

Hi Karl,

After receiving the pictures of York Street & Talbot Street, a visit to the site was made and the following observations / conclusions have been made by myself, Orientation & Mobility Specialist Jessica Bowman & Orientation & Mobility Specialist Sheila Dinnin regarding the accessibility of the Boulevard enhancements / Sidewalk treatment plan for people with vision loss:

- While the decorative bands through the sidewalk do not appear to be significant in colour contrast or texture, we have to consider the likelihood of these decorative bands causing confusion to pedestrians with vision loss travelling along the sidewalk and they should be reconsidered for this reason. While wet weather conditions may increase the contrast it is still grey on grey and therefore not a significant enough difference to provide wayfinding information, rather it may end up creating visual confusion. As the textured surface wears over time there is concern that it could become a tripping hazard or cause a hindrance for white cane users due to the possibility of their cane getting caught on the uneven surface.
- Another point we would like to bring to your attention is how the placement of the green electrical box on the northwest corner of York & Ridout acts as an obstacle & poses risk for people with vision loss.

When considering environmental accessibility Vision Loss Rehabilitation refers to Clearing Our Path. Below are some sections which are relevant to the discussion of the sidewalk on York Street and Talbot Street:

Paths of Travel

A path of travel is any space in a public facility where people might reasonably be expected to move from one point to another. It's essential to pay attention to the design of paths of travel when considering people impacted by blindness. An accessible route will allow them to navigate public spaces safely and independently.

An accessible path of travel should ideally be straight, with turns as equal to 90 degrees as possible. Ensure the path's surfaces are firm, stable, slip resistant and free of glare. Avoid using busy and heavily patterned surfaces, which can result in visual confusion and disorientation.

Pedestrian paths of travel should be designed to intersect as close to a right angle as possible, and the intersecting paths should continue in straight lines.

A straight path is easier to follow for people impacted by blindness. Curved or winding paths are more difficult to detect, more difficult to describe when giving verbal directions and more difficult for frequent users to memorize. Primary paths of travel that are clearly differentiated from the surrounding area are much easier to navigate. In large open outdoor and indoor areas,

consider using textured surfaces to differentiate paths of travel from adjacent areas.

Sidewalks and Bike Lanes

A lot of useful information can be integrated into a sidewalk's infrastructure. Wayfinding cues can be incorporated into the surface to assist pedestrians, including directional changes, nodes to indicate decision-making areas, entrances to key facilities and buildings, sidewalk/road boundaries and more.

Information can be communicated through the use of textural and/or colour changes in the sidewalk's infrastructure. In some cases, information such as street names is being integrated into sidewalks that approach intersections. Nodes can indicate to pedestrians that multiple routes of travel are in the area.

Colour and Brightness Contrast

In the built environment, colour and brightness contrast can be used effectively for many purposes. It can be used to identify a door opening, to draw attention to signage and to define a route of travel. It can also be used for orientation. For example, a building designer may opt to use different colours for different sections or floors in a building. However, consistency and simplicity are also important. Providing colour and brightness contrast at every turn or change in architectural detail can be confusing.

Wherever possible, the colour and brightness contrast of key elements in the built environment should be at least 50 per cent (higher levels are preferred). The colour and brightness contrast on signs and pictograms should be at least 70 per cent.

Please let me know if you need any clarification or if you have any further questions as I would be happy to answer them.

Kindest regards,

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