

Pedestrian Accessibility Audit of North Monroe Street - Ide Avenue to Boone Avenue

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Audit Participants:

Jenny Hoff, Americans with Disabilities Act
Kitty Klitzke, Futurewise
Kat Hall, The Lands Council
Nicole Powell, The Lands Council
Ron Kusler, Spokane County Commute Trip Reduction Office (CTR)
Margie Hall, Spokane Growth & Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC)
Teresa Fuller, Spokane Police Department
Heleen Dewey, Spokane Regional Health District
Staci Lehman, Spokane Regional Transportation Council
Mike Hynes, Spokane Transit Authority
Julie Banks, YMCA-YWCA



Crossing the Street

There are two main issues with crossing N. Monroe:

- 1) Existing crosswalks need to be repainted.
- 2) There are unmarked intersections where auditors felt safe pedestrian crossings should be provided.

The crosswalks at the intersection of N. Monroe and Broadway are barely visible and need to be painted (photo at left.) The crosswalks at the intersection of N. Monroe and Mallon are nearly as faded.

There are no crosswalks or pedestrian crossing signs at the bus stops on the north end of the Monroe St. Bridge or one block further north where College Ave. joins N. Monroe. A random peak PM audit of that section of N. Monroe on a weekday logged 16 people crossing in the middle of the street within 30 minutes. A random 11:30 am – 1:00 pm audit of the same section logged 49.



The intersection of N. Monroe and Gardner also has no crosswalk or pedestrian crossing signs. The Gardner intersection is of particular concern because of its proximity to the YMCA. The transit stop for patrons traveling south to or from the YMCA is on the opposite side of Monroe. A random peak PM audit of N. Monroe between Mallon Ave. and Boone Ave. recorded 23 pedestrians crossing in the middle of the street within one-hour. A random 11:30 am – 1:00 pm audit of the same section logged 42.



Bicycling

N. Monroe has no bike paths, no bike parking and no bike-related signage. However, there are many cyclists on the street and even more on the sidewalks. A random peak PM audit of the N. Monroe-Broadway intersection on a weekday recorded 33 riders in one hour. A random mid-day audit of the same intersection recorded 19 in one hour.



Spokane's newly adopted Master Bike Plan recommends using less-congested Lincoln St., which parallels N. Monroe, as a shared roadway and then using Broadway to access Monroe. Bike signage would inform riders about that option. Bike parking is also needed.

Transit

Between the north end of the Monroe Street Bridge and Boone Avenue, auditors counted three transit routes, the Plaza/Arena shuttle, and a total of 12 separate stops. Auditors found only minor issues with transit:



- 1) Two stops are not wheelchair accessible.
- 2) Most stops lack seating and pedestrian scale lighting.



Neither the bus stop on the northwest corner of N. Monroe and Mallon Ave. or the stop on the southeast corner of N. Monroe and Boone Ave. are wheelchair accessible because on-street parking prevents a bus from getting close enough to the curb to use the hydraulic lifts. Out of a dozen bus stops, only three have seating. There is also no pedestrian scale lighting at bus stops, with the exception of the two stops located at the north end of the Monroe Street Bridge. Auditors also noted that buses on N. Monroe must stop in the travel lane causing drivers to turn sharply around them.

Traffic



There are two main issues with traffic:

- 1) The speed limit is too fast.
- 2) Travel lanes are too narrow.

The speed limit is 30 mph. Most auditors agreed that this is too fast for pedestrian comfort considering the close proximity of pedestrians to traffic. Auditors found that the narrow travel lanes added to that discomfort, particularly when passed by large vehicles and buses. There was consistent noise and exhaust.



Data from the Spokane Regional Transportation Council (SRTC) lists average daily traffic flows on this section of N. Monroe at 6,170 northbound and 8,000 southbound for a total of 14,170 trips a day in 2007 (most recent data available.) SRTC records show 31 vehicular accidents, 3 involving pedestrians and one involving a bicycle, for that same year. Accident locations are shown on the attached map along with comparison data for 2006 and 2008.

Streetscape

In addition to the narrow sidewalks, three other streetscape issues were consistent throughout the audit:

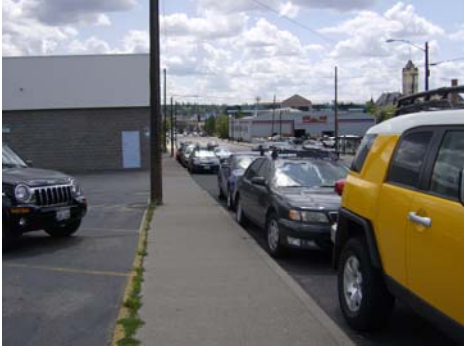


- 1) A lack of landscaping and trees.
- 2) A lack of eyes on the street.
- 3) A lack of wayfinding signage.

Some blocks have street trees and landscaping, but most blocks do not, especially where sidewalks are narrowed by on-street parking.

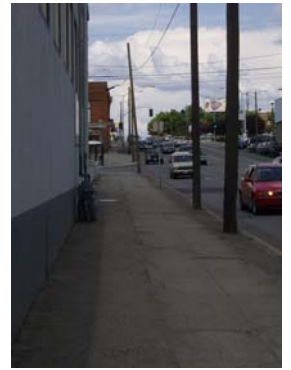


Several blocks lack eyes-on-the-street: buildings facing the street, windows overlooking the sidewalk, pedestrian activity, and good lighting; the qualities of a safe neighborhood street.



There is no pedestrian scale lighting on N. Monroe once you cross the bridge. Several unlit parking lots front the street and the site of a large development is vacant and overgrown.

There is no wayfinding signage along N. Monroe with the exception of one Tourist Parking sign at the north end of the bridge.



Parking

The one issue that auditors mentioned more than any other was the negative effect of the on-street parking. Wherever there is on-street parking the sidewalk narrows substantially. Parking meters show up in the right-of-way. The ability for pedestrians to interact is diminished and wheelchair travel becomes more challenging.



The free on-street parking towards the north end was usually occupied, but much of the metered parking was vacant throughout the audit and on subsequent visits in the afternoon and evening. There was parking available in several of the surface lots that front the street. The opinion of most auditors was that eliminating the on-street parking to allow for consistently wider sidewalks would benefit the pedestrian.

Conclusion

With its employment density and proximity to the Central Business District and surrounding neighborhoods, this area has high potential for walkability and presents a good opportunity to plan for pedestrians in conjunction with vehicular and road planning. Investing in pedestrian and bicycle enhancements increases citizen safety, benefits the local economy, addresses climate change, energy conservation and health issues, and supports our City's Sustainability Action Plan.

Complete walk audit and pedestrian bike count results are available by contacting Margie Hall, City of Spokane Planning Services Department, mhall@spokanecity.org.

