

**Mayor's Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Agenda**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2012
5:30-7:30 PM**

Piemonte Room, 5th Floor, Boston City Hall

Introductions

Approval of January 11 minutes

Commissioner's Report: Kristen McCosh

Chair's Report: John Kelly

Update on Transition Plan: Bill Egan, Boston PWD

Update on MBTA Key Bus Routes Access Improvements: Eric Scheier

New Business

Old Business

Public Input

**Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 8, 2012**

Present:

(JK) John Kelly, Chair
(AB) Arnold Berry
(HW) Heather Watkins
(SL) Suzanne Leveille
(JWard) Janice Ward

Staff Present:

(KM) Kristen McCosh, Commissioner
(KA) Kathryn Aldrich

Absent:

(CR) Carl Richardson, Vice-chair
(EB) Eileen Brewster
(DE) David Estrada
(JWinske) John Winske

John Kelly convened the meeting at 5:30PM.

Eric Scheier (ES), MBTA Project Director
MBTA Key Bus Routes and Sidewalk Improvements Project Presentation

The MBTA key bus routes project is focused on making upgrades for ADA compliance greater than the ADA requirements by lengthening stops, making shelters accessible, reviewing site circulation and enhancing signage. The project responds to many challenges with busy sidewalks and many obstructions. The accessibility improvements respond to the unique situations of each bus stop with unique responses. The bus stops maintain the bus stopping and opening at the curb and efforts to deter cars from parking the bus drop-off/pick-up area include a \$100 fine. There will be pavement markings to outline the stop delineations on a larger scale. The new bus signs will have the \$100 fine posted. The MBTA is working to make sure that the sign text and information is appropriate in terms of ADA compliance. A level concrete landing pad will be implemented at all locations without a hard surface from the sidewalk to the bus, and upgraded at all other locations. All of the site specific changes go through system wide accessibility review. These changes are not a result of a class action law-suit, but more in response to making accessibility upgrades to the MBTA key routes. The main goal is to create unobstructed doors and pathways to and from the buses. The MBTA is counting on customers to report whenever a driver does not pull up to the curb as outlined; the phone number is 617-222-3200. All of the buses do not have cameras, but many of the new buses do have cameras.

There are 200 bus stops getting lengthened with a landing pad and clear path of travel from front to back door of the bus. This is more than half of the Boston bus system. The shelters will be made accessible with space for mobility device with the ability for the bus operator to see pedestrians waiting in the shelter. Street benches will only have center arm so the end is open for someone to have the opportunity to slide or transfer onto the end. Once drawings are approved, the first routes will be under construction in late spring of 2012.

The key bus routes project is not about the pedestrian ramps, but more about updating the bus stops. Only a handful of pedestrian ramps will be modified as part of the project. The key bus routes project is currently a "one shot deal" but the hope is that there will be further funding in the futures to continue making improvements.

Bill Egan (BE), Chief Civil Engineer City of Boston Public Works Department
5000 Curb Cut (Pedestrian Ramps) Reconstruction Project Presentation

There are currently 20,000 ramps in the City of Boston that are being reviewed in terms of priority for reconstruction and compliancy upgrades. The City of Boston Public Works Department is working with David Chandler on the Transition Plan from a number of years ago to establish a plan to get the reconstruction started. Of the 20,000 ramps, 5,000 ramps have been identified to be reconstructed over the next 15 year period. The Reconstruction Plan identifies what ramps and what order by classifying and categorizing the missing/non-existent locations, out of compliance ramps (slope, dimensions, and condition) and key routes priority. These locations have been ranked based on a point system that incorporated arterial streets, bus stops and level of service, institutional buildings, and hospitals. After the points were assigned, a radius was applied of 75'-100' to establish the 5,098 ramps on a weighted system. The missing or worst condition ramps will be addressed first. The order of reconstruction will be reviewed each year and coordinated with the City of Boston's Roadway program, as well as with MBTA construction projects. In 2011, 900 ramps were completed by City of Boston's Public Works Department. The outlined Reconstruction Project has been submitted to David Chandler.

KM noted that the criteria used to weigh the ramps outlines priority areas which the Commission is going to try and use to map accessible and key routes for snow removal and accessible routes downtown. KM would like to use the ramp map to put on the Commission website in order to update the Transition Plan. KM requested slope measurements be part of the inspection process.

