

DAVENPORT ROAD

Accessibility-Focused Site Visits

November 2023

**STREETS ARE VITAL
PLACES IN TORONTO.**

**HOW OUR STREETS ARE
DESIGNED SHOULD
IMPROVE SAFETY AND
ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL.**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Davenport Road Accessibility-Focused Site Visit represents a collaborative effort from City staff and members of the accessibility community. Transportation Services is thankful for the insights and time of all participants.

The tour was led by the Transportation Services Cycling and Pedestrian Projects unit, Becky Katz, Kanchan Maharaj, Igor Samardzic, Sonya De Vellis, and other Transportation Services staff.

Introduction, Vision, and Goals

In November 2023, the City of Toronto's Transportation Services Division conducted a site visit focused on recent upgrades to Davenport Road between Bay Street and Avenue Road. This visit, referred to throughout the report as the Davenport Site Visit, was part of an ongoing effort to gather accessibility-focused feedback on new complete street infrastructure.

The goal of the Davenport Site Visit was to understand the effectiveness of current designs, particularly for those with mobility challenges, and to use this insight for future urban planning and design standards.

This report provides a summary of feedback received from participants during and following the Davenport Site Visit, which is organized by various locations along Davenport.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Davenport Road, stretching between Bay Street and Avenue Road, is an arterial road featuring four lanes of motor vehicle traffic. There is a cycle track, and sidewalks present on both sides of the road. This area is classified by the City as a mix of Apartment Neighbourhood and Mixed Use Areas. Additionally, there are bus routes operating along Davenport Road. In 2021 and 2022, with further work scheduled for 2024, improvements were made to Davenport Road. The changes included upgrading the previous bike lanes to cycle tracks from Bedford Road to Bay Street. In addition, new road markings, pre-cast concrete curbs and bollards, new signage, accessible tactile plates, bus platform and traffic signals were installed.

SITE VISIT PLANNING

In Summer 2023, Transportation Services began recruiting study participants and developed a detailed project plan. The site plans for the site are available in Appendix A. This plan outlined the logistics and objectives of the site visits. Participants were selected and two distinct site visits were organized. During this visit staff members were assigned to individual participants to assist in navigating the sites, while also conducting thorough note-taking and photography. After each visit, participants congregated to discuss their feedback, key observations, and identify areas for further investigation. Following the visits, City staff compiled and summarized the feedback, which was then reviewed by the participants for accuracy and completeness.

SITE VISIT

Five individuals participated in the visit, starting at Bay Street and Cumberland Street. They moved north to Davenport Road, examining sidewalk curb cuts and intersection designs. The group assessed the intersection at Davenport Road and Bay Street, followed by an exploration westward towards McAlpine Street, focusing on sight lines and road curvature. The visit also included an assessment of intersection designs and curb cuts on Belmont Street, and a review of ZICLA platforms on both the north and south sides of Davenport Road.

OVERARCHING FEEDBACK

Site Visit Feedback

Participants shared a wide range of detailed feedback, including how to best lead a site visit to review accessibility.

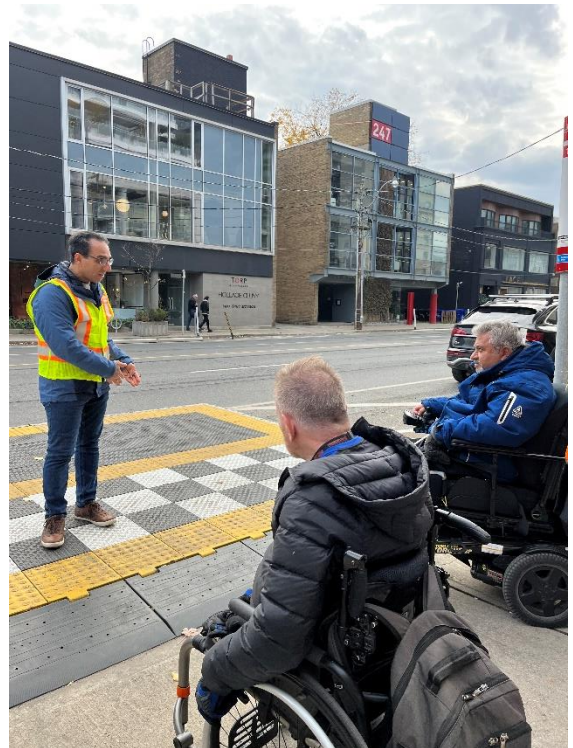
Participants highlighted the need for receiving pre-information about the site visits. The pre-information should include details about accessing the site by transit, convenient pick-up/drop-off points, washroom and rest stop locations, and the level of one-on-one staff support that would be required for each participant.

