

PURPOSE

To provide programs to establish ‘Complete Streets’ in the City of Knoxville in an ongoing effort to promote the health, safety and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of the City.

Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street. Construction of Complete Streets advances the interests of the City. Thus, the goal of the City of Knoxville is to upgrade existing streets within the city limits to Complete Street standards.

A network of sidewalks is necessary for the safety of pedestrians and the creation of Complete Streets in the City of Knoxville. Research published by the National Cooperative Highway Research Program has found that on streets with sidewalks, pedestrians are 88 percent less likely to be struck by a car while walking along the street. The preeminent street design manual used in this country, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials’ “A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets,” notes that “sidewalks are integral parts of city streets.”

This ordinance sets out the requirements for the construction of sidewalks and/or pedestrian pathways within school parental responsibility zones as defined by Knox County Schools, and along major and minor arterials and collectors as defined by the Major Road Plan. It also creates an advisory board, the Pedestrian Safety Board, to pursue the goal of complete streets for the entire City of Knoxville.

DEFINITIONS

Expansion: The expanding of an existing building or structure to increase overall size and/or square footage.

Knoxville-Knox County Minimum Subdivision Regulations: Available at _____.

Major Road Plan for the City of Knoxville and Knox County, TN: Available at <http://archive.knoxmpc.org/zoning/mrp04txt.pdf> or contact Knoxville Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission at 215-2500.

Parent Responsibility Zone (PRZ): The PRZ for elementary schools is one mile and it is 1.5 miles for middle and high schools. Parents are responsible for student transportation within the PRZ. These distances have been interpreted to be by the roadway system from the front door of a school and not “as-the-crow-flies”.

Pedestrian Plan: The Pedestrian Plan promotes pedestrian safety and access to help ensure that Knoxville is a safe, convenient, and attractive place to walk. It will establish a Pedestrian Route Network emphasizing safe routes to school and connections to transit. The routes include streets, walkways, and trails that connect schools, libraries, parks, neighborhoods, and

commercial districts throughout the City. It will identify priority street segments along these routes for targeted improvements over the next twenty years. The plan also identifies new pedestrian design elements to promote pedestrian safety and access throughout the City.

Renovation: The restoration of an existing structure to a better state.

APPLICABILITY

Sidewalks or approved pedestrian pathways shall be required by the City within school parental responsibility zones (PRZs) for all new construction, and for renovations or expansions, pursuant to the following provisions:

- 1) Renovations with a total cost exceeding 50 percent of the tax record assessed value of the building, according to the City of Knoxville tax records;
- 2) Expansions exceeding 50 percent of the pre-expansion finished floor area.

The Plans Review & Inspections Division will determine the applicability of the above criteria in the permitting process.

All new subdivisions are required to provide sidewalks along all new streets constructed.

Sidewalks or approved pedestrian pathways shall be required to be constructed outside of the PRZs in areas designated by the City to be critical to pedestrian connectivity across the City. These areas include major and minor arterials, major and minor collectors, and any connections critical to the pedestrian network (e.g. greenways, pedestrian generators), as designated in the Pedestrian Plan. This ordinance is applicable to all new construction and for renovations and expansions pursuant to provisions 1) and 2) listed above.

Any roadway and bridge construction or reconstruction that changes the road curb-to-curb cross-section shall include sidewalks or approved pedestrian pathways. New City parks shall also adhere to these requirements for adjacent roadways.

DESIGN STANDARDS AND SPECIFICATIONS

The following apply to existing roads of various functional classifications as designated in the “Major Road Plan for the City of Knoxville and Knox County, Tennessee” and to new roads designed to meet the standards of a given functional classification following the specifications of the “Knoxville-Knox County Minimum Subdivision Regulations.”

Functional Classification	Minimum Sidewalk Width	Suggested Greenspace Width	Minimum Greenspace Width	Location of Sidewalks
Major Arterial	6 feet	8 feet	8 feet	Both sides required
Minor Arterial	6 feet	8 feet	8 feet	Both sides required
Major Collector	6 feet	8 feet	6 feet	Both sides required
Minor Collector	5 feet	8 feet	6 feet	Both sides required
Local Road	5 feet	6 feet	3 feet	One side acceptable*

* Although one side is acceptable, both sides are preferable.

Greenspace requirements describe the area between the curb, or edge of the pavement if no curb exists, and the inside edge of the sidewalk. The suggested greenspace width shall be used in all cases except where a constrained available right-of-way makes it impossible, in which case the minimum greenspace width applies. These regulations require sidewalks on both sides

of all roads in cases where new roads are being constructed, with the exception of roads that are designated as or designed to be Local Roads, in which case sidewalks on one side the road are acceptable. The decision of which side of the road to put the sidewalks on a Local Road shall be made by the Director of Engineering. The decision shall be based on factors including but not limited to the Pedestrian Plan, drainage requirements, existing right-of-way, utilities, connection to existing sidewalks, pedestrian safety, school locations, costs, and other engineering and community concerns

In areas of the City where alternative street design specifications are adopted by MPC and City Council (for example, downtown, South Waterfront, Cumberland Avenue), those street design specifications take precedence over the design standards in this ordinance in determining the width of sidewalks and of the sidewalk buffer zone or greenspace.

Where property is being redeveloped along an existing road, sidewalk construction is required along all roads adjacent to that property. Renovation of owner-occupied, detached dwelling units may be exempt from this requirement with Director of Engineering approval. The decision to exempt property shall be based on factors including but not limited to the Pedestrian Plan, drainage requirements, existing right-of-way, utilities, connection to existing sidewalks, pedestrian safety, school locations, costs, and other engineering and community concerns. If sidewalks exist where redevelopment is occurring but their width or condition renders them substandard, they shall be reconstructed following the guidelines of this ordinance.

