

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

**July 27, 2009**

## Audit Participants:

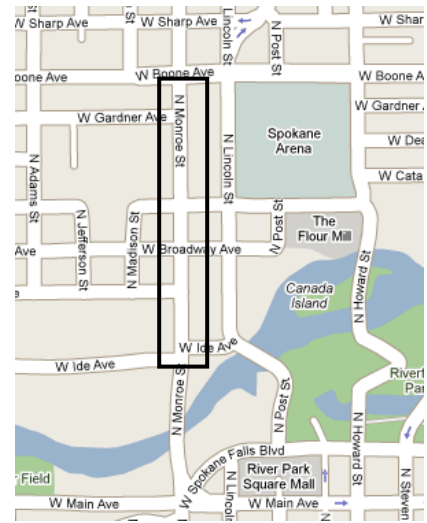
Jenny Hoff, Americans with Disabilities Act  
Kitty Klitzke, Futurewise  
Kat Hall, The Lands Council  
Nicole Powell, The Lands Council  
Ron Kusler, Spokane County Commute Trip Reduction Office (CTR)  
Margie Hall, Spokane Growth & Transportation Efficiency Center (GTEC)  
Teresa Fuller, Spokane Police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

## Summary

On June 9, 2009 at 8:00 am, eleven auditors gathered to analyze the walkability of historic N. Monroe Street. The area audited follows N. Monroe from Ide Avenue up to Boone Avenue.

This area still retains several of its historic buildings, including the Spokane County Courthouse, considered one of the finest examples of French Renaissance architecture in the West. This particular stretch sees a great deal of traffic, both auto and pedestrian\*, because of its proximity to the Courthouse and the many City and County government facilities that surround it. It is home to restaurants, retail, banks, service providers and the new YMCA-YWCA Central Facility. It is also within one-half mile of downtown Spokane, Riverfront Park and the Spokane Arena.

\* A count of the Monroe-Broadway intersection at 3:30 pm on a weekday resulted in 151 pedestrians in one hour. A mid-day count of the same intersection resulted in 290 pedestrians in an hour and a half.



The audit studied eight qualities of the pedestrian realm:

- Walkability
- Wheelchair Accessibility
- Crossing the Street
- Bicycling
- Transit
- Traffic
- Streetscape
- Parking

The accessibility issues the auditors encountered are summarized here and on the attached spreadsheet.

### Walkability / Wheelchair Accessibility



Two issues were consistent throughout the audit:

- 1) Sidewalks are in poor condition.
- 2) Sidewalks are too narrow.

Sidewalk concrete is broken, cracked, patched and uneven, and in places it was difficult to navigate in a wheelchair.

Sidewalks become narrow where there is on-street parking which is approximately 50% of the area. Meters for some of the on-street parking are located in the adjacent sidewalks, narrowing them even more.

Other sidewalk obstructions included utility poles, sign posts, fire hydrants, garbage cans and overgrown vegetation.





### 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.

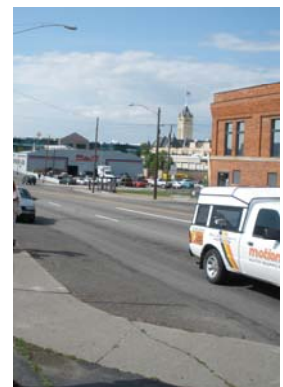
## Streetscape

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

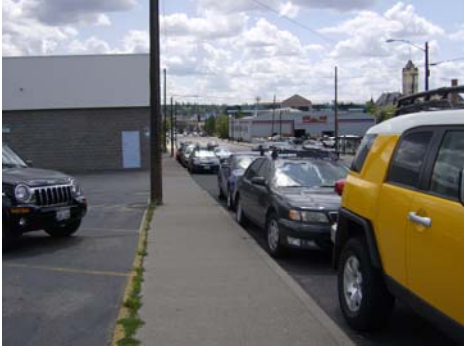


- 1) A lack of landscaping and trees.
- 2) A lack of eyes on the street.
- 3) A lack of wayfinding signage.

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

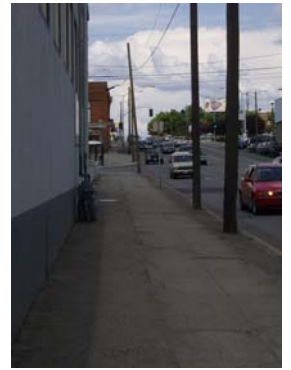


Several blocks lack eyes-on-the-street: buildings facing the street, windows overlooking the sidewalk, pedestrian activity, and good lighting; the qualities of a safe neighborhood street.



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.