The post-site visit debrief session was also well received, as it provided a chance for participants to have a focused discussion without outdoor distractions.

Design Feedback

The design feedback from the Davenport Site Visit highlighted several key areas for improvement.

Participants noted the need for smoother slopes and raised questions about pedestrian bikeway interactions. Issues such as the overpowering traffic noise affecting Accessible Pedestrian Signal button locator sounds, the wear of tactile walking surface indicators, and the challenges posed by narrow sidewalks and poorly lit areas were emphasized. Additionally, participants stressed the importance of effective tactile surfaces in various weather conditions and the proper placement of TTC poles for better orientation and safety.



2.1

Intersection: Bay Street and Davenport Road & Avenue Road and Davenport Road

- **Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) Button Locator Sound:** Participants shared that traffic noise overpowered the APS locator sounds, which could lead to disorientation for blind pedestrians.
- **Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs):** Some participants noted that the Tactile Walking Surface Indicators (TWSIs) were worn out and thus not detectable.
- **Tactile Surface Awareness:** Emphasis was placed on contrasting colors and textures of tactile surfaces being identifiable in various weather conditions, aiding cane users.
- **Construction and Accessibility:** Participants highlighted the issue of construction sites blocking pathways, emphasizing the need for accessible detour planning.
- **Impact of Weather on Accessibility:** Reports of slippery surfaces in rainy or snowy conditions underscored the need for anti-slip materials.
- **Daytime Visibility and Safety:** Concerns were raised about poorly lit areas affecting pedestrian safety, highlighting the need for better lighting and reflective materials.
- **Narrow Sidewalks and Accessibility Challenges:** Feedback was given about narrow sidewalks in busy areas, noting that they pose challenges for those using mobility aids.

DAVENPORT ROAD AND BAY STREET INTERSECTION



2.2

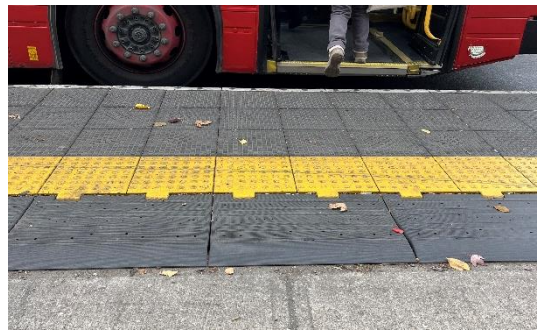
Bus Platform: Avenue Road and Davenport Road

- **Tactile Surfaces and Winter Conditions:** Concerns were raised about the effectiveness of tactile surfaces during snow, impacting their usability by individuals who are blind, especially those using canes or guide dogs. The difficulty in detecting tactile strips under snow was a major concern.
- **Platform and Ramp Design:** Feedback highlighted issues with the design of platforms and ramps, particularly the severity of the slope when moving from the sidewalk to the platform. This design element posed challenges for individuals with limited mobility and could potentially cause them to lose balance or be propelled forward.
- **Navigational Aids for People who are Blind:** The importance of tactile colour contrast, such as the transition from black to yellow surfaces, was discussed. The presence of yellow markings was seen as beneficial for people with cognitive issues, helping them frame the area differently and identify crossing points. However, there was uncertainty about how individuals who are blind would detect these changes, especially when unexpected or obscured.
- **TTC Pole Placement:** Proper placement and consistency of TTC poles and their alignment with ramps were critical for orientation and safety. It was noted that people who are blind rely on locating the TTC pole and aligning with it when waiting, so that the bus driver, trained to align their doors with the pole, will stop and open the bus here, making it easier for a person with a disability to enter the bus.
- **Bus Interaction and Safety:** Concerns were raised about the length of bus ramps and their proximity to bike lanes when deployed, especially when the bus platform is narrow.

