

Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee

Meeting held February 22, 2022

A meeting of the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee is held this day commencing at 10:00 o'clock a.m. via Zoom video conference, there being present the following members:

Sally Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair
Peter Best, Co-Chair
Councillor Ed Sleiman
Surendra Bagga
Sheila McCabe (arrives at 10:06 a.m.)
Ricardo Pappini
Nicholas Petro

Regrets received from:

Kristy Franklin

Guests in attendance:

Stephen Brook and Katherine Scott, BT Engineering regarding *Item 4.1*
Joy Mayerhofer

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Gayle Jones, Accessibility/Diversity Officer
Mark Keeler, Human Resources Assistant
Paul Mourad, Engineer III
Lauren Robinet, Order of Business Coordinator
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Sally Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair calls the meeting to order at 10:05 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule A attached hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. Declaration of Conflict

None disclosed.

3. Adoption of the Minutes

Moved by Councillor Sleiman, seconded by N. Petro,
That the minutes of the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee of its meeting held November 18, 2021 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. Presentation

4.1 Banwell Road Phase 2 and Roundabout Construction Project

Paul Mourad, Engineer III, City of Windsor refers to the Banwell Road Phase 2 project and is present to discuss the multi-use trails and the roundabout to determine if there are any accessibility issues or concerns with the project.

Stephen Brook, BT Engineering appears before the Committee and provides a Presentation entitled "Banwell Road Phase 2 and Roundabout Construction", **attached** as Appendix "A", He states that a roundabout is being proposed at the intersection with Mulberry Drive and Wildwood Drive. There will be pedestrian crossings on the north and west side of the roundabout.

In response to a question asked by R. Pappini regarding if they are accommodating future crosswalks on the southeast and southwest corners on the medians, S. Brook responds yes and adds that the curb cuts would all be in place when the crosswalks are put in. The signage for those other crosswalks will be put in place when the crosswalks are actually added. Only two crosswalks will be included in this project however the signage and the infrastructure will be there.

S. Bagga refers to the push buttons to be installed in the second phase and asks if the design is in this phase.

S. Brook responds that the design for the future crosswalks on the south and the east lanes of the intersection is complete. The crosswalks themselves were removed from the contract recognizing that rather than putting in infrastructure that is not going to be needed now to wait for those pedestrian crossings to be added.

G. Jones asks in terms of the crosswalks, what kind of audible signals will be installed. She indicates in the past, P. Best has had concerns regarding the audible sounds on the crosswalks being difficult to ascertain for some low vision and blind individuals.

S. Brook responds these pedestrian crossovers are the same equipment that the City of Windsor has installed in other locations. The push buttons themselves will have an audible beep so the visually impaired will be able to locate the actual push button.

These are pedestrian crossovers and not traffic signals, so that when the button is pushed, there would be flashing lights and the pedestrian signs would be actuated.

P. Best states in speaking with Traffic Engineering regarding the audible signals that they currently use, we are recognizing there are some concerns with them because traffic does not have to stop; it is a caution. When someone is visually impaired, they do not know if the car is actually stopping. He suggests a discussion with Traffic Engineering be held to determine if this will be standard practice. He recommends that rather than a traffic light that stops traffic, that the push button would enact a caution light, then a red light to stop traffic with an announcement that indicates that “it is now safe to cross” rather than indicating that traffic may or may not stop.

G. Jones expresses concern that they will be using these crosswalks instead of a signal in this case. She adds that the audible component can be confusing to some people.

P. Best suggested to Traffic Engineering, several years ago, the idea to develop a standard for crosswalks as there was no standard in Ontario at that time. The standard would apply rules relating to the height and location of the push button, the consistency in the way the button would be used and the voice audio command.

S. Brooks responds that the roundabout at this location was selected for a number of reasons. With the roundabout design, traffic will be going much slower at this location than if it were a signalized intersection. If someone feels that they are unable to cross the road at this location, a traffic signal is located in close proximity at Palmetto.

S. Bagga remarks that S. Brooks indicated that the traffic will be slow, but will be continuous which could be a problem for a visually challenged person crossing so close to the roundabout.

S. Brooks states that the flashing lights will make pedestrians much more visible to motorists. It has been found that roundabouts are safer than traffic signals as everyone is required to travel slower in order to traverse the roundabout and also the pedestrians that are crossing the intersection are directly in front of the motorists.

