

TOWN OF MANCHESTER
SIDEWALK AND CURB PLAN



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Manchester Planning Department
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by the
Planning and Zoning Commission

SIDEWALK PLAN

Introduction

Providing paths for pedestrians has always been fundamental to community building, and while the need for and function of sidewalks has changed, it has not disappeared. The basic purpose of sidewalks is to provide a safe location for people to walk separated from motorized or mechanized vehicles. Sidewalks are an elemental form of transit, connecting people to public transit, schools, work, shopping, services, and cultural or recreational facilities and activities. They provide a space for spontaneous social interaction. They are increasingly used as a recreation and health amenity in themselves for walkers and joggers. For families with young children sidewalks provide a safe dedicated space for youngsters to learn to ride a bike or rollerblade.

For all of these reasons Manchester has long required sidewalks to be constructed by individuals or businesses developing land in Manchester. The overriding goal is to provide pedestrian connections within neighborhoods, connections between neighborhoods, and connections from homes to services, facilities, and amenities in the community.

The Town's Sidewalk Plan was first adopted in 1980. Since that time there have been at least two periods of significant new industrial, commercial and residential development in Manchester. Because development has extended to previously undeveloped areas and away from the Town center, the Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the Sidewalk Plan considering current conditions and anticipated future trends. Our sidewalk and curb policies, and the location map that will serve as a guide for the implementation of this Plan, have been revised to reflect these new realities. The Plan articulates policies for where new sidewalks should be installed; effectively and sensibly deals with new installations in developed areas; sets guidelines on how and whether to decide to remove sidewalks in certain areas, identifies priorities for filling in gaps and/or extending the existing system; and provides guidance on what types of curbs should be installed in various locations or conditions.

Policy for New Sidewalk Installation

As a general policy the Sidewalk Plan calls for concrete sidewalks on all streets in Town of Manchester. The amount and location of sidewalks will vary depending on the type of street and its function. Table One describes the minimum standards and location for sidewalks. Roadway classifications are shown on the Roadway Classification Map, Town of Manchester Sidewalk Plan, dated February 2009.¹

On all new local streets sidewalks will be constructed as required in Table One unless the judgment is made by the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the recommendation of the

¹ Rev. 1/21/09

public works department (PWD), that payment in lieu of installation is warranted. On all existing local² streets sidewalks will be required as identified on the Sidewalk Location Map unless the judgment is made by the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the recommendation of PWD, that payment in lieu of installation is warranted.

Table One

Minimum Standards for Sidewalks					
Roadway Classification	Sidewalk Width (feet)	Concrete	Bituminous or Alternative	One Side	Two Sides
Arterial Street	5	x			x
Collector Street	5	x			x
Local Street	5	x		x	
Rural/Scenic Road	8		x	x	

Regardless of the general policy and standards recommended in this Plan and contained in Table One above, the location of sidewalks on existing streets shall be based on the Sidewalk Location Map which is a part of this Plan. Sidewalks will be required on all street segments identified as Proposed Sidewalk Extensions, and repairs if necessary as required by the Town Sidewalk Ordinance (see Appendix A) will be required on all segments identified as existing sidewalk. In some cases the Plan may require that sidewalks be built on both sides of an existing local street if it is deemed necessary for pedestrian safety given the proximity to schools, the housing density of the neighborhood, and other factors.

When required on only one side of the street, sidewalks shall be installed on the north and east sides of the roadway to facilitate snow melt and ease of maintenance. While this general standard should always apply, there may be circumstances where the location, width, or material may otherwise be waived. Conditions that may warrant a deviation from these standards include the following:

- Infill development in neighborhoods or on streets where the sidewalks should match the dominate pattern on the street or in the neighborhood.
- Physical features of the area including the available right-of-way, grades, rocks/ledge, specimen trees or other important natural features which should be preserved, etc. In these cases the director of public works may recommend and the Planning and Zoning Commission may approve alternate locations.

All sidewalks shall be built according to the design and construction standards contained in the Town of Manchester Public Improvement Standards, as amended.

² Rev. 1/21/09

Critical Path Extensions

The Sidewalk Plan has identified the desirable location for sidewalks throughout the Town of Manchester. Keeping in mind this Plan will be updated every five years, the Plan identifies selected streets as priorities for the extensions of new sidewalks. Criteria for determining these critical path connections include the following:

- The recommendations contained in the Town’s 1998 Plan of Conservation and Development.
- The desire to provide safe pedestrian connections to schools, shopping, or transit facilities, with consideration given to the school location, residential density and nature of the streets and traffic.
- The desire to provide safe pedestrian walkways on arterial or collector streets where such pedestrian systems are not now available, in particular highly populated or highly traveled areas.
- The desire to close gaps in sidewalk systems in areas of high pedestrian traffic.

