

APS Community Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Date: February 24, 2026
Time: 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: 2 N LaSalle St, Chicago, IL 60602

Committee Attendees:

- Romina Castillo – CDOT – In-Person
- Grant Davis – CDOT / Funding Point Person – In-Person
- David Gleason – CDOT – In-Person
- Dave Miller – CDOT/ APS Implementation Point Person – In-Person
- Anne Zhang – CDOT – In-Person
- Rachel Arfa – MOPD – In-Person
- Doreen Bogus – MOPD – In-Person
- Christina McGleam – MOPD – In-Person
- Jessica Maronto – MOPD – In-Person
- Liliana Schiller – MOPD – In-Person
- Irma Gomez-Fierro – CTA – In-Person
- Bryen Yunashko – DeafBlind Advocate – In-Person
- Amanda Hetzel – Second Sense – COMS – Virtual
- Jaemi Jackson – CMAP – Virtual
- Denise Avant – National Federation of the Blind Illinois – Virtual
- Jae Jin Pak – UIC – Virtual
- Jaret Bozigian – The Chicago Lighthouse – Virtual
- Maureen Henneghan – American Council for the Blind of Metropolitan Chicago – Virtual
- Michael Shaw – Jensen Hughes / Independent Monitor – Virtual
- Carla Mykytiuk – Jacobs/ Moderator – In-Person

Members of the public, ASL and tactile interpreters, and other support staff were present at the meeting.

1. Introductions & Opening Remarks

Attendees and committee members introduced themselves and their institutions.

Carla Mykytiuk (meeting administrator) shared the agenda and some meeting protocol.

Commissioner Rachel Arfa welcomed attendees and expressed appreciation for the collaboration and preparation by committee members. CDOT noted that Acting Commissioner Craig Turner could not attend and shared his regrets.

2. Meeting Format & Communication

Dave Miller: Provided suggestions for communication protocol:

- Closed fist: Interrupt for clarification.
- Open fist: Request to speak in turn.

Reminder provided to committee members to introduce yourself before speaking and allow time for interpreters. Reminder to speak clearly and loudly for closed captions and online participants. Public attendees reminded that all microphone and cameras will be turned off until the public comment portion of the meeting.

3. Committee Background and Purpose

CDOT reiterated the background and purpose of the committee which is to provide feedback to the City of Chicago on all issues relating to the Remedial Plan Order issued by the US District Court which requires the City to install APS at a minimum of 71% of signalized intersections with pedestrian signals within the City by December 31, 2035. The committee must include representatives from CDOT, MOPD, Chicago's blind community, and organizations serving that community.

4. Old Business

a. Public Outreach and Information Campaign

- APS Information Campaign and Website
 - CDOT noted that the website ChicagoAPS.org has been established to:
 - Share information on APS, including intersections equipped with APS, and officials to contact regarding APS,
 - Allow community members to request APS installations or maintenance,
 - Track the status of requests for APS installations or maintenance, and
 - Share agendas and minutes of these meetings.
 - The website has been active since the summer of 2025. CDOT is open to any feedback or further improvements that can be made to it.
 - Question received on how frequently the APS website is updated. CDOT commented that the site is updated periodically at least once a month, and not in real-time. Noted the date displayed shows the time of last update.

- Questions Raised:
 - How are duplicate requests handled?
 - CDOT Engineering stated APS requests are not closed as duplicates; all requests appear on the website within 30 days.
 - Some committee members noted that for other 311 categories, duplicates are closed as “completed,” which can confuse users.
 - Do multiple requests increase priority?
 - No. One request is treated with the same priority as multiple requests.
- Training, Demonstrations, and Media Outreach
 - CDOT noted they are beginning to meet with ward officials and is updating them on the APS program and 311 requests.
 - CDOT commented that they plan to release short, engaging educational videos to spotlight how to use APS.
 - Training and Demonstrations
 - Romina Castillo: Noted progress is being made on videos to demonstrate how to use APS and other related information, with emphasis on the most helpful information for the blind community. Highlighted importance of accessibility features in these videos when releasing this information in video format.
 - Maureen Henneghan: Expressed interest in physical, in-person group trainings to be held for people to experience and understand how to use APS, in addition to releasing informational videos and online information.
 - Jaret Bozigian: Agreed that more training and education on how to cross a street using APS would be helpful. Has had clients who are blind or visually-impaired uncertain if the locator tone is indicating whether it is safe to cross or not. Education and training is important to ensure people know how to use APS safely.
 - Denise Avant: Agreed that hands-on training, videos on the city website, or YouTube channel would be helpful.
 - Also suggested that there needs to be a resource to train people on how to fill out request forms for APS Installation and Maintenance using accessibility/screen reading technology.
 - Commissioner Arfa: Agreed that these are great ideas. Encouraged present committee members to participate in the videos.
 - Media
 - Jaret Bozigian: Asked if news coverage is being pushed to showcase APS