R. Pappini expresses concern that when you bring roundabouts into inhabited areas (as opposed to highways), the crosswalks interrupt the idea of a traffic circle and that continuous flow of traffic. He suggests if the crosswalks were set back further where they are perpendicular, it would shorten the length of travel slightly and might give people time to stop and cue up. Perhaps this is not the optimal location for the crosswalk. If one is driving through the roundabout and becomes a bit confused and then suddenly there is a crosswalk that could create an issue.

S. Brooks responds that there are two factors to consider – is what they have determined to be the placement of crosswalks in relation to the roundabout and the other factor to consider is the further the crosswalk is moved away from the roundabout, the

faster traffic is moving. Once a car comes through the roundabout, they start to speed up. The objective is to keep it close enough to the roundabout that traffic is still moving slowly in order to traverse the roundabout. In this instance, these rectangular flashing beacons are going to be flashing for people on the top of the pedestrian crossing signs. He adds that the flashing beacons on top of signs is a standard across Ontario but is not a requirement.

P. Best states that if a person can cross at point “a”, then the person with the disability should be able to cross there and not have to go to point “b”. When these projects are designed, it must be about inclusion. He suggests putting in safety devices that will work.

G. Jones advises that under Section 80.8 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards which is a regulation under the AODA, the city is required to consult with their municipal advisory committee before constructing new or redeveloped existing recreational trails. For example, the slope of the trail, the need for the location of ramps on the trail, the need for rest areas, and other amenities on the trail. She adds she is hoping the City is listening to the expertise of the Windsor Accessibility Advisory Committee regarding this matter.

R. Pappini refers to the landscaping in the centre island and adds that the site lines are very important. Sometimes, in these inner circles there is a tendency to over landscape them with visual barriers not only for the drivers but for the pedestrians. He recommends whatever is put in that area to ensure there is a clean site line.

S. Brooks responds that a certain amount of landscaping is normally recommended with roundabouts and the objective is to provide some interruption to the line of sight to help distinguish this roundabout to ensure someone does not drive through the centre of it.

Councillor Sleiman refers to the crosswalks in Wards 4 and 5 and asks if Administration or WAAC could suggest any safety amenities for the people who are using the crosswalks.

P. Best responds that a discussion with Traffic Engineering is warranted to deal with these other corners and to request a report on what accessible features we have throughout the city in order to determine how effective they are.

S. Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair refers to the multi-use trails in the project and asks if WAAC wishes to address this.

In terms of the multi-use path, S. Brooks remarks that this location is slightly different with respect to multi-use paths – from Palmetto Street to this intersection there is 335 metres with very little grade on this pathway (water may collect in puddles along the pathway).

In response to a question asked by P. Best regarding the width of the pathway, S. Brook replies that the pathway is three metres wide which will allow for two wheelchairs.

S. Bennett Olczak, Co-Chair asks if there are requirements for rest areas at this location.

S. Brook responds that with this short section of multi-use path, there is no rest area proposed as part of this. There is a bus stop located in the northeast corner of the intersection with Mulberry Drive and is not aware if there is a plan to provide a bench at the bus stop.

G. Jones states that this presentation was undertaken as part of the consultation to WAAC to gain input regarding the Banwell Road Phase 2 and Roundabout project.

S. Bagga indicates that this crosswalk as a future project seems to be a concern as a person cannot cross the road at this time as that portion of the project is being postponed. These crosswalks have pushbuttons so there is a flow in traffic – a person will have to locate the button, push the button and will not know if the traffic will stop or not.

P. Mourad responds that in terms of future crosswalks, people will still be able to cross there but there will not be all of the infrastructure located at that area. The volume of pedestrian movement does not warrant the full crossing infrastructure. In terms of the proposed signals with the lights on top, he asks if there is more comfort to know that those signs have signals on top as a caution for the vehicle traffic. We want all parties to be satisfied with our design going forward.

Councillor Sleiman refers to a complaint received from a constituent in Ward 5 regarding motorists not stopping at the crosswalk. He adds that police were contacted and tickets were issued.

P. Best advises when there is moving traffic with a caution light in these various locations, it is very confusing for a guide dog. It is important to stop traffic as the dog will realize that it is safe to cross.