Where new sidewalks are being constructed as part of the development or redevelopment of a given property, the new sidewalks shall be constructed to meet the sidewalk plan for the street.

The sidewalk or pedestrian pathway shall be placed within the public right of way so that the outside edge of the sidewalk or path is, at minimum, 2 feet from the outside edge of the public right of way.¹

Permit; lines and grades:

- 1) No person shall construct any sidewalk, driveway, curb or gutter, or change or repair any sidewalk, driveway, curb or gutter on the streets of the city without having first received a permit from the Director of Engineering for the work, authorizing such construction.
- 2) Such permits shall be issued by the Director of Engineering at charges set out under section 23-75 in order to provide for inspectors on the work.

All sidewalks shall be constructed, reconstructed, repaired or maintained, in accordance with reasonable specifications as set forth in the Sidewalk Technical Specification and Standard Drawing documents.

Alternative surfaces may be considered for pedestrian pathways, subject to Department of Engineering approval and Pedestrian Plan consistency.

All sidewalks and pathways built privately or by the city shall conform to the Americans With Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines in effect at the time of construction.

To support transit accessibility for all transit riders, at transit stops identified by the Pedestrian Plan, the sidewalk shall be extended into the greenspace up to the curb in accordance to current ADA Guidelines to create a space for loading and unloading transit vehicles. Larger landing pads shall be required where the Pedestrian plan deems it necessary.

FEE IN LIEU STRUCTURE

Where a sidewalk is required to be constructed, the Director of Engineering may waive said requirement with the advice of the Pedestrian Safety Board. Applicants must make a written request to the Director for a waiver. Waivers can be granted with consideration of pedestrian safety, school locations, connection to existing sidewalks, and other engineering and community concerns. If such a waiver is granted, a fee will be assessed in lieu of constructing the sidewalk. The fee will be based on the market price of construction of sidewalks plus 5 (five) percent as determined by the Director of Engineering.

In the event that a fee in lieu of constructing a sidewalk is approved, a recorded easement shall be provided for future development of the sidewalk. Grading shall be done in preparation for future sidewalks or pedestrian pathways.

Fees collected will go into a city fund dedicated to sidewalk and pedestrian pathway construction. Disbursal of funding should not be geographically constrained, but should be based on a project prioritization system developed in conjunction with the Pedestrian Plan.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS

Sidewalks must support a free flow of pedestrian traffic at all times, as required by _____ (reference document currently used by Neighborhood Codes Enforcement).

It is the duty of the property owner to report any repair needs promptly to the City. The property owner is responsible for upkeep and maintenance of the greenspace located between the sidewalk or pedestrian pathway and the roadway.

ENFORCEMENT

No building permits will be issued by the Plans Review & Inspections Division until the sidewalk or pedestrian pathway plan requirements, as set forth in this document, have been met and included in the building plans. Occupancy permits will be issued only after all plan requirements have been met.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY BOARD

This ordinance creates a Pedestrian Safety Board that will promote pedestrian access and safety through advocacy for sidewalks, paths, street crossings, and other pedestrian connections. While promoting access throughout the City, the Board will also focus on connectivity: connecting neighborhoods to parks, to greenways and to commercial centers, keeping in mind the goal of a city-wide pedestrian network.

A. Pedestrian Safety Board: Creation, Responsibilities and Membership

For the purposes of making decisions relative to the pedestrian network within the city, a Pedestrian Safety Board will be created. The responsibilities of the board and its membership are outlined below.

1. Responsibilities:

- a.) Work with the City and Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) to develop a Pedestrian Plan for the City with the goal of adoption by City Council and MPC.
- b.) Recommend a project prioritization system to determine where available funds should be directed to maximize safety and access for pedestrians with the goal of adoption by City Council and MPC.
- c.) Seek public and private sources of funding to offset the costs of new sidewalks and pedestrian pathways in previously developed areas of the City, including cost reductions attained from public/private partnerships. (Costs will be lower in neighborhoods where all adjacent property owners request pedestrian improvements and agree to donate required rights-of-way and easements.)
- d.) Encourage pedestrian activities to increase the health of the residents of the City.
- e.) Advise the Mayor, City Council, and the Metropolitan Planning Commission on pedestrians needs throughout the City.
- f.) Recommend revisions to this ordinance as needed.

2. Composition of the Pedestrian Safety Board:

- a.) Membership: the Board shall consist of 15 members and shall be composed of permanent staff and other rotating members as follows:

Permanent Staff Members

- Metropolitan Planning Commission/Transportation Planning Organization (1)
- City Engineering (1)
- City ADA Coordinator (1)
- City Greenways Coordinator (1)
- Department of Neighborhoods (1)

Rotating Members (Three year terms)

- Home Builders' Association (1)
- One individual nominated by each of the nine City Council Members (9)

- b.) Administrative rules: The board shall adopt and file with the Metropolitan Planning Commission administrative rules regarding the rotating terms of its members, election of its Chair, its schedule of meetings, voting procedures and all application requirements.

ⁱ Here's a diagram (not to scale) with the outermost lines representing the typical boundaries of the public right of way:

2-foot min.	side-walk (5'-8')	green-space (5'-8')	road (width varies)	green-space (5'-8')	sidewalk (5'-8')	2-foot min.
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