- Anne Zhang/Romina Castillo: Will bring it up with CDOT communications officer, with goals to tie to milestones and videos to highlight APS.
- Dave Miller: CDOT can also highlight how implementation is ramping and scaling up to show progress in the city
- Jamie Jackson: Outreach and coordination should also include CPS to help educate on how to cross safely.
- General Design Feedback
 - Doreen Bogus: Noted as part of the training campaign, it would be helpful to have a description of the shape of APS structure to help clarify (for example) what is a bus stop sign, what is a signal pole, and what is the APS pole?
 - Dave Miller: CDOT to work with Ms. Castillo to explore this further.

i. APS Goals

CDOT reiterated that APS installation goals follow the **Remedial Plan Order**:

- **71%** of signalized intersections with pedestrian signals will have APS within **10 years**.
- Potential expansion to **100%** within **15 years**.
- Additional details of installation goals can be found in the publicly available APS Remedial Plan Order.

b. CDOT and CTA Coordination

- CDOT reported on presenting at CTA’s advisory committee meeting
- Irma Gomez-Fierro: Coordination with the CTA ASAP program is going well. APS installed at/near stations can be highlighted on CTA website. Received feedback of a lot of noise around some intersections, with combination of ambient noise, CTA signs, and APS beeping. Noted that there is an audible difference between APS beeping and CTA beeping.
- Dave Miller: Noted CTA is also installing APS as part of the Austin Green Line station project near city limits.

c. APS Design & Functionality

- APS Settings
 - Concerns on lack of street name messaging
 - Maureen: When push button says ‘Wait’, it would be useful for it to also state street information, example ‘Wait Milwaukee’.
 - Dave Miller: CDOT follows MUTCD standards to provide street names only when APS are less than 10 feet apart. CDOT exploring

use of optional messaging to provide street name information when APS push button is pressed and held for an extended duration (extended press). This is the main focus of the optional extended press functionality. Main goal is to keep APS consistent.

- Michael Shaw: Agreed that consistent messaging with APS is critical.
- Denise: Agreed that the messaging needs to be thoughtful and consistent. Simplicity and consistency are important for APS to help people use them effectively.
- Amanda Hetzel: Supported option for speech message on extended press. Noted percussive tones are better as the base press option as its easier to hear in a lot of ambient noise to locate APS.

d. Tactile Surfaces within Crosswalks

- CDOT noted that in researching this topic, the design team found some examples in Japan and other locations but did not find any written guidance on where or how to use the tactile surfaces.
 - Bryen: Japan has made a lot of progress on accessibility and guidance and visitors do not need any outside assistance to cross the street.
 - CDOT requested any sources or information Bryen might have on installations in Japan or other countries.
- CDOT wants to understand potential design, materials, and maintenance of tactile crosswalks.

e. APS Volume

- Volume of APS: Reiterated the importance of proper APS sound calibration.
- CDOT noted they have received complaints about the sound being too high or too low. CDOT to continue refining the standard sound and to investigate further. Currently, APS automatically adjust volume in response to ambient noise, but results vary by manufacturer. CDOT is also approaching the issue as an educational campaign to explain to communities and residents the purpose of the sounds.
- Public comment received from person living in Lakeview near a six-way intersection where APS is particularly loud. APS could be heard on the upper floors of the building, at least 100 feet away at sidewalk level, across the intersection, and reflected off buildings.