N. Petro asks why blinking beacons were chosen rather than flashing red. The flashing red requires a motorist to stop until the section is clear and asks if a flashing red could be considered as this requires people to stop.

S. Brook responds that the *Highway Traffic Act* identifies that motorists need to stop and yield to pedestrians at these crossings. A flashing red light by itself is not identified specifically in the *Highway Traffic Act*.

N. Petro quotes from the Ontario Drivers Handbook that states “you must come to a complete stop for a flashing red light and proceed through the intersection only when it is clear”.

S. Brook responds that these pedestrian crossovers even though it is flashing amber light they are still legally required to stop. The flashing amber makes the signs more visible to motorists if a pedestrian is there, that there is signage in advance of the intersection warning people of the pedestrian crossing and regulatory signage identifying specifically for motorists to stop for pedestrians. The combination of signs and lights is a standard that the province has adopted. When the crossing is actuated, motorists in both lanes are required to stop, so on Banwell Road motorists in both lanes are required to stop so in the instance where someone has a guide dog, the dog should be aware that traffic has now stopped.

S. McCabe remarks that in speaking with someone who visited Sudbury, that the flashing crosswalks for pedestrians created great confusion for the motorists.

Moved by N. Petro, seconded by R. Pappini,

That the presentation from Stephen Brook and Katherine Scott, BT Engineering regarding the Banwell Road Phase 2 and Roundabout Construction Project **BE RECEIVED.**

Carried.

4.2 Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS)

As background information, excerpts from the memo dated February 14, 2022 from the Accessibility Diversity Officer and Mark Keeler are as follows:

- The City of London, Ontario was a leader in creating the FADS document that many other municipalities modelled their FADS after.
- The City of Windsor used the London standard as a basis when their FADS document was created along with some tweaking.
- The FADS helped municipalities be leaders in accessibility and create proactive standards above and beyond the minimum Ontario Building Code standards.
- Since the time the City of Windsor adopted their FADS, new Provincial accessibility legislation/standards have been enacted for the indoor and outdoor built environment.
- It is recommended that the city provide an updated version of FADS that fully outlines our Corporate Accessibility Standards and to do minimal updates when there are relevant changes to the Ontario Building Code or the Design Standards under the Integrated Accessibility Standard.
- A comparison of the current Windsor FADS with the new London FADS (which is essentially an updated version of the City of Ottawa and Markham's FADS), Oakville which is another recently revised FADS which is progressive and easy to read, and Kingston which is the revised document that is closest to what the City of London would have been if they updated their previous version.
- This exercise is to review where our current FADS are as compared to three of the most up-to-date documents following different formats.

M. Keeler reviews the current Windsor FADS with the three recently revised FADS that took three different approaches as follows:

- Each line of the Windsor FADS was delineated and compared with the London, Oakville and the Kingston standards
- London FADS came out in November 2021, Oakville was 2015 and Kingston in 2019.
- Each one of these municipalities took different approaches which includes the Ontario Building Code and the AODA which bear a strong semblance to the City of Windsor standards.
- The pros and cons of the FADS of the three comparator municipalities are discussed in terms of technical language, diagrams, and readability.

G. Jones suggests a subcommittee of WAAC be struck to work with G. Jones, M. Keeler and a representative from Engineering to review and come back to WAAC with recommendations. S. McCabe volunteers as an editor, P. Best, S. Bagga and R. Pappini volunteer to sit on the subcommittee. R. Pappini agrees to act as Chair of the subcommittee.

5. Business Items

5.1 Audio Pedestrian Signals

P. Best requests that Administration provide a status report on audio pedestrian signals in terms of what exists and what are the plans for the future.

Moved by P. Best, seconded by S. McCabe,
That Administration **BE REQUESTED** to provide a brief update on the city's audio pedestrian signals in terms of what exists and what are the plans for the future.
Carried.

5.2 WAAC 2022 Operating Budget and Capital Fund

G. Jones advises that the balance of the 2022 Capital Fund is \$485,784. The balance of the 2022 Operating Budget is \$6,250.

5.3 Transit Windsor Accessibility

Moved by P. Best, seconded by S. McCabe,

That Transit Windsor **BE REQUESTED** to provide a report twice a year outlining the issues/concerns from the public (including a 311 report) and on any accessible improvements or plans.

Carried.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on a date to be determined in April 2022.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:59 o'clock a.m.

CHAIR

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR