Minor Injuries to Pedestrian Lead to Death - Questions About the Official Investigation

Posting Date: Nov 4-2015

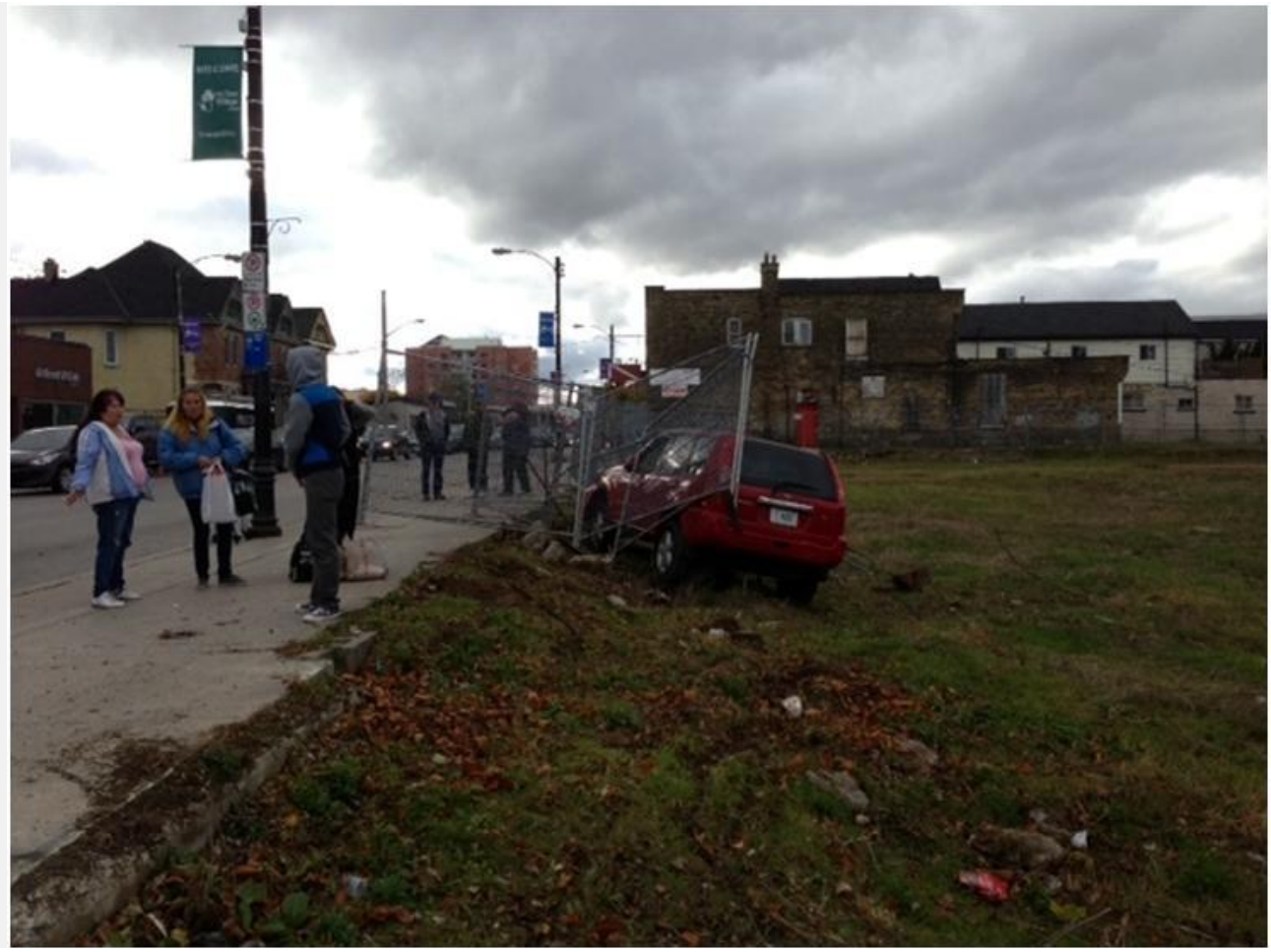

Figure 1: It was reported that this SUV struck two pedestrians before driving into a metal fence on Dundas Street west of English Street in east London, Ontario, on October 30, 2015. One of those pedestrians later died.

It was initially reported as a minor and routine event. On October 30, 2015 the London Free Press (LFP) reported that the driver of an SUV, westbound on Dundas Street, lost control of the vehicle and struck two pedestrians before crashing into a temporary fence surrounding an empty lot just west of English Street in the City of London, Ontario. Although one of the pedestrians reportedly sustained a head injury it was non-life-threatening. Just another traffic non-event of little consequence. However, on November 3, the struck pedestrian reportedly died.

CTV News in London also reported a different set of facts in comparison to what was originally indicated. Instead of travelling westbound on Dundas Street the SUV was reportedly travelling southbound on English Street and its driver was attempting to turn right onto Dundas Street when the SUV went out of control.

A similar set of facts was reported by the LFP in an update on November 3, 2015. The LFP revised its initial report and indicated that the SUV had been southbound. It also quoted police who said the SUV "…stopped at the stop sign then turned right onto Dundas. At the same time, the man was crossing the street, and the car struck him, said police".

The initial report that the SUV was westbound on Dundas seemed plausible but the revised report that the SUV had been southbound did not make sense. Neither did it make sense that a pedestrian who sustained "non-life-threatening injuries" should suddenly pass away. Given this strange set of facts Gorski Consulting attended the accident site on November 4, 2015 and made the following observations.

Figures 2 and 3 below show the accident site before the fence was struck down. The photo in Figure 2 was taken on February 14, 2015 and the one in Figure 3 was taken on May 13, 2015.

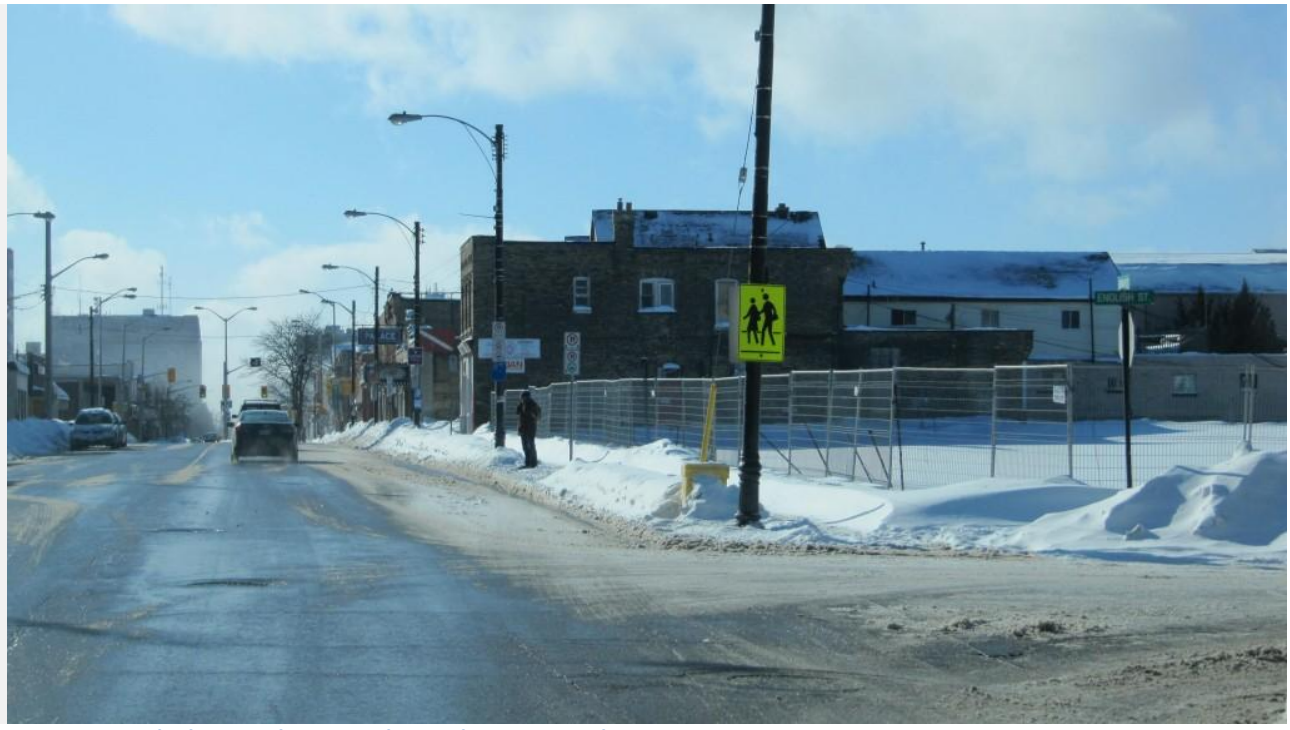

Figure 2: View, looking north-west at the accident site on February 14, 2015.

