

ACPD's Built Environment Working Group Meeting Notes

March 4th, 2025

Virtual Teams Meeting

4:00PM – 6:00PM

Members in Attendance: Paula Kilburn, James Kemp, Hargun Kaur, Lance Dingman

Also in Attendance: Anne McArthur, Mike Field, Peter Sniuolis, Ed English, Susan Jacob, Jessica Bowen, Camila Grullón

Members Absent: Cara Hernould, Levi Janosi

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of March 4th Agenda: Agenda was approved.

**3. Roads and Transportation Overview with Staff
Discussing:**

Construction Sites and Accessible Redirection:

Chair began the discussion relaying some complaints

that had been made by citizens with respect to construction zones and redirection of paths of travel. Ed English has previously shared what efforts have been made by construction staff regarding assisting the public during work days. Chair pointed out that this does not address the problem when the site is closed and there is no one to assist with redirection. Staff were of the mistaken impression that people with disabilities always travel with support people and didn't require further support. This is a misconception that we have run into with staff from the HSR as well. We corrected that mistake and explained that it is actually difficult to ask someone else to put their lives on hold while they assist you with your errands. Ed explained sidewalk redirection actually starts a block away from the redirected area with signs. Paula pointed out she couldn't read or find the signs. Chair also pointed out there was issues with the sign placement blocking paths and should be mounted on poles where possible. We then discussed how to make a white cane detectable redirection of an intersection. We discussed using the hobby horse barricades, some sort of stanchion and rope placement, foot level barriers to catch white canes, Camila even suggested some sort of audio system, but as there is no known system that exists for this purpose, we would have to create it and that is

beyond our abilities. Snow fence redirection was probably the best suggestion as it was something people could follow with their hands as well as be white cane detectable. Jessica will look into what other cities are doing in these cases.

Sidewalk Corner Treatments: Chair explained that this is about the corner ramps of sidewalks that the City has slowly been replacing so they can install the cane detectable patterned concrete sections. Chair asked if there was a reason why only some corners are getting done and not the whole intersection. Staff responded that it is the policy to do them all at once, but it is a big city with many people doing the work and may not be entirely consistent. We discussed the purpose of the treatments and staff confirmed that they are currently experimenting on what is the best high contrast paint, what patterns are best, which combinations work best. Chair pointed out that out of all the different patterns, the straight vertical lines seem to be the best and the small cubes are the worst. Staff explained that they would be going around this year, reapplying the surface treatment and would note which patterns they felt were best with which topping. Susan pointed out that other cities use the button plates and she would like to assess why they use them and not patterned concrete. She was concerned about not being AODA compliant and we

explained that the patterned concrete was a vast improvement to the button plates as they are unsafe to numerous disabilities.

Intersection Accessibility(APS/Button Placement):

We briefly touched on the APS installation process and staff explained how they were slowly changing all intersections to the new standard as labour and money allowed. BEWG has not had input into priority of installation for a couple years but if we ever do, are welcome to suggest intersections. CNIB is currently providing guidance on this. We then discussed the intersection activation buttons and how they are often placed in sites that are inaccessible. Chair used the Balmoral and Main St. intersection as an example; the button is on the other side of a ditch at least two feet away from the sidewalk. Staff explained that they can't just replace the button in a better spot. The moment that City staff begin work on the intersection, they are required to update the entire intersection to comply with AODA IASR standards. This takes a large effort of redesign, labour and expense which explains why this is such a slow process.

Sewer Replacement Work(Insituform): Chair explained that he found himself stuck in the middle of an Insituform construction project on Main from Emerald to Tisdale and down Tisdale. It was only after he turned down Tisdale that he realized he

would be unable to get out and had to backtrack a block and a half. Chair then had to navigate through a police redirection and weave through obstructed traffic. There was no signs or any assistance installed by the contractor. Staff suggested that Ed is usually the one that receives all construction related complaints and then he redirects it to the right department. He responded that he doesn't want to be known as the gatekeeper of complaints, but it is usually the way it goes. Staff further suggested that if we have a complaint, we should send it to the department written on the side of the vehicles in question or if we are unsure, through the City complaints line. Any serious or egregious issues, for example, an open trench, should be reported not only to the City, but to the Labour board.

