

Storefront Entry Ramps on the Public Right-of-way

Update to Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

June 13, 2022

Ryan Lanyon
Manager, Strategic Policy and Innovation
Transportation Services

Sophia Yue Li, PhD
Partnerships & Strategic Project Manager
KITE Research Institute | Toronto Rehab | UHN

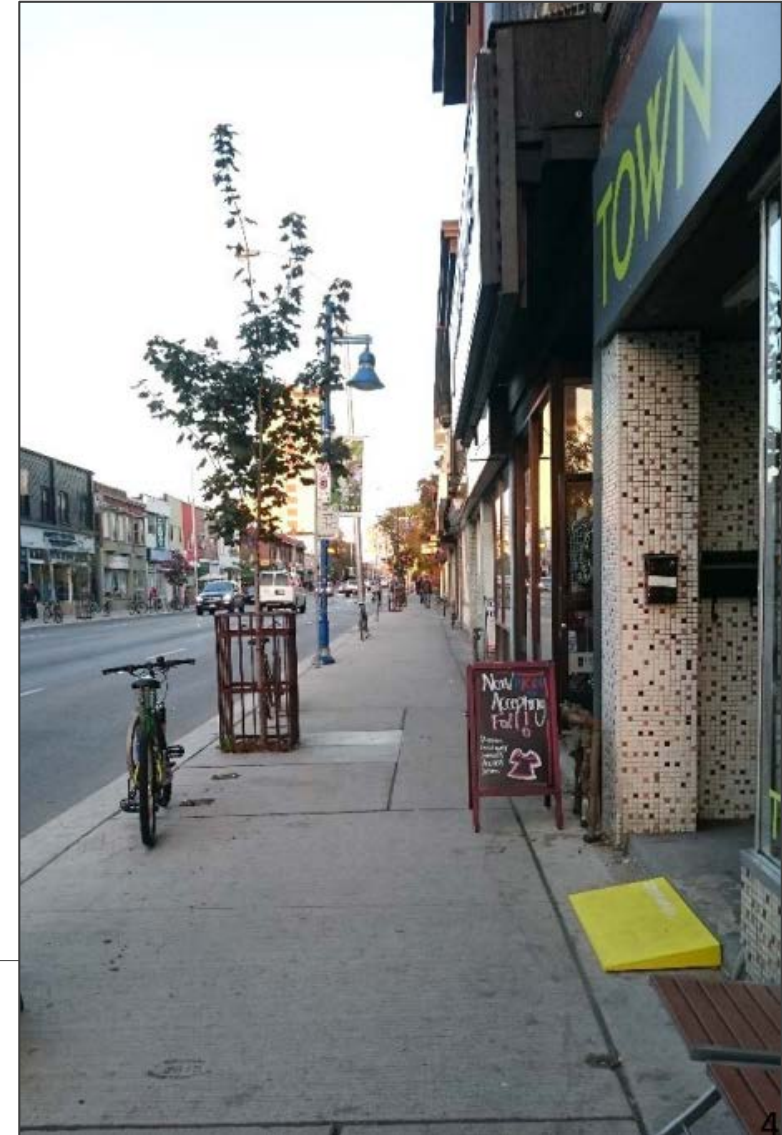
Outline

- Issue Background
- TAAC and Council Motions
- Update: “Closing the Gap”
- Update: “Private Ramps”

Issue Background – 1 of 3

- Many businesses in Toronto are located in buildings where the entrances are not completely level with the adjacent sidewalks.
- The full and proper solution should be on the building side of the gap.
- To provide access for customers with disabilities, some businesses have placed ramps on the sidewalk.
- Some ramps protrude into the pedestrian clearway and impact shorelining.
- For many of these buildings, there is no short- or medium-term plan to retrofit the entrances within private property.
- The City cannot force additional requirements for private properties over and above the Ontario Building Code.

Issue Background – 2 of 3



Issue Background – 3 of 3

- The current process to place a private ramp on public right-of-way is to submit an application to Transportation Services for an encroachment
- Staff would review the application and, if deemed appropriate, issue a permit for the ramp.
- However, most of these ramps have not gone through the permitting process.
- Enforcement is generally on a complaint-only basis.

Motion: Private Ramps on ROW

[EX28.23 - Private Ramps on Public ROW](#)

Adopted by City Council on Nov 7, 2017.

4. City Council direct the General Manager, Transportation Services to investigate the feasibility of establishing guidelines to permit private ramps on the public right-of-way, conduct stakeholder consultations, to report on the results to the appropriate Committee in the second quarter of 2018 and to provide an update to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee.

