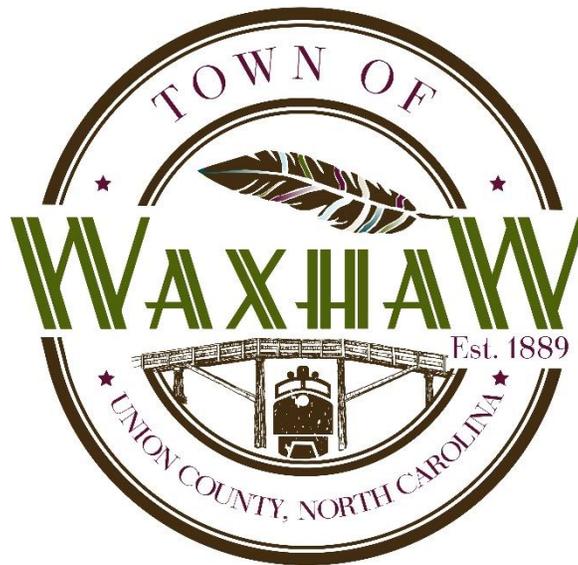


# *Town of Waxhaw Sidewalk Retrofit Policy*

**DRAFT**

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**Contents**

I. PURPOSE ..... 3

II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY ..... 3

III. SIDEWALK RETROFIT POLICY STATEMENT ..... 3

IV. DEFINITIONS ..... 3

V. SIDEWALK IMPLEMENTATION CATEGORIES AND PROCESS ..... 5

    A. Ranking Criteria ..... 5

    B. Reserved Authority ..... 6

VI. PRIORITIZATION PROCESS FOR EACH PROGRAM ..... 6

    A. Sidewalk Program ..... 6

    B. Area Plan Implementation Program ..... 7

VII. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS ..... 8

    A. Petition Process ..... 9

    B. Post-Petition Notification ..... 9

    C. Appeals ..... 9

VIII. DESIGN GUIDELINES ..... 9

IX. FUNDING ..... 10

X. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION ..... 10

XI. EFFECTIVE DATE ..... 10

# Town of Waxhaw Sidewalk Retrofit Policy

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## I. PURPOSE

A pedestrian-friendly environment is desired throughout the Town. The purpose of this policy is to address sidewalk gaps and enhance pedestrian accessibility/mobility on existing thoroughfares, local streets, and collector streets that lack adequate infrastructure.



## II. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

The following policy and procedures apply to all sidewalk retrofit projects along streets within the Town limits. Specifically, this policy is intended to support the implementation of sidewalk projects recommended in the following plans: *Downtown Neighborhoods Plan, Highway 16 Corridor Plan the Waxhaw Planning Division's Small Area Plan, Parks and Recreation Department Master Plans, and the Comprehensive Transportation Plan(CTP)*. This policy does not apply to sidewalks constructed as part of roadway projects, new subdivisions, or other land developments which have specific sidewalk design and construction requirements as identified in the latest revision of the *Unified Development Ordinance(UDO)*.

## III. SIDEWALK RETROFIT POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Town of Waxhaw to:

- A. Install sidewalks on both sides of all existing thoroughfares and one side of all existing local and collector streets in accordance with the prioritization procedure set forth in this policy.
- B. Prioritize sidewalk requests in accordance with the processes identified for each plan/program in Section VI of this document. The affected Town plan/programs will follow the public involvement process described in Section VII of this document.

## IV. DEFINITIONS

**Thoroughfare** – Any public street, which is designed to carry higher volumes of traffic and longer trip distances through and within the Town. Major and minor thoroughfares are identified on the draft Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) *Thoroughfare Plan (Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) when adopted)*, which is updated periodically.

**Collector Street** – Any public street which “collects” traffic from local streets and channels the traffic onto thoroughfare streets, as defined in *AASHTO Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, latest edition.

**Local Street** - Any public street that carries traffic from adjacent land uses to the thoroughfare/collector system. Local streets are intended to carry the lowest traffic volumes, and primarily provide access to abutting land.

**AAWT** - Average Weekday Traffic Volumes Traffic is counted for 48-hours between Monday and Friday (no weekends) on thoroughfares. The average of two days is used to arrive at a 24-hour volume. Non-thoroughfare counts are taken for a 24- hour period, on school days only unless it is determined by staff that school traffic does not influence the street’s traffic volume. Holidays and special events are avoided. Count equipment are placed approximately 200 feet away from an intersection to avoid cars waiting and gather a more accurate count.

**Park** – For the purposes of defining the ranking criteria, a park is defined as a recreational area, which includes Town and/or County owned or maintained public parks, greenways, or recreation centers.

