

Appendix A - Barrier Audit

MEMORANDUM

Date:	February 11, 2021	TG:	1.19049.00
To:	David Hower, Whatcom County		
From:	Ryan Peterson PE, PTOE – Transpo Group		
cc:	James Karcher PE, Douglas Ranney PE – Whatcom County		
Subject:	Whatcom County ADA Accessibility Standards Review		

Practices and design standards that meet accessibility standards are essential to ensure new or upgraded pedestrian facilities are accessible and that these upgrades contribute to the removal of accessibility barriers throughout the County.

The following Whatcom County documents were reviewed against current accessibility standards:

- Whatcom County Development Standards and Standard Drawings, October 14, 2019
- Whatcom County Code

In conversation with County staff, an approach to the standards review was developed that included a focus on referencing other accessibility standards, rather than providing substantial detail within Whatcom County standards. This was done for several reasons including the lack of County resources to research changes to accessibility standards and update County standards on a regular basis. The review of County standards relies heavily on WSDOT standards, particularly Chapter 1510 of the WSDOT Design Manual. Where applicable, recommendations have been made to reference this standard in lieu of providing substantial detail that would be redundant with the WSDOT Design Manual.

This memo summarizes a review of Whatcom County's policies and design standards for barriers and includes major findings of this work. The memorandum is organized by facility type.

Sidewalks and Pathways

Whatcom County Code mentions sidewalks in various sections and provides guidance on design relative to the different land use zones within the County. These references are not accessibility related. Where specific design requirements are called out, they do not violate current accessibility standards. No modifications to the County Code related to sidewalks are recommended.

Most of the design guidance for sidewalks in Whatcom County is contained in Section 508, *Roadside Features*, of Whatcom County Development Standards and corresponding Standard Plans. Sections 508.A and 508.B address sidewalks and pathways and the following modifications are recommended:

Section 508.A, Urban Pedestrian Facilities

- Section 508.A.4 – Change the wording of this section to “Pedestrian Access Routes (PARs) as defined by Chapter 1510 of the WSDOT Design Manual shall be provided on one side of new and existing perimeter public roads adjoining any development which creates, in the professional judgement of the County Engineer, the potential for significant additional pedestrian movement and the roadway traffic has an ADT of over 400 vehicles. This PAR shall have a firm, stable, and slip-resistant surface and may be incorporated into the shoulder of the roadway. The PAR shall meet all applicable accessibility requirements as shown in the WSDOT Design Manual Chapter 1510.”
- Section 508.A.5 – Change the wording of this paragraph to read “Sidewalks shall be constructed with Class 3000 cement concrete per WSDOT Standard Specifications and be constructed per WSDOT Design Manual Sections 1510.05 – 1510.08 and corresponding WSDOT standard plans. Construction tolerances should be accounted for during design to insure the final constructed sidewalk meets all accessibility requirements. Sidewalks shall be light brush finished and curing compound shall be applied to all finished concrete

surfaces per WSDOT Standard Specifications. Subgrade compaction shall meet the requirements outlined in Section 511.E, Concrete Testing. Sidewalks in cut sections shall be drained as shown on Standard Drawing 508.A-2.”

- Delete Sections 508.A.6, 508.A.7 in their entirety.
- Standard Drawing 508.A-1 – Most of the information in this County standard drawing is redundant with WSDOT Standard Plan F-30.10. It is recommended that this standard plan be deleted and information specific to Whatcom County be incorporated into Section 508.A.5 as described above.

Section 508.B, Rural Pedestrian Facilities

- Section 508.B.1 - Change reference to walkways to “Pedestrian Access Routes (PARs) as defined by Chapter 1510 of the WSDOT Design Manual”. Change all subsequent references to walkways in Section 508.B to “PAR”
- Section 508.B.3 – Change wording to read “Minimum PAR improvements shall consist of a firm, stable, and slip resistant material. Material other than cement concrete and asphalt pavement must be approved by the County Engineer. When the PAR is incorporated into the road shoulder, the typical roadway section shall govern. PAR may be combined with bikeway.”
- Delete Section 508.B.4 in its entirety.

Driveway Approaches

Whatcom County Code contains several requirements for driveways in various sections. These requirements are general in nature and generally identify where and when driveways are to be installed. No specific information to accessibility is referenced in the County Code and no modifications are recommended.

Section 508.D of Whatcom County Development Standards and associated Standard Plans address driveway approaches. The following modifications are recommended:

- Add the following sentence to the end of Section 508.D.3.a: “When a Pedestrian Access Route or sidewalk is present on the arterial/collector street, a Pedestrian Access Route meeting accessibility criteria as defined in WSDOT Design Manual Chapter 1510 shall be provided through the driveway.”

Curb Ramps

References to curb ramps in the County Code are again, general in nature and do not specifically address accessibility. No modifications are recommended.

Section 508.G of Whatcom County Development Standards and associated standard plans address curb ramp requirements. The following modifications are recommended:

- Section 508.G – Change wording to read “Curb ramps shall be installed at all legal pedestrian crossings including intersections and mid-block pedestrian crossings where a Pedestrian Access Route as defined in WSDOT Design Manual Chapter 1510 is provided on both sides of the street and where a transition from sidewalk to pavement grade is required. At-grade pedestrian facilities shall not require a curb ramp. Curb ramps shall be constructed per the WSDOT Design Manual, Chapter 1510.09 and associated WSDOT Standard Plans.”
- Standard Drawings 508.G-1 through 508.G-5 – These standard drawings are redundant with WSDOT Standard Plans F-40.12, F-40.14, F-40.15, F-40.16, and F-45.10. It is recommended that these standard plans be deleted.

Pedestrian Signals

Pedestrian signals are not addressed in either Whatcom County Code or Development Standards. It is recommended that the following modification be made:

- Add sub-section of Section 508A titled *Pedestrian Signals* that states: “All traffic signals within Whatcom County, including pedestrian signals and beacons, shall be built in accordance with City of Bellingham standards. All new traffic signals shall be constructed in accordance with City of Bellingham design standards and standard plans. All new pedestrian signal elements, where applicable, shall be accessible, including countdown pedestrian signal heads and Accessible Pedestrian System (APS) pushbuttons. For retrofits, the City of Bellingham’s APS Policy shall be followed to determine the scope for accessibility upgrades to the signal system.”

Other Pedestrian Facilities

Other facilities of the pedestrian network like handrails, access ramps, and transit stops are not mentioned in any detail within Whatcom County Code and Development Standards. The following is a recommended modification to address this omission:

- Add sub-section of Section 508A titled *Other Pedestrian Facilities* that states “All other pedestrian facilities including handrails, transit stops, access ramps, etc. shall be constructed per WSDOT Design Manual Section 1510.15.”