



Source: USDOT/Getty.

# Managing Work Zones for Improved Vulnerable Road User Access to Voting Day: Information Brief

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## Document Purpose

Work zones can have a significant impact on travel to and from polling places by all types of travelers, including motorists, transit riders, and vulnerable road users (VRUs). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Operations encourages the use of traffic analysis and enhanced work zone management principles to improve access to voting days—as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) support for [Executive Order 14019, Promoting Access to Voting](#).

This information brief focuses on work zone impacts on VRUs and contains a checklist that agencies can use to help mitigate these concerns near voting locations.

## Work Zone Impacts That Adversely Affect VRU Access to Voting Locations

Work zones can cause significant impediments to VRUs by being on sidewalks, on walking or riding paths, or in bike parking areas for accessing voting locations. Such impediments can be especially impactful to pedestrians with disabilities. Sidewalks that normally accommodate only occasional pedestrians or individuals using personal conveyances may serve significant numbers of these users on voting days.

Roadway construction and maintenance contracts, in-house maintenance forces, and utility contractor or vertical construction permits/agreements can all create such impacts. Efforts may be needed to minimize the likelihood that those impacts occur on voting days. Likewise, agencies may need strategies to mitigate such impacts if they cannot be completely avoided. Thus, effective work zone management may involve efforts in the following categories:

- Work zone processes, guidelines, and impact assessments
- Transportation management and public information
- Monitoring and evaluation

## Checklist To Mitigate Impediments to VRU Travel Paths to Voting Locations

### *Work Zone Management Processes, Guidelines, and Impact Assessment*

- Prior to voting days, reach out to the local board of elections to identify and verify planned voting locations.
- Encourage project scheduling of any required sidewalk or pathway closures and detours near typical voting locations to occur off cycle from voting seasons.
- Establish a policy to deny permit requests for temporary sidewalk or pathway closures that would adversely affect accessibility to voting locations on voting days.

The New Jersey Department of Transportation will “ensure department-maintained pathways leading to polling stations are clear and accessible for all transportation users.”—New Jersey Department of Transportation, in support of Executive Order 14019

## Transportation Management and Public Information

- Consider the need for using short-term pedestrian and bicyclist management strategies to navigate sidewalk and pathway detours near voting locations.

Examples of such strategies include but are not limited to:

- Using audible information technology to guide pedestrians with reduced vision capabilities ([figure 1](#))
  - Positioning crossing guards or law enforcement at pedestrian detour points to assist pedestrians with visual disabilities
  - Providing signage to clearly mark pedestrian and bicycle detours.
- Ensure alternative, adequate bicycle parking is available and visible if work zone activities affect existing bicycle parking areas.
  - Ensure that temporary transit stops serving voting locations provide accessible paths to the voting locations.
  - Consider providing messages on social media and traveler information platforms about how pedestrians and bicyclists may access voting locations impacted by a work zone.



Source: Virginia Department of Transportation.

**Figure 1. Photograph.**  
**Audible information technology.**

## Monitoring and Evaluation

- Check sidewalk and pathway accessibility through or around work zones or permit areas near voting locations immediately prior to the voting day.
- Monitor sidewalk or pathway accessibility near voting locations on voting days.
- Establish processes for monitoring sidewalk and pathway conditions around voting locations on voting days. Examples of such monitoring include:
  - Reporting by field staff, law enforcement, and others
  - Gathering and addressing citizen comments and complaints about voting-location accessibility
- If unexpected accessibility issues did develop, organize and conduct an after-event review with all affected agencies to determine causes and potential solutions for future events.

## Additional Resources

FHWA has created additional resources for agencies' practitioners to use for improving traffic analysis and work zone management practices at their agencies in consideration of voting days:

[https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program\\_areas/votingevents.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program_areas/votingevents.htm).

The website includes:

- [Resources related to work zone management for voting events](#)
- [“Frequently Asked Questions”](#)
- Information briefs for Managing Traffic for Improved Access to Voting Events and Managing Work Zones for Improved Vehicle Access to Voting Events.

[https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program\\_areas/votingevents.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/program_areas/votingevents.htm)



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For technical assistance or additional resources on this topic, contact [FHWAVotingAccess@dot.gov](mailto:FHWAVotingAccess@dot.gov).