

**City of Worcester Accessibility Advisory Commission**  
**Tuesday, January 17, 2023, 4:30 PM Meeting Minutes**  
**Hybrid meeting with**  
**Virtual WebEx platform**  
<http://www.worcesterma.gov/video-on-demand>  
**ASL interpreters provided**

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Robert Bureau, James Delage, John Finn, Jr., Darya Karuna, Jully Khattar, Elizabeth, Myska, Linda Larrivee, Stephen Stolberg  
**Members Absent:** Christina Parissi

**Staff:** Jayna Turchek, Dawn E. Clark

**Guests:** John O'Dell, Chief of Worcester Department of Sustainability and Resilience; Commissioner Steve Rollins and Todd Kirrane, Assistant Director, Worcester Commissioner of Transportation and Mobility; Jason Mello, Director of Engineering, Department of Public Works and Parks.

**Call to order, instructions for virtual meeting, introductions**

Chairperson Bureau requested Director Turchek provide the technology instructions for public access to the meeting. A unanimous roll call vote was taken to start the meeting at 4:42pm.

**Approval of November 15, 2022 meeting minutes** Commissioner Karuna moved to approve the November 15, 2022 minutes as written. Commissioner Karuna seconded by Commissioner Larrivee. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call.

**Endicott and Bigelow Streets Project- Review and discussion of ADA Accessibility Features**

[www.worcesterma.gov/mobility/planning/future-of-endicott-andbigelow-streets](http://www.worcesterma.gov/mobility/planning/future-of-endicott-andbigelow-streets)

Worcester City staff: John ODell, Chief of Sustainability and Resilience Department, Steve Rolle, Commissioner of the Department of Transportation and

Mobility: This project is collaboration between three city Departments Transportation & Mobility, Community Development Department, Division of Neighborhood Services and Department of Sustainability and Resiliently. Endicott and Bigelow streets are in Green Island neighborhood which is prone to flooding and has a high heat index. These streets have a high number of crash incidents. Here is federal Community Development Block Grant funding at the Department of Economic Development and planning funding at the Department of Sustainability and expertise at the Department of Transportation & Mobility. The goal is to improve safety, reduce the flooding and the high heat index by doing a complete redesign of the two streets.

This is being approached as a demonstration project to address streets in a different way than has been done in the past. Endicott Street runs along the northern boundary of Crompton Park between Quinsigamond Ave. and Harding Street and is two blocks long. Bigelow Street is three blocks long and runs from the entrance of Compton Park three blocks north.

On Endicott Street there seems to be more space than is needed for parking perhaps with the exception of large events. This creates an atmosphere for more speeding and difficult to cross the street. Several designs have been reviewed with consultants but not finalized yet. What has been considered for this presentation is calming of traffic, 20 ft. wide street parallel parking on both sides of the street. This leaves space for pedestrians and bicyclists. With this design there is room for a sidewalk the can accommodate both pedestrians and a protected bicycle route on the park side. There is also room to widen the sidewalk 8 to 9 Ft. on the other side of the street for pedestrians and others. ADA curb cuts (ramps) will be installed. Ramp extensions would be added and particularly noted at the Park entrance. Trees will now be able to be planted proving a cooling effect and protect sidewalk user from street vehicles. Curb bump outs will be placed at intersections which visually tends to narrow the street thus drivers may slow down.

Bigelow Street is much more residential. The plan is to install ramp extensions ADA compliant ramps and add plantings. With ramp extensions there is a space constraint. The consultant suggested lowering the sidewalk to the street level with the tactile dome around the entire corner. Commissioner Rolle

recognized two concerns; 1. Water may collect at the ramp area and 2. A visually impaired person may have difficulty crossings the street.

All ramps or curb cuts would be perpendicular to the sidewalks at the required 90 degree angle. No apex ramps are being proposed.

No audible signalization is anticipated at this time. A study could be done to see where one may meet code. There could be a petition for a Rapid Flashing Warning Lights in high use areas.

Commission members were concerned about the need for signalization rather than Rapid Flashing Warning Lights. Motorists tend not to stop or even slow down.

Commission members asked that the area where the truncated domes are on corners to find a way give a signal to cane users so they are able to walk across street and not into the intersection. Commissioner Rolle said this was certainly the goal and would seek to find solutions.

A member of the public was concerned that there are structures on the sidewalk which may limit space for pedestrians and bicyclists. There is a place on the Bigelow Street where space may be a problem. Rapid Flashing waning Lights were also mentioned as an issue.

A Commission member asks about what kind of trees would be planted. The decision has not been made yet. Commissioner Rolle said the goal was to have trees the give shade for cooling.

### **Apex curb cut documentation and review**

(Jason Mellow, Engineer, from the Department of Public Works & Parks provided the following PowerPoint.

