



Building sidewalks on local streets to reduce accessibility barriers

Disability, Access, Inclusion and Advisory Committee

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Fiona Chapman, Manager, Pedestrian Projects

Presentation overview

- Issue
- Magnitude of the issue
- Legislation
- Sidewalk rationale
- Policy background
- Proposed solution
- Common concerns
- Addressing concerns
- Options and examples
- Staff recommendations
- Feedback



Photo caption: No sidewalk on local street.

Issue: missed opportunities to add essential infrastructure

- Current Council-mandated process (2002) requires Ward Councillor sign-off on local street sidewalk installation, as proxy for resident input
- City staff are unable to add missing sidewalks (on even one side) to local streets during many reconstruction projects; this is often due to residents' objection
- **Road reconstruction occurs once-in-a-lifetime and offers an efficient and cost-effective opportunity to provide universally accessible, safe and walkable networks**

Sidewalk ends at turn with poor visibility



Photo caption: Sidewalk on Baby Point Road in Etobicoke York ends at turn with poor visibility on local street.

Sidewalk does not continue on other side of street



Photo caption: Sidewalk on Combe Avenue in Etobicoke York does not continue on other side of the street.

Sidewalk ends mid-block on local street



Photo caption: Cocksfield Avenue in North York where sidewalk ends midblock.

Sidewalk ends mid-block on local street



Photo caption: The sidewalk on Mocassin Trail in North York ends midblock.

Local street without sidewalks



Photo caption: No sidewalk on Reidmount Avenue in Scarborough with pedestrian and child cyclist.

Snowy conditions narrow the passable space



Photo caption: No sidewalk on snowy street has a narrow passable space.

Local streets without sidewalks are common

- Almost ¼ of Toronto's local streets don't have sidewalks

Local streets in the City of Toronto (2014)

District	Km without sidewalks	Km Total	Percent of local street with no sidewalks
Toronto-East York	67	651	10.3 %
Scarborough	183	785	23.3 %
Etobicoke York	258	1001	25.8 %
North York	294	885	33.2 %
City of Toronto	802	3322	24.1 %

Provincial accessibility legislation requires municipalities to remove barriers

- AODA enacted to remove barriers to accessibility in Ontario
- AODA's Built Environment Standards requires municipalities to conform, starting 1 January 2016
 - City does this already by installing tactile walking surface indicators, cross slopes, curb ramps, audible pedestrian signals, etc.



Sidewalks promote safety, accessibility and walkability



Photo caption: Ashtonbee Road in Scarborough before and after sidewalk is added.

Sidewalks are essential infrastructure

- Safety
 - Sidewalks offer a protected, dedicated space for all pedestrians, especially the most vulnerable, and when visibility is poor (i.e. weather events; dark)
- Universal accessibility
 - Sidewalks provide universal accessibility, regardless of ability level, including for all residents or visitors with mobility challenges and those with limited sensory or cognitive limitations
- Physical activity
 - Sidewalks help counter obesity and inactivity among residents through a built environment that promote safe walking and cycling; significant public health care costs of doing nothing
- Safe routes to school
 - Walking and cycling to school develops lifelong habits and improves learning
- Aging in place
 - Sidewalks support access and gentle exercise for seniors and caregivers
- Sustainable growth
 - As Toronto's population grows, we can no longer accommodate more vehicles on our roads (due to the costs of congestion) or additional GHG emissions

City policy supports sidewalks

- Essential Sidewalks Links (2002)
 - Focuses sidewalk building efforts on “arterial” and “collector” streets; “locals” must receive signoff by ward Councillor
- Toronto Accessibility Guidelines (2004)
 - The City’s Standard exceeds the AODA minimum sidewalk widths
- Toronto Walking Strategy (2009)
 - Guiding Principles: universal accessibility, safety and design excellence; Implementation action item 3.1 is “Constructing New Sidewalks”
- Road Classification System (2012).
 - Local roads have sidewalks on at least one side
- And many others, including increased snow clearing standards...

