

WALK/DISABILITY AUDIT: Gus Nicks Blvd

Date: March 12, 2019

Time: 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Lighting: Sunny

Weather: Sunny, mild

Auditor	Mode
Tiffany Lee	Wheelchair
Greg Walters	Walk
Nathan McClung	Walk
Rachel Ruhlen	Walk

Route: Gus Nicks Blvd from old high school parking lot to Pollard St. Crossed Gus Nicks Blvd at the old high school, traveled south on the sidewalk on the east side of Gus Nicks Blvd, crossed at Pollard St, and traveled north on the sidewalk on the west side of Gus Nicks Blvd. (The bike audit of Gus Nicks / Washington from the old high school to ByPass Rd included this segment, so this audit was for walking and disability only.)

This section of Gus Nicks Blvd, along with Washington Ave as far as ByPass Rd, is identified as a connection between Wolf Creek Greenway and Tinker Creek Greenway. The trailhead for future Phase II of the Glade Creek Greenway is adjacent to the old high school parking lot.

Trip generators: The segment is of interest to Vinton because of current and future development. The old high school is under construction to be repurposed into moderately priced apartments, the William Byrd Lofts. It is an easy walk or bike ride to downtown Vinton. Future development of the old Gish Mill site across the street will be an attraction for these tenants as well as other visitors from downtown. Because of recent changes to the bus route, there are no bus stops on Gus Nicks Blvd.

Sidewalk condition: Good. One small lip was noticed and one rough spot for people with wheeled mobility devices. The sidewalk in front of the old school is seven feet wide, and auditors commented on how much more comfortable it was compared to the five-foot-wide sidewalk the rest of the street. Neither segment has separation from the curb.

Obstacles: No obstacles, other than a tree limb which was removed by the auditors. Auditors commended the lack of vegetative overgrowth.

Traffic: 4 lanes of fast-moving traffic with no separation between the road and the sidewalk. Speed limit 35 mph (estimated average actual speed 44 mph), average annual daily traffic 21,000. No street parking.

Crosswalks: The intersection of Pollard and Washington, including its crosswalks, will be improved soon as part of the Pedestrian Safety Action Program funding Vinton received. Coincidentally, three hours after the audit took place, a pedestrian crash occurred in the same intersection.

A critical missing crosswalk for future development is between William Byrd Lofts and the Gish Mill site. If the Gish Mill site is developed and is an attraction for tenants of William Byrd Lofts, there will be high potential for pedestrian crashes.

Curb ramps: The curb ramp on the southeast corner of Madison Ave (also called Omar Ave NE) & Gus Nicks Blvd is not usable. It is narrow (3 feet), steep, has no landing pad, and faces directly onto the street. It lacks a tactile surface. At the moment, it is not a high priority because there is probably not much pedestrian traffic on the street, especially with the removal of the bus stops.

The curb ramps on the northwest and southwest corner of Gus Nicks and Highland and the northwest and southwest corner of Gus Nicks and the old high school parking lot lack a level landing area, tactile surface, and point into the street.

Vision impairment: Curb ramps lack tactile surfaces.

Signs: Wayfinding signs direct travelers to downtown destinations.

Recommendations

With 35 mph traffic and 21,000 average annual daily traffic, a high degree of protection will be needed for safe pedestrian crossing from William Byrd Lofts to the Gish Mill site. Consider a pedestrian refuge island, a high-intensity activated crosswalk beacon or rectangular rapid flashing beacon, and high visibility crosswalk markings when improvements are made.

Extend the sidewalk on the east side of Gus Nicks Blvd north to Madison Ave (Omar Ave) and bring the curb ramp up to ADA standards.



Inadequate curb ramp at Madison and Gus Nicks



Auditors discuss future development



Curb ramps on the segment lack level landing area, tactile surface, and point into the street.