

# **COLLEGE STREET BRUNSWICK AVENUE AND CROFT STREET**

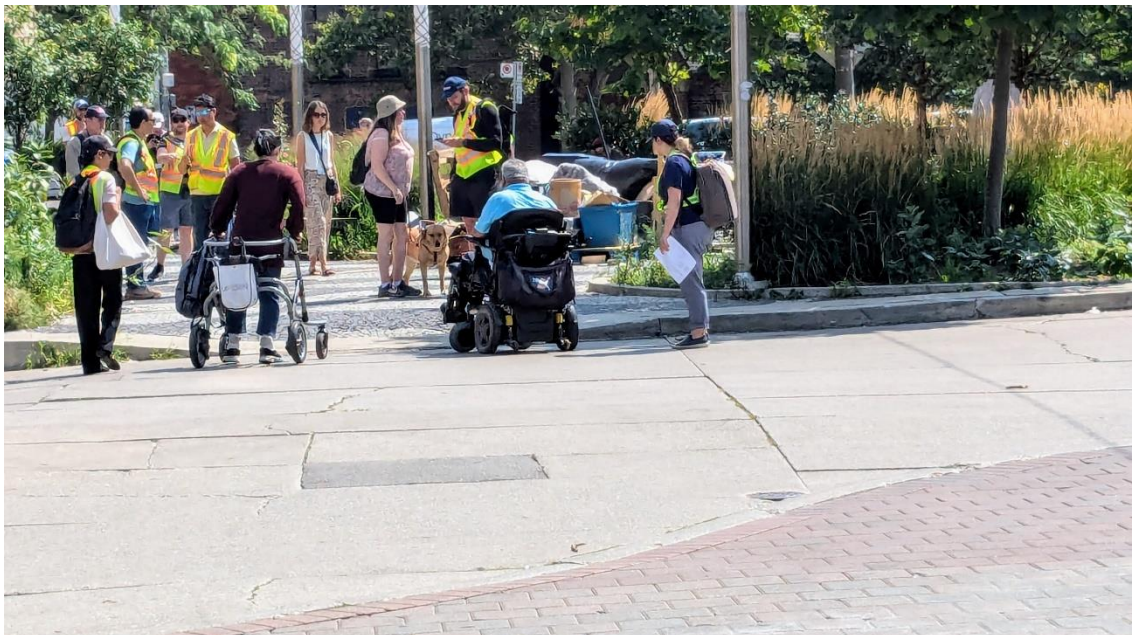
## **Accessibility-Focused Site Visits**

August 2024



**STREETS ARE VITAL  
PLACES IN TORONTO.**

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



# CONTENTS

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## **1.0 Introduction, Vision and Goals**

## **2.0 Accessibility Features and Associated Feedback**

2.1 DRIVEWAY: DOCTORS PARKETTE

2.2 RAISED CROSSING: BRUNSWICK AVENUE AND COLLEGE STREET

2.3 INTEGRATED PLATFORM: COLLEGE STREET AND BORDEN STREET

2.4 BORDEN-BELLEVUE CROSSING (APS)

## **3.0 Additional Comments**

## **4.0 Conclusion**

## **5.0 Appendix A: Site Plan**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The College Street 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, AJ Bimm and other Transportation Services staff.

## OVERARCHING FEEDBACK

### Site Visit Feedback

A virtual debrief session was conducted one day after the College Street Site Visit among the participants and Transportation Services staff to discuss final input. Participants shared a wide range of detailed feedback.

