



Department Source: Public Works  
To: City Council  
From: City Manager & Staff  
Council Meeting Date: January 6, 2025  
Re: Sidewalk Council Report

## Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council information a report on sidewalks.

## Discussion

Sections 24-35 and 29-5.1 (d) of the City's Code of Ordinances sets forth sidewalk construction standards and requirements associated with new developments. This covers the vast majority of new sidewalks constructed within the City. These sidewalks are either constructed by the developer of a commercial development or by a residential home builder prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. The Performance Contract signed by each developer as part of the platting process states that "the Subdivider shall construct, erect and install all improvements and utilities required in connection with the final plat of the subdivision, including sidewalks and all improvements and utilities shown on the plat and related construction plans, within 36 months after the City Council approves the plat." In practice, the developer delegates that requirement to the home builder so as to ensure that the new sidewalk isn't damaged during home construction. Historically, the City has not enforced the 36-month timeframe for installation of the sidewalks to ensure there is no damage during construction of the structure.

Chapter 29, Appendix A, of the City's Code of Ordinances sets forth the design standards for streets, sidewalks, and bikeways.

- Residential streets are required to have a sidewalk five (5) feet wide on both sides of the roadway. The only exception is a cul-de-sac less than two hundred and fifty (250) feet in length.
- Non-residential and neighborhood collector streets have this same requirement. Collector and arterial roadways are required to provide a five (5) foot wide sidewalk on one side and an eight (8) foot pedway on the other side.
- In the downtown area, since the buildings typically have a zero-foot setback, sidewalk widths vary but are typically required to be constructed the full width of the right of way. Sidewalks constructed at the back of curb outside the downtown area are typically required to be constructed at six (6) feet.

The only exception to the above requirements is when there is an obstruction which prevents the full width from being constructed. Minimum ADA requirements provide for a minimum width of 36 inches provided a passing space is provided at intervals of 200 feet maximum. A passing space is required to measure 60 inches by 60 inches. The clear width is permitted to be reduced to 32 inches for a maximum length of 24 inches under certain conditions.



# City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Prior to 1974 the City did not require sidewalks in new subdivisions and prior to 1995 Boone County did not require sidewalks in their subdivisions. This has resulted in a lot of existing streets built without sidewalks at all. There was also a time when the sidewalk width requirement was only four (4) feet.

Public Works looks at all roadway projects in terms of constructing a “complete street.” Therefore, we consider the installation of sidewalks meeting the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), bicycle lanes, etc. to accommodate all users of the roadway. Outside of sidewalks constructed as part of Community Development’s processes, Public Works typically uses the City’s Sidewalk Master Plan to choose and develop capital improvement projects for standalone sidewalk projects to fill in sidewalk gaps. In addition, sidewalk improvements are included in roadway capital improvement projects by reconstructing the existing sidewalks to current standards and filling in sidewalk gaps. Finally, sidewalk curb ramps that do not meet the ADA criteria are reconstructed to meet the ADA requirements on roadways that are asphalt overlaid as part of the street maintenance pavement preservation program.

Public Works also has a residential and downtown sidewalk 50/50 sidewalk renovation cost share program which is available to property owners provided funds are available. The downtown program has been in place for many years with residential properties being added in more recent times. This program can also be used by property owners with pedways on their property.

Currently, Public Works has Safe Streets for All grant money to review our current complete street policy (2004). A consultant has been hired and the project is underway. The project includes a robust public involvement process and includes a Council work session early in 2025. This project was born out of a “Livable Streets Policy” developed by Local Motion. Public Works agreed that it made sense to review our existing policy, as it does all policies periodically. Therefore, we pursued and received grant money in the amount of \$350,000 to move this project forward. A representative of Local Motion was on the consultant review committee and a copy of Local Motion’s “Livable Streets Policy” will be provided to the consultant for background for their use in the development of a new, updated policy for all users of the City’s roadways.

New sidewalks are constructed using the City’s adopted specifications and standards. These cover the depth of the sidewalk, its location within the right of way, the base it is to be placed on, concrete mix design to be used, steel placement within the sidewalk, etc. These specifications and standards are promulgated by the Directors of City Utilities and Public Works under our sole authority as Professional Engineers licensed in the State of Missouri and directors over streets, sanitary sewers, storm sewers, etc. During the Public Hearing for the Forum Boulevard project we discussed the possibility of wider pedways and/or including a pedway on both sides of that roadway. A finalized update to our existing complete streets policy would go a long way in guiding how we design and construct future major roadways.



The responsibility for the adjoining landowner to maintain the adjacent sidewalk is set out in the property maintenance portion of the city code. Section 6-71 adopts the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) and Section 302.3 of the IPMC requires the property owner to keep sidewalks in a proper state of repair and free from hazardous conditions. Section 24-12 of the city code addresses the need to keep the sidewalk clean of debris and obstructions, including snow and ice removal. Section 24-10 of the City Code makes it an offense to intentionally damage sidewalks.

Sec. 6-71 - Adoption of International Property Maintenance Code 302.3 – Sidewalks and driveways All sidewalks, walkways, stairs, driveways, parking spaces and similar areas shall be kept in a proper state of repair, and maintained free from hazardous conditions.

Sec. 24-12. - Cleaning sidewalks.

All persons are hereby required to keep the sidewalks in front of, or adjacent to, the property or premises owned or occupied by them or under their control, within the city, clear and free from rubbish, filth, refuse, fat, oil, grease, dirt, snow, ice and from any and all obstructions and dangerous agencies of every kind and description whatsoever; and any person failing to observe the provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor.

In practice, the Neighborhood Services Division within the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department handles residential property and Building and Site Development within the Community Development Department handles commercial property. Enforcement of the minimum construction standards is the responsibility of the Public Works Director pursuant to Section 24-33

Currently the only mention of pedways in the City's Code of Ordinances is within Chapter 29, the Unified Development Code. Within Chapter 29 a pedway is defined as "a path that is physically separated from the roadway and intended for shared use by pedestrians, joggers, skaters, and bicyclists." The practice to date has been for maintenance of pedways to occur in the same manner as sidewalks.

### Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact:

Long-Term Impact:

### Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

#### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable and Sustainable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Inclusive and Equitable Community, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary

#### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility, Tertiary Impact: Tertiary



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## Legislative History

Date	Action

## Suggested Council Action

For information only.