1. APEX WHEELCHAIR RAMPS – OVERVIEW
  - a. Types of Wheelchair Ramps
    - i. Parallel
    - ii. Perpendicular
    - iii. Apex

- b. Character of Apex Ramps
  - i. Location: Centered on radius
  - ii. Perpendicular to sidewalks
  - iii. Warning panel: not aligned with specific route
  - iv. Orientation: Can serve multiple routes
  - v. Allowed under 521CMR 21:00 if necessitated by site conditions
- 2. Example of Apex Ramp on Belmont Street by Memorial Hospital  
The apex ramp serves two routes with warning panel (truncated dome) serving neither of them.
- 3. A. Factors influencing Installation
  - a. Intersection radius
  - b. Routes of travel
  - c. Connected Sidewalks
  - d. Obstructions in curb line
  - e. Line of sight – examples light pole, catch basins
  - f. Stop line locationB. Accessibility and Safety Issues
  - a. Warning panel orientation
  - b. Traffic exposure
  - c. Pedestrian visibility
  - d. Level landing location
- 4. A picture and description that did not have ramp because of a fire hydrant (No room)
- 4. A picture and description of and ramp and fire hydrant (adequate room)
- 5. DPW&P RAMP EVALUATION –PRIOR CONSTRUCTION (PILOT)
  - a. Purpose – Determine if conditions necessitated apex ramp
  - b. Ramp Characteristics
    - i. Year of Construction
    - ii. Location/intersection
    - iii. Direction(s) of Travel
    - iv. Connected Sidewalks
  - c. Crosswalk Characteristics
    - i. Intersection type
    - ii. Crosswalk served
    - iii. Crosswalk paint

## 6. DPW&P RAMP EVALUATION –PRE CONSTRUCCION (FUTURE PROJECTS)

- a. Purpose
  - i. Review existing ramp locations for potential improvements
  - ii. Limit installation of apex ramps
- b. Proposed modification to pilot process
  - i. Measure curb radius
  - ii. Locate and catalog obstructions
  - iii. Obtain multiple photo angles\
  - iv. Access site for possible ramp addition
- c. Proposed evaluation process
  - i. Perform site visit
  - ii. Complete evaluation form
  - iii. Compare against criteria
  - iv. Determine most practicable ramp configuration

## 7. Questions?

Member of the public asked if residential apex ramps were going to be changed. There is no project identified to do this at this point.

The process presented tonight applies to resurfacing streets. When streets are resurfaced they will be accessed for change of installed ramps.

Member of the public spoke about the clearing of bus stops. Apparently clearing of bus stops is contentious. Director Turchek indicated this was an issue the City council is addressing and she will alert the City Manager that this issue was raised at this meeting.

Another member of the public spoke to two issue. There is a difference between apex ramps at a larger intersection and a residential street. There needs to be clarity of how curb cuts are or are not installed at these larder intersections. The second issue elates to how contractors are responding to the new guidelines. Mr. Mello indicated prior to these new guidelines contractors were told to replaced wasn't is there. With these new guidelines the expectations will be different for both the city and the contractors.

Another member of the public identified two interaction the have walk signs and traffic turning at the same time. Director Turchek will report these two situations.

Another person identifies Main and Chandler Streets being an issue with motorists going through red lights. Mill Street has a similar issue.

**Notice: Mass DOT District 3 Public Hearing January 19, 6pm**

The proposed project consists of the reconstruction of existing pedestrian curb ramps to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Access Board (AAB) standards. Project scope for the City of Worcester is where Millbury Street intersects with Accommodation Street, Burton Street, Esther Street, Fifth Avenue, Maxwell Street, Perry Avenue, and Vernon Street <https://www.mass.gov/event/district-3-ada-retrofits-atvarious-locations-2023-01-19t180000-0500-2023-01-19t190000-0500>

Director Turchek shared the email response from MassDOT Project Director to her questions:

- Can you please provide the City of Worcester addresses and boundaries of the proposed projects along with the plans?
- Additionally, regarding these locations can you specify the types of curb cut to be installed (perpendicular, parallel, apex)?

Greg J Frazier, Project Manager MassDOT, email response:

The preference and direction to the consultant is to avoid apex ramps whenever possible. Currently the consultant proposed some apex ramps, however, MassDOT has responded to reevaluate and see if any apex ramps can be redesigned into (2) different ramps. Otherwise, a parallel ramp is proposed for side streets where a crossing is not proposed for the main road. A perpendicular ramp would be proposed for any crossings along the main corridor.

**Notice & Discussion: Economic Development Committee Meeting to review Inclusionary Zoning, January 31, 2023, 5pm**

[www.worcesterma.gov/agendas-minutes/standing-committees/economicdevelopment/2023/20230131.htm](http://www.worcesterma.gov/agendas-minutes/standing-committees/economicdevelopment/2023/20230131.htm)

Commissioner Stolberg reported that this Ordinance will probably. The issue now is the language. Disability advocates will attend the meeting to support and advocate for accessible units within those allotted affordable. The amended language for the ordinance is on the city's website.

**Notice: Virtual Career Fair for Individuals with Disabilities, Tuesday March 7, 2023** <https://workwithoutlimits.org/career-fair-forindividuals-with-disabilities/>

**Review of AAB notices and applications:** (No City owned properties)  
No Action taken

**Notice: MA COVID-19 testing and vaccine**

- Free Walk-Up COVID-19 Testing & Vaccines (COVID booster & flu)  
100 Front St, Worcester (Next to CVS):  
Mondays 11am-4pm 1/23, 1/30  
Thursdays 10am-3pm 1/19, 1/26
- Vaccine clinics and vaccine information:  
<https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine>

**Suggestions for upcoming agenda items:**

- ADA Transition Updates
- Review curb cut/ramp installation's on streets
- The question was asked if anyone been selected to represent the disabled community on the Worcester Regional Transportation Authority. This will be looked into and brought back to the Commission.

**Announcements:**

- Next Accessibility Advisory Commission meeting: February 14, 2023 - 4:30pm
- WRTA Transportation Advisory Planning Group Wednesday, February 15, 2023– 1-2:30pm

**Adjournment:**

Meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm by a unanimous roll call vote moved by Associate Commissioner Delage and seconded by Commissioner Larrivee.

\*Material can be viewed at the Human Rights & Accessibility Office upon request.