2.2

Bus Platform: Avenue Road and Davenport Road Continued

DAVENPORT ROAD AND AVENUE ROAD ZICLA PLATFORM



DAVENPORT ROAD AND AVENUE ROAD ZICLA PLATFORM



3.0

Conclusion

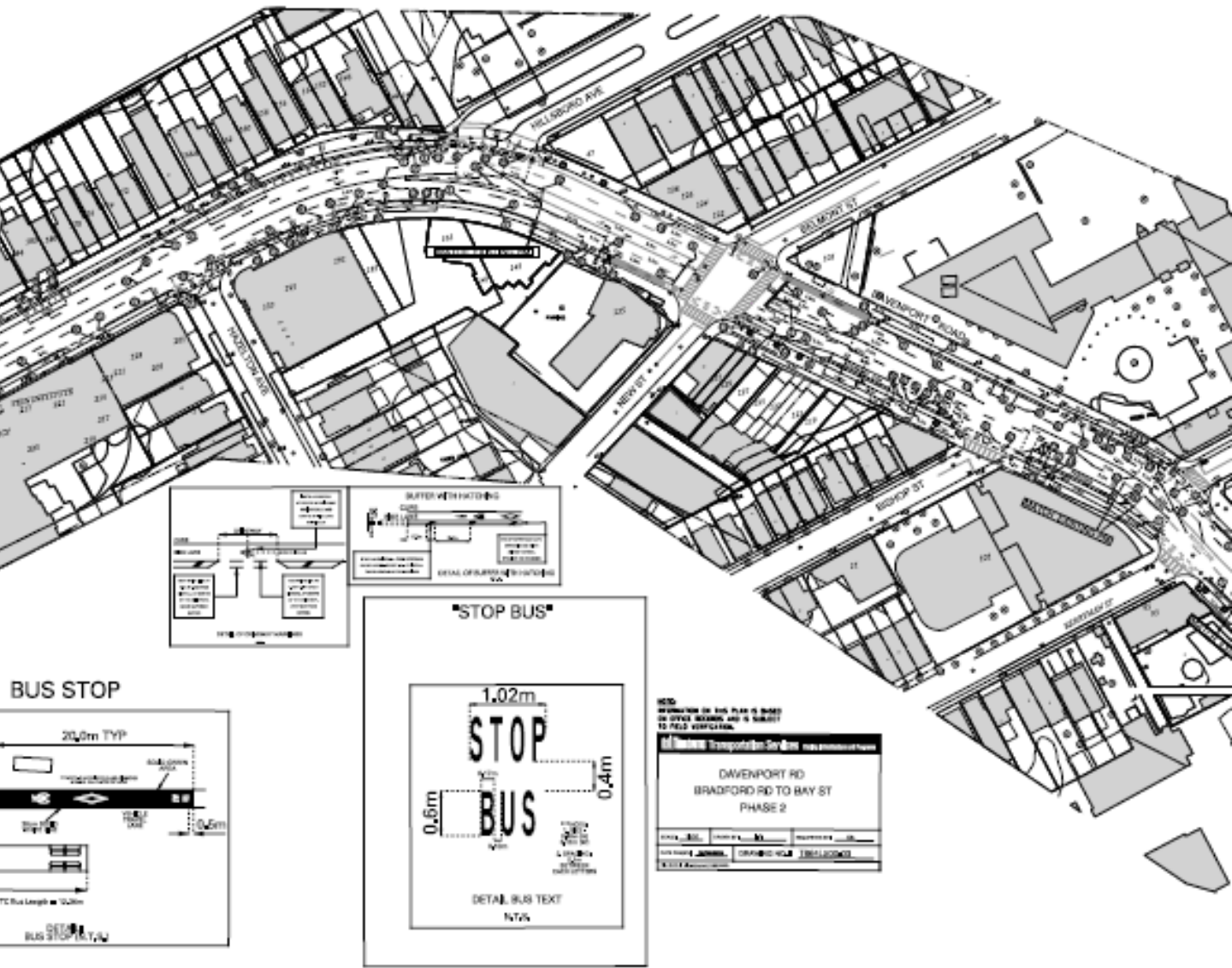
SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK:

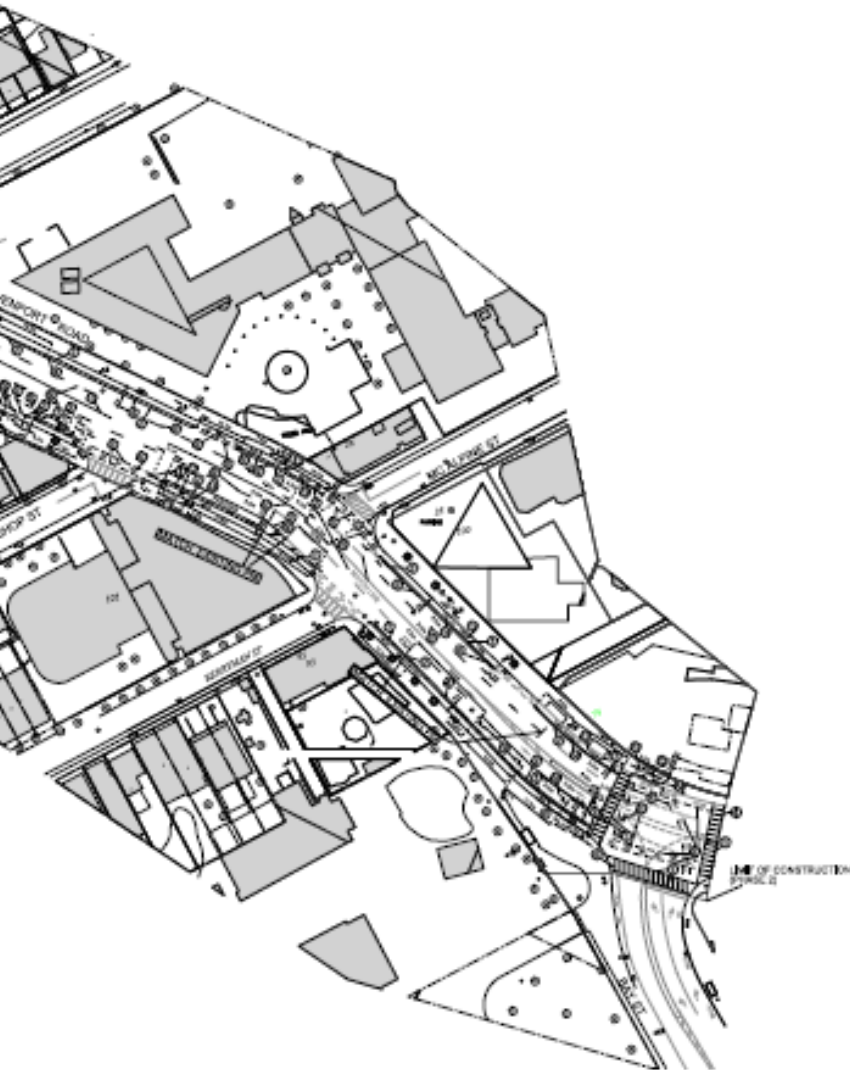
The Davenport Site Visit gathered extensive feedback on the accessibility and safety of new street infrastructure. Participants appreciated the ZICLA platforms but identified the need for smoother slopes and raised concerns about the interaction between pedestrian waiting areas and bike lanes. Traffic noise was found to overpower the Accessible Pedestrian Signal button locator sounds, making it difficult for blind pedestrians, while worn tactile walking surface indicators were noted as an issue. The feedback also highlighted challenges such as slippery surfaces in adverse weather, narrow sidewalks, and inadequate lighting. Participants emphasized the importance of contrasting colours and textures on tactile surfaces and the correct placement of TTC poles for better navigation and safety.

