

## Engineering Technical Review

**Requestor:** Accessibility Committee

**Request Date:** November 20, 2023

**Reviewer(s):** Hiep Lo, ASCT. Lihua He, P.Eng. Bridgette Epp, P.Eng.

**Background:** Tactile Walking Strip Indicators (TWSI)

### Introduction

Tactile Walking Strip Indicators (TWSI) were removed from City designs due to concerns from the public that the strips posed a tripping hazard.

Some nearby Cities also limit TWSI use – others do not limit this use.

### Technical Response:

### Analysis

Tactile pads, often known as tactile paving or tactile walking surface indicators (TWSI) serve as a crucial accessibility feature in various environments. Here are some reasons why installing tactile pads can be beneficial:

1. **Accessibility:** Tactile pads primarily aid individuals with visual impairments or blindness by providing tactile cues, helping them navigate safely through public spaces like sidewalks, train stations, bus stops and pedestrian crossings.
2. **Safety:** They serve as warning indicators, alerting people about potential hazards like at edge of bus stop platforms, the top and bottom of stairs, walkable railway crossings or intersections, reducing the risk of accidents.
3. **Universal Design:** They contribute to the concept of universal design, making spaces more inclusive for everyone, not just those with visual impairments. For instance, they can assist individuals with cognitive disabilities or those who are distracted while walking.
4. **Independence:** Tactile pads empower individuals with visual impairments to move independently and confidently in public areas, promoting their autonomy.
5. **Public Awareness:** By having tactile pads installed, it also raises awareness among the general public about the needs of people with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive and understanding society.

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6. **Provincial Recommendations:** BC does not have legal requirements for the installation of tactile pads; however, the province has provided recommendations through the British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide.

The Design Guide recommends a tactile walking surface to be used to define a pedestrian through zone, differentiating it from other zones and ensuring it is detectable for people who are visually impaired. The design guide states that the surface material should be firm, non-slip, provide good traction in all weather conditions and be glare-free. In addition, the material should provide a smooth rolling surface for people using mobility devices. If differences between materials are intended to be detectable by people with visual impairments, they must be sufficiently detectable under foot and when using a cane and should be tested before being applied.

7. **Translink Accessibility Program:** In 2019, TransLink announced its plans to install tactile and braille signage at every bus stop and tactile walking surfaces at bus stations and exchanges throughout Metro Vancouver.

A number of bus stops in White Rock already have tactile surfaces installed and the city is continuously working with Translink to update existing bus stop to meet their new accessibility requirements.

In summary, installing tactile pads is a fundamental step towards creating environments that prioritize accessibility, safety, and inclusivity for individuals with disabilities.

### Recommendation

Staff recommend and support the use of tactile pads when and where possible. Some suggestions include using certain type and certain colors in different parts of the City where it is appropriate and applicable.

The following suggestions for tactile pad installation include:

- At all major intersections within the City of White Rock
- At high pedestrian traffic areas, including crosswalks in the City at major hubs such as Five Corners, Johnston corridor, and Marine Drive
- At wheelchair let downs at public City Facilities
- At major bus stops and bus exchanges within the City

There are a number of options for colour and textures of tactile pads. Staff recommend the following tactile pad colour recommendations at the following locations:

- Intersections at major hubs, such as Five Corners, Johnston corridor, and Marine Drive should have yellow, non-slip tactile pads to match existing tactile pad installations.

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- Bus stops and bus exchanges should have yellow, non-slip tactile pads to match existing bus stops and Translink's color theme.
- Intersection, with low pedestrian traffic, near residential areas and less frequented bus stops, such as Marine and Nichol intersection, should have grey, non-slip tactile pads to match the concrete.

### Immediate Actions

1. Install tactile pads along wheelchair letdowns for current and future capital project
2. Future project budget requests will take into consideration the installation of tactile pads.

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