

# DISABILITY AUDIT: Jefferson St

Date: 19 February 2019

Time: 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Lighting: Partly cloudy

Weather: Cool to cold

<b>Auditor</b>	<b>Mode</b>
Garrett Brumfield	Power scooter
Tiffany Lee	Wheelchair
Wendy Munderville	Vision impaired with guide dog
Andrea Garland	Walk
Rachel Ruhlen	Walk
Ian Coffey	Walk
James Nuckles	City Engineer
Eric Patton	Concrete inspector

Jefferson St is on the repaving scheduled from the library to Norfolk Ave. The intersection of Jefferson and Bullitt was awarded Pedestrian Safety Action Plan funding. These opportunities prompted this disability audit which focused on intersections.

Route: From the library, crossed three legs of the intersection of Jefferson and Bullitt, then crossed Bullitt again and proceeded north on the west side of Jefferson. At Kirk, crossed to the east side of Jefferson and continued north. At Campbell, crossed back to the west side of Jefferson, crossed to the north side of Campbell, then turned around and came back to the library staying on the west side of Jefferson.

Pavement condition: Near Heironimus, there was a bump where the sidewalk panels are uneven. Otherwise pavement on the sidewalks was reasonably smooth. The pavement condition on curb ramps and particularly where curb ramps meet asphalt was very rough.

Obstacles: The sidewalk is comfortably wide. Auditors discussed the importance of ensuring that 4 feet of sidewalk space is protected from encroachment by street furniture. Since the sidewalk itself is not being repaved, this must be accomplished through education of businesses and enforcement. Auditors found a DRI planter that was offset slightly from the other planters at a point that coincided with the retractable belt barrier at the entrance of Bernard’s Gastropub & Eatery (303 S Jefferson St) to create a pinch point.

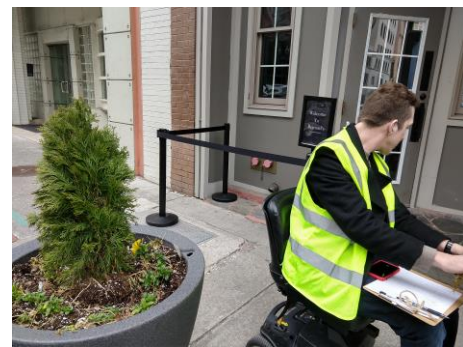


Figure 1. Obstacles create a tight passage

Another issue encountered was a work zone encountered at the Roanoke Regional Chamber. The work zone consisted of yellow “Caution” tape tied to traffic cones, signs, and posts to blockade the sidewalk. This was an improperly marked work zone that did not have warning signs and could not be detected by a vision impaired pedestrian.

Crosswalks: Wendy commented that some cities have tactile surfaces at the edges of angled crosswalks that can be detected with a cane. She also discussed her preference for lining up the tactile surface at the curb ramp with the crosswalk.

Cross elevations: Several curb ramps have steep cross slopes.

Jefferson and Bullitt: This intersection has PSAP funding. Andrea explained the issues, constraints, and proposed improvements. The pole that will have the audible signal on the southeast corner of the intersection may be too far back. Putting a post in the ideal position will require additional conduit and exceeds the available funding. Solutions discussed included turning up the volume or hanging the audible signal from a second mast so it will be closer to the pedestrian.

On the southwest corner, facing north, there is a lip and cross slope that was a problem for the wheelchairs.

Other intersections do not have funding for dramatic improvements but the repaving project is an opportunity to fix some issues. Existing stormwater and utilities placement is a major constraint for improving disability access: stormwater inlets, grates, and manhole covers, fire hydrants, and utility poles clutter the walkway as it approaches intersections.



Figure 2. The crosswalk runs into the inlet.

Jefferson and Luck: Flatten out this intersection on the east side, crossing Luck.

Jefferson and Kirk: There are no street signs identifying Kirk Ave. The curb has a steep ramp.

Jefferson and Campbell: There is a bad bump on the southwest curb ramp. Ideally, the four diagonal curb ramps would be replaced with eight curb ramps aligned with the direction of travel.

Recommendations:

Using the repaving schedule as an opportunity to improve curb ramps and crossings beyond the minimum required is commendable. For wheelchair accessibility, the curb ramp transition to the asphalt is the most difficult at many intersections on Jefferson St and throughout downtown. Include an even landing at the top and bottom of the ramp. Keep curb ramp slopes gentle, and watch for cross slopes. If possible, align tactile surfaces with the crosswalk.

Other comments: Participants in the audit had inconsistent interpretations of ADA standards, and while everyone is an expert on his or her disability, no one is an expert in ADA standards. City staff found the exercise informative for the context of user experience.