Figure 3: View, looking east, toward the accident site on May 13, 2015.

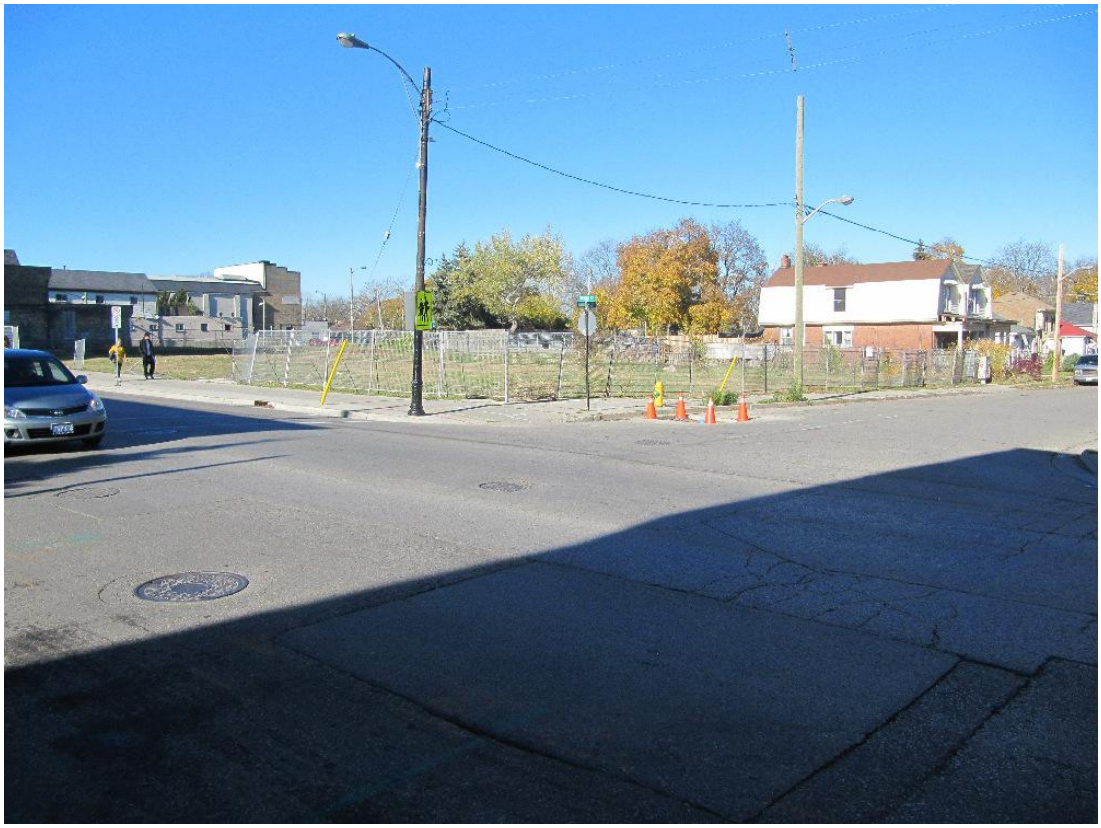

Figure 4: View, looking north-east, at the accident site on November 4, 2015.

The photo in Figure 4 was taken on November 4, 2015, or just a few days after the collision. In Figure 4 one can see a hole in the metal fence where the SUV struck it. It can also be seen that there are some traffic cones at the intersection with English Street and the pavement has been removed in a small rectangle.

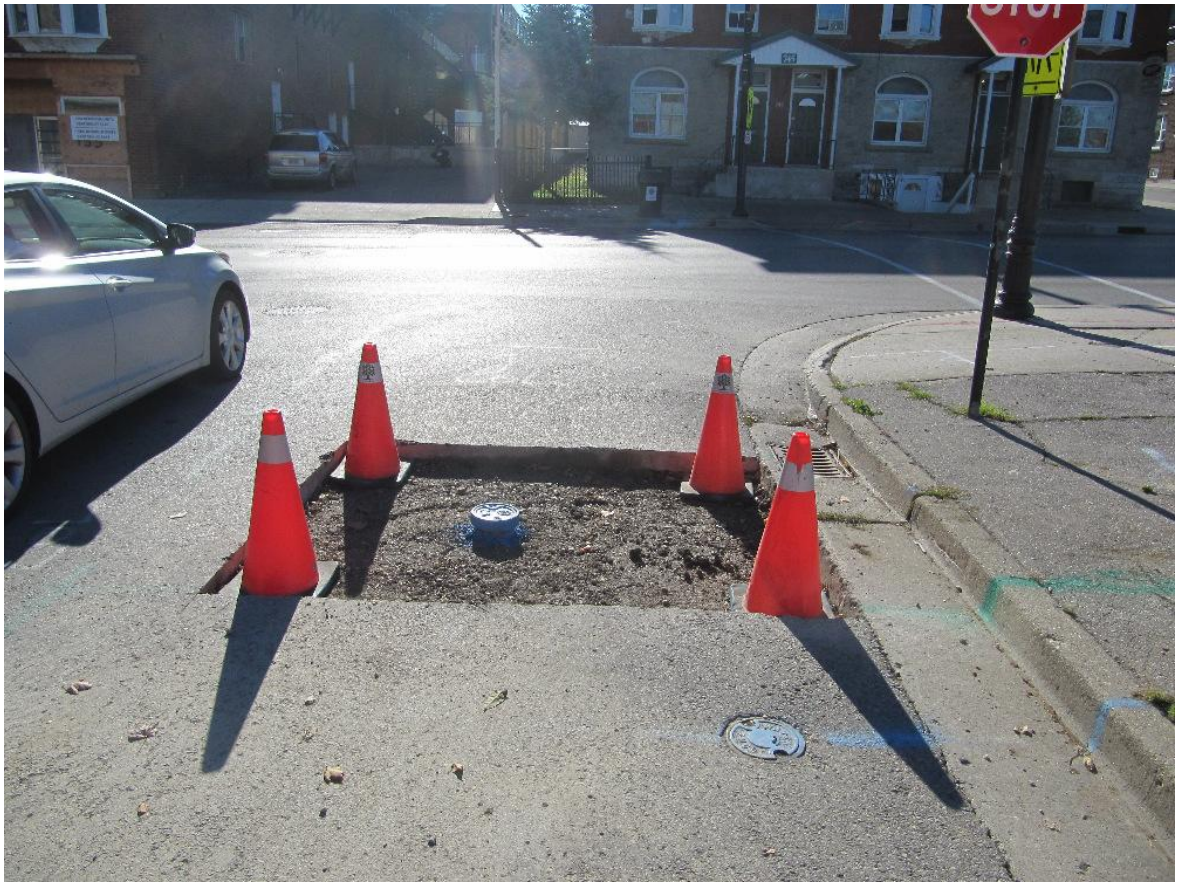

Figure 5: View, looking south, from English Street toward the construction hole in the pavement at Dundas Street.

The photo in Figure 5 above shows a closer view of the construction hole in the pavement on English Street at its intersection with Dundas. It is not known if this hole was present at the time of the collision. However, the collision reportedly occurred at about 1500 hours on Friday, October 30, 2015. It is possible that the pavement was removed in the late afternoon of Friday while the police investigation would have been ongoing but that is highly unlikely.

The other possibility is that the pavement hole was created on either Monday or Tuesday, November 2 or 3, and this is a more likely possibility. However we simply do not know as nothing was reported in the news media about it and there were no photos taken by the news media that showed that area of the site. So this fact remains a mystery.

If this construction hole existed at the time of the collision then the SUV would travel along a similar path to the white car shown at the left edge of Figure 5. So the SUV would stop a this location and then make a right turn where it would commence to go out of control.

If the construction hole was present then we would have to ask whether there were construction vehicles or other equipment near the hole and whether that could be relevant to the collision events. Obviously no one has mentioned anything about this in the official reporting of the incident.

Figure 5 below is a view looking south along the pedestrian crossing of Dundas at English. It was reported that the fatally injured pedestrian and a crossing guard were both stuck by the SUV as they were within this pedestrian crossing area.

