

IE6.8 Attachment 2

Attachment 2 - Missing Sidewalk Installation Policy

Policy Statement

Sidewalks are critical transportation infrastructure to support a safe, accessible and walkable city. This policy enables the City of Toronto to install sidewalks where they are missing to remove barriers to accessibility, complete gaps in Toronto's walking network, and help all residents and visitors connect to transit, schools and other neighbourhood amenities.

Installing Sidewalks on Arterials and Collectors

1. Sidewalks shall be installed, where they are missing, on both sides of the road
 - a) during road reconstruction
 - b) as a standalone capital project based on identified needs and budget availability

Installing Sidewalks on Local Roads

1. The General Manager of Transportation Services has delegated authority to install sidewalks:
 - a) where they are missing, on one or both sides of the road as part of road reconstruction.
 - b) where accommodation for a person or persons with a disability, as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code, is identified.
2. City staff will evaluate, prioritize, and propose additional missing sidewalks for Council consideration according to the below prioritization criteria and prepare an annual report for Infrastructure & Environment Committee with recommendations for action.
 - City staff shall notify ward councillors when missing sidewalks are to be designed in their wards under delegated authority.
 - City staff shall undertake design consultation with adjacent property owners to minimize impacts to public and private property.
 - City staff shall consult with Parks, Recreation and Forestry Division to ensure all reasonable measures are taken to mitigate negative impacts to trees.
 - Prioritization criteria for sidewalks for Council consideration (item 2 above):
 - Existing works planned such as substantial road resurfacings involving changes to curbs or other infrastructure.
 - Safety issues. Sidewalk construction projects are a top priority where a pedestrian safety issue or issues are documented. This may include, but is not limited to, where collisions have occurred, or at locations where safety-related complaints are received. Sidewalks adjacent to and leading to schools may be considered priorities to allow safe routes to school. Staff will use evidence (e.g.

collision data, traffic speed and volume), site observation (e.g. sight lines) and professional judgement to verify and document safety issues.

- Connectivity. A sidewalk construction project's priority is raised on streets where connections to schools, transit, neighbourhood amenities, businesses, and other links to the pedestrian network can be completed.
- Technical feasibility and cost effectiveness. A sidewalk construction project's priority is raised when there is greater technical feasibility and lower cost. Topography, grading, drainage type, and obstructions such as utilities and vegetation may pose technical obstacles and raise the cost of standalone projects. Where technical obstacles are present, more time is often needed for assessment and design.

Design Criteria for Installation of Sidewalks

1. Side(s) of the street:

- a. The Road Classification System (2012) is the primary factor used to determine whether a sidewalk is built on one or both sides of the street.
- b. Sidewalks are built, where they are missing, on both sides of arterial and collector roads, and on one or both sides of local roads.

2. Wherever possible, sidewalks should be installed on both sides of local roads.

Sidewalks may be installed on only one side of local roads based on the following criteria:

- Low current and future pedestrian demand, taking into consideration current and projected area population density, proximity to transit, schools, parks and other trip generators;
- Lack of available space in the public right-of-way, existing pavement width, one-way or two-way street operation, on-street parking is permitted;
- Obstructions such as existing underground and aboveground utilities, trees, soft and hard landscaping
- High construction costs due to technical challenges associated with topography and water drainage patterns; and,
- Possibility for natural water infiltration. Some reconstructed local streets may be built with sidewalks on one side, and swales or ditches on the other to balance the needs of walkability and natural water infiltration. This is a compromise that is desirable in areas of the city with appropriate soil, topography and land uses.

3. If a sidewalk is to be constructed on only one side of the street, the following criteria is used to determine the most appropriate side:

- Connectivity to trip generators and to existing sidewalks and trail networks
- Least obstruction
- Minimize impacts to existing features (landscaping, trees, etc.)
- Feasibility and cost of construction
- Winter maintenance considerations

4. Sidewalks are to be constructed in accordance with the Streetscape Manual standards and be of sufficient width to ensure safety and accessibility. Sidewalks on roads not covered by the Streetscape Manual shall be made of concrete.

- a. Arterials and Collectors: 2.1m minimum clearway, higher for high pedestrian volume roads
 - b. Local Roads: 1.8m minimum clearway for low pedestrian volumes and 2.1m minimum clearway for high pedestrian volumes
5. A planting and furnishing zone or “boulevard” is to be placed, where feasible, between the sidewalk and the roadway to protect pedestrians, allow space for snow storage, and for tree growth. On arterial and collector roads, this zone is a high design priority.

Exceptions

1. Sidewalks may not be installed on Local Roads under the following conditions, subject to the approval of the General Manager, Transportation Services:

- Where there are major slope or grade issues.

On short, dead-end streets, such as cul-de-sacs and, where no pedestrian connections, including trails and footpaths, to parks, schools or other streets are present or planned in the reasonably foreseeable future. Where trails or pathways are present, staff shall consider pedestrian volumes.

2. Sidewalks may not be installed on both sides of collector roads due to technical feasibility under the following conditions, subject to the approval of the General Manager, Transportation Services:

- Insufficient right-of-way or pavement width.
- Abutting land use is exclusively low-density residential.

Related Policies

City Council and its Boards and Committees have adopted the following policies in support of walking and the construction of sidewalks where they are missing:

- City-Wide Program for Provision of Essential Sidewalks Links (2002) states that sidewalks should be provided on all streets, including arterial, collector and local roads, and that sidewalk construction should be considered a “Health and Safety” initiative within Council's priorities.
- Toronto Pedestrian Charter (2002) has six principles: accessibility, equity, health and well-being, environmental sustainability, personal and community safety, and community cohesion and vitality.
- Toronto Seniors Strategy: Toward an Age-Friendly City (2013) includes direction to City divisions to create policies to support a comprehensive and universally accessible transportation system; develop walkable mixed-use and transit-supportive neighbourhoods, and design public streets and open spaces that are safe, comfortable and accessible. It directs staff to improve pedestrian safety by taking steps to reduce the number pedestrian and vehicle collisions. The revised 2018 version Recommendation 19 seeks to construct new sidewalks on roads where they are missing to improve walkability, mobility and accessibility of city streets.
- Toronto's Official Plan (2004) states the importance of improving the public realm and identifies universally accessible sidewalks in all parts of the city, including in industrial areas, as key infrastructure in the transportation network.

- Toronto Walking Strategy (2009) has three Guiding Principles: universal accessibility, safety and design excellence. Implementation action item 3-1 states, “Construct new sidewalks during road reconstruction, or when applicable, through the development review process – on both sides of the street in all areas where they are missing.”
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2012). The Province of Ontario proclaimed the Design of Public Spaces Standard as part of the AODA. The City of Toronto must comply for all newly constructed or redeveloped infrastructure as of January 1, 2016, including sidewalks, walkways, stairs, and curb ramps (Part IV.1 of O. Reg. 191/11). While the AODA does not specifically state that sidewalks are required, it does speak to the removal of “barriers” as anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society.
- Toronto Road Classification System (2012). The system classifies Toronto’s roads to facilitate operational decisions. It stipulates that arterial and collector roads have sidewalks on both sides and local roads have them on one or both sides.
- Toronto Green Standard (2013) requires all City-led capital projects to meet the Tier 1 Green Standard, including that sidewalks be installed with a minimum clearway of 2.1m to safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrian flow.
- City Council’s Strategic Plan (2014) includes in Action #3, creating “an integrated framework for movement in the city that supports walking, cycling, transit and goods movement as key priorities.”
- Healthy Streets – City of Toronto (2014) includes a jurisdictional and literature reviews with a focus on streets as vital health infrastructure. It includes reviews of several studies showing that people walk more and have better physical health on residential streets with sidewalks, and that sidewalks are associated with safer walking environments.
- Strong Neighbourhood Strategy 2020 (2014) names measures to improve healthy lives, the built environment and walkability, including to “Promote active living”. As part of the public consultation, many residents and community groups mentioned barriers to walkability, such as the lack of sidewalks, as a factor preventing them from accessing healthy food, transit, and other public amenities.
- Official Plan Amendment (2014) includes “complete streets”, such that Toronto’s streets are designed for all modes, and users of all ages and abilities.
- The Disability, Access, and Inclusion Advisory Committee (2016) voted unanimously to support the installation of sidewalks where they are missing, because sidewalks remove barriers to accessibility.
- Vision Zero Road Safety Plan (2016) is a comprehensive approach to improve road safety which emphasizes the protection for the most vulnerable users such as pedestrians, cyclists, older adults and school children. This Plan supports additional capital funding for missing sidewalks.