



## **CITY OF DUNWOODY**

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### **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**From:** Michael Smith, Director of Public Works  
**Date:** April 26, 2010  
**Subject:** **Proposed Sidewalk Improvement Policy**

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#### **ITEM DESCRIPTION**

Approve a policy for allocating capital funds for sidewalk improvements.

#### **PURPOSE**

The goal of the sidewalk improvement program is to establish an objective process for prioritizing sidewalk projects. The city has allocated \$100,000 in capital funds for sidewalk improvements in fiscal year 2010 and capital funding for sidewalks is anticipated in future years. Prior to incorporation, the Citizens for Dunwoody Task Force identified 21 miles of future sidewalk improvements and 87 future ADA compliant sidewalk ramps. Since incorporation, the public works department has received many inquiries and requests for new sidewalk from citizens and community organizations.

#### **PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

As discussed at the April 12<sup>th</sup> council work session, the Sidewalk Improvement Policy includes guidelines for new sidewalk construction, accessibility improvements on existing sidewalks and the neighborhood sidewalk program. For new sidewalk construction, the policy provides a process for prioritizing projects using a scoring system based on specific criteria related to proximity to schools, safety, pedestrian demand and constructability. Council expressed a desire at the work session to place the highest priority on school walking routes. Subsequently, the attached policy was amended to change the points assigned for school walking routes from 6 to 10.

#### **RELATION TO COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Later this year, the city will be developing a comprehensive transportation plan that will include an evaluation of existing and future pedestrian facilities. The Sidewalk Improvement Policy and the list of future sidewalk projects will be reviewed, modified as needed to be consistent with the overall transportation plan and incorporated either as part of the final plan document or by reference.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

Council could adopt the program as presented, decline to adopt a sidewalk program as policy or could recommend additional modifications to the proposed policy.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

A policy should be adopted to establish an objective method for evaluating the numerous proposed sidewalk improvements competing for limited funds. Staff recommends adoption as policy of the program as presented. This will enable Public Works to allocate the 2010 capital funding for sidewalk construction.



CITY OF DUNWOODY  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
*SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT POLICY*

Version2010.04.19



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## **I. PURPOSE**

The City of Dunwoody recognizes that a good sidewalk network provides many benefits to the community and enhances the quality of life of the citizens. In order to achieve the goal of a connected and accessible pedestrian network, a number of capital improvements have been identified. The city has developed a sidewalk program with three components to guide prioritization and budgeting for these improvements:

1. City Sidewalk Improvement Program- prioritizes new sidewalk construction on streets with higher traffic volume (>3,000 vehicles per day) or on lower volume streets with short gaps in existing sidewalk or that have been identified as major school walking routes
2. Accessibility Improvement Program-prioritizes existing sidewalk crossings that require ramp retrofits or construction to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
3. Neighborhood Sidewalk Program- outlines a process by which neighborhoods can fund sidewalk construction on streets not identified in the city's sidewalk improvement program.

## **II. CITY SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

### **A. Goals**

The goals of the city sidewalk improvement program are to improve:

1. Walking routes to schools
2. Pedestrian safety
3. Connectivity to commercial and community centers, parks and transit

### **B. Requirements**

Request for new sidewalk on public right of way will be evaluated by City's Public Works Department. One of the following criteria must be met for a sidewalk request to be included in the City Sidewalk Improvement Program:

1. Traffic volume of the adjacent street is greater than 3,000 vehicles per day OR
2. The corridor is considered a major school walking route based on the number of potential students served or based on input from the school's Safe Routes to School Committee OR
3. The sidewalk will fill a gap in the existing sidewalk network of less than ¼ mile.

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### **C. Project Prioritization**

The Public Works Department will update the priority list of sidewalk projects annually and present the list along with the projects recommended for construction to the Mayor and Council for their approval.

The project prioritization method outlined below is based on the goals stated above as well as factors such as available right of way, existing drainage and utilities and ease of construction. In a given year, further adjustment of the prioritization will occur when the costs and constructability is considered against the capital budget for that year. Other factors such as concurrence with other capital projects, adjacent land development activity and connection to adjacent jurisdictions will also be considered when finalizing the project list for construction each year.

To develop the priority list, the Public Works Department will divide the corridors identified for sidewalk improvements into logical segments and rate each segment using the following criteria:

#### **1. Walking Routes to Schools** (*Approx.25% of Total Score*)

##### **A. School Walk Route** (10 points)

School walk routes address safety as well as pedestrian demand. Schools generate pedestrian demand particularly within the zone where the school system does not provide bus service. As pedestrians, children are particularly vulnerable. Sidewalks in these areas benefit the health and safety of the children and can help to reduce traffic around schools during arrival and dismissal times.

##### **i. Ten points are assigned to streets that meet the following requirements:**

1. The street is within the zone for which the school system does not provide bus service AND
2. The street is identified as a major walking routes based on the number of potential students served or based on input from the school's Safe Routes to School Committee.

#### **2. Pedestrian Safety** (*~50% of Total Score*)

##### **A. Accident History** (0-6 points)

- i. Up to six points are assigned to street segments based on documented cases of pedestrian accidents.