NEXT STEPS:

Transportation Services staff will undertake several actions based on the feedback from the Davenport Site Visit:

- **Feedback for ZICLA:** The feedback on the ZICLA platforms highlighted concerns about the steepness of the slopes when traveling from the sidewalk to the platform. Suggestions for improvements in wayfinding and color contrast were also provided. This feedback was shared with ZICLA, who subsequently implemented changes. The new design features a shallower, more accessible slope, making it easier for people using wheelchairs to mount the platforms.
- **Internal Review and Sharing:** Results from the site visit will be shared internally to refine and improve design standards for new street infrastructure projects.
- **Ongoing Engagement and Feedback Collection:** Staff will continue to engage with the disability community through further consultations and site visits. This ongoing dialogue is critical in continually assessing and upgrading the urban infrastructure to be inclusive and accessible for all.





#	PAVEMENT MARKING TYPE	QUANTITY
1	15cm SOLID WHITE LINE	1886.2m
2	20cm SOLID WHITE LINE	1186.2m
3	50cm SOLID WHITE LINE	30.0m
4	80cm SOLID WHITE LINE	254.0m
5	15cm WHITE LINE AT 1.5m x 1.5m CYCLE	111.0m
6	20cm WHITE LINE AT 1.5m x 1.5m CYCLE	20.0m
7	15cm WHITE LINE AT 1.5m x 1.5m CYCLE	0
8	15cm WHITE LINE AT 3.0m x 3.0m CYCLE	617.0m
9	15cm WHITE LINE AT 3.0m x 3.0m CYCLE	87.0m
10	15cm SOLID YELLOW LINE *	6.0m
11	RECYCLE SYMBOL	15
12	RECYCLE LANE DIAMOND	17
13	RECYCLE THRU ARROW	19
14	LEFT TURN ARROW	0
15	RIGHT TURN ARROW	5
16	LEFT THRU ARROW	0
17	THRU ARROW	0
18	BUS STOP TEXT	2
19	CHEVRON	18
20	SOLID GREEN AREA	22.0 m ²

APPLICATION OF PREFORMED THERMOPLASTIC	QUANTITY
RECYCLE LANE SYMBOL AND ARROW INTERCONNECTED GREEN	3
SOLID GREEN AREA PREFORMED THERMOPLASTIC	10.0m ²

* FOR ITEM #11 REFER TO PHASE 1 INSTALLATION PLAN BETWEEN BAY ST AND YONGE ST

PLEASE REFER TO NOTE 3.

NOTES

1. INFORMATION ON THIS PLAN IS BASED ON OFFICE RECORDS AND IS SUBJECT TO FIELD VERIFICATION.
2. ALL OPENINGS ARE APPROPRIATE.
3. PAVEMENT MARKING QUANTITIES SHOWN IN MATRIX REFER TO TOTAL QUANTITY OF MATERIAL REQUIRED FOR INSTALLATION, NOT THE LINEAR MEASUREMENT OF MARKING OF ALL PAVEMENT MARKING ALONG DAVENPORT ROAD.
4. PAVEMENT MARKING SHOWN ON THE DRAWING MAY NOT REFLECT THE SCOPE OF THE CONTRACT.

November 2023



For advice, insights and comments please contact
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