

Neighborhood Sidewalk Policy

Applicability. This policy applies to sidewalks constructed with funding identified in the city's Neighborhood Sidewalk capital category.

Definition. Neighborhood sidewalks are paved pedestrian facilities that are parallel to, but with some physical separation from, streets that are classified as minor arterials, collectors, or local streets and are located within primarily residential areas. They have the purpose of creating safe connectors to education, business, transportation, recreational, or government centers.

Minimum requirements for consideration. This policy applies to all residential neighborhood streets that are identified as a needed linkage in the approved Pedestrian Master Plan. Primary streets (i.e. US and NC numbered routes) are not included in the universe of neighborhood streets. In addition, streets that do not meet the minimum traffic volume specified to necessitate sidewalks for new development or redevelopment shall not be considered for construction under this policy. That minimum volume is currently 300 vehicles per day.

Prioritization. Within the available funding, projects shall be selected based on their compliance with the following prioritization criteria:

Initial Screening Factors. Streets that meet the minimum requirements for consideration, above, will then be screened to prioritize the factors described below.

- **Proximity to destinations.** Potential projects will be rated on proximity to transit and to community destinations. These elements will be additive (proximity to a school AND proximity to a transit stop AND proximity to ...). The community destinations include:
 - Transit stops (within 1/4 mile)
 - Major grocery stores (within 1/2 mile)
 - Asheville City Parks (within 1/2 mile)
 - Asheville City Recreation Centers (within 1/2 mile)
 - Buncombe County Libraries (within 1/2 mile)
 - Schools, see Appendix for details (within 1/2 mile)
- **Zoning.** Areas with residential zoning at a density of 8 dwelling units per acre or higher (RS8, RM8, RM16).
- **Demographics.** Prevalence of low-income households and of no-vehicle households.
- **Safety**
 - Pedestrian Crashes. Crashes reported within 5 years and along the project segment or within 150 feet of each end of the segment and along the same street. Using most recent 5-year NCDOT or City of Asheville data available.
 - Traffic Volume. Using either actual or estimated count, as available.

Secondary Screening Factors. Secondary screening factors will be applied to the top-ranking projects as determined by the initial screening process. The number of projects to consider in the secondary screening process will be based on the anticipated funding available.

- **Connectivity.** The project must contribute to the continuity of the transportation network.
- **Presence/Absence of Sidewalk on one side of the street.** If a continuous sidewalk already exists on one side of the street, sidewalk for the second side of the street will not normally be considered for construction under this program.
- **Construction feasibility, including available funding, geographic constraints, and right-of-way.** Adequate right-of-way and/or easements must exist or be donated to the city.
- **Geographic distribution.** In the event that there are two or more similarly ranked projects and a choice must be made between them, consideration will be given to achieving distribution of projects across the city to the extent that is reasonable.

Public Input. Recognizing that public input is vital to all planning, the public was consulted as to the contents of this Policy prior to adoption, as more specifically described in Appendix A. The public shall be consulted at reasonable intervals to ensure that the Policy continues to reflect the community's vision. It is anticipated that the first reassessment of this Policy shall be within five years of implementation.

Future Involvement of the Neighborhood Sidewalk Committee. The committee will meet as necessary to advise staff or revise this policy, as requested by city staff or by the Asheville Multimodal Transportation Commission.

Appendix A, Neighborhood Sidewalk Policy

The purpose of this appendix is to expand on certain elements in the policy. This appendix has the same organization as the policy. If a section in the policy is not listed here, no information beyond that in the policy was considered necessary.

Minimum requirements for consideration. This section includes reference to a minimum traffic volume for requiring sidewalk for development/redevelopment projects. That minimum volume is currently 300 vehicles per day.

Prioritization

Initial Screening Factors

- **Proximity to destinations.** The destination elements will be additive (proximity to a school AND proximity to a transit stop AND proximity to ...).
 - **Transit stops.** Source: City of Asheville GIS data
 - **Major grocery stores.** This includes full line grocery stores, not convenience stores or other limited-inventory stores. Source: data set created and entered into GIS for this project
 - **Asheville City Parks.** Source: City of Asheville GIS data
 - **Asheville City Recreation Centers.** Source: City of Asheville GIS data
 - **Buncombe County Libraries** inside Asheville city limits. Source: City of Asheville GIS data
 - **Schools.** Institutions that are considered schools for the purposes of this policy are:
 - Asheville City Schools, Buncombe County Schools and Charter Schools inside the City of Asheville which serve students in any combination of grades from Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. Source: NC Division of Public Education registries.
 - Private schools inside the City of Asheville which are registered with the NC Division of Non-Public Education, have an enrollment of 100 students or more, and serve students in any combination of grades from Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. Source: NC Division of Non-Public Education registry.
 - Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
 - UNC Asheville
- **Zoning.** Areas with residential zoning at a density higher than 8 dwelling units per acre (RS8, RM8, RM16). This criterion applies to zoning, not necessarily current use. Areas with RM16 zoning will be given twice the value of those with RS or RM8 zoning.
- **Demographics.** Demographic information is based on available US Census data.

- **Safety**
 - **Pedestrian Crashes.** Crash data will use the most recent 5-year NCDOT or City of Asheville data available. The choice of data sets will be based on completeness and accuracy of the data.
- **Demographics.** Source: US Census data

Secondary Screening Factors.

- **Presence/Absence of Sidewalk on one side of the street.** If a continuous sidewalk already exists on one side of the street, sidewalk for the second side of the street will not normally be considered for construction under this program. If discontinuous sidewalk exists, construction of sidewalk to make a continuous sidewalk on one side of the street will be considered.
- **Construction feasibility, including available funding, geographic constraints, and right-of-way.** Constructability assessments and cost estimates will be made by the city's Capital Projects Division, or its designee.

Initial/Current Public Involvement Plan. The public involvement plan was developed by the Neighborhood Sidewalk Committee, which consists of representatives of the City of Asheville Multimodal Transportation Commission and the City of Asheville Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC). Initial involvement included seeking input at the NAC Festival of Neighborhoods via face-to-face input and a short survey to complete and return. Additional survey and personal interaction opportunities will be promoted via the city's Neighborhood Coordinator, transit and bicycle and pedestrian mailing lists, and other staff contacts. The community group Just Economics was contacted and agreed to distribute the survey as coincides with their plans. The surveys remain open for input, which will be used when this policy is revisited.

Future Involvement of the Neighborhood Sidewalk Committee. At the time of initiation of this policy, the committee consisted of three members of the Multimodal Transportation Commission (MMTC) and one from the Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC). That NAC member was also the NAC's regular liaison to the MMTC.