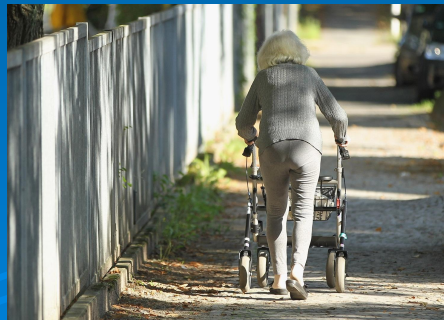


# Pole Permit Policy

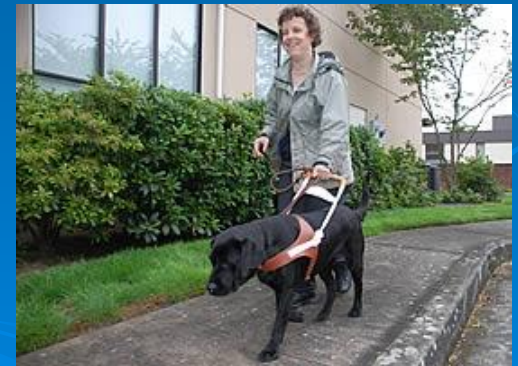
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July 2022



Southborough, Massachusetts



# 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



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# 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
- “Its different” – changing short-term focus is hard
  - **Not** changing is harder/expensive

# The bottom line

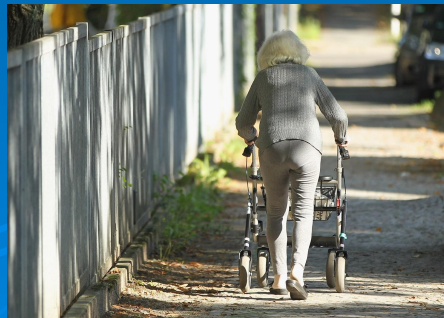
- ❑ Decisions on sidewalks should be planful
  - Not driven by total cost of short-term decisions driven by convenience
- ❑ Use the pole permit process as leverage
- ❑ One small step toward an accessible future
- ❑ Please vote to ask SB to consider/implement



Thanks for your time



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