Public Works has to figure out how to upgrade the ramps, sidewalk and APS and fund the improvements. With Complete Streets there is a drive for pedestrian accessibility. The current focus is the pedestrian ramps, and then Public Works will be able to focus on the sidewalk improvements. There are issues in areas of landmark districts that have brick sidewalk and the associated costs. Public Works supports investigating and addressing continuous paths of accessibility.

JK would like to see a plan for continuous accessible paths in the immediate future, not the next 15 years. When a building undergoes reconstruction that block of street is upgraded, but the next block is run down. A continuous accessible path outlined would be really helpful and nice. SL pointed out that it is not just about obtaining information (accessible paths), but about communicating that information to the public. KM pointed out that it will take more than a summer internship to create an app or information resource. JK would like to see an accountability program. JK has been advocating for lower Boylston Street for the past 10 years and feels the City needs to communicate to the public when upgrades will be made.

BE is going to look into the changes for Boylston, Tremont and Ruggles. Many changes were before BE's time and the information requires research in order to get the issues addressed as soon as possible.

AB motion to accept the past minutes.
HW seconded the motion.

Commissioner's Report – Kristen McCosh

To follow up on Mr. Egan's presentation, a plan needs to be established to affect the most change. KM is working with staff member to address the people in the City who the Commission can reach out to in order to make an impact. In response to the discussion of apps, there is some potential financially to pitch the idea to the Mayor to get a real project going to come up with accessible routes.

A few members of the Commission met with Amy Noble, Assistant Attorney General at a Monday Meeting, to discuss remote participation capabilities. There cannot be remote participation unless the Mayor approves it. A Home Rule petition by the Mayor to the City Council would allow the City to be exempt from the State, which would allow for remote participation. KM is writing a memo to support the Mayor regarding the Mayor's letter to the City Council.

KM met with the MBTA on the Government Center Train Station. MBTA doesn't want to use brick in path of travel or directly around head house. KM asked MBTA if it was possible for the City Hall Plaza Accessible Route to meet the MBTA ramp. MBTA will revisit the potential of the connection. BRA would like to present the project to the Commission; KM will follow up with date of meeting.

PROW comments were due; they had been in draft form for months. KM supported that engineering judgment be allowed so there are no conflicts. Comments are online.

Mass. Ave delineation strip was approved by the AAB to be a combination of option #2 and #3.

Opening Community Forum for Spring – KM, Board, and BCIL – to be April or May (TBD)

New Business:

Resident concerned about accessible taxis to be added to March Agenda.

Chair's Report – John Kelly

JK attended the AAB Mass Ave hearing and reminded the City that the street itself was non-compliant. AAB asked the City to see that the street gets fixed.

On January 31st JK attended the Complete Streets presentation.

On February 3rd attended a support meeting of the AAB 521 CMR. A group of architects (BSA) have been advocating to get rid of 521 CMR and replace it with the IBC. The IBC requires purchase of \$300 worth of books with endless text and complete lack of accessibility requirements.

On February 27th there will be a hearing for Steve Madden as they want to add an incline lift at the front stair.

March 5th – Special Meeting 3:00pm – 5:00pm

Old Business:

JWard has been trying to get a meeting with Susanne Condon in reference to the air conditioning turn on/off dates. The dates provided were unacceptable. The assistant said the Susanne was waiting to hear from the advocates. Working on a meeting in March.

HW asked about starting a fund scholarship for students with disabilities. KM is not sure if the City would support that, but could possibly get public funding to put money towards advocacy positions and programming. KM is working with Cabinet on how to do training for summer internships.

AB asked if there is any planning started for an ADA celebration. KM will use funds for another ADA day with more T-shirts and possibly an advocacy award each year that the Mayor could acknowledge. The hope is to be able to reveal City Hall Accessible Route on that date. JWard suggested honoring a youth.

KM is trying to make sure that all City events are to be accessible with notices and icons on all announcements.

JWard suggested that when the weather is warmer the Commission board could do an accessible Harbor walk to take notes on the good and bad components. KM suggested a disability history walking tour as well.

JK adjourned the meeting at 7:38pm

Next meeting is March 21, 2012.