

## Town of Carrboro

### Guiding Principles for Implementing Sidewalk Bond Projects

February 3, 2004

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On November 4, 2003, the voters of Carrboro approved a \$4.6 million general obligation bond issue for the purpose of constructing sidewalks and greenway trails. Implementation of sidewalk bond projects will be accomplished in accordance with the following guiding principles.

#### **Purpose and Need**

Sidewalks constructed with bond funds will provide a pedestrian circulation network to improve mobility and expand access to downtown Carrboro, schools, parks, bus stops, businesses, residential areas, town buildings, and other facilities. Sidewalks will be constructed in a fiscally responsible and environmentally sensitive manner that enhances pedestrian safety by eliminating hazards and minimizing conflicts with vehicular traffic.

#### **Implementation**

The Town will hire a design consultant with appropriate project and community relations experience to assist Town staff in the design of new sidewalks.

The implementation process will take into account the needs of property owners along affected streets. Prior to the approval of a sidewalk plan for a particular street, two informational meetings will be held with property owners, as follows:

- The first meeting will describe the design and construction process and allow property owners to discuss their interests before the consultant begins sidewalk design.
- The second meeting will provide property owners the opportunity to review and comment on a preliminary sidewalk design.

Meetings will be scheduled with representatives of groups of streets from the same or close by geographic areas. For example, Ashe, Elm, Lindsay, and Shelton streets would be grouped together and property owners on those streets would be invited to the same meeting. It is anticipated that there will be about 7 to 9 such groupings. When a sidewalk project will affect only one property owner, a separate meeting will be held with that property owner.

The Town will produce a brochure and web page explaining the sidewalk design and construction process and designate a Town employee to serve as a primary contact person.

At any point in the implementation process, property owners on a street may submit a request that a sidewalk not be built on their street. Decisions on such requests are made by the Sidewalk Review Committee (see “Modifications to Sidewalk Designs” below).

### **Donation of Right-of-Way**

During meetings with Town staff and the design consultant, property owners will be informed of the opportunity to donate right-of-way for sidewalk projects and be encouraged to discuss the tax implications of such a donation with their tax advisor.

### **Modifications to Sidewalk Designs**

Once preliminary sidewalk designs have been prepared, affected property owners will have a reasonable amount of time to review and request modifications. The time period for requesting modifications will be specified at the informational meeting. Requests for modifications are submitted to the Public Works Director.

A Sidewalk Review Committee, composed of three members of the Board of Aldermen and two citizens, will be created and hear the following types of requests:

- Requests that a sidewalk not be built on a particular street.
- Requests that major modifications be made to the sidewalk designs on a street.

Requests to the Sidewalk Review Committee must be signed by at least 75 percent of the property owners of the street. The Town will prepare a form on which such requests may be submitted.

### **Sidewalk Design**

New sidewalks will be designed, installed, and maintained in accordance with government standards (including ADA accessibility standards). Generally, sidewalks will be a minimum of 5 feet in width, when feasible. Sidewalk installation will be coordinated with street maintenance and construction activities to the extent practical.

When a decision must be made about which side of a street to place a sidewalk, the following factors will be considered:

- A determination of which side would require the least new construction to provide connections to existing sidewalks.
- An inventory of existing trees, existing utilities, other immovable obstructions, available right-of-way, and adjacent parking and driveway locations.
- Drainage and environmental impacts.
- The request of a majority of the property owners abutting the street.

A grass strip between street/curb and sidewalk is encouraged. Such strips provide both an aesthetic benefit and physical separation between vehicles and pedestrians. If a grass strip is not possible, other alternatives that address aesthetic and safety concerns will be considered.

The impacts of sidewalk installation on existing on-street, off-street, and overflow parking will be considered in the design of new sidewalks.

The impact of new sidewalks on existing driveway entrances will be considered. Designs should seek to reduce awkward humps and abrupt grade changes.

The design of new sidewalks will take into account postal service standards for the placement of mail boxes and seek to reduce the conflict between mail boxes and Town maintenance operations such as street sweeping, refuse collection, snow removal, etc.

### **Environmental Concerns**

Trees are a valuable amenity to the urban environment. It is the intent of the sidewalk program to protect large trees if reasonably practicable. Large trees that are deemed to be in poor condition will not be protected. Removal of a tree may be required if the tree is determined to be hazardous. Options to protect trees may include:

- Using alternative materials or alternative construction methods over the critical root area.
- Altering the path within the right-of-way.
- Providing an easement to the Town to relocate the sidewalk to private property.
- Relocating the tree.
- Where grade cuts or fills are required, work shall adhere to best management practices for pruning roots and canopy, slope of cuts or fills, and installation of retaining walls or tree wells.

New sidewalks will be designed so that they meet the Town's stormwater management standards and do not create new drainage problems or exacerbate existing drainage problems.

The design consultant will be asked to consider the suitability of pervious concrete or similar materials for use in sidewalk bond projects in Carrboro. Pervious concrete is a special structural concrete with the fine particles removed.