

## **ADA PROW Committee Meeting March 7, 2014**

Ryan Peterson, called the meeting to order at 9:01 am

**Attendees:** Jim Bloodgood, Doug McCormick, George Basioli, John Dineen, Harold Wirch, Andy Lentz, Corinna Fale, Oliver Sloboda, Brian Way, Candice Soine, Ryan Peterson

Excused Absence: Mark Villwock

### **Committee Business**

- a. New Member Welcome & Introductions
  - George Basioli introduced himself to the committee.
  - The Snohomish County ADA Measuring Guidelines and ADA Decision matrix are available for the public to use and comment on.
  - The biggest task ahead is getting the Transition Plan completed
- b. Review By-Laws Article II – Purpose of Committee
  - The Committee read through, and briefly discussed Article II of the by-laws as a reminder to Committee members of the purposes for which the Committee was formed.
- c. Future Meeting Scheduling & Agendas
  - The Committee is to meet every quarter but it can meet more if needed. A lot of work/communication can be done through e-mail.
  - Members expressed an interest in conducting a field review. County staff will set up the next meeting to be a field review of Everett's facilities downtown.
  - Ryan explained that the ADA team is exploring the meaning of the phrase "to the maximum extent feasible," to know how to provide better guidance to design engineers who are designing ramps that can't be fully compliant due to existing physical constraints. The County wants to help design engineers be efficient in their design process. Engineers might spend hours designing ramps to the MEF. Staff is developing an MEF Order of Importance chart which will suggest which ramp elements to adjust first.

For example, the MEF Order of Importance may show that the first ramp element that should be adjusted is the flare slope. If that is the one thing that can be made non-compliant and the rest of the ramp is compliant then that might be an acceptable compromise. If the flare slope is adjusted and there are other ramp elements that are still non-compliant what should be adjusted next – maybe the ramp running slope?

If that doesn't work then what about warping the ramp? If a ramp is planar, all points on the ramp are in the same plane. But, for example, if the roadway gutter flow line slope at 9%, but we want to hold the landing cross-slope to a maximum 2 percent the ramp is going to have to twist or warp and the ramp won't be planar any more. The next question is how far can the ramp be warped before it is unusable and adjusting the landing cross-slope above 2 percent should be considered?

The design engineers don't know how much is too much. It would be helpful to set up a study and recruit citizen volunteers who use wheelchairs, walkers, canes, or who have visual impairments to assess a wide variety of existing ramps so we can quantify a break-point. Setting up such a study is something the Committee could really help the County to do.

John Dineen asked Ryan to provide him a summary of his data needs as succinctly as possible and send it to him and he would put it out to the National Network of ADA Centers, and ask the question "does someone have any break-even points here?" John suggested that maybe the County could share the information learned from the study with other agencies and the ADA Centers – a two-way street.

d. General questions/concerns/comments

Ryan asked that the Committee communicate with John Dineen, citizen co-chair, with suggestions, questions, ideas, about anything they might want to add to future agendas.

**Sidewalk & Curb Ramp Inventory**

Andy Lentz provided an update on the curb ramp and sidewalk inventory. Over the winter he was able to inventory 20 more sidewalk miles due to the weather. A new hire will be coming on board soon, and with better weather they should be able to get back up to pace. So far he's completed about 140 miles out of 480 total.

The County contracted to have a firm mobile geolocate and inventory a number of infrastructure assets in the County right-of-way. Mobile mapping uses cameras and other sensors to detect, identify, and geolocate assets such as catch basins, push buttons, curb ramp, sidewalks, etc. With the preliminary mobile mapping data that has been provided the ADA team has been able to refine the list of sidewalk facilities that need to be inventoried for ADA compliance.

Ryan explained that the level of accuracy of the Mobile mapping data was not detailed enough for ADA, so the ADA team still has to go out and walk the routes. The ADA team has found that most of the sidewalk cross slopes are non-compliant at about 4%. Most sidewalk was not built with the digital levels that we use today to measure cross-slopes. In the past flat workers used spirit levels and they had to gauge cross-slopes with a bubble.

