



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – March 1, 2017 Agenda Item 5

Work Session

Discussion of Proposed Amendment to City Code for Operating Wheelchairs and Bicycles on Sidewalks

Recommended Council Action

Discuss proposed amendment to City Code and determine whether to proceed to a vote.

Context with Key Issues

Takoma Park strives to be a bike friendly community and the City staff has prioritized improvements to bicycle infrastructure wherever possible to encourage the comfort and safety of riders. Riding bicycles on sidewalks is prohibited by Maryland state law, unless it is allowed by the municipality. Montgomery County Code allows bicycles to ride on sidewalks, but Takoma Park City Code section 13.16.050 states “No person shall ride any bicycle on, over or upon any walk or sidewalk in this City.” On November 15, 2015, the Safe Roadways Committee presented a request to Council to allow bicyclists to ride on sidewalks. A discussion of this recommendation occurred October 6, 2016.

In Takoma Park, most roadways and sidewalks are narrow; the topography poses challenges for bike riders, particularly children and novice riders. Heavy vehicular traffic can cause bicycle riding in the roadway to be difficult. Though riding on the sidewalk is not permitted, it is rarely enforced, especially against children. The Safe Roadways Committee reviewed and voted to approve the amendment on February 21, 2017 and supports the Council review provision option.

Additionally, City Code currently does not accommodate wheelchairs on sidewalks and the proposed amendment to the Code will grant that right.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All; Environmentally Sustainable Community

Environmental Impact of Action

The amendment to allow bicycles and wheelchairs on sidewalks further encourages alternative modes of transportation and allows the modes to be more accessible in a wider variety of circumstances and to a greater number of users.

Fiscal Impact of Action

N/A

Attachments and Links

- Redline Code for Draft Amendment to Allow Bikes on Sidewalks
- Link to: [Takoma Park Bikeways](#)
- Takoma Park Existing Bicycle Infrastructure Map

13.16.050 Requirements for Riding on Sidewalks ~~Coasting and bicycle riding on sidewalk prohibited—Exception.~~

A. Operators of motorized and non-motorized wheelchairs shall have all the rights and duties applicable to pedestrians. No person shall ride or propel any handcart, wheelbarrow, sleigh or sled, carriage or other vehicle either in the manner commonly known as “coasting,” or otherwise.

B. Bicycles may be operated upon sidewalks except in locations where in the judgement of the City Manager, it is necessary for the safety or control of vehicular or pedestrian traffic to prohibit the riding of bicycles. No person shall ride any bicycle on, over or upon any walk or sidewalk in this City.

C. Whenever any person is riding a bicycle upon a sidewalk, such person shall yield the right-of-way to any pedestrian and shall give an audible signal before overtaking and passing any pedestrian. Nothing under this section shall apply to baby carriages or small wagons propelled or drawn by hand, nor to children’s vehicles.

D. — No person shall ride, operate or use a bicycle, unicycle, skateboard, cart, wagon, rollerskates, or any other device moved primarily by human power, on a sidewalk in a careless, reckless, or wanton manner, or carelessly so as to endanger life or property.

E. A violation of this section is a Class G offense. (Prior code § 13-61)

F. This section shall expire on _____, 2019, and shall be of no effect thereafter.

[OR]

F. The Council shall review the impact of this section on or about _____, 2019, to determine whether repeal or amendment is appropriate.

New Ave Bikeway - City of Takoma Park

Existing Bicycle Infrastructure

