

June 4, 2025

Deputy City Clerk, SPC on Standing Policy Committee on Transportation

Dear Committee Members:

Re: Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee – Construction Site Accessibility and Safety
you

The Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee, at its meeting held on May 9, 2025, discussed the construction site accessibility and safety.

The Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Education and Awareness Sub-Committee met on May 20, 2025 to discuss what issues have arisen from member experiences with different construction sites within established neighborhoods.

The Sub-Committee feels that some education and awareness presented to the City of Saskatoon could help construction sites be more accessible for everyone in the community. The reason the sub-committee met on this topic was because of member experience and would like to express several significant concerns regarding accessibility and communication practices during construction projects in the City of Saskatoon. These issues disproportionately impact residents with disabilities, older adults, and families with young children, and I urge the Committee to consider improvements that prioritize inclusivity and safety.

1. Lack of Access to Curb Cuts

Construction zones often block access to curb cuts, leaving individuals to use driveway ramps, which are not always safe or accessible, especially for those using mobility aids.

2. Inaccessible Signage

Construction signage must include audible cues for individuals who cannot read braille or printed text. Clear, accessible information is essential in detour and construction areas.

3. Fencing Obstructing Sidewalks

Temporary fencing installed along sidewalks poses a serious hazard. In particular, when fencing is angled or zig-zagged to prevent tipping, it can entirely block the sidewalk. This restricts access for wheelchair users, people using walkers, and parents with strollers.

4. Gravel Covering Temporary Water Lines

While gravel may be an effective solution to protect temporary water pipes from vehicle damage, it creates a severe barrier for those with mobility challenges. Loose gravel is difficult to walk on, nearly impossible for wheelchair users to navigate, and unsafe for others with limited mobility.

5. Adherence to Construction Schedules and Proactive Updates

Delays are understandable, but affected individuals must be informed proactively. Deviations from the schedule should be clearly communicated across accessible platforms.

6. Clear and Accessible Communication About Schedule Changes

Information about schedule changes must be shared in a timely and accessible way, ensuring people can adapt their routes safely and effectively.

7. Overly Complicated Detours

Construction detours must be easy to follow, with consistent, clear signage that helps users understand where they can safely return to the regular path or sidewalk.

8. Winter-Specific Challenges

During winter, snow is often not cleared from alternate routes, compounding accessibility issues. Combined with extreme cold, this can pose significant health and safety risks.

9. Accessible Notification Systems

The City should offer notification methods that are usable by blind and visually impaired individuals, such as audio alerts or screen-reader-compatible emails.

10. Property Manager Notifications

Notifying property managers allows them to inform tenants directly—whether by printed notice, verbal communication, or email—enhancing awareness among those affected.

11. Construction Site Cleanup Before Winter

Construction sites must be cleaned and cleared before winter begins to ensure accessible travel throughout the colder months.

12. Cluttered City Website

Information about construction is hard to find on the City's website. A simplified and accessible page would improve communication for all residents.

Construction planning must take into account the lived realities of all community members, especially those with mobility and accessibility needs. I hope the Committee will take these concerns into serious consideration and work toward ensuring a more inclusive and navigable city for all.

The Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee respectfully requests that the recommendation be considered by the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to accessibility.

Yours truly,

Mark Kennedy, Chair
Saskatoon Accessibility Advisory Committee

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cc: General Manager, Transportation and Construction Division

DRAFT