

City of North Bay

Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee (MAAC)

2016 Annual Report

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a) Background

This report reflects activities undertaken by the North Bay Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee during 2016 and plans for 2017.

b) Summary of Activities – Year 2016

a) Committee Membership – 2016

Nora Long (Chair)
Sharon Moseley-Williams (Vice-Chair)
Denise Alkins
Brian Bibeault
Sharyn Emond
Robert Nielsen
Suzanne Nielsen
Barbra Smith
Councillor Anthony (City Council Representative)

Staff:

Kathleen Fralic (Secretary-Treasurer)
Remi Renaud (City Transit Representative)

Committee member Adam Miller passed away in May, 2016. Committee member Emma Langdon resigned from the Committee in July, 2016. New members Brian Bibeault and Sharyn Emond were appointed to the Committee by Council in July, 2016.

b) Meetings of the Committee

The Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee met seven (7) times in 2016. Meetings generally take place the first Thursday of the month, at 5 p.m. at City Hall.

c) Guest Speakers

MAAC meetings are regularly attended by City Staff. This allows Staff to receive feedback from the Committee regarding the accessibility of existing and proposed policies, programs, services, facilities and infrastructure. It is also an opportunity for MAAC members to gain a greater understanding of municipal processes and projects.

Guest speakers in 2016 included Robin Cameron (Facilities & Parking Supervisor) and Bryan Kimber (Community Development Facilitator), who presented 2016 Parks projects, and John Severino (Managing Director, Community Services), who presented the Wheels to Water project.

A number of service groups also attended MAAC meetings in order to raise awareness of accessibility issues and provide information regarding services available in the community. In 2016, this included Brenda Peacock and Chantal Simard from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), who gave a presentation regarding adaptive technologies for individuals with visual impairments, and Crystal McCollum from March of Dimes Canada, who gave a presentation regarding acquired brain injuries.

d) Activities

City Staff consulted with MAAC throughout 2016. Some specific examples of projects that MAAC provided comments on include:

- the Sidewalk Patio Policy;
- waterfront accessibility;
- the new Armstrong Park gazebo;
- Memorial Parks parking lot alterations;
- enhancements to City Hall and Leger Square; and
- sidewalk fracture cracks.

In addition, MAAC Members had the opportunity to attend a demonstration of the new Transit AVL system on October 11, 2016 and experience the accessibility improvements it provides. MAAC also provided support for the City's funding application to the Enabling Accessibility Fund for accessibility upgrades to the washrooms at Armstrong Park.

MAAC continued its participation as member of the Age Friendly Coordinating Committee of North Bay (AFCC) with Nora Long representing MAAC at AFCC meetings.

e) Awareness Initiatives

MAAC participated at the AFCC's Seniors Expo event on June 11, 2016 at the Golden Age Centre. The Committee hosted a booth at the event and provided residents information regarding MAAC and the City's work.

MAAC also sent out a Tweet and Facebook Post of the Day each day of Accessibility Awareness Week, which took place from May 30, 2016 to June 5, 2016. The posts were published on the City of North Bay's social media pages and aimed to raise awareness of MAAC, the AODA and services and resources available for people with disabilities.

The Committee is currently working on developing a map of the City's accessible parks, facilities and services to raise awareness of the accessible infrastructure that currently exists in the community.

f) Snow Removal Recommendations

In 2015, MAAC identified snow removal in North Bay as an accessibility concern. In particular, the piling of snow in the areas surrounding accessible parking spaces and bus stops acts as a barrier that prevents individuals with disabilities from travelling in the community during the winter.

In 2016, MAAC formed a Subcommittee to examine this issue and develop recommendations. The Snow Removal Subcommittee included MAAC committee members Denise Alkins, Adam Miller and Barbara Smith and volunteers Greg and Kim Walker. The Subcommittee reviewed the City's existing snow removal policies and policies in comparable communities. The Subcommittee also met with staff representatives from the Public Works Department and the Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services Department to discuss issues and get feedback on proposed recommendations.

The Subcommittee's Snow Removal Recommendations Document was approved by MAAC on October 11, 2016. Recommendations include completely clearing the curbs on all sides of accessible parking spaces, clearing 3 metres of the curb in front of bus stops, clearing intersections for sidewalk access, clearly marking the areas to be cleared and improving communication of snow removal processes to the public. The document has been forwarded to Staff for consideration and implementation as they plan for snow removal in winter 2017.