Andy also provided an update on the curb ramp inventory. He said that mobile mapping identified the curb ramp locations that were not captured during the initial inventory that was started in 2011 and that the mobile mapping dataset has also captured new ramps that have been constructed since initial urban inventory was completed in 2012. However, there are locations where there is curb/gutter/sidewalk and no curb ramp (mobile mapping cannot pick up missing ramp locations) that have not been captured in the mobile mapping dataset or in the initial inventory due to a lack of understanding about where ramps are required – for example, at 90 degree elbow intersections and at "T" intersection – and that the ADA team will need to add those locations to the inventory as well.

Ryan elaborated that the ADA team has inventoried 7,400 locations with 1,200 of those being missing ramp locations (should be ramps and there are not) which means the team has measured 6,200 actual ramps. Ryan explained that the County Survey group has committed to provide the ADA team, every week, with an update to the curb ramp inventory. PDS, oversees permitting & private development

work, and they send out as-built drawings to Survey, and Survey goes out and captures everything that the County needs for its asset management system, including curb ramps. That will be a huge part of keeping the curb ramp inventory up-to-date.

Andy clarified that Survey will be going out and geolocating the ramps but that the ADA team will still have to go out and measure each one of those facilities to check for compliance because the Survey group does not have the time to evaluate all 30 or so elements that need to be evaluated for each ramp.

Road Maintenance, for the ramps it will be building (as part of the overlay program), will capture all the data that the ADA team needs to update the inventory, because Road Maintenance crews now have GPS units. Last year Road Maintenance reconstructed 160 curb ramps as part of the overlay program. This year, so far, there are 220 on the overlay list.

Ryan explained that the courts in 1993 determined that when an agency overlays a roadway or improves a roadway surface that it has to fix the non-compliant curb ramps on each side of a crossing that is paved through. The overlay dictates a lot of the ramps the County rebuilds each year. And, the FHWA clarified last year what types of roadway preservation treatments qualify as alterations that trigger ramp upgrades and what types of treatments qualify as maintenance which would not trigger ramp upgrades. Corinna – I was just going to ask if there are a certain percentage of missing ramps, does also that mean there is a certain percentage of crosswalks that are missing?

### **Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) - Pushbuttons**

Ryan showed the Committee several YouTube videos illustrating the various elements and features of APS pushbuttons. In the discussion that followed George explained how he navigates intersections with his guide dog and identity cane. George gave examples of intersections where the pushbutton is located so far back from the curb that he has difficulty locating it and then lining up his dog at the curb and still being able to hear the tones or audible messages for the walk indication. Sometimes he misses the phase altogether and has to go back and push the button again. George also gave examples of where agencies had provided pushbuttons at signalized intersections on high volume roads that were working well for him and later the agencies turned down the volume due to citizen complaints about the noise and now he can't hear the locator tone or audible messages above the background traffic noise.

Committee members asked if the next meeting could be a field review of ADA facilities so that members could see and experience the things that have been talked about in the current and past meetings. Ryan said the ADA team would set up the field visit for the next meeting.

Committee members watched several more YouTube videos demonstrating audible messaging vs. percussive tones to indicate the walk and don't walk phases. Audible messaging is required when pushbuttons are located less than 10 feet apart and percussive tones are allowed for pushbuttons located farther apart. Jim explained that the County typically uses audible messaging to indicate the walk phase at almost every location, even though the pushbuttons may be more than 10 feet apart.

Jim asked the Committee for a recommendation on the pushbutton manufacturers that the County might specify in future designs and provided a background on the Polara pushbuttons vs. Campbell pushbuttons. Jim explained how the Seattle Lighthouse organization for the blind had requested years

ago that the County use Polara pushbuttons because they had all the right features but that given time and an increase in competition there are now other companies that make comparable pushbuttons for much less. George thought that had happened is that Polara has been out for 10 years or so, and the patent is now off its product, so now other companies can start making it cheaper because the patent has expired.

