



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – January 17, 2024 Agenda Item 3

Work Session

Presentation of Proposed Administrative Regulation Updates to the Traffic Calming Process and Proposed Administrative Regulations Establishing a New Process for Sidewalk Requests

Recommended Council Action

Review presentation and provide feedback. If the Council endorses the changes to the sidewalk request process, an action should be added to a future agenda to rescind or annul Resolution 2015-32, which established the current sidewalk process.

Context with Key Issues

This presentation provides proposed updates to the existing policies for residents to request traffic calming measures and new sidewalks. The proposed updates consolidate the two processes into parallel, similar procedures, provide a structure that creates more clarity regarding budgeting, and bring both processes into the same policy format of an administrative regulation.

During the City Council Meeting on October 4, 2023, the City Council requested that staff develop policy options to update the existing processes to initiate new traffic calming and sidewalk projects. The traffic calming process is set through Administrative Regulation No. 96-1 and the new sidewalk request process is set through City Council Resolution 2015-32. Both processes have been identified by staff to be inefficient, complicated for the public to understand, and present possible issues about the inequitable access to and distribution of resources.

Council Priority

Advancing a Community of Belonging
Fiscally Sustainable Government
Environmentally Sustainable Community
Engaged, Responsive, Service-Oriented Government
Community Development for an Improved & Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

The City's pedestrian and transportation planning efforts influence the safety and well-being of pedestrians. The sense of security, comfort, and ease by which people can get around the City without fossil fuel-powered modes of transportation has a tangible impact on the city's carbon emissions. These policies will lead to improvements to the pedestrian and roadway safety infrastructure across the City. By encouraging safe and convenient walking, these policies will contribute to the City's efforts to shift residents away from private vehicle use and toward human-powered modes of transportation, reducing the City's climate impact.

Fiscal Considerations

There is no direct fiscal impact from actions taken as a part of this presentation, or the adoption of these policies as administrative regulations. The longer-term fiscal impact will depend on the kinds and volumes of requests, but the proposed policies would create the ability for City staff to plan and budget for these projects in a more predictable and defined manner.

Racial Equity Considerations

The proposed policies revise existing elements of both Administrative Regulation No. 96-1 and City Council Resolution 2015-32 that create potentially inequitable barriers to requesting new infrastructure and ensuring its installation, particularly in locations identified to be important for closing network gaps or supporting vulnerable roadway users. In particular, the removal of a petition as a required process to request a new project creates easier pathways for residents who live in multi-family buildings, on blocks with multi-family buildings, or areas without well-organized neighborhood associations. The removal of resident approval votes after a design is in progress prevents the possibility that a small minority ends a project that is otherwise supported by the community or identified through data-driven need as an important project to advance.

Attachments and Links

- Administrative Regulation Setting Policy for New Traffic Calming Request Process
- Administrative Regulation Setting Policy for New Sidewalk Request Process
- Traffic Calming and New Sidewalk Request Policy Visualization - Proposal Summary
- [Administrative Regulation No. 96-1: Guidelines and Procedures for Traffic Calming Devices Installations](#)
- [City Council Resolution 2015-32: A Resolution Setting a Policy for New Sidewalk Design and Installation](#)

SUBJECT: Guidelines and Procedures for New Traffic Calming Requests, Designs, and Installations

EFFECTIVE DATE: [Month XX, XXXX]

PURPOSE/SCOPE:

To provide written guidelines for the administration of *Takoma Park Code* Chapter 13, Vehicles and Traffic, as amended, pertaining to the request, design and installation of traffic calming devices.

Traffic calming devices include signs, pavement markings, speed humps, raised walkways, flat top speed humps or speed tables, and other physical devices placed or installed on a roadway which use vertical deflections, horizontal shifts, roadway narrowing, closures, or high-visibility queuing to limit access, restrict traffic flow, or channel or slow vehicle movement for the purpose of reducing traffic hazards and improving pedestrian safety.

PROCEDURES:

I. Request for Traffic Calming Installation

A. Project Initiation

1. A Takoma Park resident can submit a request to the City Manager for a new traffic calming device within one-quarter (1/4) of a mile from their permanent residence. This request may also include a description of the preferred specific location and design elements of the proposed traffic calming device, although the final design will be determined by the Public Works Department in consultation with residents through the public design process. Proposed locations of new traffic calming device shall comply with the requirements of the Takoma Park Code and relative State and County laws.

2. A Takoma Park City Council member can submit a request to the City Manager for a traffic calming device within their ward boundaries. This request may also include a description of the preferred specific location and design elements of the proposed traffic calming device, although the final design will be determined by the Public Works Department in consultation with residents through the public design process. Proposed locations of a new traffic calming

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device shall comply with the requirements of the Takoma Park Code and relative State and County laws.

3. The City Manager or a City staff member, in consultation with the Public Works Department, can submit a request for a new traffic calming device in any location around the City, at the City’s discretion. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed as preempting the City at its initiative from installing, altering, maintaining, or removing a traffic calming device.