##### **B. No Sidewalk Present** (6 points)

If all other factors are equal, priority should be given to streets without any sidewalk over streets with sidewalks on one side.

- i. Six points are assigned for street segments that do not have sidewalk on either side of the street

##### **C. Traffic Volume** (0-6 points)

Higher traffic volume can increase the potential for conflicts between

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pedestrians and vehicles. On streets where no sidewalk exists, higher traffic volume makes it unfeasible to walk on the street. On streets with sidewalk on one side, high volumes make it more difficult to cross the street to access the side with sidewalk.

- i. The traffic volume of the adjacent street measured in vehicles per day (vpd) may be determined from available, recent traffic counts or may be estimated by the Public Works Department.
- ii. Points are assigned as follows:

>16,000 vpd-6 points	13,000 to 16,000 vpd-5 points
10,000 to 13,000 vpd-4 points	7,000 to 10,000 vpd-3 points
4,000 to 7,000 vpd-2 points	2,000 to 4,000 vpd-1 point
<2,000 vpd-0 points	

**D. Speed Limit of Adjacent Street (0-2 points)**

Vehicle speed is directly related to the severity of pedestrian accidents.

Pedestrian fatality rates are much lower at vehicle speeds less than 25 mph.

- i. Points are assigned based on the posted speed limit of the adjacent street as follows:

45 mph or greater-2 points

26-44 mph-1 point

25 mph or less-0 point

**3. Connectivity/Pedestrian Demand (20% of Total Score)**

To serve effectively as an alternate form of transportation, the sidewalk network should connect residents with destinations that could generate pedestrian traffic such as schools, shopping centers, transit, parks, community centers and places of worship. Pedestrian demand is also evident by worn foot paths along roadways or multiple citizen inquiries and request for sidewalks in a particular area.

**A. Gaps in Existing Sidewalk Network (0-2 points)**

Giving higher priority to projects that close short gaps in the sidewalk network allows the city to improve connectivity for relatively little cost.

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- i. Points are assigned based on the length of the existing gap as follows:

< ¼ mile-2 points

<1/2 mile-1 point

>1/2 mile-0 point

**B. Demonstrated Demand (0-2 points)**

- i. Two points are given for segments where demand has been demonstrated either through multiple citizen inquiries and requests or evidence of a worn path along the side of the road.

**C. Proximity to Transit (0-2 points)**

Transit generates pedestrian demand and bus riders require pedestrian access to bus stops.

- i. Two points are given to sidewalk segments that are located along bus routes. One point is given to sidewalk segments that connect a side street to a street that has bus service.

**D. Adjacent to Multi-Family Housing (0-1 point)**

Multi-family housing units tend to generate a higher percentage of trips by walking or transit than single family residences.

- i. One point is given for sidewalks located adjacent to multi-family housing.

**E. Pedestrian Trip Generators (0-2 points)**

- i. Points are assigned based on the number of destinations adjacent to the sidewalk segment and on the same side of the street that could generate pedestrian trips. The types of destinations considered are shopping centers, community centers, parks and places of worship. Schools and transit also are considered pedestrian trip generators but are accounted for elsewhere in the scoring.

2 or more trip generators -2 points

1 trip generator-1 point

**4. Constructability (~5% of Total Score)**

**A. Ease of Construction (0-3 points)**

- i. A visual observation of the field conditions will be made by public works to assess how easily the project could be constructed. Factors that will be considered are available right of way, topography, vegetation, existing drainage, utilities and impact to adjacent property. Up to three points will be assigned for projects where: there is ample existing right of way, the right of way is relatively flat and clear and where the project would cause minimal impact to the adjacent properties.

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## **II. Accessibility Improvement Program**

The American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all public entities to make public facilities, including sidewalks, accessible to people with disabilities. All new sidewalks will be constructed to comply with ADA requirements. However, there are many sidewalk facilities throughout the city that were built prior to the development of current ADA standards. The purpose of the accessibility improvement program is to outline the process for bringing older sidewalks into compliance with ADA standards.

As required by federal guidelines, the public works department will develop an ADA transition plan that will include an inventory of known ADA deficiencies and a schedule for achieving compliance. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually. Under federal guidelines anytime major improvements, including road resurfacing, are constructed, the adjacent sidewalk must be brought into compliance with ADA. Thus, accessibility improvement projects will be prioritized in the transition plan to coincide with road resurfacing or other adjoining capital projects.

## **III. Neighborhood Sidewalk Improvement Program**

The Neighborhood Sidewalk Improvement Program provides an opportunity for neighborhoods to fund sidewalk improvements on streets not included in the City Sidewalk Improvement Program. The Neighborhood Sidewalk Improvement Program differs from the City Sidewalk Improvement Program in that:

1. A sidewalk district must be created through petition to city council of 51% of the property owners adjacent to the proposed sidewalk.
2. The sidewalk improvements are funded entirely by the property owners within the sidewalk district.

The requirements and procedures for establishing sidewalk districts are outlined in Chapter 23 of the City's Code of Ordinances. Application must be made using forms developed by the Public Works Department.