1. City Council request the City Manager to investigate the feasibility of the creation of a grant program for business owners to retrofit their entrances on private property to improve accessibility, to report on the results to the appropriate Committee by the end of June 2018 and to provide an update to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee.
2. City Council request the City Manager to explore potential funding sources for the proposed grant program from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, or other relevant ministries within the Province of Ontario.
3. City Council advocate to the Province of Ontario to support small businesses to retrofit their buildings to improve accessibility.

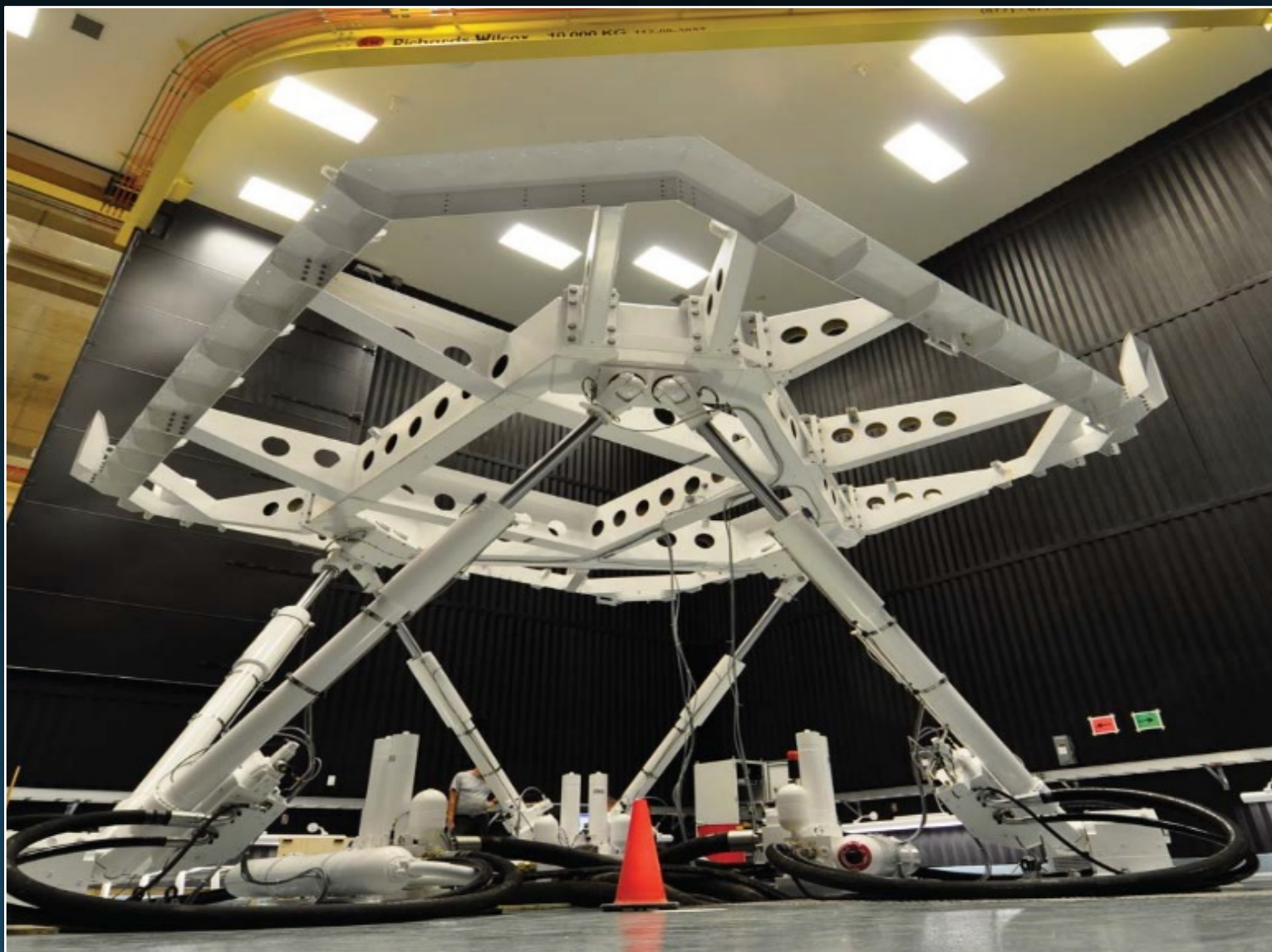
Feasibility of Establishing Criteria and Specifications for Interim Accessibility Ramps

Sophia Yue Li, PhD

Partnerships & Strategic Project Manager

The KITE Research Institute | Toronto Rehab | University Health Network

Challenging Environment Assessment Laboratories 1/2





Challenging Environment Assessment Laboratories 2/2

kite KNOWLEDGE
INNOVATION
TALENT
EVERYWHERE

kite KNOWLEDGE
INNOVATION
TALENT
EVERYWHERE

kite KNOWLEDGE
INNOVATION
TALENT
EVERYWHERE

kite KNOWLEDGE
INNOVATION
TALENT
EVERYWHERE

Feasibility of Establishing Guidelines

Framework:

