

Avenue A ADA Accessible Streetscape Improvements Project

October 15, 2024 Community Input Session – Public Comments

- Tim de Christopher (resident): Will every storefront along the 3 blocks in this project be made accessible?
 - Yes
- Pam Allen (resident): How were the 3 blocks chosen?
 - Brian McHugh (Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority): These are the last 3 blocks to not have been touched during previous phases of Avenue A streetscape improvements
- Suzette Cobb (resident): Who will be responsible for maintenance of the ramps once completed? Weren't downtown streetlights already replaced?
 - Brian McHugh (Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority): The Town has easements allowing for maintenance of the walkways in front of downtown businesses, but we will look more into whether the Town expects to taken on regular maintenance of the ramps
 - Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): No new lights are proposed for this phase, but 1 existing light may be moved in front of 113-115 Avenue A
 - Follow-up response after meeting: Confirmed with Walter Ramsey, Montague Town Administrator on morning of 10/16 that the ramps will be treated the same way as the sidewalks are currently, where building owners are expected to maintain/shovel the areas in front of their property
- Suzette Cobb (resident): Will salt erode the new cement faster than it would erode brick?
 - Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): Yes cement has other benefits over brick, but it is unfortunately expected to break down faster than brick due to erosion from salt. Alternative ice melts are encouraged.
- Suzette Cobb (resident): How to handle grade change between 113-115 Avenue A and Turners Falls Pizza House?
 - Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): Connecting sidewalks to each other fluidly and through alley crossings; new strips of concrete are needed across end of alley to be compliant
 - Maureen Pollock (Montague Town Planner): For good visual of what most ramp/stair combos will look like, imagine the entrance to the former Black Cow Burger Bar. These improvements should benefit both the public and business owners
 - Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): Double railings will be code-compliant
- John McNamara (resident): Decorative railings preferred over those with “institutional” look; current ADA tactile warning pads where sidewalk meets crosswalk are deteriorating, and Town should look into a different material for these

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- Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): The current material being used for these has improved over previous versions (i.e. the front of Shady Glen includes some of the newest material for these); designed to be easy to repair
- John McNamara (resident): Supportive of these accessibility improvements, but disappointed this was left out of previous construction on even side between 3rd and 4th St
 - Maureen Pollock (Montague Town Planner): Town is currently looking for other funding sources to support this accessibility improvements to the even side between 3rd and 4th St.
- Suzette Cobb (resident): Agreement with John’s preference for decorative railings, and would support planters and accessibility improvements being added further south along Avenue A as well (lives at 177 Ave A)
- Jamie Simpson (resident): Curb cut improvements; would love to eventually see raised crosswalks to prevent problem of area where curb cut meets road becoming a wet or icy ditch; raised crosswalks may make more sense on side streets for future projects
 - Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): Logistical and financial complications
- Erin-Leigh Hoffman (Greenfield Recorder): Accessible parking for individuals with mobility impairments?
 - Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): The proposal doesn’t show but Town is exploring possible on-street ADA accessible parking spaces.
- Erin-Leigh Hoffman, Greenfield Recorder: ADA streetscape improvements in other towns as an example?
 - Maureen Pollock (Montague Town Planner):
 - See ADA ramp to access the storefronts at [28 Bridge Street, Village of Millers Falls, Montague](#)
 - See ADA ramp to access storefronts at [8-24 Main St, Amherst MA](#)
 - See ADA ramp to access storefronts at [187-201 North Pleasant Street, Amherst MA](#)
- Tim de Christopher (resident): A few stores in downtown Turners Falls already provide ADA-compliant ramps to their entrances, including LOOT found + made, The Rendezvous, and Unnameable Books, which are helpful for my mobility challenges. Also notes that it seems the Town has had difficulty funding lighting for the art installation at the corner of Avenue A and 3rd St
 - Maureen Pollock (Montague Town Planner): Happy to discuss the Town’s efforts in hiring a contractor to provide lighting after meeting.

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- Suzette Cobb (resident): Opposes “leaf” decorations on the art installation at Spinner Park (resemble dog excrement); hopefully this new phase does not include any similar surprises
 - Brian McHugh (Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority): No plans for fixtures such as those with this phase
 - Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): Those are skateboard inhibitors which the Town could likely remove if it chose
- Doug Serrill (Berkshire Design Group): New look to front area of Turners Falls Pizza House; antiquated shared utility box for water and electrical meters; potential for outdoor seating area; with planter kept, the walkway would be made much narrower than currently; removing planter could create “plaza” concept for outdoor dining
 - John McNamara (resident): I support the plaza idea; concern about aesthetic of very long ramp, and would like to see it spruced up with additional brick and/or plantings
- Brian McHugh (Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority): LOOT’s decorative ramp was done by a CDBG grant 20 years ago; same program funded decorative ramp for building at 28 Bridge Street in Millers Falls.
- Jamie Simpson (resident): Suggested small interspersed plantings to break up the monotony of the long ramp.
- Suzette Cobb (resident): Keep the trees in some way; don’t get rid of greenery
- Brian McHugh (Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority): One option is hardscaping the area, but adding tree grates for either existing transplanted or replacement trees