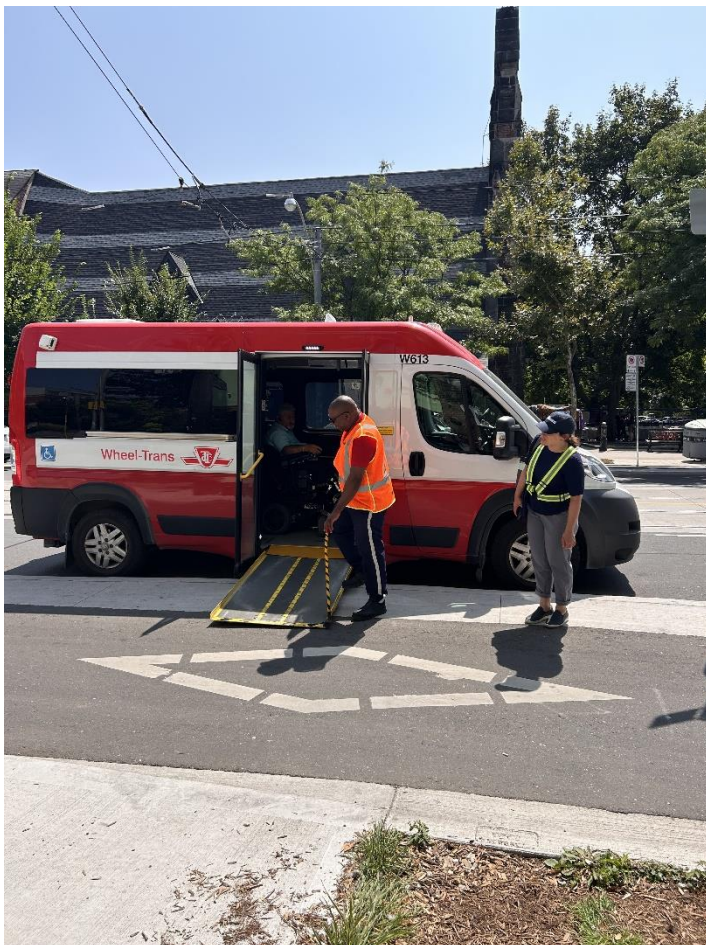
The post-site visit debrief session was also well received, as it provided a chance for participants to have a focused discussion without outdoor distractions.

### Design Feedback

The feedback from the College Street Site Visit underscored the crucial need for accessible and safe infrastructure.

Participants emphasized the need for clearer auditory and tactile cues to aid blind pedestrians in navigating safely.

Safety concerns regarding people cycling behavior highlighted the need for education, awareness campaigns, and to ensure people cycling yield to individuals using modular and accessible loading platforms.



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## Introduction, Vision, and Goals

In August 2024, the City of Toronto's Transportation Services Division conducted a site visit focused on recent upgrades to College Street between Brunswick Avenue and Croft Street. This visit, referred to throughout the report as the College Street Site Visit, was part of an ongoing effort to gather accessibility-focused feedback on new complete street infrastructure.

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

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

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The site visit focused on College Street, between Brunswick Avenue and Croft Street, a major arterial road with two lanes of motor vehicle traffic in each direction and uni-directional cycle tracks on both sides. Sidewalks run along both sides of the street, and the area is classified by the city as a Mixed-Use Area and Neighbourhoods.

In September 2022, the City's contractor replaced aging streetcar tracks between Bathurst Street and Bay Street. As a result, existing bike lanes were upgraded to separated cycle tracks on College Street, integrated cycle and streetcar platforms and pedestrian safety improvements were added, including curb extensions and raised crossings. These changes aim to enhance safety, accessibility, and the overall experience for people cycling, pedestrians, and transit users along this corridor.

### SITE VISIT PLANNING

In Spring 2024, Transportation Services began recruiting study participants and developed a detailed project plan.

This plan outlined the logistics and objectives of the College Street Site Visit. During the visit, staff members were assigned various roles, which ranged from assisting individual participants in navigating the sites, to conducting thorough note-taking and photography. After the visit, participants met to discuss their feedback providing input regarding signal and traffic operations, key observations, and identify areas for further investigation. Following the debrief, City staff compiled and summarized the feedback, which was shared with the participants for their input and approval.

### SITE VISIT

Six participants took part in the College Street Site Visit, which began at The Doctors' Parkette at the northeast corner of College Street and Brunswick Avenue. Participants travelled in one group west along College Street to examine a driveway crossings, integrated bike/streetcar platform, raised crossing, Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) and beveled curb.