The complete Snow Removal Recommendation Document is attached as Schedule A to this report. MAAC will continue to monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

g) Outstanding Concerns

Sidewalk Fracture Cracks

Throughout the year, the Committee identified sidewalk fracture cracks as a major concern. The City's current style of the sidewalk joints, which includes an indentation around the edge of each joint, jostles individuals in wheelchairs, causing discomfort and even headaches and migraines. This has resulted in members of the community travelling on the road, rather than the sidewalk, which represents a safety and traffic concern.

In order to address this issue, MAAC has sent a letter to the City's Engineering Department outlining the concern and identifying a pilot project in the City of Kitchener involving the introduction of "saw-cut" fracture cracks, which provide a smoother surface for pedestrians. The Engineering Department will be undertaking a review of the City's sidewalk standards in 2017 and will consult with MAAC further at that time.

Memorial Gardens

The Committee continued to discuss concerns regarding the availability of accessible seating at Memorial Gardens.

Waterfront Access

The Committee supported the City's efforts to provide infrastructure to allow people with disabilities to access the water and identified the need for continued investigations into this kind of project.

h) Communication with City's Internal Accessibility Committee

Remi Renaud and Kathleen Fralic provided the MAAC with updates from the City's Internal Accessibility Committee. This allowed the Committee to learn of progress made to increase accessibility within the City.

i) 2017 Work Program

The Committee and staff are preparing a formal work program for 2017. This program may include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Inform Council of Provincial Standards and Legislation, as they become available.
2. Continue to increase community awareness of accessibility issues.
3. Review and comment on policies, programs, services and new and existing municipal facilities and infrastructure.
4. Host guest speakers from various municipal departments and outside agencies.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora Long, Chair, North Bay Municipal
Accessibility Advisory Committee

Schedule A

October 11th, 2016

North Bay City Council
c/o City Clerk
200 McIntyre St. E
North Bay, Ontario
P1B 8H8

Members of Council,

I am writing on behalf of the Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee to suggest improvements to the manner in which snow is removed in the vicinity of accessible parking spaces and bus stops in the City of North Bay.

The MAAC Committee has received a number of concerns and complaints from the community regarding snow removal, particularly in the vicinity of accessible parking spaces and transit stops. In order to investigate these issues further, a MAAC sub-committee was formed to research and provide recommendations that may require changes to the municipal snow clearing protocol in these areas.

These important considerations affect the safety and mobility of many in our community with special needs who rely on these areas being properly cleared as they head out into one of the many snowy days that are a part of our winter existence in Northern Ontario.

The snow removal subcommittee of the city's MAAC began meeting in October of 2015. They have gathered information from City departments that are responsible for snow to be properly removed from these areas. They have informed themselves of municipal regulations regarding the protocol for snow accumulation and when actions are taken to ensure these areas are cleared to allow access and safe use by all of our community's users. By focusing their attention on accessing parking and transit stops they have learned a great deal about removing snow from our city's streets and from these important areas.

Snow removal falls under the responsibilities of two City departments: Public Works handles the majority of city roadways, as well as maintaining the many accessible stalls around these areas. These road and sidewalk crews are also to ensure that city transit stops and surrounding areas are cleared and safe for all passengers boarding or exiting City transit vehicles. Parks and Recreation are responsible for the downtown core, as well as areas including City Hall, Waterfront, Marina parking and the tunnel from the Discovery centre areas to the Waterfront Parkway. (See Appendix A for detailed snow removal procedures, Appendix B for snow plow routes, Appendix C for location of accessible parking stalls and Appendix D for comments about accessible parking spots).

Our subcommittee has also contacted other communities across the North with enquiries about any policies they have in place to deal with any similar snow removal issues they face. None of those contacted appear to have regulations or policies in place regarding these snow removal issues. Interest, however, in our recommendations and any policies that follow was keen. It would seem that North Bay may be seen as a regional leader on these issues.

The recommendations (see Appendix E) have been approved by the MAAC and should be forwarded to Public Works and Parks and recreation. The subcommittee's findings that are developed into policy

changes must be seen as a living document that can be changed at any time. There will certainly be opportunity for media presentation and the vital need for community, business and special interest groups to offer input and ideas.

Hoping these guidelines will enable our community partners to move forward in setting an example for all Northern communities.

