



POLICY 2016-6

SIDEWALK PROGRAM POLICY

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The Lake~Sumter MPO (MPO) will enhance safety, mobility, accessibility and convenience for users of all ages and abilities, including children, and seniors by inclusion of sidewalks on all roadway plans and projects. This objective is consistent with the multimodal transportation goals and visions set forth in TRANSPORTATION 2040, the MPOs long range transportation plan.

2. BACKGROUND:

The benefits of walking, such as improving public health, fostering connected communities, decreasing automobile dependence, and reducing air pollution are highlighted in the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan "TRANSPORTATION 2040". There is an increasing need and responsibility to give people the opportunity to walk. TRANSPORTATION 2040 addresses the importance of walking and what can be done to facilitate and promote it as a viable mode of transportation.

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, also known as "the Green Book": "Providing safe places for people to walk is an essential responsibility of all government entities involved in constructing or regulating the construction of public rights-of-way."

When building new infrastructure or renovating existing places, it should always be assumed that people will walk and plans should accommodate pedestrians. Facilities should be accessible to pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Accessible design is the foundation for all pedestrian design and facilities need to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to be usable by all people. Poor accessibility may create significant barriers to travel.

3. Definition:

Pedestrian Facilities: There are several ways in which pedestrians can be accommodated in the public right-of-way:

- a. Sidewalks - walkways parallel to the roadway and designed for use by pedestrians. Sidewalks provided on both sides of a street are the preferred pedestrian facility; however, the construction of sidewalks on both sides of the street would not be required in cases where pedestrians would not be expected such as when the roadway parallels a railroad or drainage canal. Newly constructed, reconstructed, or altered sidewalks must be accessible to and usable.
- b. Off-Road Paths - an off-road path, paved or unpaved, can be an appropriate facility in rural or low density suburban areas. Paths are usually set back from the road and separated by a green area, ditch, swales or trees.
- c. Shared Streets - shared uses of a street for people walking, bicycling and driving are referred to as shared streets. These are usually specially designed spaces such as pedestrian streets which are used on local urban streets with extremely low vehicle speed.
- d. Shoulders - most highway shoulders are not pedestrian facilities, because they are not intended for use by pedestrians, although they can accommodate occasional pedestrian usage.

❖ Florida Green Book 2013 edition

4. GOALS:

- a. The primary goal of the Sidewalk Program is to help municipalities and counties within the Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization planning area to provide a transportation system where pedestrians can safely and conveniently walk to destinations within a reasonable distance.
- b. The Sidewalk Program serves as framework for identifying and selecting pedestrian projects for the Long Range Transportation Plan.
- c. To establish a comprehensive vision and strategies for pedestrian accommodations that enhance mobility through connectivity & accessibility, improved safety & quality of life.
- d. To provide well-designed, safe, comfortable, continuous, direct, and convenient pedestrian facilities for all users of various skill levels and physical abilities.
- e. To provide improved pedestrian connections to existing and future public transit facilities.
- f. To maximize the multimodal capacity of existing roadways.
- g. To reduce the number of injuries and deaths in crashes involving motorists and pedestrians.
- h. Ensure that all roadway and development projects accommodate pedestrians to the fullest extent. Roadways should be designed and buildings sited to make pedestrian access and safety the first priority.
- i. The establishment of clear priorities for coordinating, directing and focusing resources.

- j. Promote community policies, plans, subdivision regulations, and right-of-way requirements to make sure that sidewalks are included in new construction and rehabilitation projects both at a regional and local level.

5. POLICY:

The MPO will promote the planning and implementation of the Sidewalk Program throughout the region and recommends that all member governments adopt Sidewalk policies, consistent with this policy. The concepts listed provide a broader perspective for both regional and local decision making concerning Sidewalk Program implementation:

- a. Create Complete Streets
- b. Close Gaps in the Pedestrian Network
- c. Improve the Pedestrian Environment
- d. Prioritize Transit, Schools, Civic and Commercial Sites
- e. Implement Smart Growth Principles

The MPO will seek incorporation of the Sidewalk Program into the development of all transportation projects where applicable.

6. CRITERIA:

- a. New Sidewalk Installation: All new construction in urban and suburban areas should be evaluated include places for people to walk, on both sides of a street or roadway.
- b. Retrofitting Sidewalks: Many of the streets built in our region in recent decades do not have sidewalks, and these streets should be evaluated for the need to be retrofitted with pedestrian facilities. Local jurisdictions should prioritize pedestrian projects based on context of the roadway and the adjacent land use. The following are suggested criteria for establishing priorities.
 - i. Speed — there is a direct relationship between speed and the number and severity of crashes; high-speed facilities may rank higher if speed is a criterion.
 - ii. Street Classification — urban arterial streets should take precedence because they generally have higher pedestrian use (due to more commercial uses), have a greater need to separate pedestrians from motor vehicles (due to higher traffic volumes and speeds), and are the main links in a community.
 - iii. Crash Data — pedestrian crashes seldom occur with high frequency at one location, but there are clearly locations where crashes occur due to a lack of sidewalks. Usually, there is a pattern of pedestrian crashes up and

