



Decision Letter

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting No. 9

Meeting Date Thursday, October 17, 2024

Start Time 9:30 AM

Location Committee Room 2, City Hall/Video Conference

Contact Jennifer Lin, Committee Administrator

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Chair Councillor Jamaal Myers

DI9.2	ACTION	Amended		Ward: All
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Accessibility Protection Zones Around Construction Projects

Committee Decision

The Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee recommends that the Infrastructure and Environment Committee:

1. Request the Traffic Management and Policy staff in Transportation Services to present to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee at its December 11, 2024 meeting, on a plan to make construction sites accessible for people with disabilities.

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Manager, Works and Coordination, Traffic Mitigation, Transportation Services, gave an overview on the Accessibility Protection Zones Around Construction Projects.

Origin

(August 20, 2024) Letter from Councillor Jamaal Myers

Summary

At its meeting on October 17, 2024, the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee considered Item [DI9.2](#) and made recommendations to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee.

Summary from the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee:

Please see below the letter that I am submitting to Toronto Accessibility Access Committee on behalf of Corina McCoy:

“My name is Corina McCoy and I have a newly acquired disability and have quickly become aware that construction projects limit my access to the city as well as creating unsafe situations for me as I move throughout it. In trying to figure out what to do to change this situation I came across the Toronto Accessibility Access Committee (TAAC). Therefore, I am writing to you to

ask that you request City Staff to create an Accessibility Access Protection Zone Policy. Some further details are below.

I have had the chance to watch recordings of some of your meetings and see that TAAC has had several presentations about accessibility in construction zones from City Staffers, however I have noticed the following.

1. There are great Ideas for improved access, but implementation is based on “culture change” and “education of stakeholders”. In other words, hope is a strategy that there will be improvements.
2. There are no timeframes, goals, or metrics, KPIs, OKRs or stated desired outcomes.
3. There are no paths to change, processes, guidelines, or implementation plans. And one checklist tool.
4. The change for disability access in Construction Projects is tied to bike access and able bodied pedestrians access. What they have not applied is the notion that “clearing a path for special needs clears the path for everyone .”
5. There is nothing for non-City projects that are Commercial or Residential in nature.

Additionally, not seeing much substance in the way of policy and becoming frustrated as I wheeled through an obstructed sidewalk on a much-publicised City of Toronto project I looked to my right and saw some trees in a Tree Protection Zone which is a well known City of Toronto construction related policy that has guidelines, a reporting and investigation method and a penalty if broken. It also applies to government commercial and residential construction projects. That's when it hit me, we should have Accessibility Access Protection Zones in Construction Sites as well. Similar to the trees an Accessibility Access Protection Zone Policy would be real policy with reporting procedures, investigation processes and fines for bad actors. As next steps I contacted the Chair of this Committee's Office and have been communicating with the Director of Policy and Planning and he gave me some good news on June 3rd.

The Councillor and/or his team has started to investigate the solution I have proposed to create a new policy for Accessibility Protection Zone. – This will require work from City Council; the process will need to start with an exploratory request.

I have asked the Director of Policy if I can be part of the solution and he suggested sending him some notes, but I thought it might be good to also speak with TAAC to see if there's interest in:

1. Putting the request forward to explore creating an Accessibility Access Protection Zone Policy.
2. Providing suggestions on what should be included in the policy. Some of the areas I was thinking of include:
 - Policy areas: A. unplanned blockages on pathways/sidewalks/road crossings
 - B. planned blockages for sidewalks/pathways/road crossings, sidewalk access for size/terrain, road closures etc....

- Project Timings to be considered; short term (less than 7 days), medium term (more than 7 days and less than 3 months) and long term (more than 3 months) construction projects.
- Types of projects to be considered encompassing residential, commercial and government builds with the same principles but different magnitudes and specifics to each.
- Recommendations and regulations for proper implementations, for example proper temporary ramps versus self made ramps by wood or asphalt, or signage in different media to allow for visual and audio directions. (This is where some of the existing city work can be applied.)
- Penalties and fines for non-compliance with different variables for residential versus commercial or government.
- Reporting mechanisms for when an issue is encountered. There has been some work on this from the presentations I reviewed but not enough or the same as there is for the trees and that ties back into penalties and fines or suspension from contracts the way trees are protected.”

Background Information

(August 20, 2024) Letter from Councillor Jamaal Myers on Accessibility Protection Zones Around Construction Projects
(<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/di/bgrd/backgroundfile-248497.pdf>)

Speakers

Corina McCoy