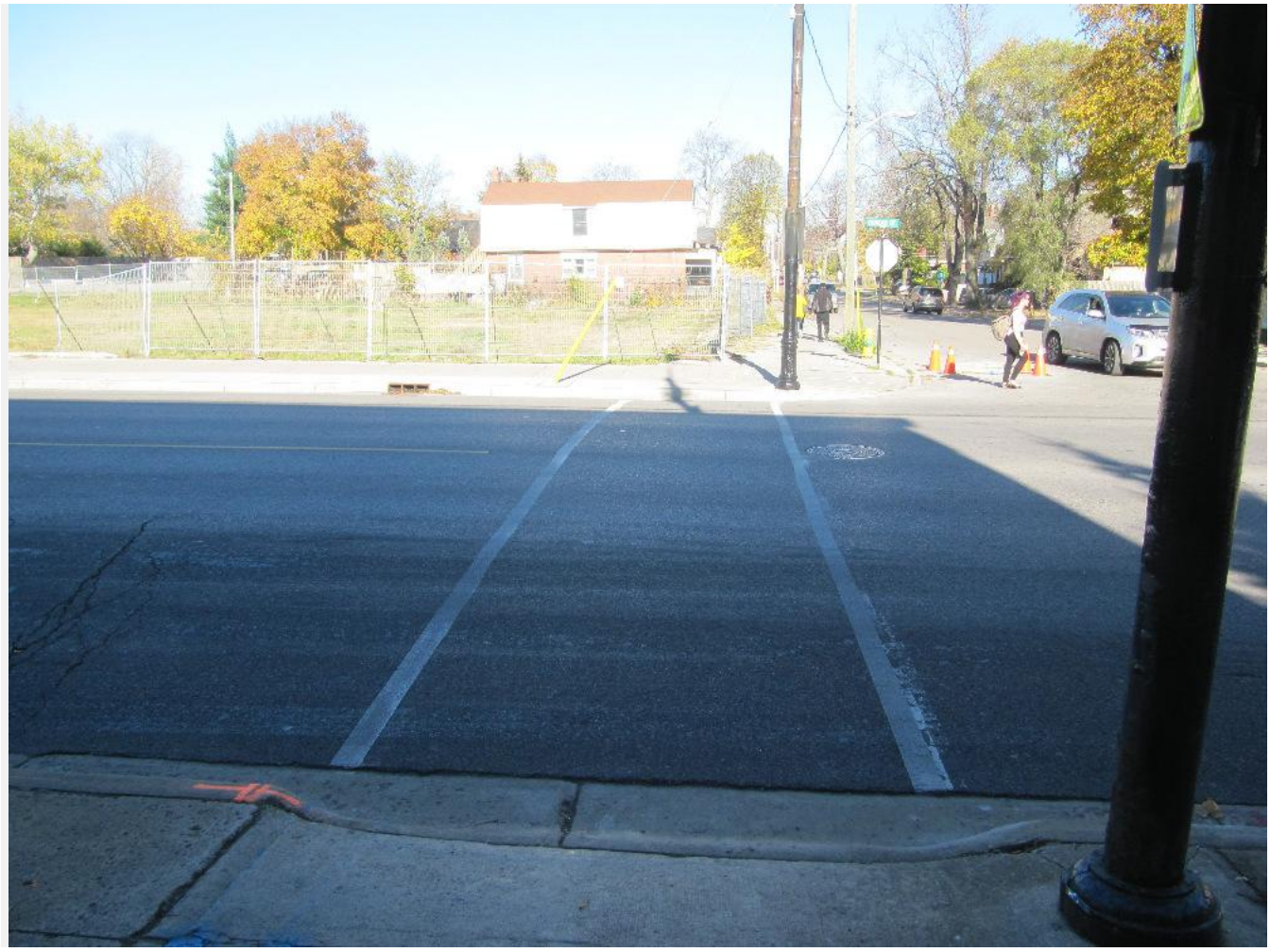

Figure 6: View, looking south, along the pedestrian crossing of Dundas Street near the west edge of the intersection with English Street.

Toward the right portion of Figure 6 one can see a sewer drain that is built into the south curb of Dundas Street and this is where tire marks were found on the curb that likely came from the SUV as it exited the road. But one should examine the short distance between this sewer drain and the intersection of English Street and consider whether the motion of the SUV could be accomplished in this very short distance. Perhaps this could be accomplished if the SUV was travelling very slowly but the evidence does not indicate such a slow speed. We need to look at this evidence more closely.

Figure 7 shows a diagonal view looking at the sewer drain with the hole in the fence in the background. Thus we can explore the angle at which the vehicle struck the curb and then carried on to impact with the fence.

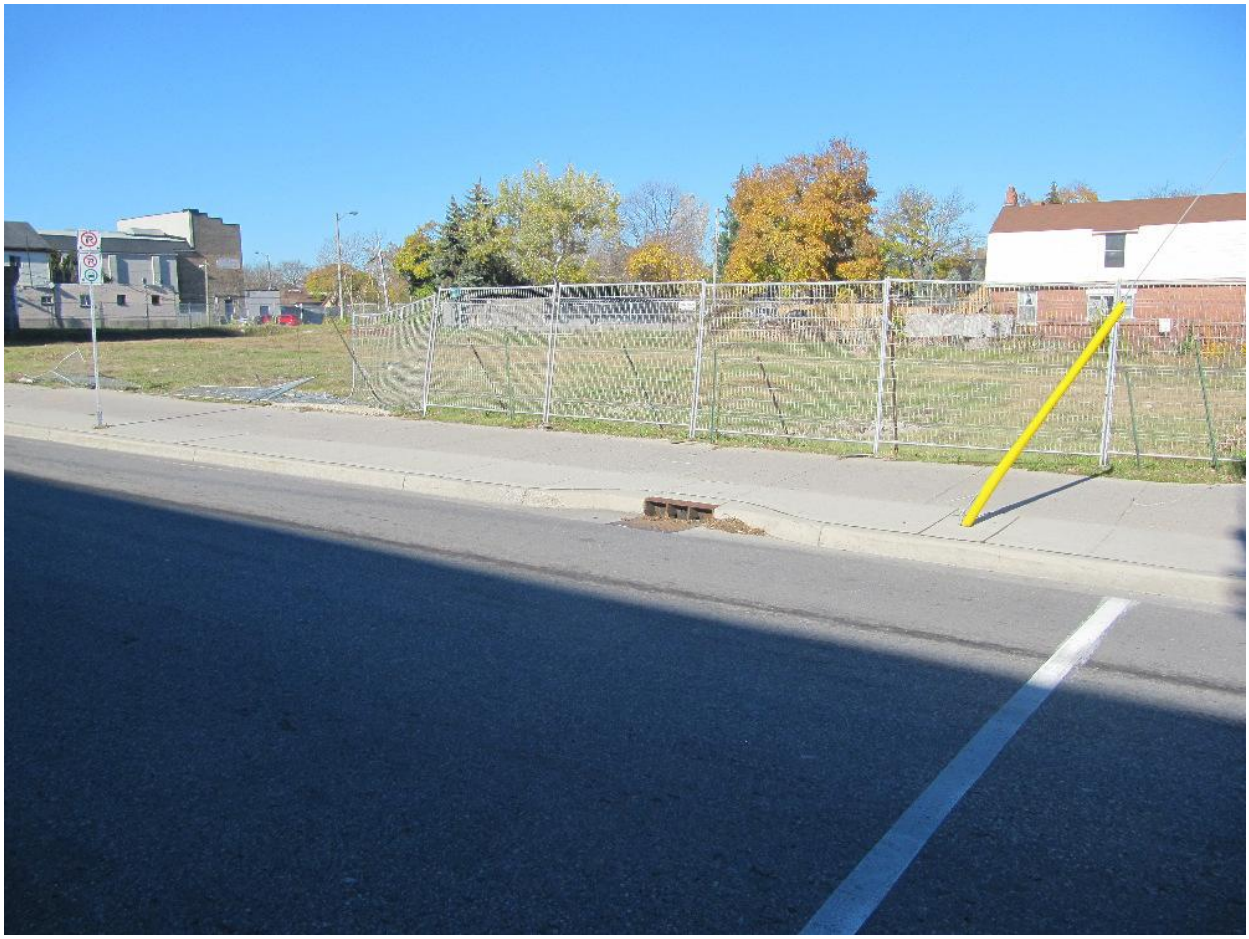

Figure 7: Diagonal view looking toward the northwest. We can see the sewer drain in the curb where the tire marks are located and the hole in the fence in the background.

Figure 8 shows a view of the north curb of Dundas Street at the sewer drain. There are tire marks both east and west of the drain. Figure 9 shows the tire mark that is east of the drain and this would likely have been caused by the right side tires of the SUV. Figure 9 shows a close-up of the tire mark.

Figure 10 shows the portion of the north curb west of the sewer drain and Figure 11 shows a close-up of the tire mark which was likely caused by one of the left side tires of the SUV.

Figure 12 shows a diagonal view from the sewer drain toward the east end of the hole in the metal fence. This view is carried on in Figure 13 as we approach further west toward that hole. There is evidence of red/burgandy paint and black rubber transfers on the fence post at the east edge of the hole. This evidence is shown in Figure 14, 15 and 16.

