



Citizen's Accessibility Evaluation Tool



Pedestrian and Bicycle
Information Center

Problem

Pedestrians on Busch Boulevard had a multitude of difficulties to deal with when navigating the corridor. The high-traffic corridor was in need not only of an improved pedestrian environment, but also a means of assessing the problem.

Background

As the State Department of Transportation prepared to resurface Busch Boulevard, a high-volume corridor, The Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board decided to get involved and show accessibility problems that also needed addressing.

Solution

The MPO staff designed and executed an accessibility evaluation tool that can be used as a template for future citizen evaluations.

An assessment sheet was developed by the MPO and four Busch Boulevard intersections were identified for evaluation. Citizens with disabilities, family members, caregivers and advocates were identified, emphasizing cross-disability representation. The site evaluation conducted for the Busch Boulevard Corridor included participation by the identified citizens, volunteers and staff members. All participants were asked to identify and document barriers to accessibility. The information was then compiled and reported in a final illustrated document.

The assessment documented the common pedestrian activities in order to identify what needs should be addressed. Walking was a common travel mode for everyday tasks since several neighborhoods border the corridor. Typical pedestrian groups included families with young children in strollers, children on their way school, the elderly, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities.

The extensive assessment noted several problem categories:

- Sidewalk discontinuity and condition
- Conflicts between pedestrians and motorists (very wide driveways, large right turning radii)
- Curb ramps (slope too steep, lack of landing pad, etc)
- Bus stops (inaccessible in the grass, no bus lane)
- Inaccessible Signals (difficult to find for the visually impaired, inaudible, no brail)
- Crossings (too little time to cross, no median refuge, curves confuse guide dogs)
- Railroad tracks (no crossing for wheelchairs, confuse guide dogs)
- Lack of buffers between traffic and walkway
- Obstructions in walkway (poorly placed benches, utility poles, holes)



This person was using Busch Boulevard on the day of the evaluation. He got stuck in the sand and gravel shoulder and was assisted out by evaluation participants.

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Project sponsors included the local Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board (TDCB), YES! of America United, and the statewide Real Choice Partnership. Funding was not a complicated affair as the main costs were staff hours, a few good cameras, and committed citizen volunteers. The biggest challenge was the logistics of the day itself, as staff had to coordinate with the Transit system to use an accessible bus for the day, in order to cover enough ground in the relatively inaccessible corridor.



This large turning radius at 30th street invites high speed turns, which may result in high speed crashes with people trying to cross the street.

Results

A final report detailed the existing conditions and made recommendations to improve the environment, including landscape treatments, lighting, transit infrastructure, pedestrian infrastructure, utilities, and several supportive policies such as easement dedications, overlay districts, and sign ordinances. The lavishly illustrated document made a big impression on professionals and legislators, and the DOT has since committed to incorporating suggestions from the document into the design.

Contact

Allison Yeh
Senior Planner
Hillsborough County MPO
(813) 272-5940
yeha@plancom.org
<http://www.hillsboroughmpo.org/pubmaps/otherplansstudies/BuschBlvdFinalReport.pdf>

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