

MEMO

TO: Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
FROM: Councillor Joe Mihevc, Ward 21, St. Paul's West
RE: Sidewalk width and utility infrastructure
DATE: April 11, 2018

Background

Currently, Toronto Hydro is replacing and upgrading its infrastructure along Davenport Road between Bathurst Street to east of Dovercourt Road. A new pole reduces the sidewalk width to .889 metres (see attachment 1). While the old pole left the sidewalk width sub-standard, the new pole further reduces the sidewalk width.

The City of Toronto has a minimum standard of 1.5m to meet the Accessibility for Ontarian's with Disabilities Act (AODA), with a recommendation of 1.7m. The City is also striving to increase active mobility. The "Complete Streets" guidelines state specifically in "Chapter 4 – Pedestrian Design Principles":

1. **Coordination with Utilities.** The location, use, and maintenance of utilities needs to be coordinated early on in street projects. Ensure pedestrian clearway needs are met for universal accessibility. Seek ways to minimize conflicts among utilities, street furnishings, trees, and landscaping.

I suggest that in 2018 the City should have planned this hydro project to meet the "pedestrian clearway". There are other examples of city departments installing structures on sidewalks that do the same (see attachment 2: hydrant at St. Clair Ave. & Bathurst St.). Moving forward, the City should better coordinate "early on" with utility upgrade planning and regard the work as an opportunity to carry out street design changes that meet current pedestrian guidelines. The earlier the conversation, the easier it is to consider sidewalk widening and other right-of-way strategies.

Recommendation

I recommend that the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee:

1. Request the General Manager, Transportation Services review what allowances are presently granted to utility projects within the right-of-way with respect to sidewalk zones, and report on improving policies, programs and funding that integrates utility infrastructure in a way that meets the "Complete Streets" sidewalk design principles and also include in the report a requirement that during the project permit review process, the Ward Councillor be provided with a list structures not compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) prior to any permit being issued.



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