**Greenway Connector** – A planned greenway trail that consists of a sidewalk or multi-use pathway along a street that serves as the greenway and is part of the *Parks and Recreation Cultural Resources Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan.* (Pending replacement by the *Pedestrian Connectivity Plan*)

**School** – For the purposes of defining the ranking criteria, a school is defined as any educational institution with an enrollment of 200 or more students in Grades 12 and under. Schools can be either public or private, typically High School, Middle School, or Elementary School.

**Neighborhood Serving Land Uses** – For the purposes of defining the ranking criteria, a neighborhood serving land use is a land use which primarily serves the surrounding neighborhood and includes, but is not limited to, grocery stores, pharmacies, post offices, libraries, banks, churches, restaurants, medical facilities, and YMCA/YWCAs.

**Land Uses Serving Elderly or People with Disabilities** – For the purposes of defining the ranking criteria, land uses which serve the elderly or people with disabilities, includes, but is not limited to, independent and dependent living facilities, active adult retirement communities, and disability specific organizations.

**Roadway Design Safety Need** – A condition that warrants consideration of a

sidewalk due to roadway design features such as limited horizontal and/or vertical curves that obstruct driver and pedestrian visibility. Engineering judgment by Town staff will be used to determine if increased risks are present on the roadway.

## **V. SIDEWALK IMPLEMENTATION CATEGORIES AND PROCESS**

Potential locations for sidewalk retrofit projects will be divided into three categories based on each roadway's functional classification. The categories are as follows:

- Thoroughfare
- Collectors
- Locals

The procedure for identifying and prioritizing sidewalk projects under each category is summarized below and followed by descriptive text. As with any category identified below, Town staff is responsible for determining the point system associated with these criteria and for making additions or deletions to the criteria as needed. Any changes to the criteria or point system will apply to all potential projects and must be made by Town staff before the project lists are ranked for each program.

### **A. Ranking Criteria:**

- AAWT (Average Annual Weekday Traffic)
- Connectivity to other sidewalks
- Proximity to a school
- School Type
- Proximity to a park
- Greenway Connector
- Proximity to land uses serving elderly or people with disabilities
- Proximity to transit
- Proximity to neighborhood serving land uses
- Evidence of a worn path
- Roadway related safety need
- Length of proposed sidewalk
- Existence of curb/gutter/drainage

### **B. Reserved Authority**

A proposed or requested sidewalk will be exempt from the procedure identified in Section VII if the Town Engineer, or designee, determines that the project is necessary because of factors including, but not limited to:

- High traffic volumes and speeds
- Pedestrian safety
- Accessibility to transit
- 
-

Street primarily consists of land uses other than single family residential  
Street has reverse frontage lots

## **VI. PRIORITIZATION PROCESS FOR EACH PROGRAM**

This policy includes implementation procedures for the Waxhaw  
Development Services Sidewalk Program

- This program will be responsible for implementing a process to identify sidewalks proposed under their respective areas of responsibility. The following describes the sidewalk request process:

### **A. Sidewalk Program**

Town Staff will accept nomination forms from residents and property owners using non-thoroughfare streets. Any resident may request a sidewalk on a street in this category provided he or she shows that the project has support of the residents along the street. In order to have a sidewalk request added to the Town's *Sidewalk Priority List*, residents must submit a nomination form with at least sixty (60) percent of residents in support (based on the total number of parcels along both sides of the requested street). Town staff will rank these requests and add them to the Town's Sidewalk Priority List.

\*\*Sidewalk projects will be programmed for design at the beginning of each fiscal year. Town staff will update the list of eligible streets for each category of the sidewalk retrofit program annually to determine the highest priority projects for the upcoming fiscal year.

### **Process Steps**

1. Resident requests a sidewalk. Staff can also identify sidewalk needs, however if the street is a non-thoroughfare street it must follow the process outlined in Section VII.
2. Staff determines if petition based or not.
3. If petition based, residents must submit a nomination form with 60% of the tenants or property owners on the street.
4. When submitted, staff ranks the requests among all others in accordance with the ranking criteria in section V.
5. At the beginning of each fiscal year, staff further reviews requests at the top of the list.
6. Staff determines how many projects to program. Non-petition based projects are implemented and public meetings held. Petition based requests follow the process outlined under the Public Involvement Section (VII).

The Town will build sidewalks along street sections with highest ranking as funding becomes available. As an identified project nears the top of the ranking list, the Town's Development Services Staff will hold a minimum two (2) public information meetings to provide residents with information about the project and to receive their input. In addition, Town Staff will ask residents to provide feedback regarding design concerns. Town staff will then determine the most appropriate side of the street for sidewalk installation based on design consideration and property owner input.