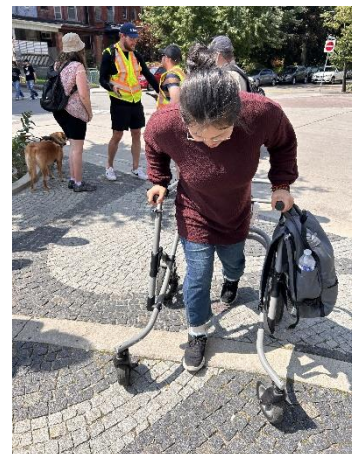
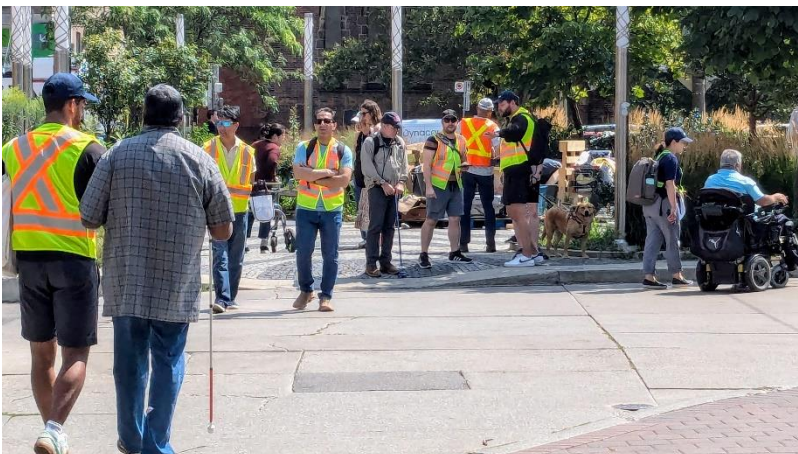
## 2.1

### Driveway: Doctor's Parkette

North of College Street and Brunswick Avenue adjacent to The Doctors' Parkette and Kensington Health

- **Curb Cuts and Steepness:**
  - Concerns were raised about the slope of the curb cuts, which were challenging for individuals using mobility aids. The transition between the driveway and sidewalk was highlighted as problematic due to uneven surfaces and alignment issues.
- **Tactile Indicators:**
  - The lack of tactile indicators was noted, which could lead to safety issues for non-sighted individuals navigating the area. Suggestions included adding tactile warnings and railings around landscaped areas to prevent accidents.

COLLEGE STREET AND BRUNSWICK AVENUE



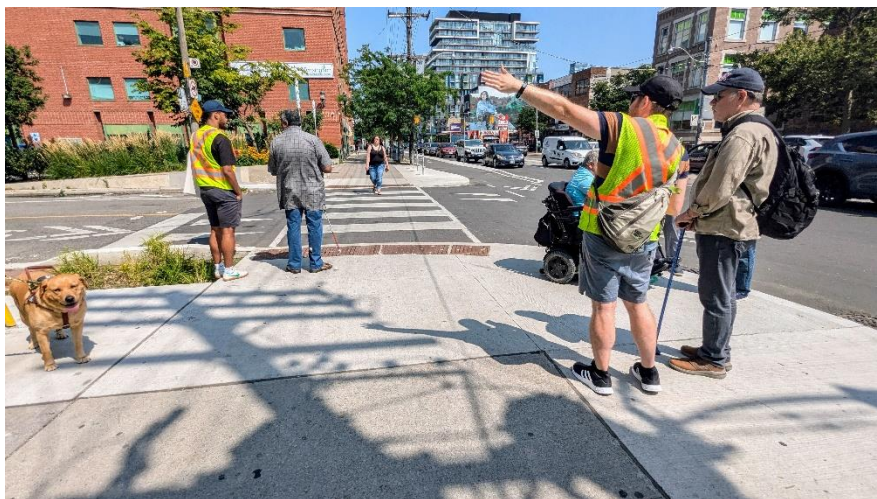
## 2.2

### Raised Crossing

College Street and Brunswick Avenue

- **Design and Safety:**
  - Raised crosswalks were discussed as a means to slow down traffic and improve pedestrian safety.
- **Pedestrian and Cyclist Interaction:**
  - The importance of clear signage and education to ensure that cyclists yield to pedestrians at raised crossings was discussed. The need for multiple warning signs and consistent signaling was noted to avoid confusion, especially in winter conditions.

