



Ensuring Safe and Accessible Pedestrian Routes in Construction Zones

Transportation Services | Engineering & Construction Services | Toronto Water

October 16, 2023

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Response to TAAC motion 2023.DI1.5

At its meeting of June 1, 2023, TAAC requested that the General Manager, Transportation Services consider re-evaluating the definition of disability to be more in line with the social model of disability, and to report back to TAAC on any revisions. [Agenda Item History - 2023.DI1.5 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

In response to TAAC's request, Transportation Services consulted with the City's Accessibility Office and notes the following:

- The definition of disability used in Transportation Services' survey was taken from the City of Toronto's Data for Equity Strategy. While the phrase "**functional limitation**" is included in this definition, it is used in conjunction with "**in interactions with a barrier**" to suggest that disability is not a problem that exists solely within an individual, rather it arises when a person's limitation or impairment is met with a barrier (e.g., attitudinal barrier, physical barrier, communication barrier, etc).
- Transportation Services can not change this definition as it relates to reporting the findings of the Streets & Sidewalks survey, as this definition forms part of the survey methodology.
- Transportation Services can not unilaterally change the corporate definition of disability, but has requested that the City's Accessibility Unit consider whether and how this definition might be updated.
- This legal context notwithstanding, Transportation Services recognizes the validity of the social model of disability and the concerns raised about the survey language. This model will continue to inform our work moving forward.

Requested Q3-2023 Report Back

EX34.35 - Improving Accessibility in Construction Zones

The Executive Committee:

1. Directed the General Manager, Transportation Services, and the Chief Engineer and Executive Director, Engineering and Construction Services to **report to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee in the third quarter of 2023** with a **progress update** on preserving accessibility in construction zones, including the following:
 - a. a detailed **summary of consultation activities undertaken and feedback received** from individuals and organizations in the accessibility community regarding barriers posed by construction zones on city sidewalks;
 - b. a detailed summary of **outreach and education activities undertaken**, and planned for later in 2023, **with the construction industry** regarding the preservation of accessibility in construction zones;
 - c. the results of the **review of the City's Standards for Designing and Constructing City Infrastructure**, specifically the TS1.00 Construction Specifications for Maintenance of Traffic; and
 - d. the **status of implementing the proposed improvements** as outlined in the presentation from City Staff to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee on June 13, 2022.

A Joint Effort is Required

City of Toronto Divisions

- Transportation Services
- Engineering & Construction Services
- Toronto Water
- 311

External Parties

- Utility Companies
- Consultants
- Partner Agencies (TTC, Metrolinx)
- Industry Associations
- Developers
- Constructors

A New Approach

Setting clear expectations for what will, and will not be acceptable for projects in Toronto and adhering to the pedestrian and cycling requirements in OTM Book 7, and the Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines.



Creating a Culture Change

- Involving all City staff and contractors in projects in the Right-of-Way, to ensure that routes for pedestrians are consistently safe and accessible, with clear directional signage:
- Everyone has a role to play to ensure consistent outcomes:
 - Project Managers / Contract Administrators
 - Work Zone Coordinators
 - Transportation Standards Officers
 - Construction Project Inspectors
 - Constructors (site managers and site supervisors) – for public sector, private development and utilities
 - Paid Duty Officers
 - 311 Staff (complaints intake)

Action Plan 2023-2024

	2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023 WE ARE HERE	Q4 2023	2024
Public/Pedestrian & Cyclist Stakeholder Engagement	Accessibility Needs Assessment		Engagement with stakeholder advisory groups for pedestrians with disabilities; cycling community.	Investigate options to enhance communications to public Town Hall Meeting re: accessibility and cycling in work zones		Enhanced communications about construction disruption (proactive and responsive via 311)
New Specifications & Tactics	Construction Hub Program Expansion Site Audits (9 ECS Projects) Demonstrated modular ramps	Inter-Divisional Agreement on Traffic Plan Expectations for Accessibility New construction specification for pedestrian accessibility and cyclists	Update special contract specifications for Sewer Rehab Program (TW)	Interdivisional process mapping of roles & responsibilities in work zone management		Update City's base construction management specification to embed pedestrian priority
Internal Training & Culture Change	Internal Training to 250+ staff and consultants		Internal training adapted for e-learning (now mandatory)	Complete internal roll-out of mandatory e-learning		New e-learning focused on cyclists
		Reiterate accessibility messaging in staff meetings, pre-construction meetings, site meetings, traffic control plan approval				
Engaging the Construction Industry	Outreach to construction industry stakeholders		Training to Utility Contractors Build accessibility into Contractor Performance Evaluations		Further engagement and training with construction industry stakeholders Create collection of case examples/optimal implementation for Toronto-specific street layouts	

Needs Assessment – Sidewalks & Streets

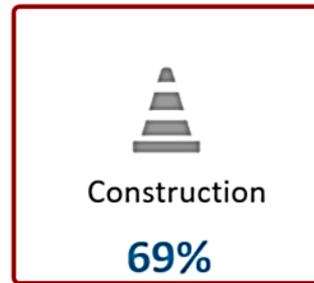
Detailed results were presented to TAAC June 12, 2023 [Agenda Item History - 2023.DI1.5 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

Objective:

- Obtain both qualitative and quantitative input from Torontonians representing a range of types of disabilities, regarding the barriers they encounter on the City's sidewalks and streets.
- Explored six categories of barriers, of which construction zones was one.

