



Pole Permit Policy

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The Problem

- Sidewalks are a town priority
 - See Master Plan, “Sidewalks are for People”
- Utility poles and infrastructure block existing sidewalks
- Moving is expensive and charged to town
- New permits can block future sidewalks
 - Short-term thinking

Examples



Suggested Action

- Request SB establish forward-looking policy
 - Condition permit approval on not blocking any current, planned, or potential sidewalk
- When you're in a hole, stop digging
- DPW/PWPB need to participate
 - Identify where sidewalks would go
 - Even if far future
 - Poles last 30, 50 – 150 years!
 - Placements last longer – routes are stable
- Not a complete/perfect solution – a start

Reference:

<http://www.americanpoleandtimber.com/wp-content/uploads/how-long-do-wood-poles-last.pdf>

Benefits

- Reinforce commitment to accessibility
- Put the utility companies on notice
 - Town wants ability to add sidewalks
 - Without unnecessary relocation cost
- Avoids the delay/cost of utility redesign
- Ensure consistency
 - Relying on public in the hearings is risky
- Incrementally make some situations better
- Avoid making any situation worse.

Obstacles

- Engineering to fit with existing pole lines
 - Incremental cost now is less than relocating later
- Space in rights of way
 - Plan, easements, be creative
- “It’s different” – changing short-term focus is hard
 - **Not** changing is harder/expensive

The bottom line

- Decisions on sidewalks should be planful
 - Not driven by total cost of short-term decisions driven by convenience
- Use the pole permit process as leverage
- One small step toward an accessible future
- Please vote to ask SB to consider/implement



Thanks for your time