Sincerely,

Nora Long
Chairperson Municipal Accessibility Advisory Committee

Appendix A: Current Snow Removal Policies

Appendix B: Public Works Plow Routes Map

Appendix C: Accessible Parking Spaces in the Downtown Map

Appendix D: Notes Regarding the Accessibility of Accessible Parking Spaces in the Downtown

Appendix E: MAAC Snow Removal Subcommittee Policy Recommendations

Appendix A – Current Snow Removal Policies

Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services

The Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services Department is responsible for snow removal within the Downtown Core. The following snow removal procedure is outlined on the City's website:

Plow out occurs after 5 centimetres of snowfall. It is the duty of the Central City Coordinator to call out our forces in the downtown area. This is not written in a policy but is best practice. The accessible stalls have snow removed from the sidewalk side as soon as the roads and stalls have been cleared. In the downtown area, Parks and Recreation vehicles and crews presently proceed in the following manner:

Utility Tractor Operators are responsible for the winter maintenance of the Downtown area. Their regular hours of work are 6:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., seven days a week. There are four operators on Mondays and three on Tuesday to Friday and two on Saturday and Sunday. Outside of the regular hours either the Parks Supervisor or City Center coordinator will call utility tractor operators for overtime.

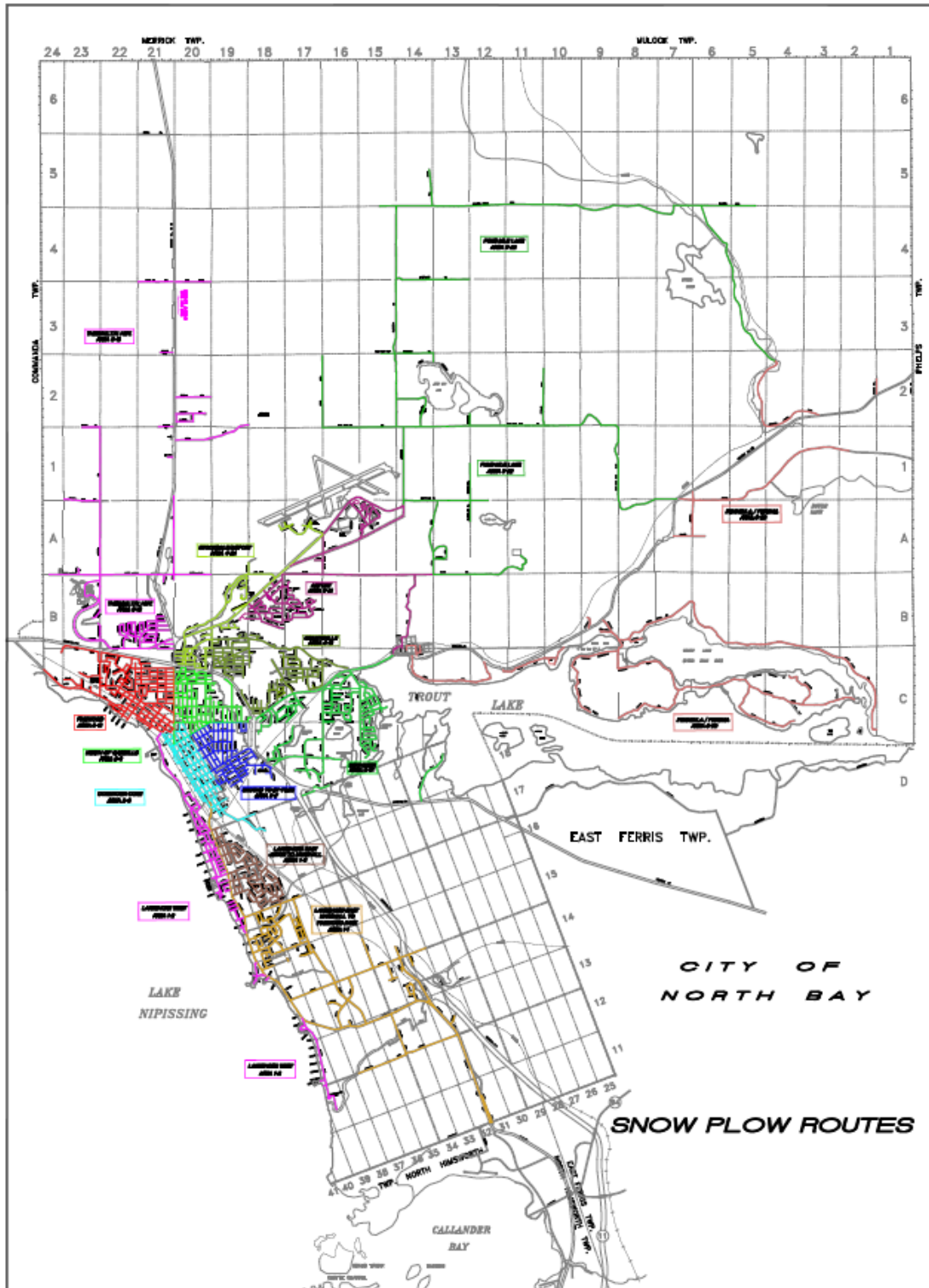
The Parks Backhoe Operator assists with snow removal at City Hall, transit and the entire downtown core including parking areas with special attention to accessible areas. His regular hours of work are 6:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Outside of the regular hours the Parks Supervisor or City Center coordinator will call the backhoe operator for overtime.

