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Mayor

CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER

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April 10, 2018
Dear Mr. Koslow,

The Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Committee would like to provide the following input on the Construction Detour Policy for pedestrians that is currently being updated by Public Works. At our February 12th MPAC meeting you made a presentation to MPAC about the construction detour policy for pedestrian access. Based on that presentation and following discussion MPAC recommends the following be included in the updated policy.

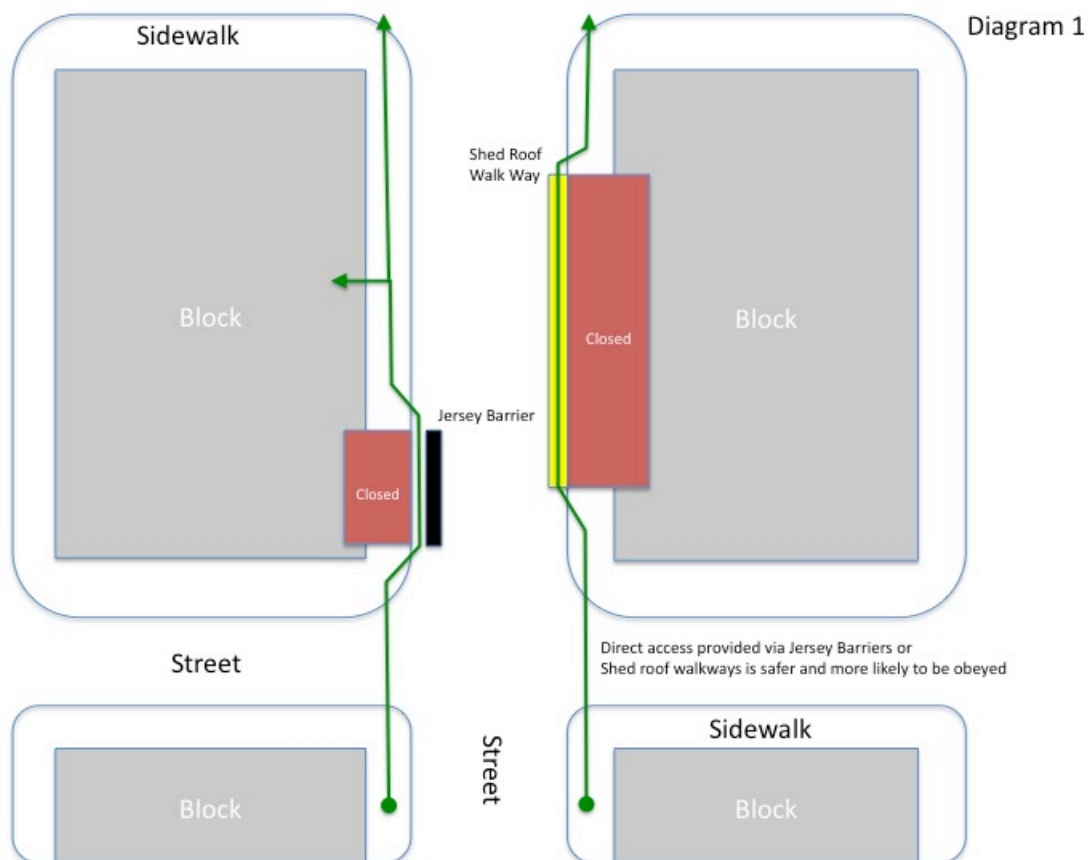
- 1. Pedestrian passage in the form of jersey barriers or shed roof walkways be required as the default when construction activity requires the closure of a sidewalk.** If a detour is necessary, it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to prove why direct safe passage is not necessary. As we understand it, this would be a reversal of current policy that now states city staff must determine if a direct pedestrian passage is to be required rather than a detour. The rule should be that pedestrians are provided with direct safe passage during construction and detours that force pedestrians to cross streets, walk in streets, walk long distances out of their way, are the exception that requires additional consideration and approval.
- 2. Situations when a pedestrian detour should not be considered acceptable include:** Pedestrian priority areas, arterial streets, locations where the construction closure occurs mid-block and thus encourages pedestrians to cross mid block (See photos 1, 2 and 3 and diagram 2). Locations where construction occurs on both sides of an open street forcing pedestrians to walk a block or more out of their way for a detour (See photos 4 and 5 and diagram 3). In the last two examples, our observations show that people are more likely to cross mid block or walk in traffic instead of taking the longer detour, which endangers pedestrians.
- 3. Factors such as speed limit and auto traffic volume should also be considered** in determining if an applicant be allowed to provide a detour rather than direct safe passage via jersey barriers or shed roof walkways. For instance, a local residential street with a speed limit of 25mph or less and a low auto traffic count poses far less danger to pedestrians than a detour on a high volume collector or arterial with a speed limit exceeding 25mph (See photo 7).
- 4. Length of Time:** For closures that last a short amount of time, a few hours to a few days, it may be impractical or unnecessary to require the installation of Jersey barriers or shed roof walkways. However for closures exceeding a few days time for things like the construction of new buildings the long term disruption to pedestrian traffic and area businesses is not acceptable and thus the permit should require the installation of a direct pedestrian route, jersey barriers or shed roof walkway, rather than a detour.
- 5. Signage and Speed Limit:** When a detour requiring pedestrians to cross a street is deemed appropriate, then signage alerting drivers to the presence of pedestrians crossing the street and reducing the speed limit to no more than 25mph should be required.
- 6. ADA Compliance:** Jersey barriers or shed roof walkway must be compliant with ADA regulations, including curb cuts and ramps. The pedestrian route provided must be a minimum 40" wide and free of obstructions or barriers. If a detour is appropriate, the detour must also be ADA compliant and free of obstructions and barriers.
- 7. The policy should discourage sidewalk closures unless absolutely necessary and closures should happen for the shortest period possible.** In many cases sidewalks seem to be closed for longer periods than necessary (photo 6), or take up more room than needed (photo 7). The sidewalk closure policy should aim to make sidewalk closure less desirable than providing direct pedestrian access during