Common concerns

- Loss of driveway parking
- Loss of hard or soft landscaping
- Loss of street trees
- Reduced 'rural' feel and home value
- Responsibility for winter maintenance
- 'Outsiders' will use the street
- Prefer traffic calming to reduce and/or slow down vehicles

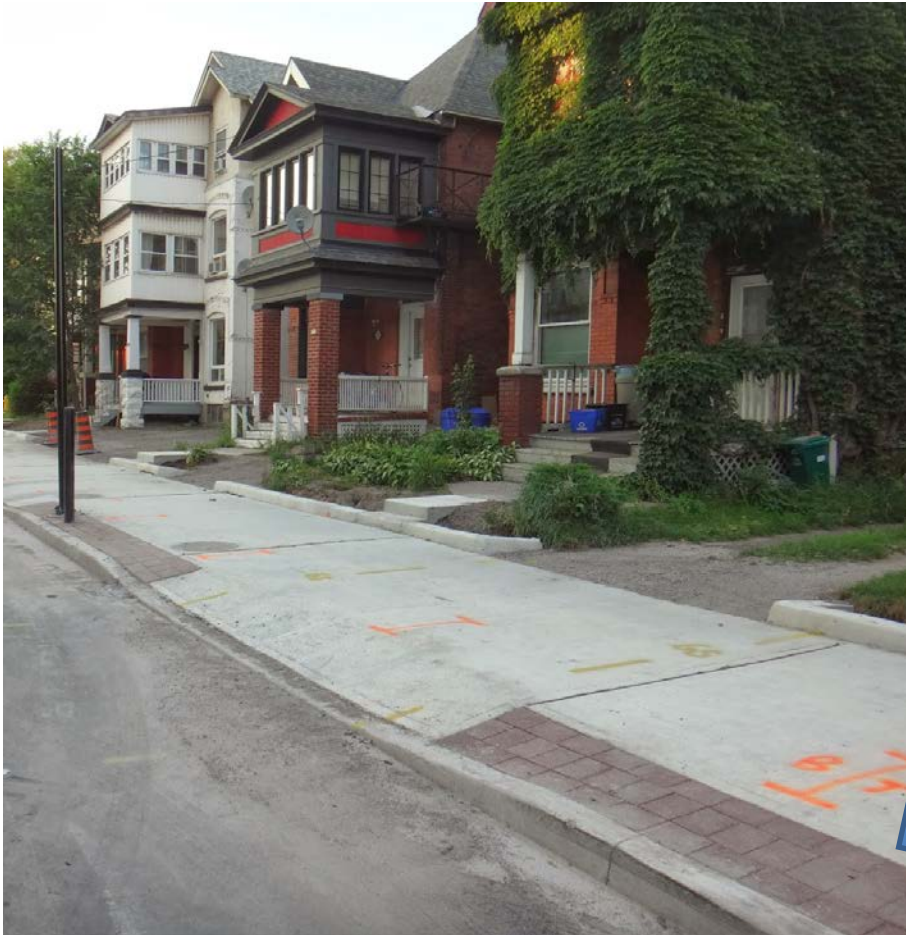
Addressing concerns

What we do already to address concerns:

- Reduce impacts to trees
 - Including rolled curbs, rubber sidewalks, sidewalk placement
- Work with residents to reposition driveways
- Use sidewalks to narrow wider roads and slow traffic
 - only possible during reconstruction
- Use pavers to enhance aesthetics

To facilitate acceptance of sidewalks, it may be necessary to expand our sidewalk vocabulary with design options.

Developing design options: materials



Ribbon of pavers next to curb provides higher level of aesthetics and space for snow storage in winter.

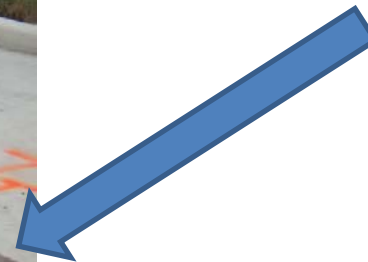


Photo caption: sidewalk with a ribbon of pavers next to the curb.

Recent sidewalk construction on Chine Drive



Photo caption: Chine Drive in Scarborough before and after recent sidewalk installation.

Recent sidewalk construction near school on Chine Drive



Photo caption: Chine Drive in Scarborough before and after sidewalk installation near school.

Staff recommendation: new protocol for all local street reconstructions

- In case of all local street reconstruction projects, sidewalks be added as of right on at least one side for accessibility, safety and walkability reasons
 - Staff would recommend preferred alignment based on existing network, and impacts on trees, landscaping and utilities.
 - Staff make every effort to accommodate local needs and wishes.



How would you advise the City of Toronto on this revised approach?