*Under the petition-based process, if there is insufficient project support, the request will remain on the ranking list and be reevaluated for public support after a 1-year period.*

## **B. Area Plan Implementation Program**

Development Services planning staff will identify projects through the area planning process. Each Area Plan that is developed will identify sidewalk needs in each plan area. Sidewalk needs will be ranked considering the criteria identified in Section VII of this policy. As such, sidewalks must compete for funding with other non-sidewalk recommendations. Sidewalk projects can be built as funding becomes available.

*\*\*Residents in an Area Plan boundary still have the ability to request a sidewalk through the Sidewalk Program process.*

### ***Process Steps:***

1. Planning staff hold public meetings during the planning process to discuss sidewalk needs and to determine which sidewalks are most critical/desirable to residents.

2. Development Services staff rank those streets identified through the area planning process using the ranking criteria in section V (or may determine through public input which streets are most critical/desirable).
3. The highest ranking streets are further evaluated by the Development Services staff to determine which streets will move forward.
4. Staff determines if petition based or not.
5. If not petition based, Development Services staff can implement project when funding is available.
6. If petition based, requests follow the process outlined under the Public Involvement Section (VII).

**VII. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

After sidewalk retrofit projects are selected, a minimum of two (2) public meetings will be held for all projects as referenced in **Table 1** below. The first meeting will introduce property owners about the Town’s desire to create a more walkable Town, and to identify the project scope and display a conceptual design. Subsequent meetings will illustrate design modifications made based on public input.

**Table 1 – Sidewalk Prioritization Categories**

| Functional Class  | Public Input                             | Design Considerations   | Petition Process           | % Support   | Implementation  |
|-------------------|--|---|----------------------------|---|---|
| Thoroughfares     | Public Meetings and Design Modifications | Sidewalk on both sides  | None                       | N/A   | Construct   |
| Collector Streets | Public Meetings and Design Modifications | Sidewalk on one side based on design constraints and public input | Town-administered petition | Minimum <b>60%</b> of property owners on both sides of street | Construct if petition passes OR Reserved Authority used |
| Local Streets     | Public Meetings and Design Modifications | Sidewalk on one side based on design constraints and public input | Town-administered petition | Minimum <b>60%</b> of property owners on both sides of street | Construct if petition passes OR Reserved Authority used |

## **A. Petition Process**

Each program will follow the petition based process outlined below:

- Thoroughfares – No petition process is required.
- Non-thoroughfares – The Town will administer a petition to gauge the level of support for a project. At least sixty (60) percent of property owners must sign the petition in order for the project to move forward.
  - Town administered petition is sent to property owners on both sides of the street.
  - Owners have 30 days to turn the petition into the Town. The deadline date will be provided on the petition.
  - Town staff validates the petition.
    - If the petition passes, sidewalk request is added to each program’s list and constructed subject to available funding.
    - **If the petition does not pass, property owners have an additional chance 1-year from the petition due date to go through the process again.**

## **B. Post-Petition Notification**

All owners of property on the nominated street shall be notified in writing that an adequate petition has been submitted and that the sidewalk will be added to each program’s list and constructed subject to available funding.

## **C. Appeals**

Any property owner abutting the requested street may appeal by filing a written notice of appeal to the Development Services Director within 30 days from receipt of notification. Implementation may be delayed if an appeal is filed. The reason for an appeal is to ensure the validity of the petition and the project. The property owner must set forth justification for the appeal in the notice of appeal.

Appeals will be heard by the Development Services Director, or hearing officer designated by the Director.

## **VIII. DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Sidewalk retrofit efforts in older neighborhoods often present a number of construction challenges such as insufficient right-of-way, poorly defined road edge, hilly terrain and private landscaping in the right-of-way. To the extent practical, the Town will design sidewalk retrofit projects to conform to the Town’s *Sidewalk Design Criteria*. However, due to retrofit challenges, staff will consider context sensitive design techniques where necessary and appropriate. All newly constructed sidewalks will conform to the requirements set forth by the *Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines*.

**IX. FUNDING**

The number of locations and amount of sidewalk addressed per year is dependent on funding levels. Staff from the affected programs will determine how sidewalk funds will be appropriated on an annual basis. Due to the varying mileage and construction costs of individual projects, the number of projects constructed in each category will vary from year to year.

**X. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

Development Services shall have primary responsibility for the implementation and administration of this policy and will recommend amendments, from time to time, to the Board of Commissioners, for the purpose of keeping this policy complete and current.

Two years after implementation of the revised policy, Town Staff will evaluate the program for its effectiveness, public satisfaction and amount of staff time necessary to implement.

**XI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy shall become effective upon adoption by the Board of Commissioners on \_\_\_\_\_.