construction through pricing and careful review of site plans when a sidewalk closure is proposed. For instance, the sidewalk at 21st and Broadway was closed for several weeks with no sign of work starting on the construction project.

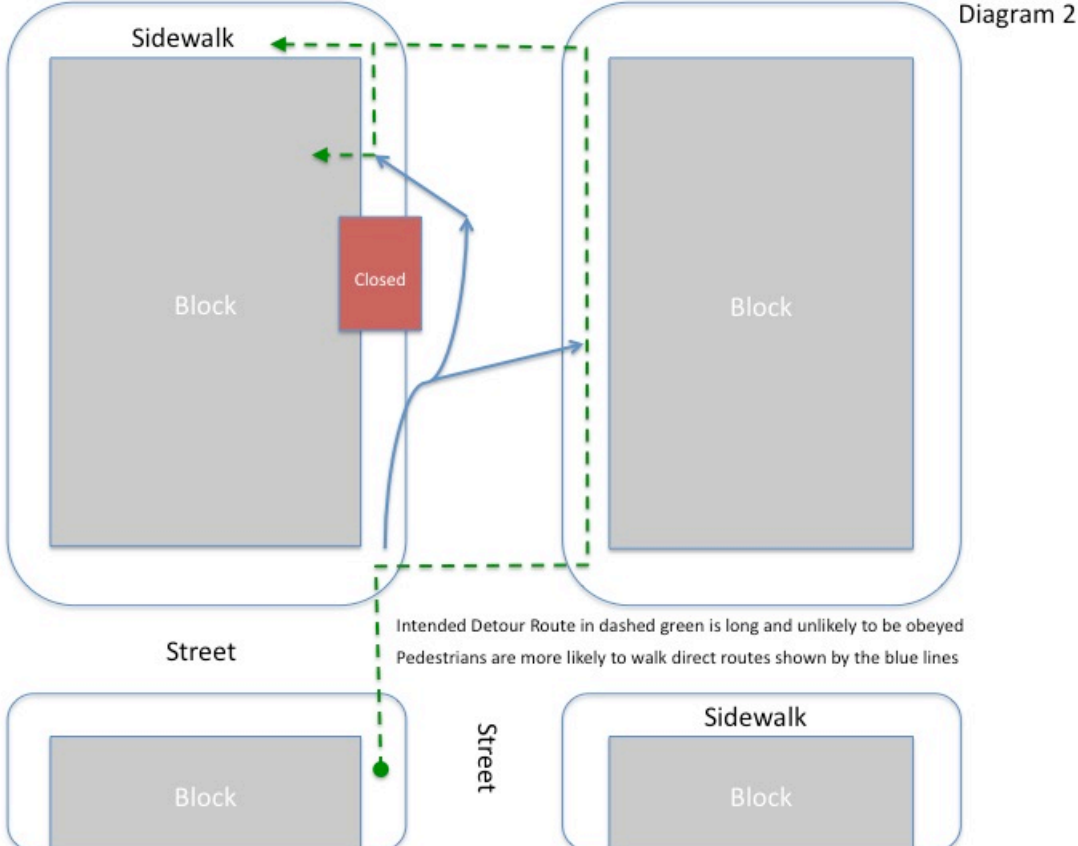
At the February 12th meeting you indicated that the physical length of the closure was one factor being considered as a determinant of whether a detour or direct access was acceptable. MPAC discourages the use of such a matrix as a closure even for 25ft, if done in the middle of a block, can lead to pedestrians crossing the street mid-block. Thus the physical length of the closure is not the most important factor in determining pedestrian safety.

The Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Committee is committed to Denver's Vision Zero Plan, seeking to eliminate traffic deaths in Denver. To this end we respectfully ask that the above changes be considered in the update to the construction detour policy.