COLLEGE STREET AND BRUNSWICK AVENUE





## 2.3

### Integrated Bike and Streetcar Platform College Street and Borden Street

- **Streetcar Platform Design:** The design of the streetcar platform, including its raised nature and tactile indicators, was a key focus. There were concerns about the alignment of accessible doors, and the visibility of tactile indicators.
- **Bike Lane Approach:** Participants mentioned the need to better manage the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians waiting to board the streetcar. Suggestions were made to improve signage and provide better guidance earlier to cyclists as they approach the platform to avoid conflicts.
- **Platform Experience:** Feedback on the experience of transitioning on and off the platform indicated a generally positive experience, though it was noted that some users felt nervous about entering the bike path.

COLLEGE STREET, WEST OF BRUNSWICK AVENUE

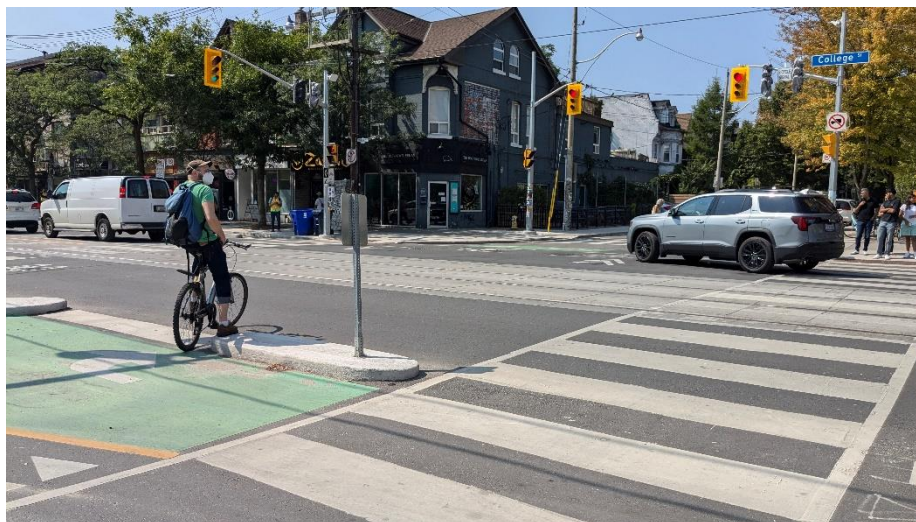


## 2.4

### Accessible Pedestrian Signal Crossing

- **Signal Timing and Audio Features:** The timing of pedestrian signals at intersections was discussed, with a focus on ensuring that they are long enough to accommodate all users. Some participants highlighted that they felt the timing to cross College Street at Borden Street was not long enough to accommodate their crossings. The audio quality of pedestrian signals was also a concern, with suggestions to increase the volume to assist those with hearing impairments.
- **Traffic and Pedestrian Flow:** The interaction between people cycling, driving, and pedestrians at intersections with APS was a key concern. It was suggested that people cycling should have priority at a green signal, but clear signaling and timing adjustments are needed to prevent conflicts, especially with turning vehicles.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** The importance of maintaining clear, accessible pathways at intersections was emphasized, along with ongoing maintenance to ensure that tactile indicators and other accessibility features remain effective, particularly during winter conditions.

COLLEGE STREET AND BORDEN STREET



# 4.0

## Conclusion

### SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK:

Participants emphasized the need for improved tactile indicators and clear signage to help people who are blind and those using mobility aids to navigate safely, particularly in areas with raised crosswalks and integrated platforms.

Safety concerns were expressed regarding the interaction between people cycling and pedestrians, particularly at intersections and near streetcar platforms. Participants highlighted the need for better education and awareness campaigns targeting people cycling to ensure they yield to pedestrians. They also suggested raising auditory cues at APS crossings and improving the alignment and visibility of tactile indicators at key crossings and platforms.

