

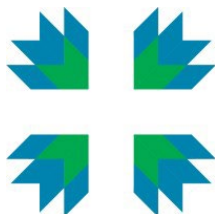


# ROCKY BOY WALK AUDIT

Rte. 6 from Gooseberry Road to Prairie Street

## Abstract

This report summarizes the May 27, 2025, walk audit along Rte. 6 in Boneau from Stone Child College to the Rocky Boy Tribal Water Resource Department and proposes action steps to move forward making this route more accessible to all pedestrians. This walk audit was done in partnership with Rocky Boy Clinic and the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant partners.



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## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
Purpose	
Participants	
Date and Time	
<b>Walking Route and Findings</b>	<b>3</b>
Map	
Observations	
<b>Analysis and Recommendations</b>	<b>5</b>
Summary	
Analysis	
Recommendations	
<b>Next Steps</b>	<b>8</b>
Proposed Action Plan	
Follow Up	



# Introduction

## Purpose

The goal of this walk audit was an assessment of pedestrian infrastructure, safety, accessibility, and appeal within the Boneau community. The audits specifically examined sidewalks, streets, crossings, street safety, appeal, public transit access, and conditions during spring weather. The route was chosen as there is frequent pedestrian traffic from Stone Child College to the Rocky Boy Tribal Water Resource Department.

## Participants

There were eight local participants that gave feedback on the walk audit. The group included a variety of genders as well as ages that participated.



Pictured above is an image of the walk audit participants walking along audit along Rte 6.



## Date and Time

The walk audit was conducted on May 27, 2025, mid-afternoon from about 1-2pm MST. It was a sunny and clear spring day.

## Walk Route and Findings

### Map

The below map shows the route related to the walk audit, starting at Stone Child College and ending at Rocky Boy Tribal Water Resource Department. GPS coordinates (48.288830, -109.835587 and 48.290017, -109.868628). This route was 0.7 miles along Rte. 6 with mostly flat terrain. Below this route is marked yellow.



### Observations

#### Strengths

- Some participants noted sidewalks having a consistent and smooth surface material (like concrete or asphalt), being in good condition without cracks or raised sections, being free of obstacles and interruptions, continuous segments, and being wide enough (at least 5 feet).
- Some participants observed pedestrian crossing signals working, having "push-to-walk" mechanisms, were appropriately placed, and provided enough time to cross.
- Some checked that buildings/homes appeared well-maintained.





- A few audits indicated that motorists appeared to be obeying the speed limit.
- Some noted that the transit stop was in a useful location.



Pictured above is an image of the walk audit participants walking along Rte. 6 while cars pass by on the opposite side of the road.

## Weaknesses

- Consistent weaknesses noted across the audits included a significant lack of sidewalks or the need for sidewalks where they were absent. No audits indicated partial sidewalks or sidewalks on both sides of the street. Tactile ground surface indicators for the visually impaired and curb cut ramps were consistently marked as absent or not applicable on all audits.



- In the streets, participants frequently noted a lack of traffic lights and/or stop signs at intersections and crossings, that these signals were not clearly visible, a lack of crosswalks, that crosswalks were not well marked or clearly visible, and a lack of signage alerting drivers to the presence of pedestrians. Audible prompts for people with vision impairment were not noted as present.
- No designated bicycle lanes or pedestrian crossing signals (beacons) were noted.
- Many auditors noted that motorists were not obeying the posted speed limit. Many auditors felt that the posted speed limit did not seem suitable.
- Street Safety and Appeal items frequently marked as absent or poor included places to sit, shade trees, well-maintained grass/flowers/landscaping, awnings/shelter from weather, drinking fountains, public restrooms, informative signage, and well-placed signage. Streetscape features were also often noted as lacking. Pedestrian-scaled lighting was frequently marked as absent, with one auditor noting "Street lights needed. None at all."
- The vast majority of audits indicated that the location/street did not appear to be a safe or appealing destination or travel route. Auditors often felt that the location/street did not appear safe for users of all ages/abilities etc., for pedestrians during the day and night, safe from moving vehicles, or safe from crime/harassment. Written notes highlighted concerns about safety, especially for children, and the lack of basic infrastructure.
- For Public Transit Access, many audits found that pedestrians could not safely access or depart from the transit stop. Transit stops were often noted as not protecting waiting passengers, lacking suitable seating, lacking shelter, not clean or well-maintained, not well-lighted, and lacking useful amenities. Auditors frequently indicated they did not feel safe from crime at the transit stop and would not feel safe or comfortable waiting there. Written notes described transit stops as "rundown not safe to wait at", "busted up", lacking lights and cleanliness, and sometimes being far from the main road.

## Analysis and Recommendations

### Summary

The summary sheets accompanying several audits provide overall ratings for each category. For all recorded summaries: Sidewalks, Streets and Crossings received a rating of "Poor", Street Safety and Appeal received a rating of "Poor", Public Transit Access received a rating of "Poor". Overall, the May 27, 2025, audits consistently rated the pedestrian



environment, safety, and transit access as "Poor" which indicates significant deficiencies in pedestrian infrastructure, safety, and public transit accessibility.