Methods:

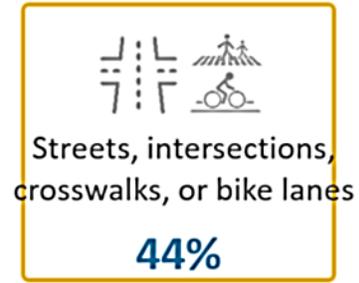
- Organizational interviews (13 organizations, 25 people)
- Organizational survey (35 responses)
- Public Opinion Survey (1085 responses)



↑ Mental-health related disability (72%)
↓ Scarborough (60%)



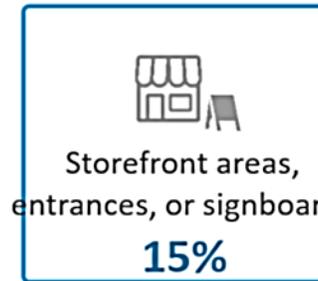
↑ Mental-health related disability (50%)
↓ Younger – aged 18-34 (39%)



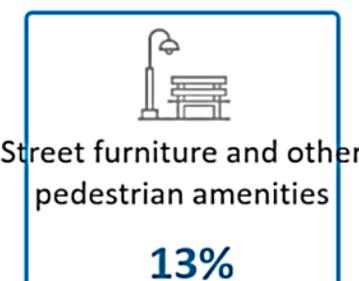
↑ Multiple disabilities (47%)



↑ Women (45%)



↑ Transit on sidewalks 'very frequently' (23%)
↑ Multiple disabilities (18%)



↑ Transit on sidewalks 'very frequently' (23%)
↑ Younger (aged 18-34) (22%)
↑ Multiple disabilities (16%)

The image shows results from the representative public survey, where 69% of respondents placed construction zones among their top 3 (of 6) areas of concern regarding accessibility on the City's sidewalks and streets. Seasonal maintenance was the second most frequently selected at 48%.

Stakeholder Advisory Workshops

Two Stakeholder Advisory Groups, drawn from organizations and advocacy groups, were engaged in developing the workshops for two types of users

- Pedestrians facing accessibility barriers
- Cyclists

Four broader stakeholder workshops held (two with each of the user groups)

- Discussion themes included: Communication, Safe Path of Travel, Training Staff, and Enforcement

Key Recommendations:

- Centralized communication platform with clear information on closures and disruptions
- Identification and mitigation of construction related barriers
- Comprehensive training on AODA standards
- Making AODA standards mandatory for all types of construction sites

New Policies, Standards and Specifications

- **Pedestrian Accessibility in Construction Zones Checklist (new)**
 - A clear list of expectations now used in staff training and job aids, site audits, and development of contracts and specifications
 - Agreed on through inter-divisional process for consistent application across all project types
- **Special specification on Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety and Accessibility Considerations (GN134SS) (new)**
 - Released April 2023 for inclusion on Request for Tender on construction projects
 - Reinforces that safety of pedestrians and cyclists, especially those with disabilities, shall be addressed in construction zones
 - Specifies ramp locations and widths, maximum slopes, acceptable materials

Updated Policies, Standards and Specifications

- **Contractor Performance Evaluation (CPE) & Professional Services Performance Evaluation (PSPE) (updated)**
 - Tools for City staff in evaluating Suppliers performing work on City projects. Poor results can lead to a Supplier being temporarily suspended from bidding on future work
 - CPE updated in May 2023. Edits include explicitly including “pedestrians and those with disabilities” in reference to the public and stakeholders
 - Updates to PSPE updates are underway
- **Comprehensive update of Construction Specification for Maintenance of Traffic TS1.00 (planned release in fall 2024)**
 - Construction Specification for Maintenance of Traffic TS1.00
 - Review and revision of specification TS1.00 started fall 2023
 - Will incorporate the content of GN134SS, construction zone checklist and reinforce prioritization order described earlier in this presentation

Industry-Focused Education & Outreach

Discussion with industry groups are in early stages, via presentations at standing meetings of established committees and industry associations active in constructing in the right-of-way, and content in annual training for utility contractors.

Further outreach is planned for Fall 2023-2024 including:

- Webinar presentations to outside agencies that perform work in the City roads, such as Utility companies, Developers, City Contractors, and public agencies that perform work within the road (e.g. TTC, Metrolinx).
- Meetings with various Construction Associations to educate and promote the City's approach to, and requirements for, accessibility.
- Provide Lunch & Learn seminars to reinforce staff comprehension of AODA requirements.
- Program of detailed articles, interviews and briefs in industry publications and local media.