Sincerely,
John W. Hayden, Chair, Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Committee



The Graphic above shows how Jersey Barriers and Shed Roof Walkways can be used to provide direct / safe pedestrian access when sidewalk closures are necessary during construction.



17th and Curtis Steet

Photos 1 and 2



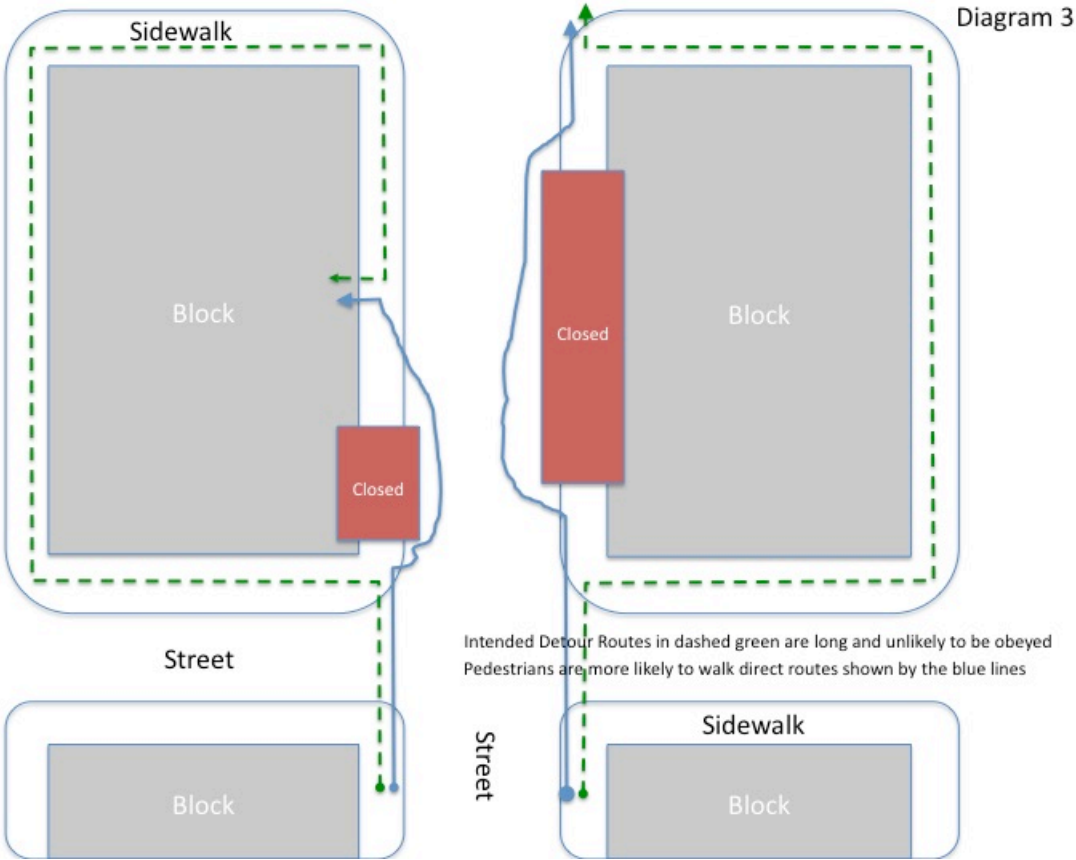
This Sidewalk closure at 17th and Curtis is mid block on a busy Downtown street. Photo above shows what most pedestrians do when confronted with this situation, cross mid block in front of traffic in a location with poor visibility created by the construction.

12th and Bannock

Photo 3



This photo at 12th and Bannock shows the usual pattern of behavior when pedestrians are confronted with a mid block sidewalk closing, entering the street in a dangerous location.



Photos 4 and 5

2nd and Saint Paul

East Side closure



West Side Closure



This section of St. Paul between 2nd and 3rd illustrates the problem of having construction on both sides of a street and not providing direct pedestrian passage via jersey barriers or shed roof walkways. Forcing pedestrians to walk in the street or go over a full city block for a detour while automobiles are allowed to use the street is dangerous and unacceptable.

Photo 6

14th and Bannock



This photo of the Denver Art Museum sidewalk closure illustrates the need to ensure sidewalk closures happen only when absolutely necessary and for the shortest period possible. No exterior work is underway on this face of the Museum yet the sidewalk is entirely closed.

16th and Broadway

Photo 7



This photo of Broadway between 16th and 17th shows the need for pedestrian access on arterial streets. The sign saying “Don’t walk in street” is a poor replacement for an actual safe direct route via jersey barriers that could have been provided where the truck and dumpster are parked. In many cases sidewalks seem to be closed for longer periods than necessary and the closure area seems larger than required for the work being performed. Space that could have been provided to pedestrians for safe passage is often empty or used for storing random construction equipment inefficiently. Perhaps the dumpster or scaffolding in this photo could go on the construction site for instance.