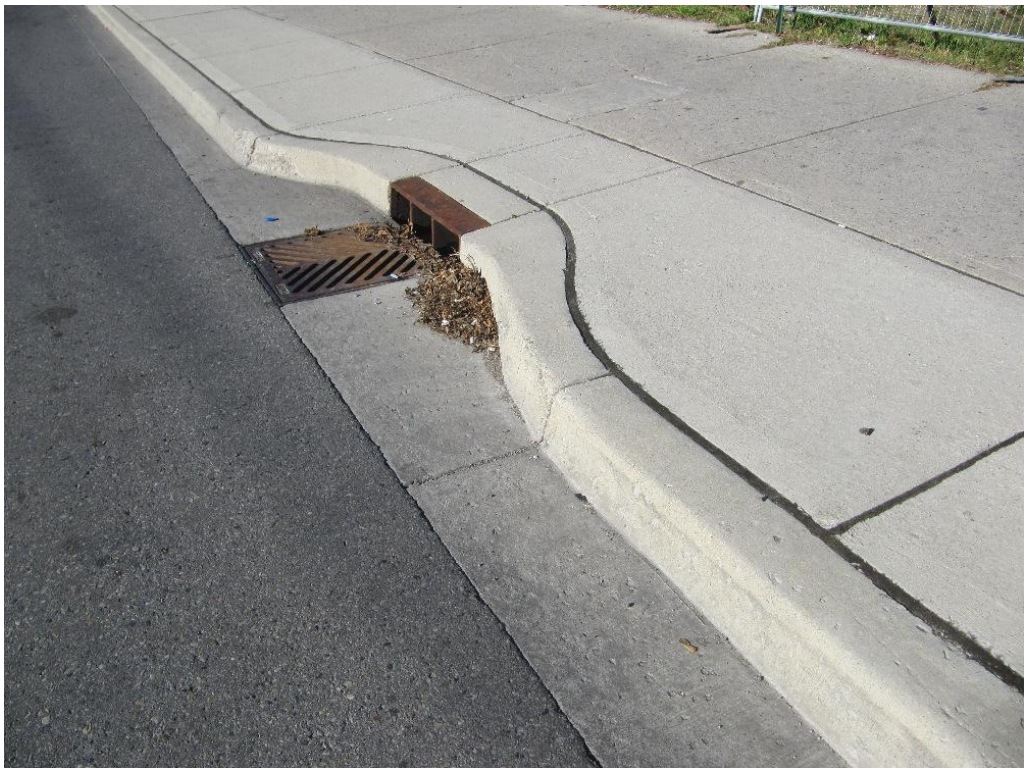

Figure 8: View of the sewer drain. A tire marks can be seen on curb just east of the drain and a close-up of that mark is shown in Figure 9. This mark would have been caused by one of the right side tires of the SUV.

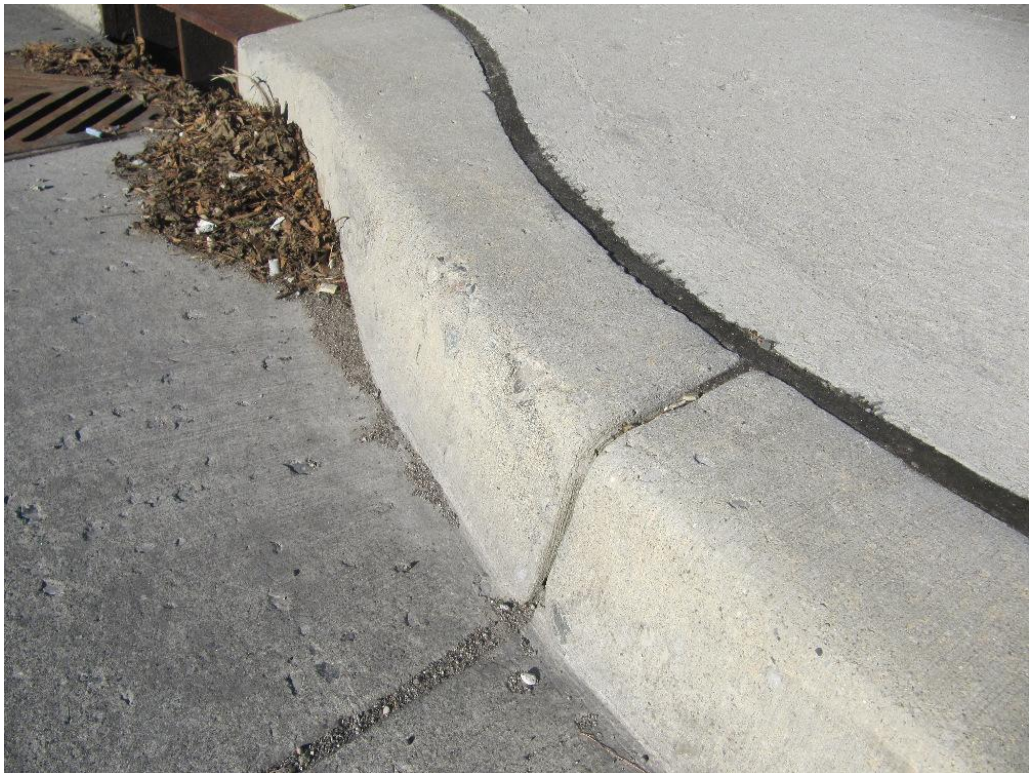

Figure 9: View of the small tire mark located on the north curb approximately at the junction of the concrete in the centre of the photo.

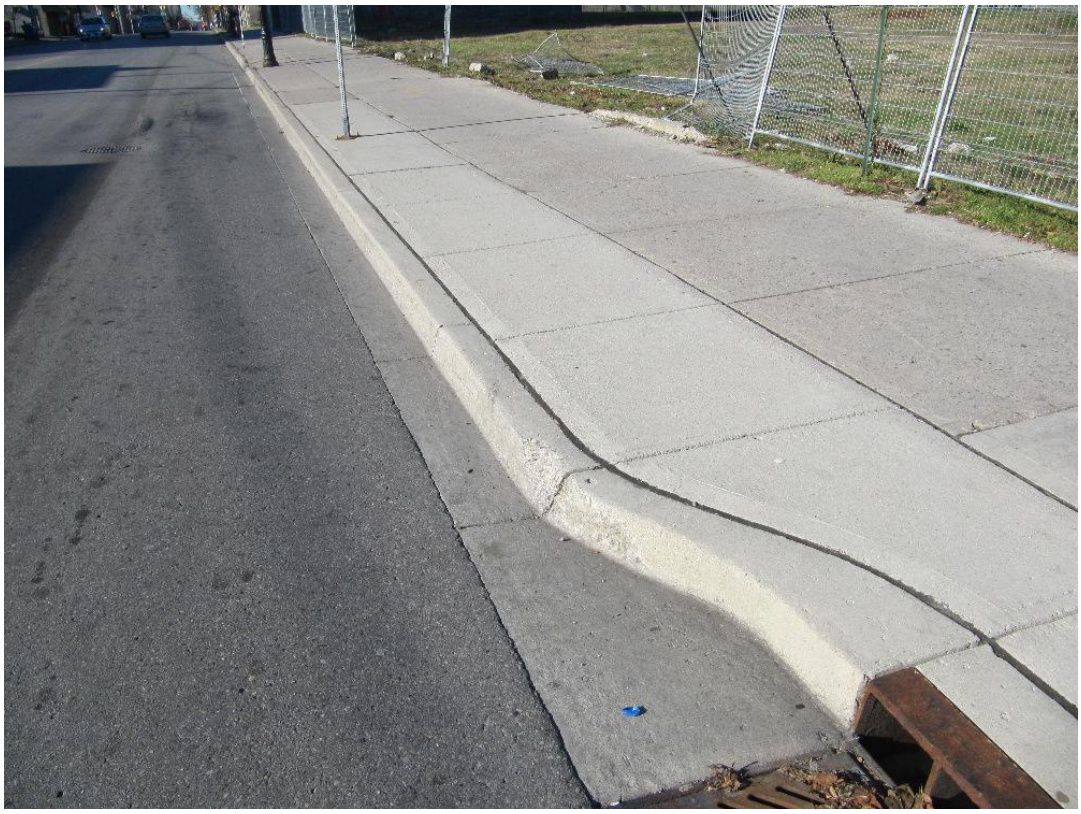

Figure 10: View of the north curb just west of the sewer drain.