5. Committee Feedback

a. Prioritization Methodology

- CDOT noted they had received minor feedback from plaintiffs on the draft prioritization methodology.
- David Gleason: Provided overview of methodology for the committee. Prioritization categories defined in the Remedial Plan Order.
 - Install APS with new signal
 - Install APS with full modernization
 - Public Requests should come to the front
 - Priority Categories:
 - 1. Intersections with exclusive pedestrian phases, midblock crossings, T-intersections, Intersections of three or more streets, Intersections identified as top 100 in Complex Intersections Study
 - 2. Intersections with leading pedestrian intervals, protected turn phases
 - 3. Intersections in proximity to public amenities:
 - Public Transportation
 - Transit stations
 - Transfer points
 - Streets under elevated train lines
 - Public Facilities
 - Hospitals
 - Police Stations
 - Major pedestrian attractions
 - Organizations serving the blind and seniors
 - Government buildings
 - 4. Everything else that is signalized with a pedestrian signal
 - Noted sub-prioritization within those buckets. Considering factors such as equity (MOBEC rating). If two intersections have almost the same prioritization score, prioritize based on which hits more boxes for the subcategories.
- Commissioner Arfa: Noted that MOPD and CDH released a report of how many people with different disabilities live in different areas.
- Comments from committee on prioritization
 - Bryen Yunashko: Noted APS are most helpful at major streets (i.e. Archer Ave, Pulaski, Central, Cicero). The greatest concern is major intersections which are unsafe for vision-impaired.
 - Analysis could be done to determine where APS could be placed to provide most impact for access across major barriers and cover largest areas for blind or low-vision people.

b. Additional Accessibility Concerns

- Potential for Braille Signage
 - Feedback on Braille Signage on APS buttons
 - CDOT is considering whether to add Braille text to APS signage. According to MUTCD, Braille is listed as optional and not a requirement.
 - Feedback from committee:
 - Irma Gomez-Fierro: CTA has been piloting Braille bus stops to include route direction and number. These tend to get vandalized due to lower height compared to other bus signs. CTA is piloting sticker with raised letters and Braille goes on top of the metal sign.
 - Dave Miller: Requested Ms. Gomez-Fierro/CTA share what they are using for Braille so CDOT can investigate further for APS usage.
 - Bryen Yunashko: Noted Braille should also include high gloss letters for low vision.
- APS Information on GPS wayfinding mapping apps:
 - Bryen Yunashko: Since people who are blind or vision-impaired often use GPS (like Google Maps) for walking, asking if APS is planned to be coordinated with GPS to identify intersections with APS?
 - Dave Miller: CDOT is looking into this or seeking alternative ways to communicate this information. CDOT to talk to Traffic Safety group to find a contact. Noted Google and other mapping entities do not work for the city, so not sure what is compatible or what can be done in this regard.
- General Design comments:
 - Several commenters agreed that consistency is very important in design and operation. APS should be located in similar places and function in similar ways all across the City so that people visiting new areas understand how to use them.
- Difficulties crossing complex intersections:
 - John Gleichman: Architect who has lived in Chicago for over 45 years who has lost his sight.
 - Angled streets and six-way streets almost impossible to cross for people who are blind or visually impaired. Frequently leads people who are blind or visually impaired to walk out of the crosswalk, leading to dangerous situations.
 - Tokyo or Seoul noted to have examples of tactile crosswalks.

- Question/suggestion posed for CDOT to do a field visit with visually-impaired pedestrians so designers can experience their perspective and techniques.

6. Action Items

CDOT:

- APS Website
 - Add basic instructions on how to use APS until full training materials and videos are released.
 - Confirm whether language is present on whether the tactile arrow points in the direction of the crossing.
- Continue evaluating feasibility and cost implications of optional extended-press features and development of policy standard for optional APS speech messages to indicate street names.
- Explore options to provide information on intersection locations with APS using GPS/Google Maps other similar navigation platforms. Check with Division of Traffic Safety to identify appropriate contact.
- Develop a plan to host in-person trainings to lead groups on how to use APS.
- Increase reach of APS education through CDOT social media platforms and CDOT YouTube channel.
- Coordinate with CDOT communications officer regarding opportunities for APS news coverage. Also consider coordination with schools and CPS.
- Develop a resource to assist individuals in completing APS Request and Maintenance forms using accessible screen reading technology.
- Continue exploring and refining volume settings and policy standards for APS.
- Consider organizing field training for CDOT staff to walk with blind or low-vision pedestrians or committee members at intersections to better understand user experience, particularly at complex and skewed intersections. Reach out to John Gleichman, who offered assistance to guide this.
- Continue investigating tactile wayfinding options inside crosswalks. Look at international examples like Seoul or Tokyo.
- Review Braille bus stop signage policy from CTA pilot and determine next steps and potential feasibility incorporating similar strategies for Braille on APS signs.

Committee:

- Participate in APS educational video development and filming
- Review APS Prioritization Methodology and provide comments or feedback

CTA

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- Share methods, strategies, and lessons learned from tactile Braille bus stop signage pilot with CDOT.

a. Next Meetings:

- May 19, August 18, November 17 (all Tuesdays, 2–4 PM).
- Dates and times pending Committee confirmation.

7. Closing

- Dave Miller thanked participants for input and emphasized ongoing collaboration.