- down a corridor, indicating a need to provide sidewalks throughout, not just at crash locations.
- iv. School Walking Zones — school walking zones typically extend from residential areas to an elementary, middle or high school. Children and young adults are especially vulnerable, making streets in these zones prime candidates for sidewalk retrofitting.
 - v. Transit Routes — transit riders need sidewalks to access transit stops. Arterials used by transit are prime candidates for sidewalk retrofitting.
 - vi. Neighborhoods with Low Vehicle Ownership — twenty percent of the U.S. population has a disability and 30 percent of our population does not drive. Walking is the primary mode of transportation for many of the people in this country. People with disabilities live throughout the community. If they are not seen in the community, it may be due to the fact that adequate facilities are not provided. In addition, car ownership is lower and crash rates are often higher in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods with lots of children
 - vii. Urban Centers/Neighborhood Commercial Areas — areas of high commercial activity generate high pedestrian use, even if they are primarily motorists who have parked their car. Sidewalks are needed to improve safety and enhance the economic viability of these areas.
 - viii. Other Pedestrian Generators — hospitals, community centers, libraries, sports arenas, and other public places are natural pedestrian generators where sidewalks should be given priority.
 - ix. Missing Links/Gaps — installing sidewalks to connect pedestrian areas to each other creates continuous walking systems.
 - x. Local Priorities — local residents may have a sense of where the most desirable walking routes exist.

7. REQUIREMENTS:

- a. Sidewalk project sponsors must complete and submit a MPO Project Information Application and Maintenance Agreement covering the long term operation and maintenance of the sidewalk facility. Sidewalks on a county roadway within a municipal boundary will be the responsibility of the local municipality.
- b. Each project should use the most appropriate design standards and procedures. For projects using MPO attributable federal funding, it is important to meet or exceed standards and procedures acceptable to the Florida and U.S. Departments of Transportation, i.e., Florida Greenbook, Plans Preparation Manual. All waivers of design criteria as described in the Florida Greenbook and the Plans Preparation Manual are supported in this policy document.

- c. Designs should include accommodation of all users and be sensitive to the context of the roadway and adjacent land use for the corridor.
- d. The project sponsor should provide the local transit agency the opportunity to participate throughout the entire process and encourage the involvement of the local transit agency in the design process to ensure that sufficient accommodation of transit users and access to transit facilities is provided.

8. APPEALS:

When a member government is not in agreement with the MPO's decision regarding sidewalk projects subject to the Transportation Improvement Program Selection Process, the jurisdiction may introduce a formal appeal by means of a resolution adopted by their local governing body. The resolution must be submitted to the MPO and proceed through the established transportation planning process. As such, the resolution will be subject to review and comment by the Technical Advisory Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, and the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee. The MPO Governing Board, after considering comments from the other three committees, will make the final decision on the appeal.

9. IMPLEMENTATION:

Upon approval and adoption of this Sidewalk Program, it will become part of MPOs planning process and project selection for state and federal funding. The principles of this Program will also guide MPO staff in preparation of MPO planning documents and regional transportation planning efforts to which it contributes. TRANSPORTATION 2040 will be amended to incorporate this Program in accordance with the requirements of the plan at adoption. Also, the List of Priority Projects will be amended as necessary in order to seek funding for projects as the result of the completion and resolution of support of a Sidewalk Project Information Application.

Strategies to Reduce Total Costs:

- a. Stand-alone vs. integrated within another project: Installation of sidewalks should always be evaluated for inclusion in road construction projects. Stand-alone sidewalk projects cost more than the same work performed as part of a larger project. Sidewalks can be piggybacked to projects such as surface preservation, water or sewer lines, or placing utilities underground.
- b. Combining Projects: A cost-savings can be achieved by combining several small sidewalk projects into one big one. This can occur even if the sidewalks are under different jurisdictions, or even in different localities, if they are close to each other. The basic principle is that bid prices drop as quantities increase.

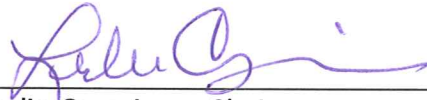
10. EVALUATION

The MPO through its committee review process will evaluate this Policy and the documents associated with it on an annual basis. This evaluation may include recommendations for amendments to the Sidewalk Program, including the development of prioritization criteria, design guidance, and subsequently be considered for adoption by the MPO Governing Board.

Lake~Sumter MPO Sidewalk Program Policy

Policy Approved on: August 24, 2016

Lake~Sumter Metropolitan Planning Organization



Leslie Campione, Chairman

Approved as to form and legality:



Melanie Marsh, MPO Attorney