Next Steps

- Continued education of staff in all relevant roles across three key divisions
- New communications to construction industry regarding expectations; via publications, direct meetings, webinars, etc.
- Reinforcement of expectations to industry via permit and contract language
- Enhanced enforcement with tools available to Project Managers, Site Inspectors, Work Zone Coordinators, Transportation Standards Officers
- Development of best practices guide for staff and constructor reference
- Iterative process to evaluate outcomes, review efficacy of measures, drive continuous improvement
- Communications to the public about what they should expect and how to flag identified barriers for action by the City

Thank you

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Supporting Information

Acceptable Sample Installations



University Ave
Oct 2022



College & Augusta (Kensington Market)
Dec 2022
Pilot installation

Acceptable Sample Installations



College at Queen's Park
Spring 2023

Key Actions Completed & In Progress From Feb 2022 to September 2023

Legend
TS Transportation Services
ECS Engineering & Construction Services
TW Toronto Water

Table 1: Key Actions Completed & In Progress From Feb 2022 to September 2023 by Division Name

TS	Expansion of Construction Hubs program from one hub to six hubs.
TS	Public Survey of People with Disabilities & Community Focus Groups
ECS	Developed Pedestrian-Focused Traffic Control training module and delivered to 250+
TS & ECS	Preliminary outreach & training to industry associations & utility companies
ECS	Summer 2022: Site audits for 9 ECS projects; As of May 2023: 639 under the Clean City program
TS, ECS & TW	Checklist of accessibility-focused expectations in work zone traffic control
TW	Customize site audit checklist to project specific requirements (e.g. watermain structural relining)
ECS, TS & TW	Converted Training to on-line modules for roll-out to all staff engaged in construction
TS, ECS & TW	Oct 2022: Special construction contract specification on accessibility for pedestrians
TW	Review of special contract specifications applied to Sewer Rehab Program; ensuring traffic control plans adhere to AODA
TS, ECS & TW	Incorporating messaging into pre-construction meetings and regular site meetings
TS, ECS & TW	Incorporate accessibility of work zones into Contractor Performance Evaluations
TW	Special contract specifications applied to traffic control for Sewer Rehab Program
ECS	Demonstrated modular pedestrian ramps and barricades at College & Augusta
TS, ECS & TW	Documenting construction management process/roles for consultation initiative

Key Actions Planned for Oct 2023 and Beyond

Table 2: Key Actions Planned for Oct 2023 and Beyond by Division Name

TS	Further expansion of Construction Hubs program
TS	Fall 2023: Town Hall on Pedestrian Accessibility and Cycling Accommodation in Construction Zones
TS, ECS & TW	Consult with utilities & private developers to create measures for site auditing and compliance reporting
TS	Outreach & collaboration with industry and trade associations to enhance understanding of requirements
TS, ECS & TW	Develop and deliver training informed by lived experience of people with disabilities
TS	Establish dedicated enforcement staff with deeper knowledge & training on accessibility
TS	Review and update the Construction Activities Right-of-Way Manual and Municipal Consent Requirements
TS & ECS	Undertake detailed review and update of TS1.00 with input from people with disabilities
TS, ECS & TW	Review City's Professional Services Performance Evaluation; educate Project Managers on use
TS, ECS & TW	Broad internal Divisional consultation to enhance understanding and consistency of collaboration to achieve accessibility in construction zones
TS	Develop guide of "made in Toronto" scenarios, specifications and case studies
TS, ECS & TW	Iteratively review compliance quality and consistently and continue education and enforcement to achieve fully accessible outcomes

Legend

TS
Transportation Services

ECS
Engineering &
Construction Services

TW
Toronto Water

Decision History - Details

July 2022

GM Transportation Services, Chief Engineer, GM Toronto Water submit report to Executive Committee addressing the request, and presenting an **Action Plan for improvement.**

[Agenda Item History - 2022.EX34.35 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

June 2022

General Manager Transportation Services and Chief Engineer present to Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

[Agenda Item History - 2022.DI21.4 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

March 2022

Executive Committee requests report on the tools and strategies the City currently uses to ensure accessibility in the public realm surrounding private development as well as capital City Projects

[Agenda Item History - 2022.EX31.17 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

February 2022

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee raises concerns and requests report re: accessibility in construction zones

[Agenda Item History - 2022.DI19.6 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

April 2018

Toronto Accessibility Advisory **Committee raises concerns and requests report re: collection of barriers to accessibility, with particular mention of construction zones**

[Agenda Item History - 2018.DI19.6 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

General Construction Management Actions

Additional attention is being given to construction zone management for the purpose of safety for all road users, including pedestrians.

- **Traffic Management**

- Additional staff capacity, restructuring and process improvement measures for the Work Zone Coordination Unit
- Hiring of 11 additional Traffic Agents to direct traffic at critical intersections
- Dedicated staffing for temporary signal timing implementation to address localized congestion
- Development of new system for Road Disruption Activity Reporting, including booking of work locations and greater required detail on impact to sidewalks and bicycle lanes

- **Permits and Enforcement**

- Hiring of 11 additional Transportation Standards Officers for enforcement activity
- Development of new Permitting Software to better manage and track permits and communicate expectations