

## We Need to Do Better With Pedestrian TTC

It's time to up our game another notch as we improve pedestrian facilities. Great progress has been made in Delaware to advance accessibility along pedestrian pathways. Yes, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) will turn thirty-four this summer and across the country, progress lagged for a long time, but in recent years, we have certainly kicked into a higher gear here in Delaware. A long way to go yet, to be sure, but looking in the rear-view mirror isn't as helpful as focusing on the road ahead (we're waxing philosophical this morning).

Whenever we improve or rehabilitate transportation routes, we inevitably have to interrupt flow. If we were to close a lane of vehicular traffic, we would put up advance warning signs, provide detour routes, and even provide certified flagging personnel to assist drivers. Yet, back in the day, we would too often begin work on a sidewalk, curb ramp, or crosswalk with little more than a haphazard barrier immediately prior to the work. Even mid-block improvements would sometimes be marked with a quick barrier and a "sidewalk closed" sign. For the average pedestrian, this was an inconvenience met with a dart around the work into the roadway; not the best safety plan for sure. For the physically disabled, this was frustrating, and potentially much more hazardous.

We have gotten better and in many projects, we are preparing all pedestrians much better. But, we still have far too many instances where we fail to properly route pedestrian traffic, and this is not just poor practice; it is in non-compliance with the Delaware Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and the ADA. We have to start thinking of pedestrian pathways as another lane of traffic and prepare those travelers just as we would with motorists.

Whenever we interrupt pedestrian pathways, we have to properly prepare pedestrians and give them guidance through proper temporary traffic controls (TTC). Particular attention must



be directed to those with physical disabilities. And let's pause there to clarify that we are not just talking about someone in a wheelchair. We must think about other disabilities as well – those with gait impairments, those using walkers or crutches, those with low vision or who are blind, those with hearing impairment, and so on. It can get complicated in a hurry, but it is not an option; it is a requirement under the ADA and so we need to get better at it.



Before we get into weeds, step back and think about the fundamentals. If someone in a wheelchair or using a walker approaches your curb ramp reconstruction without advance notice, what is he or she to do? If someone with low vision approaches it, might they miss the cues and end up falling into your broken up concrete and injure themselves? If a blind person approaches with a white cane, is there a tactile shoreline he or she can follow to navigate the detour? With a bit of thoughtful design, we can anticipate those problems and help them safely navigate around the work with a minimum of aggravation.

In the Delaware MUTCD, the standard establishes our task in this regard. In Section [6A.01](#), it states: “The needs and control of all road users (motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians within the highway, or on private roads open to public travel (see definition in Section 1A.13), including persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title II, Paragraph 35.130) through a TTC zone shall be an essential part of highway construction, utility work, maintenance operations, and the management of traffic incidents.” Notice the “shall;” this is not guidance, but rather, a requirement. It goes on to say: “When the normal function of the roadway, or a private road open to public travel, is suspended, TTC planning provides for continuity of the movement of motor vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic (including accessible passage); transit operations; and access (and accessibility) to property and utilities.”



The standard in Section 6D.01 layers on some specifics:

- The various TTC provisions for pedestrian and worker safety set forth in Part 6 shall be applied by knowledgeable (for example, trained and/or certified) persons after appropriate evaluation and engineering judgment.
- Advance notification of sidewalk closures shall be provided by the maintaining agency.
- If the TTC zone affects the movement of pedestrians, adequate pedestrian access and walkways shall be provided. If the TTC zone affects an accessible and detectable pedestrian facility, the accessibility and detectability shall be maintained along the alternate pedestrian route.

Any temporary route we establish around the work must be firm, stable, and slip-resistant, just like the standard requirement for the Pedestrian Access Route (PAR). Indeed, the MUTCD standard in Section 6D.02 is clear: “When existing pedestrian facilities are disrupted, closed, or relocated in a TTC zone, the temporary facilities shall be detectable and include

Temporary Traffic Control for Pedestrians  
Guidelines and Best Practices  
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This document presents some general guidelines and best practices for providing temporary traffic control (TTC) for pedestrians. Additional information will be added as DelDOT continues development in this aspect of TTC. References to Typical Applications are based on the 2011 Delaware MUTCD.

**Sidewalk Work – Midblock**

For sidewalk work that is occurring midblock, a sidewalk closure is typically required. Pedestrian TTC for the sidewalk closure, depending upon duration, can be accomplished in different ways:

- Utilize Typical Application 28 for a sidewalk detour
  - This TA directs pedestrians to the other side of the street using the parallel sidewalk system, if available.
- Utilize Typical Application 28 for a sidewalk diversion
  - This TA directs pedestrians out of the normal sidewalk path into the shoulder of the roadway. The shoulder is closed in advance of and throughout the work area.
  - This TA may require temporary curb ramps (see details and special provisions)
  - This TA may require the use of a pedestrian channelization barricade
  - Depending upon vehicular travel speeds and duration, positive protection between the temporary pedestrian path (shoulder) and travel lanes may be required. Temporary concrete safety barrier or other approved positive protection may be utilized.
- Utilize a temporary boardwalk and/or temporary pedestrian path around the work area.
  - This application will most likely be utilized for long-term duration projects
  - A Temporary Construction Easement (TCE) may be needed to install the temporary pedestrian path outside of DelDOT right-of-way.
  - Safety fence may be needed to separate the pedestrian path from the work area. Please note, safety fence is not an approved method for providing a detectable pedestrian path

**Crosswalk Closure and/or Curb Ramp Work**

For sidewalk work that occurs at an intersection or driveway access, the closure of the corner curb ramp and associated crosswalk(s) may be required. More than one corner/curb ramp may be closed at the same time; however, additional provisions to maintain accessible pedestrian routes should be provided. Pedestrian TTC for the curb ramp and/or crosswalk closure, depending upon duration, can be accomplished in different ways:

- Utilize Typical Application 29 for a crosswalk closure and pedestrian detour.

accessibility features consistent with the features present in the existing pedestrian facility. Where pedestrians with visual disabilities normally use the closed sidewalk, a barrier that is detectable by a person with a visual disability traveling with the aid of a long cane shall be placed across the full width of the closed sidewalk.”

There is considerable support in Section 6D of the MUTCD and project designers should routinely review the guidance to ensure that the best accommodation has been made for all pedestrians, especially those with physical disabilities (again, not just those in wheelchairs). In addition, the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) published Guidelines and Best Practices on the MUTCD website to assist with temporary traffic control for pedestrians.

Yes, we do much better across the board with pedestrians TTC than we did thirty years ago, twenty years ago, even ten years ago, but we are going to be challenged to improve more and more. And yes, in time, some of that challenging will come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Department of Justice, and even plaintiff’s attorneys. Better that we provide well-thought accommodation ourselves than have any of these third parties step in and impose their own brand on our work. Oh, and of course, it’s the responsive thing to do in consideration of our community residents that we are trying to faithfully serve in the first place.

The Delaware T<sup>2</sup>/LTAP Center’s Municipal Engineering Circuit Rider is intended to provide technical assistance and training to local agencies and so if you have temporary traffic control or accessibility questions, or other transportation issues, contact Matt Carter at [matheu@udel.edu](mailto:matheu@udel.edu) or (302) 831-7236.