## Analysis

The consistently "Poor" ratings across categories stem from a pervasive lack of fundamental infrastructure. Audits repeatedly highlighted the absence of sidewalks, safe crosswalks, adequate lighting, and well-maintained public transit stops. Even where some elements like sidewalks were checked positively on specific characteristics (e.g., surface material, condition), critical features like tactile indicators and curb cuts were absent. Safety concerns from both vehicular traffic (speeding motorists) and potentially from the environment itself (lack of lighting, rundown transit stops) were prominent issues contributing to the poor safety and appeal ratings. The lack of basic amenities like seating, shade, and trash receptacles also detracts from the pedestrian experience.

## Recommendations

### Walk Audit Participant Recommendations

The Recommendations noted by auditors in the written observation sections included:

- Need for reflectors on the road.
- Need for more road signs for pedestrians.
- Need for crosswalks.
- Need for more lights, with one auditor stating lights are "needed desperately" as there are "none at all".
- Need for sidewalks.
- A suggestion to lower the speed limit.
- Need for trash cans.
- Transit stops need to be cleaned up.

These recommendations echo many of the issues identified in the observations and align with typical recommendations for improving walkability and pedestrian safety in areas lacking infrastructure.

### Additional Recommendations

The Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) team provided these additional suggestions which were built upon many of the participant recommendations.



## *Share the Results*

- This report should be distributed to local leaders who can implement or advocate for the suggested changes.
- Sharing the report with local media can help raise awareness of the need for the recommended changes.
- Encourage community members to discuss the results and get involved in ongoing advocacy.

## *Demonstration Projects*

Demonstration projects or "Pop-up demonstrations" are planned as a way to introduce traffic-calming measures and make streets more people-friendly through temporary installations. These projects are intended to allow community members and local leaders to visualize and experience potential positive changes directly addressing the consistently rated "Poor" conditions. Pop-Up Demonstrations are also a tactic to test and tweak solutions temporarily before making permanent changes.

Drawing from the walk audit findings, participant recommendations, and the AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit's concepts for improving streets and transit access, potential types of pop-up demonstration projects include:

1. Demonstrating Sidewalks and Walkway Improvements: Given the pervasive lack of sidewalks noted in the walk audit reports, a temporary project could involve establishing a clear pedestrian path where a sidewalk is needed. This could use temporary materials, paint, or barriers to show where a sidewalk could go and how it would create a separation or buffer from the street.
2. Creating Temporary Crosswalks and Crossing Aids: The absence or poor visibility of crosswalks was a consistent weakness. Pop-up demonstrations could install temporary, highly visible crosswalks using paint or tape. They could also simulate pedestrian curb extensions using temporary barriers or cones to narrow the roadway and reduce crossing distances, as suggested by the AARP Tool Kit, or create a temporary pedestrian island to show how it offers a safe waiting place in wider areas. Temporary signage alerting drivers to pedestrian crossings could also be part of this.
3. Implementing Temporary Traffic Calming Measures: Many auditors felt the posted speed limit was unsuitable and not obeyed. While lowering the actual speed limit is a permanent change, a pop-up could demonstrate physical traffic calming. This could involve temporarily using cones or barriers to narrow lanes, illustrating how





this can help control speeds. Simulating pedestrian islands or “bulb-outs” also naturally slows traffic.

4. Installing Temporary Pedestrian-Scaled Lighting: The lack of adequate lighting was a significant concern, especially at night and near transit stops. A pop-up project could temporarily install lower, pedestrian-scaled lighting directed towards walkways and transit stops to demonstrate how it enhances visibility, safety, and appeal after dark.
5. Adding Temporary Street Furniture and Amenities: The walk audits frequently noted the lack of seating, shade, and trash receptacles. Pop-up demonstrations could place temporary benches or seating areas, add temporary shade structures or potted trees, and install temporary trash cans. Converting parking spots into "parklets" (on-street patios with seating) is another AARP-suggested idea that could be demonstrated.
6. Improving Public Transit Stops Temporarily: The walk audit reports found transit stops lacked seating, shelter, cleanliness, lighting, and safe access. A pop-up could transform a transit stop temporarily by adding seating, setting up a temporary shelter structure, improving lighting, conducting a temporary cleanup, and using temporary crosswalks/traffic calming to demonstrate safer access points.
7. Showcasing Improved Signage: A lack of road signs for pedestrians and informative/well-placed signage was noted. A pop-up could add temporary directional signs or signs alerting drivers to pedestrians to illustrate improved wayfinding and safety communication.

## Next Steps

### Proposed Action Plan

#### Assigning responsibilities

- Partnership with Chippewa Cree Roads/Public Works Department.
- Mike is responsible for selection, set up, and evaluation of pop-up demonstrations. Additional support with these efforts may include volunteers, student interns, etc.
- Collaboration with Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and Montana Office of Rural Health and AHEC on new and/or existing policy changes needed.



## Detailing required resources

- Pop-up demonstration funding provided through Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant.
- Chippewa Cree Roads/Public Works Department might have funding to make successful pop-up demonstrations permanent.

## Follow-up

Follow-up on recommendations and how to monitor their effectiveness:

### Continued Engagement

- Tracking of who receives the report and follow up if no response is received will be monitored to track effectiveness of report dissemination.
- Tracking of awareness efforts and potential audience reached through these efforts.

### Continued Monitoring

- Tracking of demonstration project effectiveness – tracking method will depend on selected projects.
- Future walk audits in the same area after changes/demonstration projects have been implemented to assess effectiveness.
- Future walk audits in the same area during different seasons of the year to showcase additional changes that might be effective.