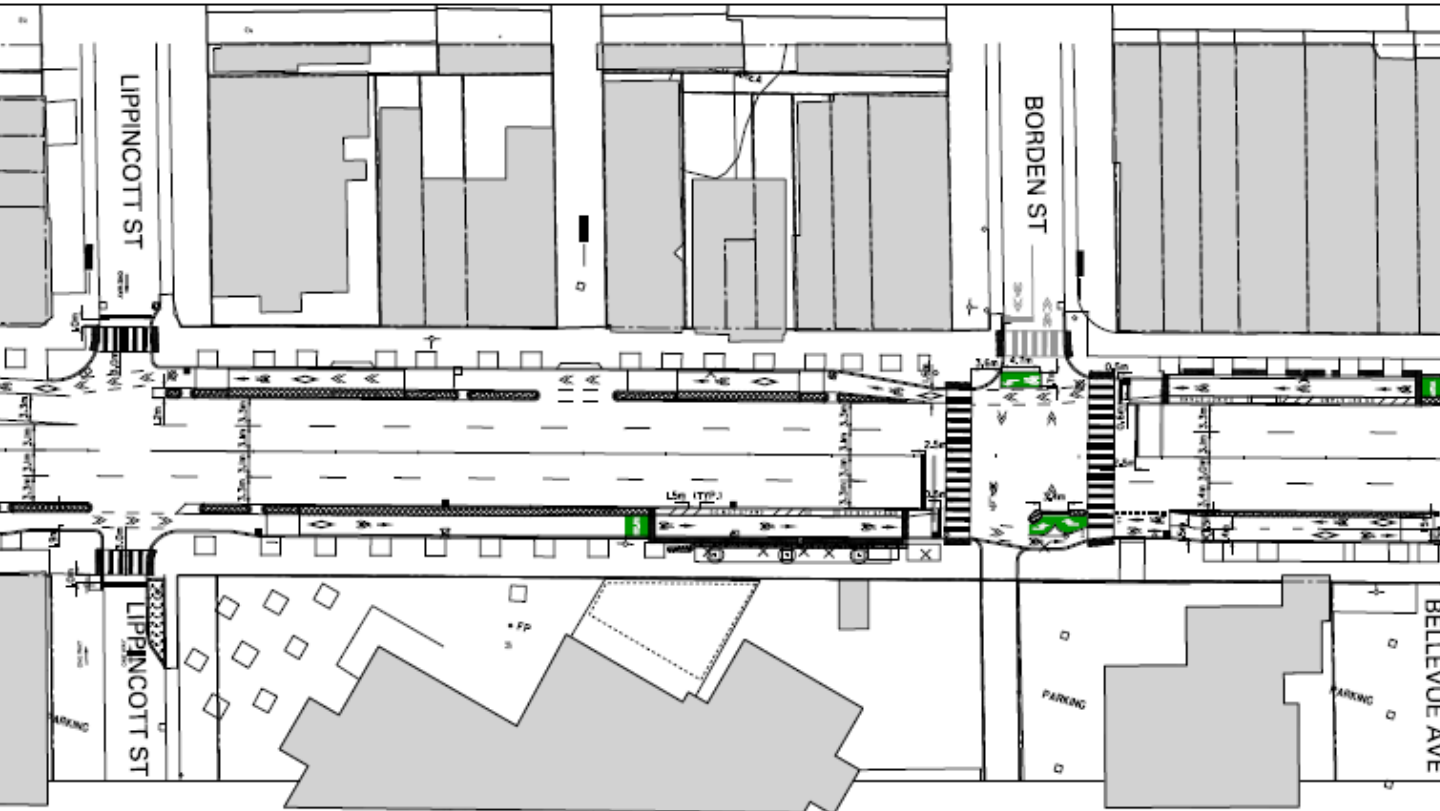
Participants appreciated the City's efforts to improve accessibility and stressed the importance of ongoing engagement with disabled individuals. While new platform designs were praised, additional safety measures were deemed necessary to ensure full accessibility.