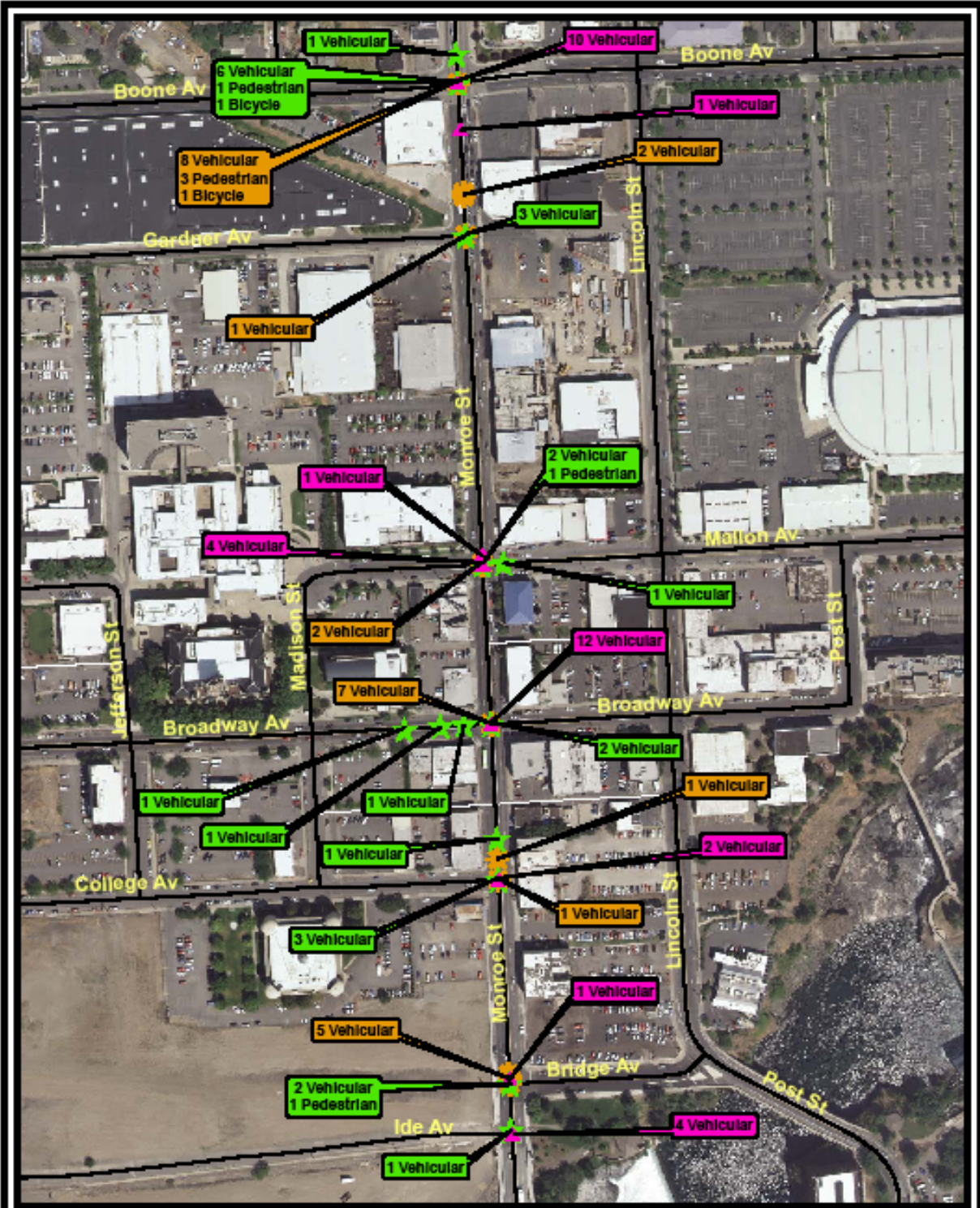
The free on-street parking towards the north end was usually occupied, but much of the metered parking was vacant throughout the audit and on subsequent visits in the afternoon and evening. There was parking available in several of the surface lots that front the street. The opinion of most auditors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

### **Conclusion**

In recent years this area has been the subject of studies that focus on reducing congestion and it is addressed in the City's 2009-2014 Six Year Comprehensive Street Program in three separate sections. Investing in pedestrian and bicycle enhancements when making any capacity improvements would increase citizen safety, benefit the local economy, address climate change, energy conservation and health issues, and would support our City's Sustainability Action Plan.

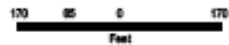
The audit team believes this street project presents an ideal opportunity to support the priorities of the community as expressed in the Transportation Chapter of our City's Comprehensive Plan: Design transportation systems that protect and serve the pedestrian first. Next, consider the needs of those who use public transportation and non-motorized transportation modes. Then consider the needs of automobile users after the two groups above.