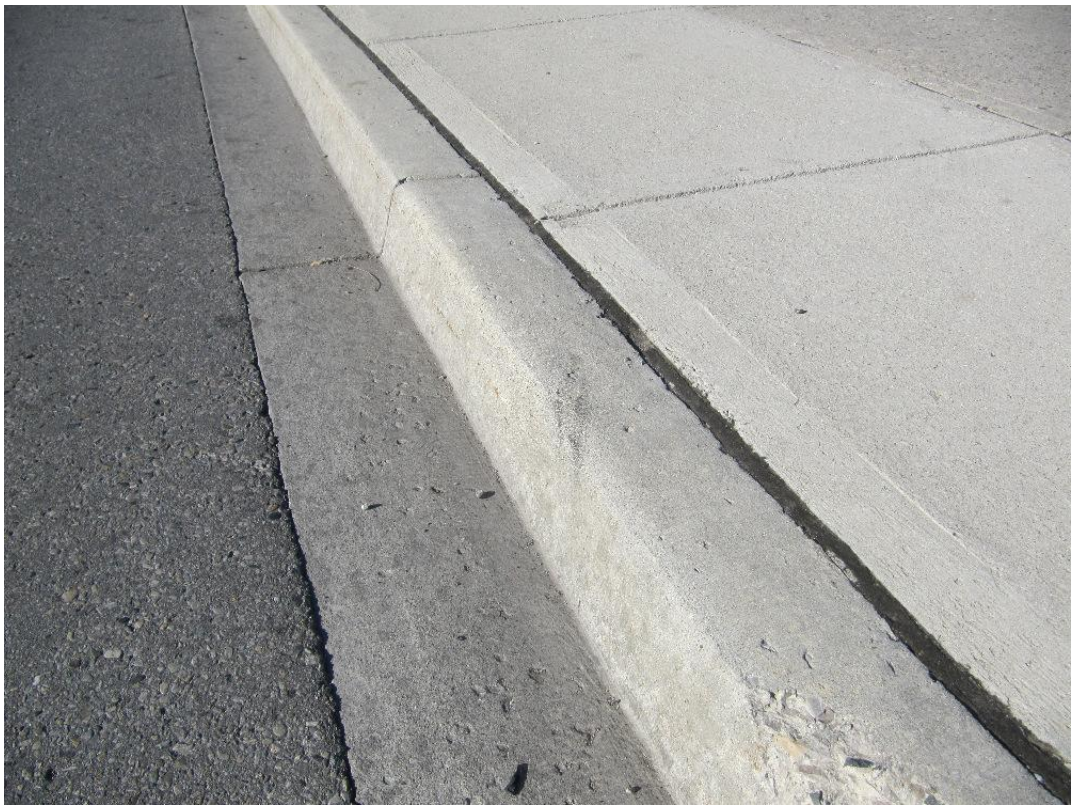

Figure 11: Close-up view of the small black tire mark on the edge of the curb west of the sewer drain.

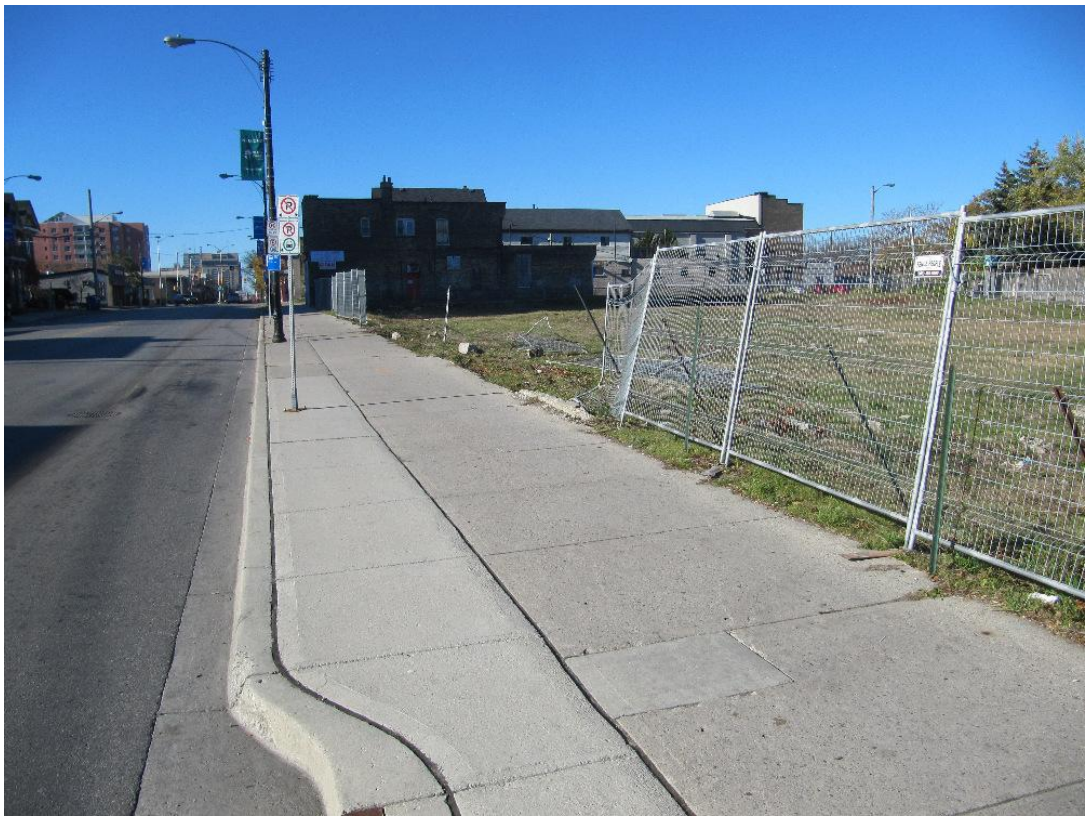

Figure 12: Diagonal view from the tire marks at the sewer drain looking toward the east edge of the hole in the metal fence.

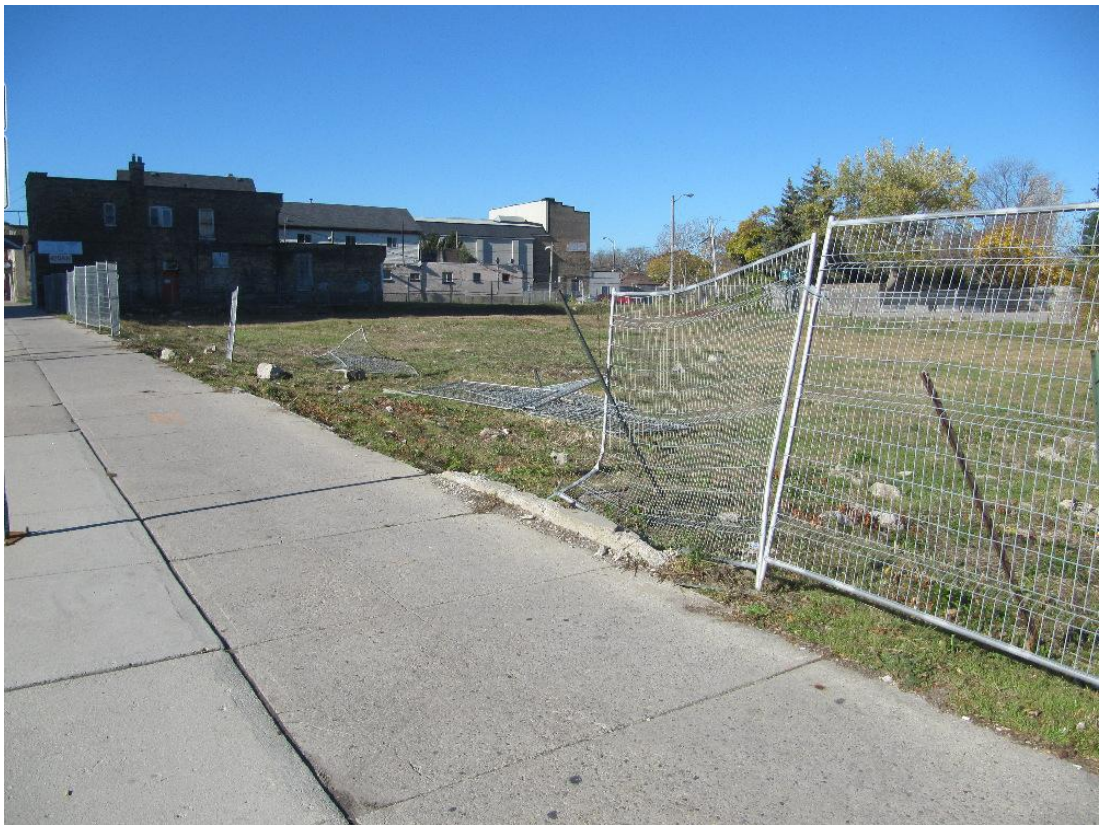

Figure 13: Diagonal view looking toward the east edge of the hole in the metal fence.