### NEXT STEPS:

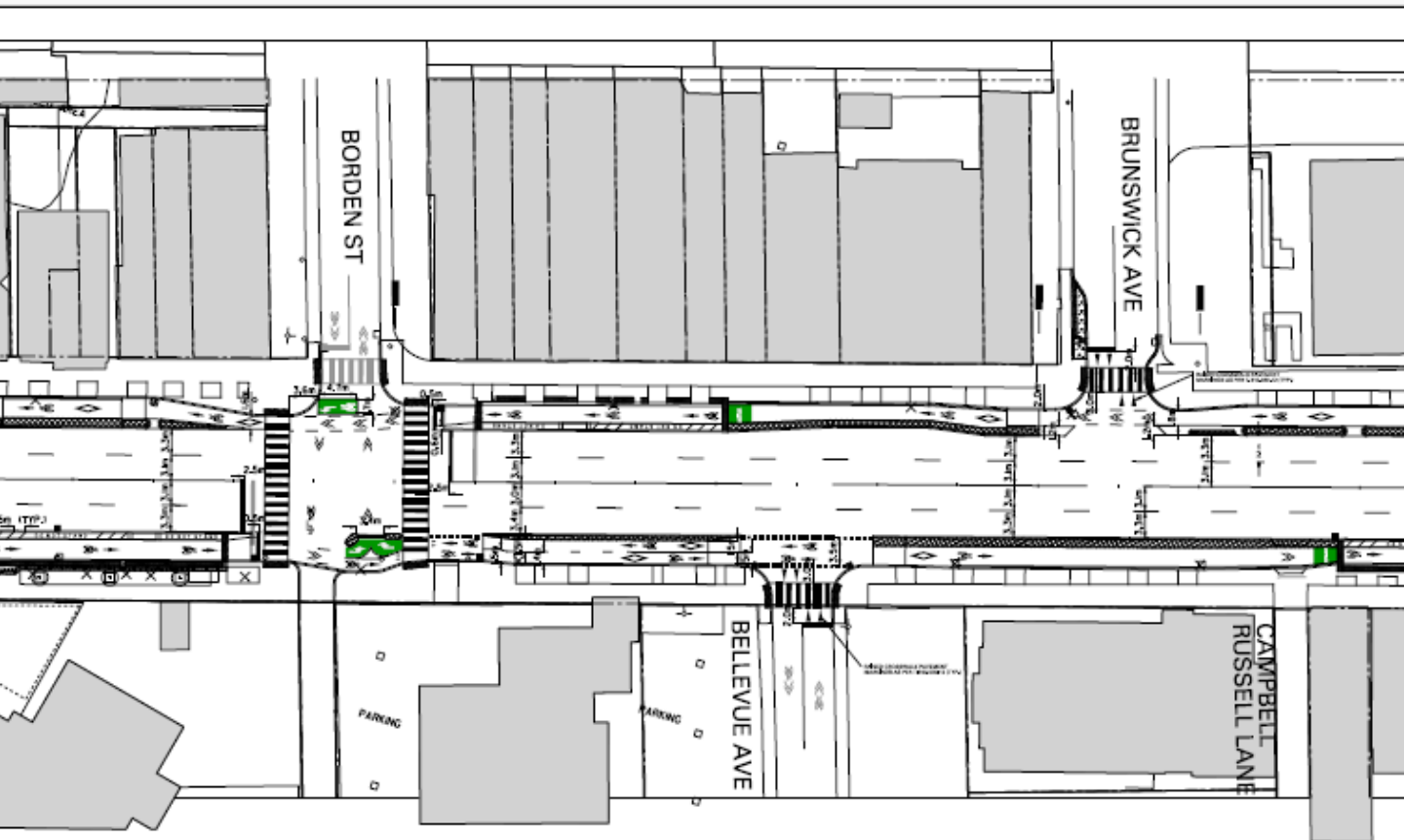
Transportation Services staff will undertake several actions based on the feedback from the College Street Site Visit:

- Share results of the College Street Site Visit to inform design and best practices.
- Continue consulting and conducting on-site reviews with people with disabilities to gather feedback on accessible design.
- Review the signal timing at the College Street and Borden Street.
- Incorporate feedback about the need for improved yield signage to the City's Strategic and Employee Engagement division to create public awareness and education campaigns aimed at people cycling

College Street, between Brunswick Avenue and Croft Street



College Street, between Brunswick Avenue and Croft Street





August 2024



For advice, insights and comments please contact  
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