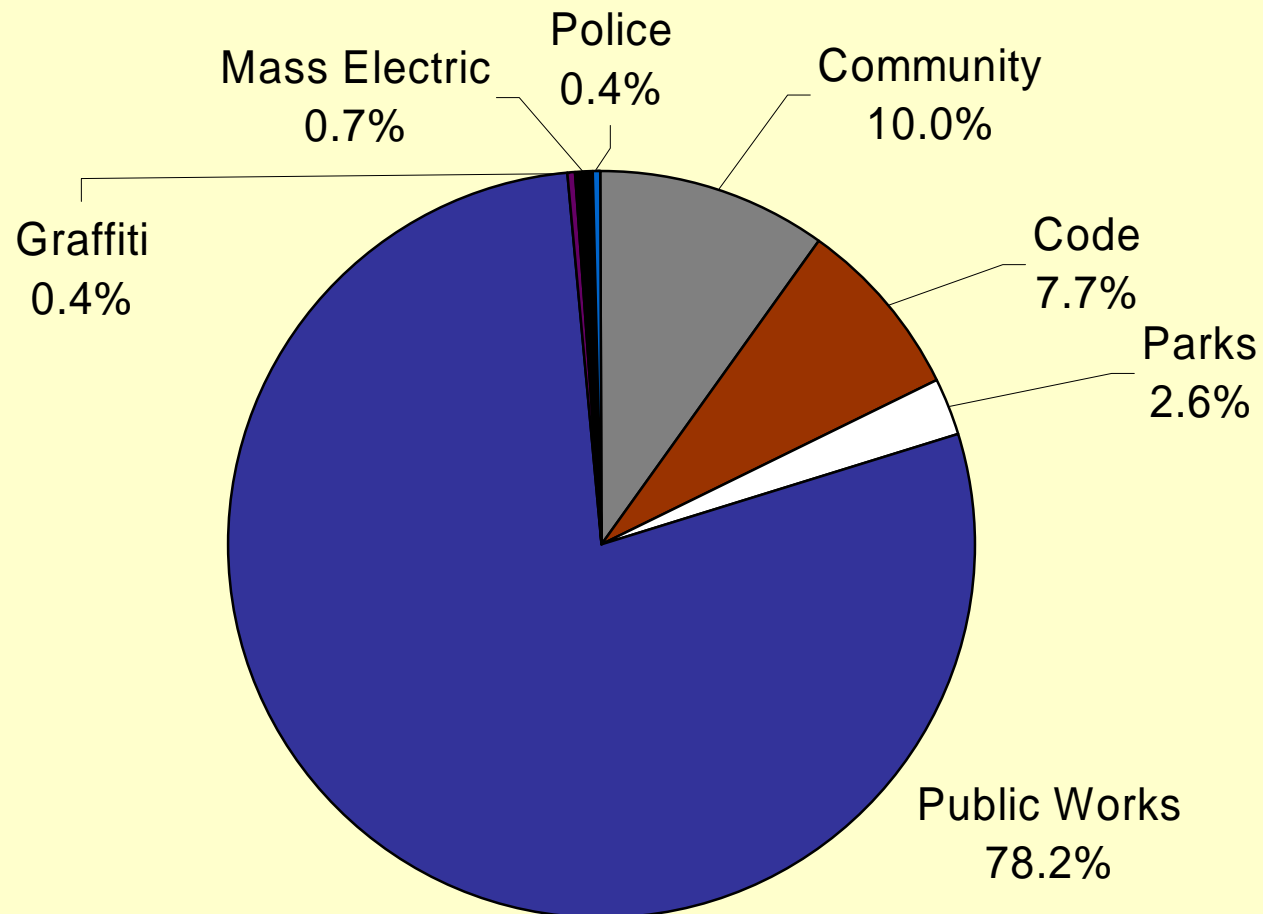


The Bad News: 271 Problems Remain

- **52 problems from the 2003 survey remain unresolved; 219 new problems recorded in 2005**
- **A closer look at the remaining problems:**
 - **45 locations with litter**
 - **7 instances of dumping**
 - **17 locations with overgrown weeds/vegetation**
 - **48 sidewalk trip hazards**
 - **6 abandoned vehicles**
 - **30 locations where road uneven/potholes**



271 Remaining Problems: Who Is Responsible?



What Happens Now? City and Community Action

All of the problems recorded that are the responsibility of a City agency will be shared with the appropriate agency, including specific details about each problem and its location.

The City then determines how the problems will be addressed. Some of these problems will be addressed more quickly than others.



Addressing neighborhood problems: Where do we begin?

- **Prioritize problems and be realistic – you won't solve everything at once!**
 - **What can be accomplished in the short-term vs. long-term?**
 - **What's high-cost vs. low-cost?**
 - **Identify resources necessary to resolve a problem.**
 - **What's most important to residents?**
 - **Other considerations (e.g., owner- vs. renter-occupied properties)?**
- **Map out a plan assigning roles, responsibilities, timeline, etc.**
- **Who else do you need to engage? How?**



Who else can we work with in the community?

Get owners of problem properties involved in a ComNET survey.

Recruit volunteers to assist elderly or disabled homeowners.

Ask local institutions to organize clean-ups.

Connect with business owners.

Connect with non-profits that provide volunteer support (e.g., United Way).

Develop a relationship with a local college or university (student volunteers).