B. City Evaluation of Request

1. Upon submission of the request, a designee from the Department of Public Works, will conduct an evaluation of the proposed new facilities in coordination with relevant other City departments.

2. The Department of Public Works will conduct an evaluation of the proposed location of traffic calming device, in coordination with relevant other City departments or consultants, which may include considerations for the following. These should not be considered exclusive criteria:

- a) Safety;
- b) Social Equity;
- c) Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Trip Generators;
- d) Roadway Characteristics;
- e) Identified Population Impacts;
- f) Project feasibility.

3. If the project satisfies the City staff’s evaluation, then the proposed project will be added to the Department of Public Works’ general project queue based on

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priority ranking determined through the evaluation process mentioned in Section B.2.

C. Procedures for Community Project Input and Approval

1. When a new traffic calming device advances through the evaluation process to the Department of Public Works' general project queue, the Department, in collaboration with other departments as needed, will organize a public community meeting for all community stakeholders. The meeting shall be scheduled in coordination with the availability of Public Works Department staff and other relevant staff or department consultants as designated by the Public Works Department. The meeting will include a review of the City's evaluation of the project and a broader discussion about design considerations for the project. Notification about the meeting must be posted publicly at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting in at least one of the following formats: print flyers; posted signage on the block where the request was made, the adjacent block of the same street and the one block of any intersecting streets; the Takoma Park Newsletter; or other equivalent notification strategy.

2. Comments gathered during the public community meeting should be consolidated and posted publicly within fourteen (14) days of the meeting date. The comments and feedback collected during this preliminary meeting will inform the preliminary designs for the new traffic calming device. All comments shall be shared with the City or external staff working on the designs of the project.

3. Annually, prior to the City Council's budgeting process, City Staff will publish the list of prioritized sidewalk requests in the construction queue, including prior projects not yet implemented. Strategies to publish this information may include one or more of the following: the Takoma Park Newsletter, community meeting, City Council presentation, public hearing, or other applicable strategy.

4. The prioritized list of requested projects would be submitted to the City Council for review during the budgeting process. The approval of the annual budget would advance selected, identified projects or listed projects left to the discretion of the Public Work Department within the constraints of the allocated

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budget to the design phase. The City Council may identify projects from the prioritization list to include in the annual budgetary allocation.

D. Procedures for New Project Design and implementation

1. City staff shall develop a preliminary design for the project, based on the feedback gathered during previous stages of the request process. The design may be developed by City staff or with the support of external consultants.

2. Upon completion of a preliminary design, the Department of Public Works, in collaboration with other departments as needed, would host public community meeting to share the proposed designs. Notification about the meeting must be posted publicly at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting in at least one of the following formats: print flyers; posted signage on the block where the request was made, the adjacent block of the same street and the one block of any intersecting streets; the Takoma Park Newsletter; or other equivalent notification strategy. City staff may collect additional feedback on the preliminary design.

3. After the community public meeting to review the preliminary design, City staff or an external consultant may develop technical project designs. Upon completion of the final technical designs, the project would be added to the Department of Public Works' construction queue, inclusive of the process to acquire any additional permits or approvals from local, County, or State agencies or utility companies.

II. Implementation Responsibility

The Public Works Director or designee shall be responsible for advising the Council and public on the proper placement of traffic calming devices on City streets, and for overseeing the installation and maintenance of traffic calming devices in the City.

PROPOSED: _____ /s/ _____ DATE: _____
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SUBJECT: Guidelines and Procedures for New Sidewalk Facility Requests, Designs, and Installations

EFFECTIVE DATE: [Month XX, XXXX]

PURPOSE/SCOPE:

To provide written guidelines for the administration of *Takoma Park Code* Article X Public Ways and Sidewalks, Section 1003 Powers as to Sidewalks, as amended, pertaining to the request, design and implementation process for new sidewalk.

Sidewalks are defined as dedicated buffers on a roadway that provide people with space to travel within the public right-of-way separated from motor vehicles and on-road bicycles. At a minimum, new or rebuilt sidewalks should be designed to comply with accessibility standards identified by Federal and State regulations. Where raised, paved sidewalks are not feasible, separated pedestrian spaces may be delineated in the roadway with temporary materials, such as paint, thermoplastic, bollards, posts, or other visual or tactile dividers.

PROCEDURES:

I. Request for New Sidewalk Installation

A. Project Initiation

1. A Takoma Park resident can submit a request to the City Manager for a new sidewalk facility within one-quarter (1/4) of a mile from their permanent residence. This request may also include a description of the preferred specific location and design elements of the proposed sidewalk, although the final design will be determined by the Public Works Department in consultation with residents through the public design process. Proposed locations of new sidewalk facilities shall comply with the requirements of the Takoma Park Code and relative State and County laws.