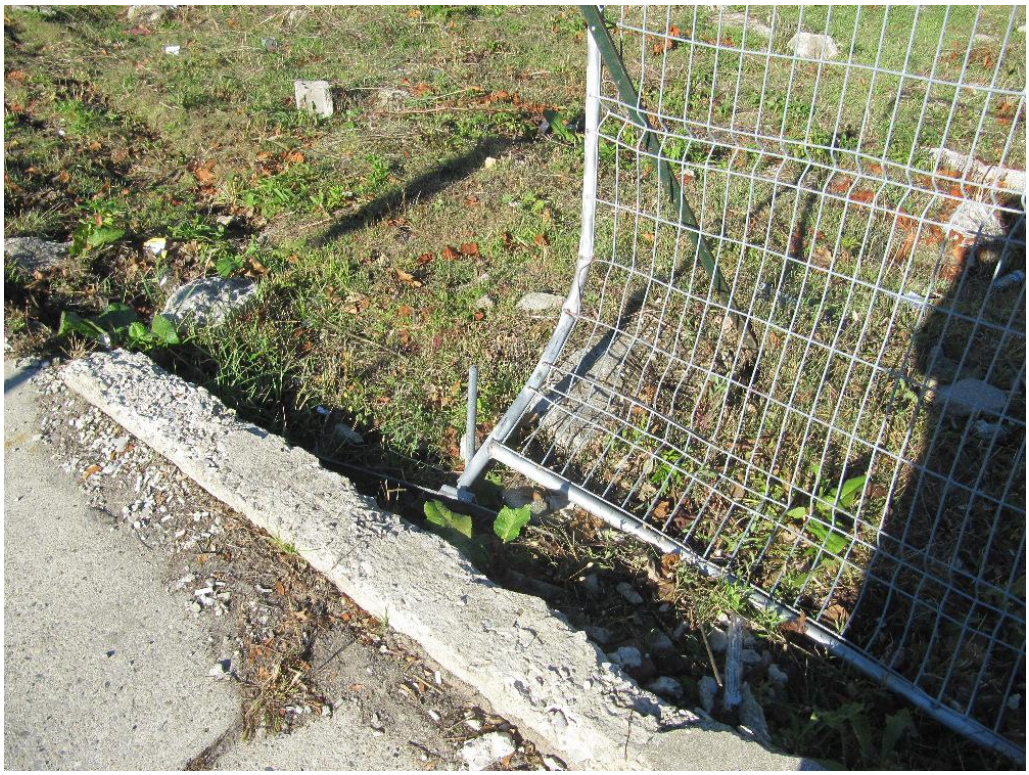

Figure 14: View of the deformed vertical post of the fence at the east end of the hole.

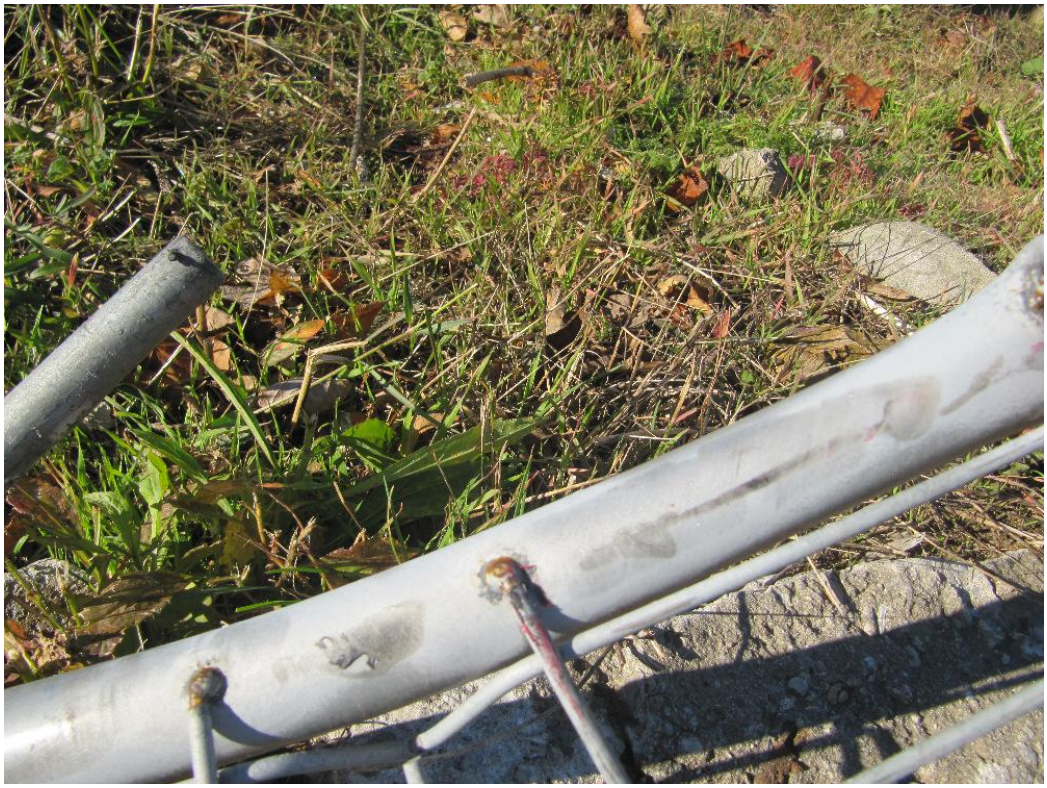

Figure 15: View of the dark transfers on the vertical post of the fence caused from contact by one of the right side tires of the SUV.

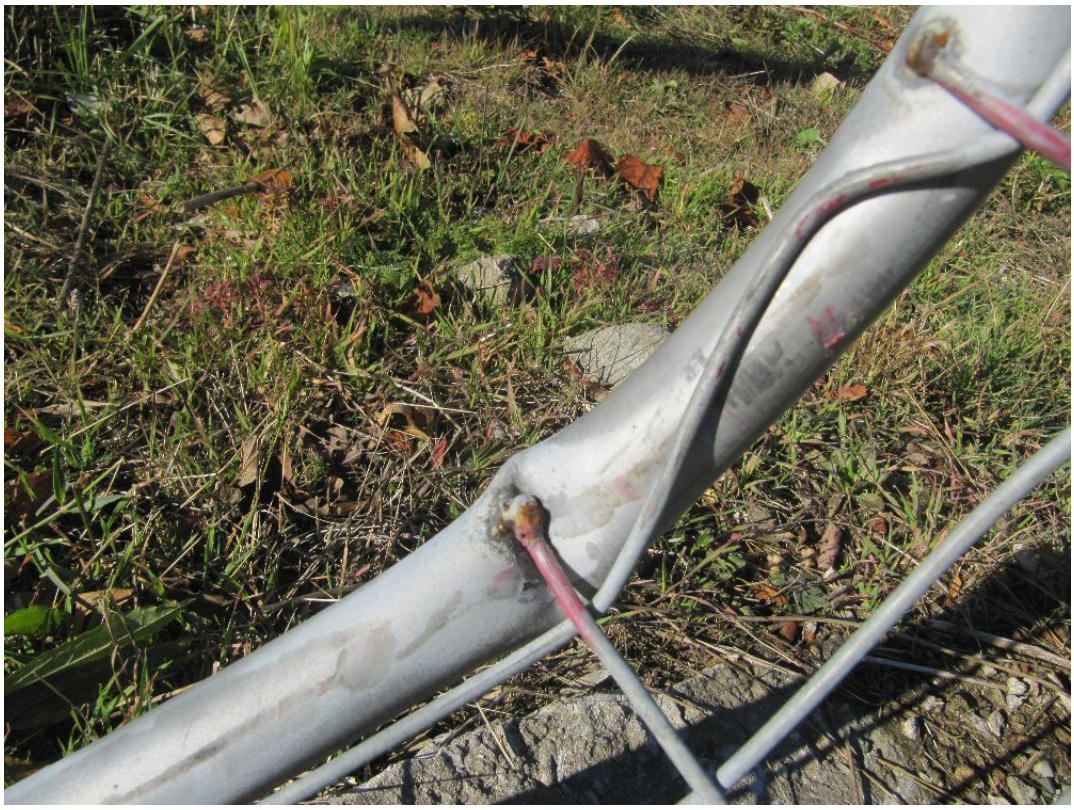

Figure 16: View of dark rubber transfers and burgandy paint tranfers indicating that contact was made by the SUV to the vertical post of the fence at the east edge of the hole.

Rotating around to face south-east, the view in Figure 17 shows the east edge of the hole in the fence and we can line up the SUV's travel path by noting that the sewer drain would be located just to the right of anchorage of the yellow-covered guide wire near the north curb. So this gives us a general appreciation of the shallow travel path of the SUV as it leaves the road.

Again, we must consider what the claim of the official reports of how this collision occurred. The SUV was southbound and made a right turn onto Dundas and then when into an immediate state of loss-of-control that propelled it on the shallow travel path shown in Figure 17. In this assessment we must keep in mind that the driver's steering wheel must be turned sharply to the right during the vehicles' right turn and then, immediately afterward the steering wheel must be turned very sharply to the left in order to cause the vehicle to travel on this shallow and straight path shown in Figure17. Does that make sense?

