

I2 Walk Audit at Broadwater Elementary School

December 3, 2021 from 10:00am-11:00am.

Attendees: Joel Peden, Montana Association of Centers for Independent Living; Charles Alvarez, Montana Independent Living Project; Tom Kreissler, Broadwater Elementary School Parent; Kellie Boedeckers, Broadwater Elementary School Principal; Miranda Briggs, Parent Teacher Council; Angela Roberts, Parent Teacher Council; Greg Wirth, NMTAC member; Wilbur Rehmann, NMTAC chair; Sarah Sandau, Lewis and Clark Public Health; Mark Young, City of Helena;

The Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council to the Helena City Commission (NMTAC) requested that Lewis and Clark Public Health assist in coordinating an Inclusive Interdisciplinary Walk Audit (I2 Walk Audit) at and around Broadwater Elementary School. Concern regarding accessibility and safety for students and local residents was voiced at a NMTAC meeting in November.

Broadwater Elementary School sits in between Henderson Street, Carroll College, and Euclid Avenue. About 275 students attend Broadwater Elementary School. Although most live in the area, there is a Montessori program at the school, so some students travel across town. The group started on the intersection of Hollins and Lincoln Street. They then moved clockwise to walk along Lincoln Peosta, Garfield, then Hollins.

Observations, questions, and ideas from the I2 Walk Audit are as follows:

Stop #1: Intersection of Hollins and Lincoln Streets. At the first stop the team assessed the area as an average score of 5. Comments on the first leg of the walk are as follows:

Positive aspects: One good curb cut, clear crosswalks, trees on all sides, clear signage, network of facilities (school, homes, Vans Thriftway, Bakery, Art Store, etc.), and asphalt was good on the street.

Needs Improvement: Curb cuts are not directional, no truncated domes, no sidewalks on other sides of the streets, no stop signs so cars drive fast, bad visibility for active transportation, and high traffic volume.

Ideas: Sidewalks on the other streets. Curb bulb outs for better visibility. Stop signs to slow down traffic.

Stop #2: Intersection of Lincoln and Peosta Streets. At the second stop the team assessed the area as an average score of 5.5. Comments on this section of the walk are as follows:

Positive aspects: Stop sign, striped crosswalks, lighting, trees on all sides, clear signage, and asphalt was good on the street.

Needs Improvement: Traffic! Curb cuts are not directional, no truncated domes, need to trim the trees along the east side of Lincoln, large lip on the curb cut, no stop signs on Peosta so cars drive fast, bad visibility for active transportation, and high traffic volume.

Ideas: Sidewalks on the other streets. Curb bulb outs for better visibility (possibility of partnering with Bike Walk MT to implement a temporary bulb-out). Stop signs to slow down traffic on Peosta.

Stop #3: Intersection of Peosta and Garfield Streets. At the third stop the team assessed the area as an average score of 5. Comments on this section of the walk are as follows:

Positive aspects: Boulevards, sidewalks, clear crosswalks, clear signage, homes, near Carroll College, and connection to Centennial Trail

Needs Improvement: Need ADA ramps to get onto existing sidewalks, no stop signs so cars drive fast, bad visibility for active transportation, college drivers sometimes aren't the most careful, and high traffic volume.

Ideas: ADA curb ramps.

Stop #4: Intersection of Garfield and Hollins Streets. At the fourth stop the team assessed the area as an average score of 8. Comments on this section of the walk are as follows:

Positive aspects: Ramps to get on the sidewalks, truncated domes, sidewalks on three sides, and boulevard on two sides.

Needs Improvement: Not great lighting.

Ideas: Stop signs; sidewalks on SW corner.

Stop #5: Intersection of Hollins and Lincoln Streets. At the fifth stop the team assessed the area as an average score of 7.25. Comments on this section of the walk are as follows:

Positive aspects: Sidewalk is wide and in good condition. Trees on the streets.

Needs Improvement: Not great lighting. No teacher parking lot. No sidewalk on the south side of Hollins which leads kids to run into the street rather than going to a crosswalk.

Ideas: Stop sign and sidewalks on south side of Hollins.

General Observations:

- 1) Note the primary student drop off is on the north side, on Peosta Street at the playground.
- 2) It was noted a fair amount of school traffic is from the west side of Henderson and arrives via Peosta Street.
- 3) Broadwater School is grateful and appreciates the synergy with Carroll College, additional pedestrian crossings on Benton Avenue at Carroll may be beneficial.
- 4) With no parking lot, all school staff park on the adjacent streets, staff vehicles are parked prior to student arrivals.
- 5) Accessible entrance is on the south side of the school on Hollins at the main entrance, an accessible parking space is on the street.
- 6) CR Anderson students arrive to pick up younger siblings after school.
- 7) Student biking is not frequent due to discontinuous sidewalks with the need to ride in the street and need to cross Henderson.
- 8) Some students dropped off on Hollins are from eastbound vehicular traffic, necessitating students to cross Hollins at uncontrolled locations with opposing traffic

Additions or Revisions to Recommendations:

- 1) Full ADA compliance at all four (4) intersections with ADA ramps on opposing corners.
- 2) Extensions of sidewalks on adjacent streets
- 3) Full sidewalk connection on Peosta Street to Henderson Steet with enhanced crossing at Henderson.
- 4) Review Pedestrian route from CR Anderson to Broadwater school.
- 5) More connections to eventual Centennial Trail project.

Summary of the main requests:

- Full ADA compliance at all four (4) intersections around Broadwater school, with ADA ramps on opposing corners.
- Extensions of sidewalks on adjacent streets.
- Full sidewalk connection on Peosta Street to Henderson Steet.
- Review and improve pedestrian route from CR Anderson.
- Connections to eventual Centennial Trail project
- Sidewalk on the south side of Hollins
- Increased visibility at intersections (bulb-outs).
- Enhanced pedestrian/school crossing at Henderson.
- Driver feedback speed limit signs.