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



**NORTH MONROE STREET ACCIDENT DATA**

▲ 2006 ★ 2007 ✪ 2008



Monroe St. Audit 6/9/09 Pedestrian and Bicycle Issues

Audit Question	# 1: Intersection of Ide/Bridge & Monroe, up to College	# 2: Intersection of College & Monroe, then to Broadway	# 3: Intersection of Broadway & Monroe, then up to Mallon	# 4: Intersection of Mallon & Monroe, then up to Gardner	# 5: Intersection of Gardner & Monroe, then up to Boone	# 6: Intersection of Boone & Monroe
<b>Walking</b>	Narrows for street parking. (E) Sidewalk cracked & uneven. (EW)	Sidewalk cracked & uneven. (EW) Obstructions - hydrant, planter (E) Overgrown vegetation (E) Doors open onto narrow sidewalk. (W) Parking meters obstruct sidewalk (W)	Narrows for street parking. (W) Sidewalk cracked & uneven. (W) Bus stop/bakery congested space. (E) Doors open onto narrow sidewalk. (W)	Narrows for street parking. (E) Sidewalk cracked & uneven. (EW) Obstructions - garbage can, pole (EW) Terrible sidewalk conditions - Jenny (W)	Narrows for street parking. (EW)	Too narrow and obstructions at REI. (W) Sidewalk unlevel at curb cuts. (E) Cut outs make walking unsafe. (W)
<b>Crossing</b>	No crosswalk on Monroe.	No crosswalk on Monroe or College. Jaywalking.	Crosswalks need to be painted. Free left/right turns dangerous to peds. No pedestrian signage.	Crosswalks need to be painted. ADA ramps only point one direction. (E)	No crosswalk on Monroe.	Crosswalks need to be painted.
<b>Bicycling</b>	No bike paths or facilities.	No bike paths or facilities.	No bike paths or facilities.	No bike paths or facilities.	No bike paths or facilities.	No bike paths or facilities.
<b>Transit</b>	Bus stop (EW) Bus stops in travel lane. No seating.	N/A	Multiple Bus Stops (EW) No pedestrian lighting. Bench in right-of-way. (E) No seating. (W)	Three bus stops. (2E, 1W) Stops too close together. (E) Stop too close to driveway cut. (E) Need ped lighting NW Monroe & Mallon. NW Monroe & Mallon not wheelchair accessible due to street parking & missing curb cut. (W)	Bus shelter. (W) No pedestrian lighting. Strong slope into bus shelter.	Two bus stops. (1E, 1W) No pedestrian lighting. Wheelchair access to bus obstructed by on-street parking. (E) No ADA evaluation. (W)
<b>Wheelchair Access</b>	No safe crossing. Curb cuts too steep. (W)	No safe crossing. Curb cuts are not safe. (E) Sidewalks are in poor condition. (E)	Curb cuts too steep. (W) Sidewalks are in poor condition. (EW) Ramp not flush with street. (W) A blind alley. (E)	Missing some curb cuts. (EW) Curb cuts are not safe. (E) Ramp not flush with street. (E)	No safe crossing. Sidewalks are in poor condition. (EW) Curb cuts are not safe. (W) A blind alley (E) & corner. (W) Driveway cut too steep. (E) Sidewalk obstruction (pole.) (W)	Curb cut obstruction (hydrant.) Curb cuts are not safe. (W) Curb cuts too steep. (E) Sidewalk too narrow. (W)
<b>Traffic</b>	Consistent noise & exhaust. Most felt speed was too fast, felt unsafe. Lane width opinions were mixed. Lanes too narrow for large vehicles.	Consistent noise & exhaust. Most felt speed was too fast, felt unsafe. Lane width opinions were mixed. Lanes too narrow for large vehicles. Center turn lane too narrow.	Consistent noise & exhaust. Traffic calmed by signal. Lane width opinions were mixed. Lanes too narrow for large vehicles.	Consistent noise & exhaust. Most felt speed was too fast, felt unsafe. Lane width opinions were mixed. Lanes too narrow for large vehicles.	Consistent noise & exhaust. Most felt speed was too fast, felt unsafe. Lane width opinions were mixed. Lanes too narrow for large vehicles. Cars cut across from Gardner to the Y to avoid intersections.	Consistent noise & exhaust. Most felt speed was too fast, felt unsafe. Lane width opinions were mixed. Lanes too narrow for large vehicles. Very busy intersection. Pedestrians seem insignificant & vulnerable. Needs landscaping.
<b>Streetscape</b>	Lacks trees & landscaping. (E) Needs pedestrian lighting on north end. Lacks eyes on the street. (EW) Lot at Kendall Yards feels unsafe. (W)	Lacks trees & landscaping. (EW) Needs pedestrian lighting. (EW) Difficult to interact with pedestrians. (E) Vines at Metro Café feel unsafe. (E) No wayfinding signs.	Lacks trees. (W) Needs pedestrian lighting. (EW) Minimal eyes on the street. (E) Litter. (E) No wayfinding signs.	Existing landscaping feels unsafe. (E) Needs pedestrian lighting. (EW) Lacks eyes on the street. (EW) Litter. (E) Difficult to interact with pedestrians. (E) No wayfinding signs.	Lacks trees & landscaping. (EW) Needs pedestrian lighting. (EW) Minimal eyes on the street. (EW) Litter. (E) No wayfinding signs.	Lacks trees & landscaping. (EW) Needs pedestrian lighting. (EW) Lacks eyes on the street. (EW) Litter. (E) No wayfinding signs.
<b>Parking</b>	On-street parking makes sidewalk narrow. Several parking lots line street. (E)	On-street parking makes sidewalk narrow. Several parking lots line street. (E) Parking lot cut ins make sidewalk narrow.		On-street parking makes sidewalk narrow. Parking meters obstruct sidewalk.	On-street parking makes sidewalk narrow.	On-street parking makes sidewalk narrow.