- Jurisdictional scan of North American cities
 - Literature review
 - online review of the government/program administration websites
 - Survey of accessibility program administrators/coordinators
- Public stakeholder workshop
- Scientific Literature on transit access ramps

Jurisdictional Scan: 14 questions

- Use of interim ramps
- Issues with interim ramps
- Guidelines for implementation and design
- Monitoring and enforcement of guidelines
- Overall accessibility of establishment
- Complaints about accessibility and methods of addressing them

Jurisdictional Scan: Important Considerations

- The information collected are the opinions of individuals with expertise in accessibility, who work in different municipalities.
- The information collected are ***not*** official statements from different municipalities.

Jurisdictional Scan: Respondents

- Contacted experts from 25 cities across North America
- Individuals from 11 cities responded:
 - Ajax, ON
 - Boston, MA
 - Brampton, ON
 - Burlington, ON
 - Calgary, AB
 - New York City, NY
 - Oakville, ON
 - Pickering, ON
 - Seattle, WA
 - Vancouver, BC
 - Winnipeg, MB

Jurisdictional Scan: Results

Do you think it is feasible to have interim ramp guidelines in a dense, urban environment?

- Yes (2: Cities: Oakville, Pickering)
 - Details: Permit process. There should be guidelines, but not sure if it's feasible.
- Conditional (4: Cities: Ajax, Boston, Calgary, Seattle)
 - Details: Provincial or state initiative. Best practice guideline that is not a by-law
- No (5: Cities: Burlington, Brampton, New York City, Vancouver, Winnipeg)
 - Details: Would need to be very broad and provide lots of alternate options

Jurisdictional Scan: Summary

- Based on our survey of expert opinions from 11 cities, there are currently no existing by-laws or formal guidelines for the implementation of interim ramps.
- Opinions about the feasibility of developing such guidelines varied
- Limitations of survey:
 - Responses are based on opinions of 1-2 individuals per city
 - Differences among cities (e.g., number of older heritage buildings, etc.)

Public Stakeholder Workshop 1/2

- Group Discussion: Is it feasible to develop interim accessibility ramp guidelines?
- 29 representatives: disability organizations, City staff who worked in transportation, city planning, and human rights, and researchers with expertise in accessibility and the built environment.
- 4 key groups: Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee, Accessibility Advisory Panel for Transportation Services, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit.

Public Stakeholder Workshop 2/2

- Stakeholders provided feedback about the benefits of and challenges with interim accessibility ramps guidelines if they were to be established.
- There was no consensus among stakeholders on the feasibility of developing criteria and specifications for interim ramps. Stakeholders shared feedback on guidelines for the design, use, and placement of interim ramps.
- One area where there was a consensus was the importance of maintaining an adequate pedestrian clearway width.

Literature on Transit Access Ramps

- The effort required to ascend a ramp increased as the slope and length of the ramp increased; Participants expressed greater safety concerns and feeling less comfortable as the slope of the ramp increased.
- The studies showed that slopes in the range of 1:10 to 1:12 were suitable for the majority of participants in the various studies. However, snow or ice accumulation on ramps has an impact on the usability of the ramp, with one study recommending a 1:16 ramp slope to compensate for these conditions. The same study also noted that most participants reported using handrails as a strategy for winter ramp navigation.

Recommendation 1

- The development of placement guidelines for interim ramps are feasible and can be established. The City has multiple standards and guidelines that can inform the development of these placement guidelines including:
 - Complete Streets Guidelines,
 - Vibrant Streets Guidelines,
 - standard construction drawings,
 - Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines
 - Pedestrian Clearway Requirements section in the Application Guide that was developed as part of the updates to Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 742, Sidewalk Cafes, Parklets and Marketing Displays.

Recommendation 2

- The development of technical guidelines for interim ramps is not feasible. The recommendation is to utilize existing standards and guidelines, such as the Ontario Building Code (OBC), Design of Public Spaces (DOPS) Standard, and Canadian Standards Association (CSA) B651-18 (Accessible design for the built environment), to assess interim ramps on a case-by-case basis.

Questions

Ryan Lanyon

Manager, Strategic Policy and
Innovation

Transportation Services

City of Toronto

416-392-1799

Ryan.Lanyon@Toronto.ca

Sophia Yue Li, PhD

Partnerships & Strategic Project
Manager

The KITE Research Institute

Toronto Rehab

University Health Network

(437) 774-6551

Yue.Li@UHN.ca