Public Works

Snow removal for the rest of the City is the responsibility of the Roads Department. Complaints should be directed to the Public Works Dispatcher at (705) 474-4340. Public Works sidewalk crews and backhoes complete clearing of accessible stalls and Transit stops.

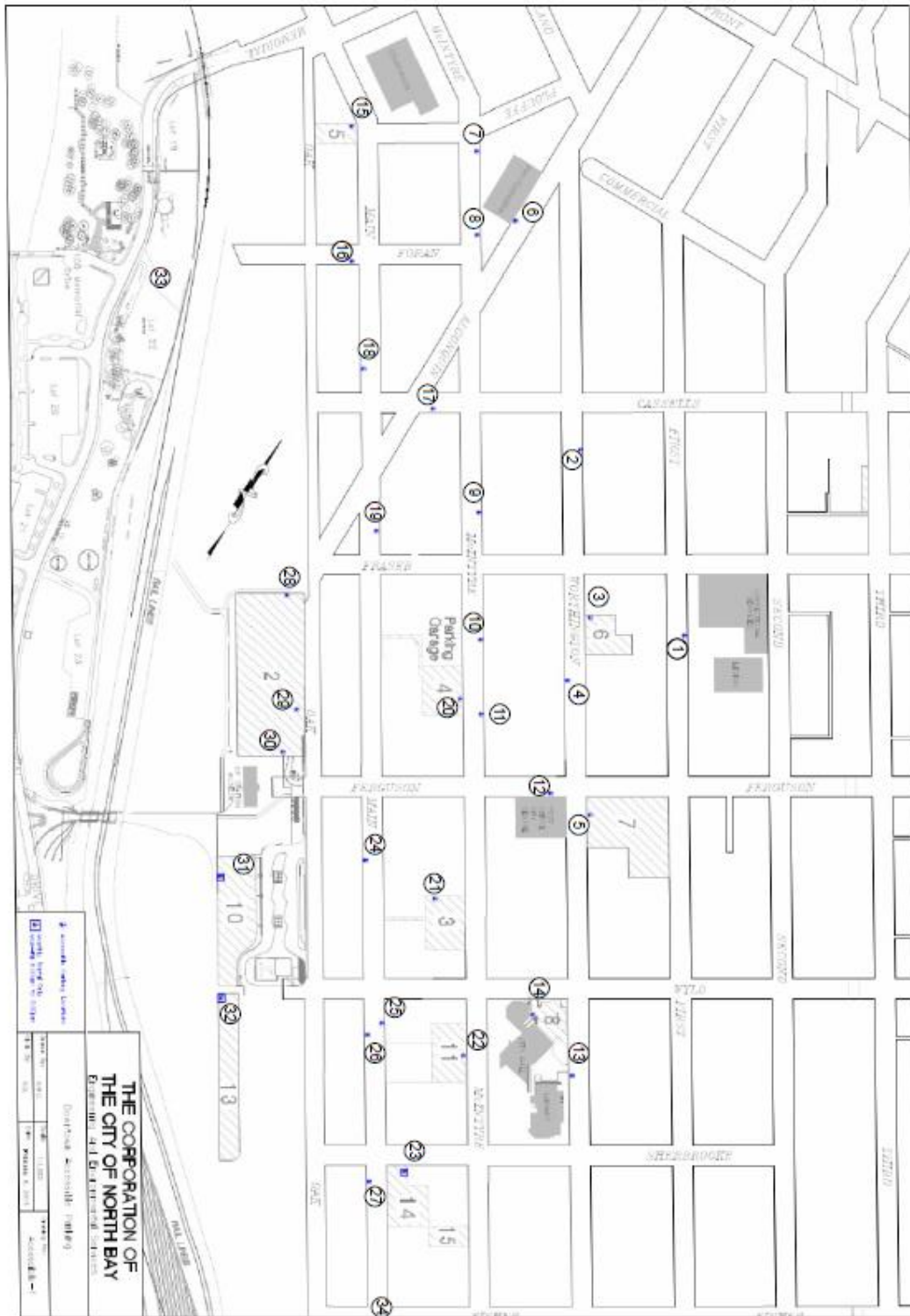
The Transit Routes are cleared first. After this is completed, snow is removed according to the map included as Appendix B.