Sidewalk Repairs and Consistency of Expansion Joints: Chair explained to staff the problem with this issue. City policy is now to only cut concrete panels and not trowel grooves around cut lines and expansion joints in order to make sidewalks more hospitable to people using mobility devices. New installations are following this guideline and it is like driving over glass in comparison. The problem is that sections of sidewalk are being replaced by another department by many different contractors and we are finding a lot of inconsistency. Often new installations

have deeper grooves than before. In some places, sections are done right and others done wrong on the same stretch of street. Staff will review images of the problem and respond. Another related issue is how these contractors are not redirecting traffic correctly as was mentioned above. Both Mike and Peter responded that they are aware of this problem and are working to correct it. We will revisit.

Developer Installations: Chair found a button plate installed on the corner of Hughson and King William. Upon investigating, we learned that developers often agree to replace amenities like sidewalks in order to complete the project. Susan pointed out that when they do they use provincial standards instead of municipal guidelines and button plates are approved by the OPS and OBC. This is of particular concern as Metrolinx is a provincial agency that will be following the same standards unless we hold them to ours somehow. We will revisit this particular intersection after Susan does a review of button plates. We again reiterated why we are strongly against them.

Urban Braille: The discussion then moved into urban braille and we asked if there was any plan to use urban braille across the city in a more fulsome manner. Susan responded that they will have to review urban braille and button plates and come back another day.

Sidewalk Vaults: This was added in an effort to be complete. Chair gave a very brief overview of sidewalk vaults and some of the many issues with them before Jessica was asked if she had any updates since we discussed an effort underway at the City in Q2 2024. Jessica did not have an update. We will return to this issue again.

4. MMU Lane Discussion with Staff: We wanted to have a discussion about bike lanes as people with mobility devices are sometimes using them more often than bike riders and we have some concerns. As the network is becoming more complete, we can actually plan routes on bike lanes alone and that is valuable because sidewalks are sometimes impassable, but as mentioned above, always hostile to mobility devices and those that use them. Bike lanes have been an unexpected boon to persons with disabilities and we would like to make them more welcoming to us. We raised issues with maintenance and repairs. Staff responded that they are purchasing new vehicles this year designed to fit into the more narrow bike lanes to monitor their condition and keep them maintained above what bike tires require. Mike then raised an issue that according to Hamilton By-Law, the only vehicles allowed in the bike lanes are bikes and that is very strict on that point. Chair raised

the concern that mobility scooters and power chairs are allowed to operate on the street as bicycles under the highway traffic act, but according to the new information, we would be required to drive on the road next to the bike lane. This is an issue of concern. Chair further pointed out that the City has approved E-Scooters and Cargo E-Bikes in the City of Hamilton and require them to operate in the bike lanes. This would also violate the City's own By-Law. Chair will ask Hargun or Cara to raise this concern at the next road safety meeting and we will revisit. Chair also asked about the bus platforms installed on Victoria St. There are three different designs and staff confirmed that is to test the different designs for many reasons. We were welcomed to provide our input on what works best for use on bike lanes and to load on the bus.

5. Accessible Washroom Criteria List and Mapping Discussion with Staff: Anne came to speak with us about this project. They were of the impression the work was finished already, but it fell through the cracks when Tom passed and Mike Gladysz left the City. At last meeting we had come up with a criteria list so we could go to washrooms and assess their accessibility for map creation. Staff were of the impression we wanted to integrate recreation centre,

library and facilities washrooms into one map, but we are only looking into mapping facilities washrooms as it is the missing link. We need to know the physical layout of the washrooms with turning radii and other accessibility features so someone can plan their day out confident on where to use the washroom. We will send out the criteria and discuss next steps.

Anne also brought up upcoming projects at Bennetto for an accessible auditorium and at the HAAA grounds for a fieldhouse.

6. Other Business: There was no other business.

7. Adjournment