The Committee discussed pushbuttons requirements for Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB). George asked if locator tones and audible messages were required for RRFBs because he hasn't always found that existing beacons have those features and so he doesn't have a clear indication of when he can cross.

Jim said that he believed that RRFB pushbuttons should have locator tones and an audible message to indicate the beacons are flashing. Through further discussion it was clarified that RRFBs are to alert drivers to the crossing and do not assign any more right-of-way to pedestrians than they already have. There was some discussion as to what the message should be once the button is pushed and the general feeling was that the message should only indicate that the beacons are flashing and that the pedestrian would then have to decide if it was safe to cross. The messaging should not prompt the pedestrian to cross. Ryan said he would check on the requirements for pushbutton messaging.

An update was provided on the County's 164<sup>th</sup> ST SE/SW Roadway Preservation Project. Because it is an overlay project the County is rebuilding curb ramps at nine signals and in the process updating 64 pushbuttons to the new APS technology which represents approximately 10% of our County's pushbutton inventory.

### **Curb Ramp Ranking & Prioritization**

Ryan provided an update on the curb ramp ranking and prioritization process. Ryan reviewed the proposed two part scoring system. The first part includes the barrier severity score whereby each ramp receives priority points based on the severity of barrier it represents including:

1. Landing Width
2. Landing Cross Slope
3. Landing Running Slope
4. Ramp Width
5. Ramp Running Slope
6. Ramp Cross Slope
7. Vertical Discontinuities
8. Horizontal Gaps
9. Gutter Slope
10. Detectable Warning

The County has now considered 7 or 8 methods before arriving at this ranking system and has found that there is really no clear preferred method. What the County is attempting to do is reflect in the methodology the values are most important. The County is determining which barriers are the most severe and assigning more points to those types of barriers and then an algorithm can comb through the data and calculate points accordingly.

The second portion of the scoring deals with the concept of location. The closer a ramp is located to a location with a probability of serving a higher number of citizens with disabilities the more points will be assigned. The following are the proximity criteria:

1. Public Schools – within ½ mile. SKIP, new program to fill-in sidewalk gaps.
2. Bus Stops – ¼ mile
3. Government Buildings – ½ mile
4. Transportation Facilities – ½ mile
5. Senior & Disability Services – ¼ mile
6. DART Pick Up & Drop Off – ¼ mile

George expressed a concern that bus stops not be too high on the priority list because the bus stops may not be there in future and the ramps are expensive to build. Ryan explained that what this means is that we need to keep up to date on our inventory and that the County would need to continue to coordinate with Community Transit. They have a big interest in making sure that the County is considering their users and building ramps. They have users that make what is considered Multimodal Trips, who use a walker or wheelchair to get to a location once they are dropped off or picked up, so that portion of their commute needs to be accommodated. Community Transit would like us to add some element in our ranking to reflect their user needs.

Ryan also explained that keeping in mind that the closer the ramp is to the facility, the higher the point total. It has been found that the further you are from the facility the more likely you are to use another mode of transportation (other than walking) to get to the facility. When measuring distances, it is not as the crow flies, but along a walk route.

Ryan demonstrated the curb ramps inventory via Google Earth and explained that the County will be putting this curb ramp inventory on the web eventually so everyone can access it. When the County fixes one ramp in an area and there are multiple ramps that need updating in the same areas/intersection, the County will do the adjacent ramps regardless of ranking because it is more cost effective.

John wanted to know if the County has coordinated with any other jurisdiction about standardizing the location of the APS push buttons? Ryan responded that every ramp is different, and it is required that there is a clear space in front of each button and sometimes the clear space and the ramp overlap. Usually, placement is dictated by where one can fit the required clear space and that changes from intersection to intersection. And, if the County is retrofitting an intersection, it depends on where conduit can be placed. But, regardless of the variation of potential pushbutton placement we still keep them within the defined confines as outline in the MUTCD.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m.