As we indicated earlier, the official explanation might be possible if the SUV was travelling very slowly so that these steering wheel inputs would have time to be carried out. But that is not the case. The SUV was not travelling very slowly as evidenced by the distance that it travelled through the fence and through the various concrete blocks and other debris in the empty lot.

Figure 18 helps to illuminate the distance that the SUV travelled from the instant that it struck the metal fence and as it stumbled over the uneven surface of rocks and concrete blocks.

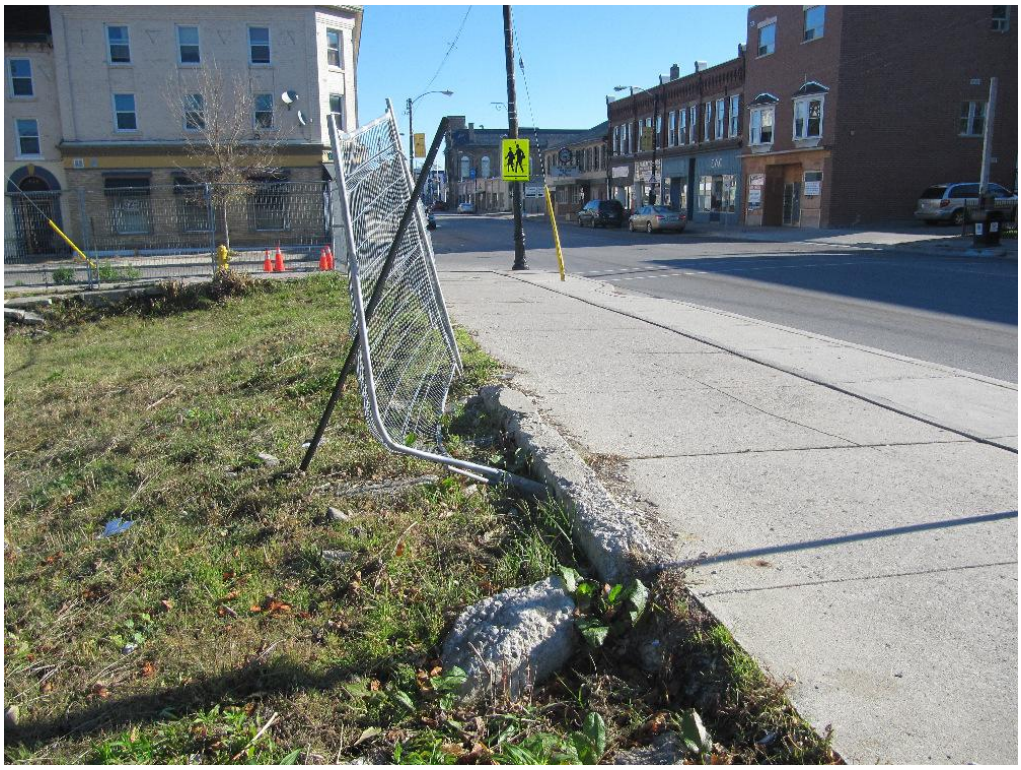

Figure 17: View, looking south-east to establish the travel path of the SUV is was travelling toward the camera.

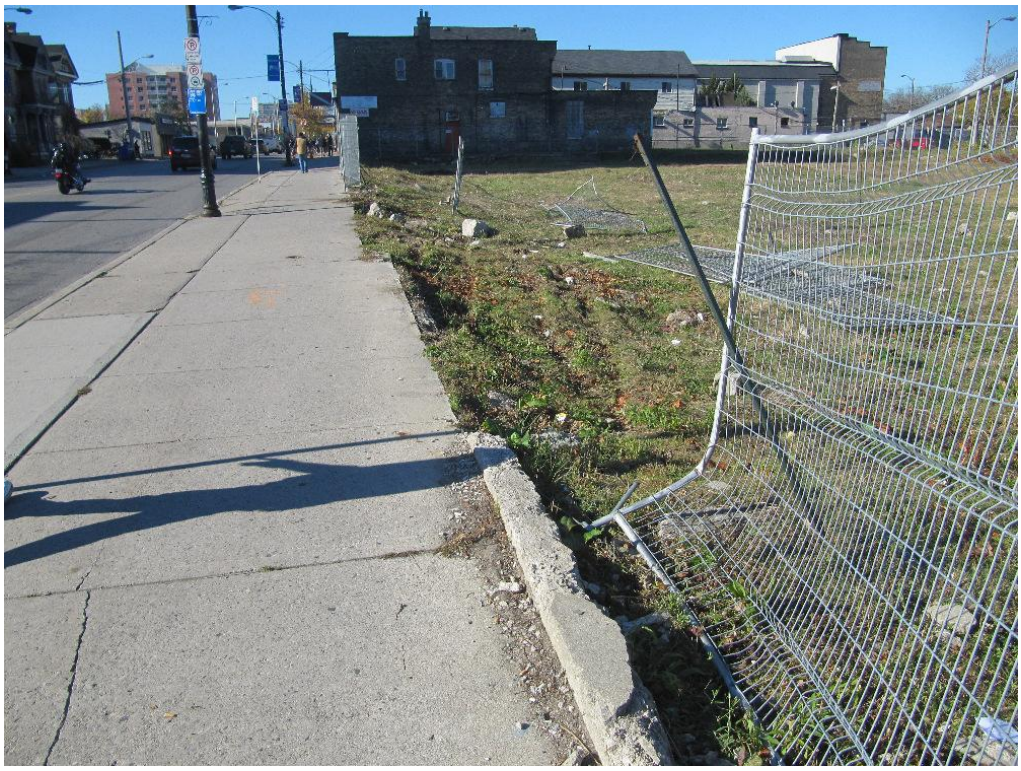

Figure 18: View, looking from the point where the SUV crashed into the metal fence and the evidence in the background where the SUV travelled to final rest.

Figure 19 shows the SUVs path and the tire marks that were created as the vehicle travelled to its final rest position.

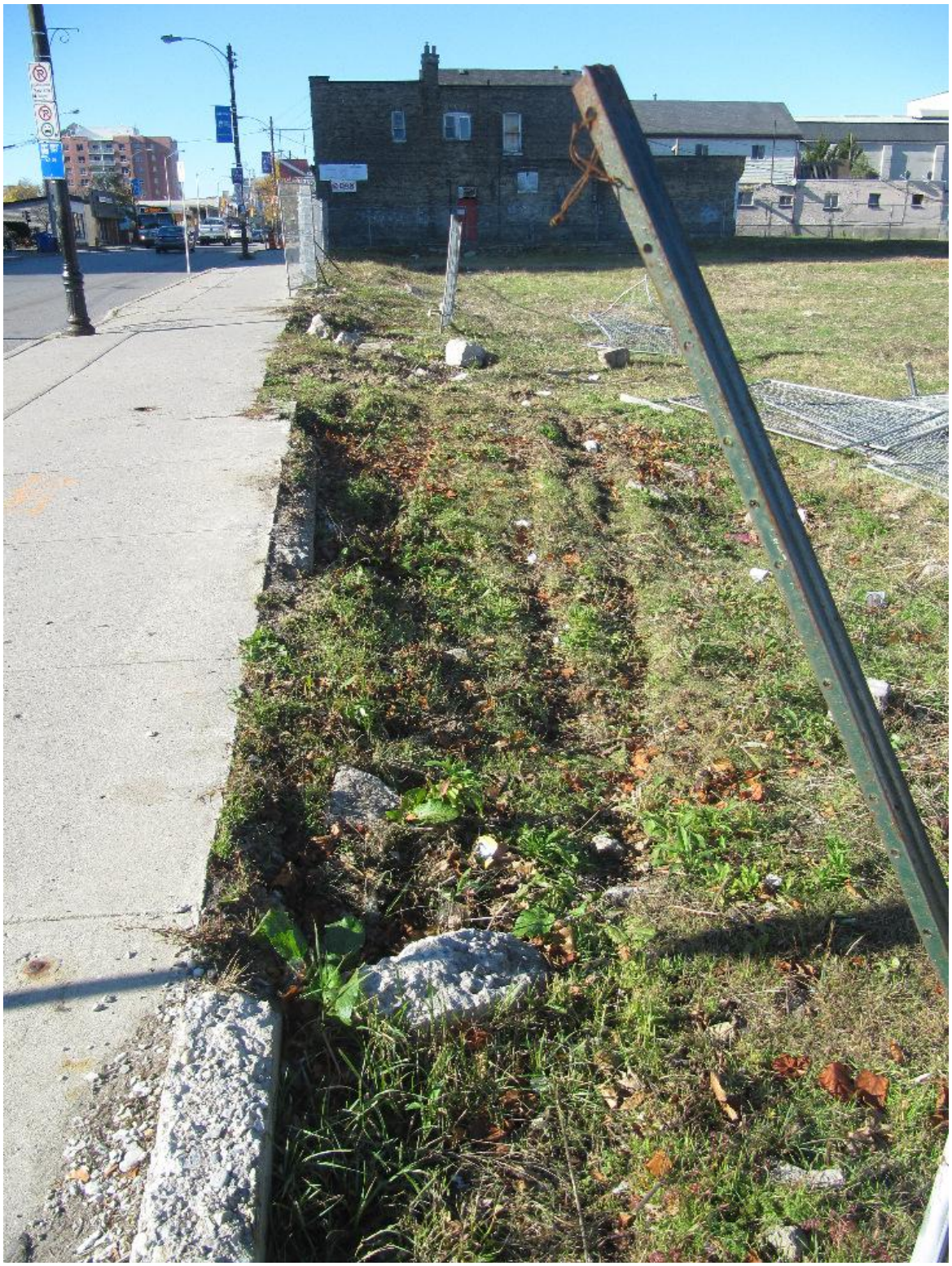

Figure 19: View, of the tire marks of the SUV as it stumbled through the uneven surface after crashing through the metal fence.

