

Work Plan for Developing an Infill Sidewalk Policy

Presentation to Development Services Committee

December 5, 2016

Why Do We Design for Walking?

- Walking is a fundamental, universal, and sustainable mode of transportation: Everyone is a pedestrian
- Official Plan and Council Policy: directs the transformation of Markham into a community “where walking, cycling, transit and carpooling are seen as increasingly viable and attractive alternatives” to driving.
- Walking and Public Health: research has shown that active transportation is linked to health benefits
- Ontario’s Accessibility Legislation: requires municipalities to improve accessibility and break down barriers for people with disabilities

Sidewalk Installation Policy – May 1994 (Superseded)

- Both sides of an arterial road
- Both sides a major collector road
- One side of a minor collector road
- One side of a local street in a conventional subdivision where it forms part of a walkway system leading to a school, park, transit facility or commercial development (*i.e. otherwise no sidewalks on local street*)
- Internal roads within an neo-traditional neighbourhood as approved at the planning stage (*e.g. Cornell*)
- Locations as required as a condition of draft approval of a plan of subdivision or development application

Further, the criteria for scheduling and location of sidewalk installation be based on need & justification, transit requirements, road reconstruction scheduling, funding and location.

Current Sidewalk Installation Policy – October 1997

- Both sides of arterial roads
- Both sides major collector roads
- *(No mention of minor collector roads – presume still one side based on 1994 policy)*
- One side of local roads *(without any specific conditions)*
- Cul-de-sacs which service more than 30 lots
- One side of a local industrial road
- Both sides of a local road designated as primary road in the community design plan as agreed upon by the Development Services and Community Services Commissions

Community Services Commission has no objections to the above policy subject to appropriate funds being granted by Council to maintain and replace sidewalks.

Some Neighbourhoods Do Not Have Sidewalks Consistent with Current Policy

- Based on the 1997 (current) policy, sidewalks should be provided on at least one side of a local street, and both sides of a local street under certain conditions
- Therefore, some neighbourhoods developed prior to the 1997 policy may not have any sidewalks on local street, which is not consistent with current policy

What Other Municipalities are Doing

Municipality	Policy/ Staff Report
Burlington (Jun 2015)	<p>“...the inclusion of sidewalks on <u>both sides</u> of the roadway is required wherever feasible”</p> <p>Rank priority for <u>infill sidewalks</u> based on a range on criteria, not just vehicle volume: Pedestrian safety, proximity to transit, proximity to pedestrian generators, schools, other factors</p>
Waterloo (Dec 2015)	<p>“This methodology is specific to establishing new <u>infill sidewalks</u> in urbanized areas of Waterloo where sidewalks do not currently exist.”</p> <p>The general conclusion of the policy is that sidewalks are required on both sides of each street <u>with some exceptions</u></p>

Other Municipalities

Municipality	Policy/ Staff Report
Kitchener (May 2015)	Approved <i>Sidewalk Infill Policy</i> to establish process and priority ranking system for infill sidewalks <i>(For the past 15 years, streets in subdivisions have sidewalks on both sides)</i>
Barrie (Jan 2015)	Approved <i>Infill Sidewalk Policy</i> as a component of a road reconstruction project with criteria, and prioritization of stand-alone infill sidewalk projects through a scoring system.

Other Municipalities

Municipality	Policy/ Staff Report
<p>London</p>	<p>New sidewalks be installed in in-fill situations where the General Manager of Environmental Services & City Engineer <u>deems it necessary</u>, as a result of any operational or pedestrian safety concern</p>
<p>Hamilton</p>	<p>Guidelines & Best Practices – WALKING (3.A Residential)</p> <p>Accommodate pedestrians in residential subdivisions by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interconnected streets and blocks (also encourages more efficient transit service) • <u>sidewalks on both sides of the street</u> • safety features at intersections and crossings (e.g. refuge islands, curb extensions)

Other Municipalities

Municipality	Policy/ Staff Report
<p>Toronto (Feb 2016)</p>	<p>Building Sidewalks on Local Streets to Reduce Accessibility Barriers Incorporate sidewalk(s) for all local street reconstruction projects Add new sidewalk “as of right” on at least one side of the street for accessibility, safety and walkability reasons Council makes final decision on installation of infill sidewalks.</p>

Benefits/Requirements of Infill Sidewalks

- Provide a safe and comfortable route for pedestrians
- Promote walking and active living to improve public health
- Promote the use of transit in existing neighbourhoods
- Comply with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

“It is the policy of Council:

- 6.1.1.1 To provide leadership and excellence in the design of Markham’s communities, to achieve: a) compact, walkable neighbourhoods, b) pedestrian-friendly streets; ...*
- 7.1.1.2 To strengthen the coordination of land use planning, transportation planning and urban design to:*
 - (b) increase the opportunities for people to make shorter trips and more trips by foot, bicycle or transit;*
 - (d) emphasize the placemaking role of transportation facilities by making people, rather than vehicles, the focus of street activities.” (Markham Official Plan)*

Some Residents Concerns Regarding Infill Sidewalks

- “Pedestrians can walk on the street”
- Impact to street trees or landscaping
- Reduction of parking on the driveways
- People will be walking too close to the house
- Reduction in property value

SWOT Analysis for Infill Sidewalks

STRENGTHS

- Meets Official Plan policies
- Meets AODA requirements
- Creates a safer environment for pedestrians and reduces City's liabilities
- Increases transportation options
- Supports transit

WEAKNESSES

- Increases operations and maintenance costs (especially winter maintenance)
- Some residents have concerns with infill sidewalks

OPPORTUNITIES

- Creates sense of community by transforming neighbourhoods into friendlier, more attractive places to live
- Encourages a healthier community
- Reduces car trips, resulting in a healthier environment

THREATS

- Resistance and complaints by residents
- Delays and additional costs for implementation
- May impact existing street trees

Work Plan for Infill Sidewalks

- Prepare sidewalk inventory by wards (Q1 2017)
- Identify sidewalk deficiency areas (Q1 2017)
- Develop criteria for infill sidewalk implementation (Q1 2017)
- Consult with Ward Councillors and Rate Payer Groups/Associations (March 2017)
- Update DSC on interim findings (March/April 2017)
- Refine criteria for implementation
- Develop 5-Year Infill Sidewalk Capital Program
- Council Adoption of Infill Sidewalk Policy and 5-Year Capital Program (June 2017)
- Staff will develop sidewalk policies for the Future Urban Area (FUA) as part of the ongoing FUA master planning exercise.