Appendix B – Public Works Plow Routes



The subcommittee has noted that a legend would help the public to better understand the City's plowing procedures.

Appendix C – Accessible Parking Spaces in the Downtown Map



The subcommittee has noted that some accessible parking spaces are not currently included on this map and recommend that they be added for the public's information.

Appendix D – Notes Regarding the Accessibility of Accessible Parking Spaces in the Downtown

The following is a list, compiled by the subcommittee, of the accessible parking spaces in the Downtown that are **Rear-Entry Vehicle Friendly (REVF)**. Any barriers to access are also noted for Staff's information when considering construction or other changes in the vicinity of accessible spots.

1. First Avenue (in front of Corrections) - REVF
2. Worthington Street (across street from Nugget) – not REVF
NOTE: drainage grates, guy wire and telephone pole in the vicinity impact access to the space.
3. Worthington Street (Parking Lot #6 by LCBO) - REVF
NOTE: two cement dividers in the vicinity impact access to the space.
4. Worthington Street (in front of Golden Age Club) - REVF
5. Worthington Street (Parking Lot #7) - REVF
6. Algonquin Avenue (Cathedral) - REVF
7. McIntyre Street West (Cathedral) - REVF
8. McIntyre Street West (Cathedral) - REVF
9. McIntyre Street West (222 McIntyre Street West) - REVF
NOTE: loading zone parking behind may impact access to the space when in use.
10. McIntyre Street West (Empire Terrace Suites) – REVF
NOTE: no pavement markings for the space.
11. McIntyre Street West (Blue Sky Insurance) - REVF
12. Ferguson Street (Post Office) – not REVF
13. Worthington Street (library) – REVF
14. City Hall – REVF
NOTE: no pavement markings for the spaces.
15. Main Street West (Parking Lot #5) - REVF
16. Foran Street (intersection with Main Street) - REVF
NOTE: no pavement markings for the space.
17. Cassells Street (St Andrews Church) – REVF
NOTE: no pavement markings for the space.
18. Main Street West (Sully's) - not REVF
19. Main Street West (Scotia Bank) - not REVF
20. McIntyre Street West (Parking Lot #4) – REVF
21. McIntyre Street (Parking Lot #3) – REVF
22. McIntyre Street East (Parking Lot #11) – REVF
23. Main Street East (Parking Lot #14) – REVF
NOTE: stall between building fence and sidewalk and may not be wide enough to access side entry vehicles.
24. Main Street (Nutty Chocolatier) - not REVF
NOTE: lamppost in the vicinity impacts access to the space.
25. Main Street (DSO) – not REVF
26. Main Street (Northland Total Sewing Centre) – not REVF
27. Main Street (St John's Church) - REVF
28. Oak Street (Parking Lot #2) – REVF
29. Oak Street (Parking Lot #2) – REVF
30. Oak Street (Parking Lot #2) – REVF
31. Oak Street (Parking Lot #10) – REVF
32. Oak Street (Parking Lot #13) – REVF
33. Memorial Drive – REVF

34. Main Street (intersection with Regina Street) – REVF
NOTE: location of the space encroaches in front of driveways.

Appendix E – MAAC Snow Removal Subcommittee Recommended Guidelines

Recommended Guidelines for Snow Removal of Accessible Parking Stalls

1. In addition to sidewalks and roads, curbs the length of accessible parking stalls must be cleared to accommodate side entry vehicles.
2. Minimum 3 metre area behind rear entry vehicle friendly accessible stalls should be cleared to accommodate rear entry vehicles.
3. Add painted markings to clearly mark areas where snow should be cleared.
4. Snow should not be stored in or behind accessible parking spaces.
5. Clear snow by hand in these areas if necessary.

Recommended Guidelines for Snow Removal of Transit Stops

1. In addition to sidewalks and roads, curbs an area at least 3 metres wide must be cleared to allow passengers to enter and exit safely.
2. Areas around Bus Stop signs must also be cleared.
3. Effectively clear the entrances to sidewalks along bus routes.
4. Clear snow by hand in these areas if necessary.

Recommended Guidelines for General Snow Removal

1. Snow removal procedures and timelines should be communicated to the public when storms are anticipated.
2. Crosswalks should also be cleared properly.

Other Findings

While not related to snow removal, the subcommittee noted the following considerations to improve the overall accessibility of parking spaces and bus stops in the community:

- Consider the placement of obstacles such as poles, grates, etc. near accessible parking spaces as they can act as accessibility barriers.
- Paint accessible parking spaces blue so that they are more easily identified.
- Audible or tactile bus stop markers to allow individuals with visual impairments to identify stops.