As the SUV moved toward its rest position there was evidence of its impacts with various rocks and concrete blocks as evidenced in Figures 20 through 24.

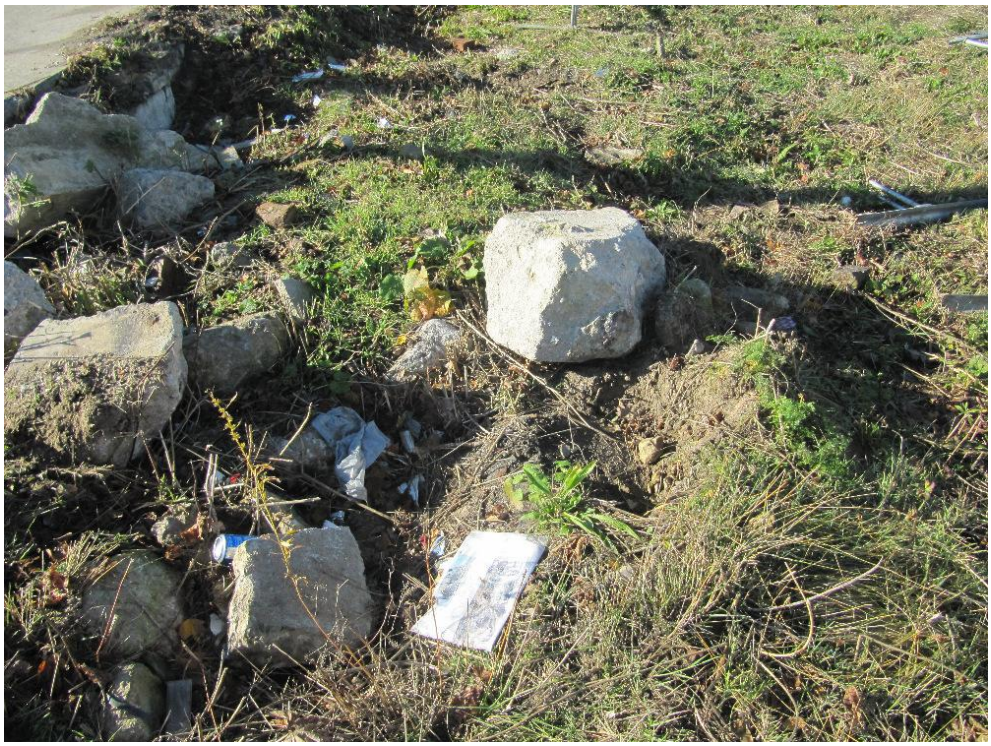

Figure 20: View of a large concrete boulder in the centre of the view that was pushed out of its resting position by the impact of the SUV.

Figure 21: View of the hole in the ground where the concrete block had been sitting before it was displaced by the impact of the SUV.

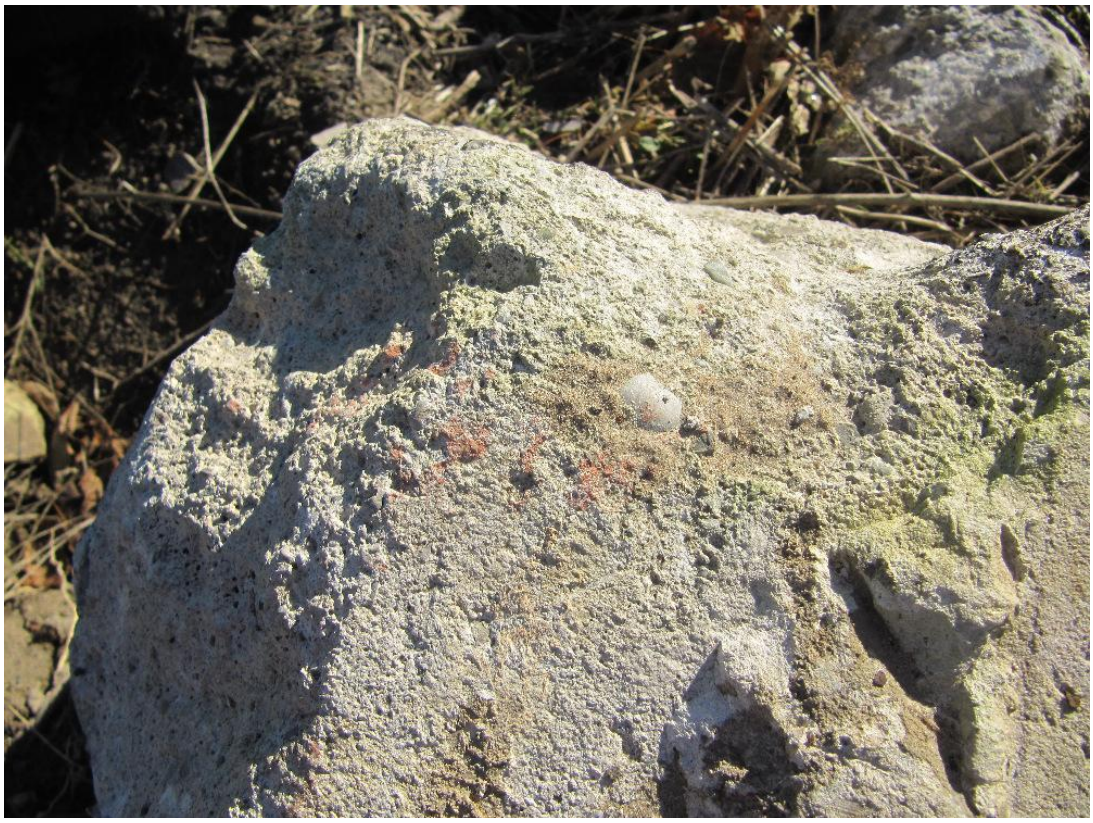

Figure 22: View of the reddish paint transfers on the concrete boulder confirming the SUV's impact with it.

Figure 23: View of a boulder containing a linear scar from scraping contact of the SUV.

Figure 24: Close-up view of linear scrape and reddish paint transfers to a boulder that was struck by the SUV.

Thus there was considerable evidence that the SUV had lost a substantial speed as it crashed through the metal fence and collided with the various debris along its path to final rest. This was not a vehicle that was travelling at a speed consistent with stopping at a stop sign and then commencing a right turn.

The physical evidence at the collision site does not support the official report that the SUV which struck the two pedestrians was travelling southbound on English Street. If such a travel direction was true then it would have to involve some form of rapid, full-throttle, unintended acceleration of the SUV which is a rare event. A far more likely scenario is that the vehicle was travelling westbound on Dundas Street as it approached the crosswalk. A westward approach would explain the higher speed of the vehicle and the shallow angle of its departure to the north roadside.

There have been many occasions in the past five years where we have attended collision sites and reported our findings on the Gorski Consulting website. In these instances we do not operate in any official capacity and therefore we do not have access to many of the details that official investigators may have. However, having spent of 35 years of examining cases where such detailed evidence has been available to us allows us to draw certain conclusions based on our past experience.

It is far more challenging to reconstruct a collision based on the limited information available at an accident site without any additional facts. But such analysis can hone

one's investigative skills. It also teaches us to be cautious about reading more into a case than the evidence allows.

For the present case, the reported information was peculiar which led us to explore this matter by attending the accident site. Our site examination confirmed our original suspicion that official investigators have likely misunderstood the evidence. As in almost all such cases neither we nor the general public will be made aware of the details of the official investigation, whether or not it is corrected to match the evidence or how or why the official investigators came to misunderstand the evidence.

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