The priority streets identified as part of this Plan are:³

- Middle Turnpike East from Walker Street to Parker Street
- Broad Street
- Oakland Street
- Tolland Turnpike
- North Main Street
- Keeney Street from Bush Hill Road north
- Parker Street from Mather Street to East Center Street
- Sheldon Road
- Woodland Street

Although these are priority streets for extensions, such extensions are dependent upon the availability of funds and may not be included during the 2009-2014 planning. Likewise, other streets may see their sidewalks extended if funding opportunities arise or if situations or circumstances during the planning period and sidewalk extensions on non-priority streets are deemed warranted for a good cause.

Removal of Sidewalks

In some circumstances in older residential neighborhoods where there are sidewalks on both sides of the street it may be desirable to remove sidewalks to meet the current standard of sidewalks on only one side of the street. Removing walks on one side of the street would bring older neighborhoods in line with current practice for local streets. The removal of sidewalks

³ Rev. 1/21/09

within narrow rights-of-way provides opportunities to create greater separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Selective removal would allow more neighborhood sidewalks to be repaired or replaced over the long-term, and the Town's long-term maintenance and liability costs would be reduced.

Sidewalk removal projects will be pursued only after an analysis of neighborhood conditions has been completed and public meetings with neighborhood residents have been held. Conditions which may warrant the removal of sidewalks include the following:

- The amount of right-of-way available in the existing public street area.
- The relative density of housing in the neighborhood. Generally the greater the housing density, the larger the resident population, and more likely sidewalks will be necessary on both sides of the street.
- The amount and nature of vehicles on streets with high traffic volumes and/or which are major pedestrian corridors, sidewalks will more likely be necessary on both sides of the street.
- The neighborhood street network and its proximity to commercial or service uses that would generate more traffic and require walks on both sides of the street.
- Neighborhoods with wide rights-of-way, exclusively residential areas and neighborhoods not in proximity to non-residential uses.

Granite Curbing Installation

- Installation of granite curbs shall be required on all new local streets or extensions of existing local streets.
- Granite curb shall be required on all collector and arterial streets as shown on a Town of Manchester Roadway Classification Map.
- When individual lot development occurs within a developed local street, the type of curb required should be consistent with the predominant material currently existing on that street, as determined by PWD.
- When existing roadways and sidewalks are reconstructed on local streets, curbs should be replaced with the predominant curb type that exists within the neighborhood as determined by PWD.
- On rural/scenic roads, the determination whether to install granite curbs or alternate materials will be based upon such factors as the street grade, stormwater management considerations, and natural features and topography.

Rural/Scenic Roads

Although Manchester is a largely developed community there are some roads that are, and should remain, rural and scenic in character. These are roads in outlying areas that are mostly rural/agricultural or identified as conservation development areas in the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. Future development in these areas is anticipated to be at low densities that would not conflict with rural or scenic roads. In these areas a pedestrian path should be provided, but granite curbs and concrete sidewalks may not be appropriate. A bituminous or stone dust pedestrian path may be more appropriate.

Good Cause for Payment in Lieu of Installation

The Plan identifies desirable locations for sidewalks and curbs⁴ throughout the community. The Plan recognizes that, depending on the amount of Town financial resources available, and the development pattern in various areas, it may not be prudent or practical to install sidewalks and curbs⁵ in all new developments approved during the five year planning period. Where the Plan calls for sidewalk and curb installation, but where there is good cause not to install them at the time of the development, payment in lieu of installation shall be required in accordance with the Town Sidewalk Ordinance (see Appendix A).

Criteria to be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission when requiring payment in lieu of installation would include but not be limited to the following:

- There are no other sidewalks or curbs within a reasonable distance of the area where the sidewalks would be required, creating gaps in the system which are neither functional nor aesthetic.
- There are no sidewalks or curbs in the area or on the street where new walks would be otherwise required.
- There is no project funded by the Town that would fill in the gaps that exist in the sidewalk and/or curb system on the street where the development is proposed.
- There are plans in the near term for major street reconstruction which would provide opportunities to fill gaps in the sidewalk and/or curb system, but it would be better to construct the required sidewalks as part of the larger reconstruction project.
- When a sidewalk and or granite curbing are to be located within the right of way of a State road and the State denies a permit for the installation⁶.

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⁴ Rev. 1/21/09

⁵ Rev. 7/06/09

⁶ Rev. 7/06/09