2. A Takoma Park City Council member can submit a request to the City Manager for a new sidewalk facility within their ward boundaries. This request may also include a description of the preferred specific location and design elements of the proposed sidewalk, although the final design will be determined by the Public Works Department in consultation with residents through the public

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design process. Proposed locations of new sidewalk facilities shall comply with the requirements of the Takoma Park Code and relative State and County laws.

3. The City Manager or a City staff member, in consultation with the Public Works Department, can submit a request for a new sidewalk facility in any location around the City, at the City’s discretion. Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed as preempting the City at its initiative from installing, altering, maintaining, or removing a sidewalk facility.

B. City Evaluation of Request

1. Upon submission of the request, a designee from the Department of Public Works, who will conduct an evaluation of the proposed new sidewalk facilities in coordination with relevant other City departments.

2. The Department of Public Works will conduct an evaluation of the proposed location of new sidewalk facilities, in coordination with relevant other City departments or consultants, which may include considerations for the following. These should not be considered exclusive criteria:

- a) Safety;
- b) Social Equity;
- c) Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Trip Generators;
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priority ranking determined through the evaluation process mentioned in Section B.2.

C. Procedures for Community Project Input and Approval

1. When a new sidewalk facility advances through the evaluation process to the Department of Public Works' general project queue, the Department, in collaboration with other departments as needed, will organize a public community meeting for all community stakeholders. The meeting shall be scheduled in coordination with the availability of Public Works Department staff and other relevant staff or department consultants as designated by the Public Works Department. The meeting will include a review of the City's evaluation of the project and a broader discussion about design considerations for the project. Notification about the meeting must be posted publicly at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting in at least one of the following formats: print flyers; posted signage on the block where the request was made, the adjacent block of the same street and the one block of any intersecting streets; the Takoma Park Newsletter; or other equivalent notification strategy.

2. Comments gathered during the public community meeting should be consolidated and posted publicly within fourteen (14) days of the meeting date. The comments and feedback collected during this preliminary meeting will inform the preliminary designs for the new sidewalk facility. All comments shall be shared with the City or external staff working on the designs of the project.

3. Annually, prior to the City Council's budgeting process, City Staff will publish the list of prioritized sidewalk requests in the construction queue, including prior projects not yet implemented. Strategies to publish this information may include one or more of the following: the Takoma Park Newsletter, community meeting, City Council presentation, public hearing, or other applicable strategy.

4. The prioritized list of requested sidewalk projects would be submitted to the City Council for review during the budgeting process. The approval of the annual budget would advance selected, identified projects or listed projects left to the discretion of the Public Work Department within the constraints of the

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allocated budget to the design phase. The City Council may identify projects from the prioritization list to include in the annual budgetary allocation.

D. Procedures for New Project Design and Implementation

1. City staff shall develop a preliminary design for the project, considering the feedback gathered during previous stages of the request process. The design may be developed by City staff or with the support of external consultants.

2. Upon completion of a preliminary design, the Department of Public Works, in collaboration with other departments as needed, would host a public community meeting to share the proposed designs. Notification about the meeting must be posted publicly at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the meeting in at least one of the following formats: print flyers; posted signage on the block where the request was made, the adjacent block of the same street and the one block of any intersecting streets; the Takoma Park Newsletter; or other equivalent notification strategy. City staff may collect additional feedback on the preliminary design.

3. After the community public meeting to review the preliminary design, City staff or an external consultant may develop technical project designs. Upon completion of the final technical designs, the project would be added to the Department of Public Works' construction queue, inclusive of the process to acquire any additional permits or approvals from local, County, or State agencies or utility companies.

II. Miscellaneous

A. The City has established the following recommendations to be provided to the design firm for consideration when developing new sidewalk designs:

1. The sidewalk is to be located in the right-of-way when possible. If right-of-way is not available, the City will need to enter into an agreement or receive an easement from the property owner to place a portion of the sidewalk on private property.

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2. When roadway width is adequate, consideration will be given to locating the sidewalk partially or completely within the existing street pavement to reduce the amount of impervious area added by the new sidewalk and decrease the impact on adjacent residential property.

3. The new sidewalk design will minimize tree removal to the maximum extent possible. The condition of the trees will be noted and an inventory of trees in the affected right-of-way or within 50 feet of the proposed sidewalk will be developed. Methods to protect trees shall be incorporated into the design and may include building extensions into the street or right-of-way to allow the sidewalk to pass around existing trees.

4. If a tree is removed for the new sidewalk, the City will follow the Tree Ordinance requirements for replanting and the cost of replanting will be included in the project.

5. The location of utility lines and poles will be noted as they limit the planting of large shade trees. The side of the street with the utility poles will be considered first for the sidewalk, as it already limits the impact on future tree planting, and may have street lighting. If relocation is necessary for any utility poles, the cost should be factored into the decision-making process.

6. The City shall coordinate any sidewalk development with planned work by public utilities, traffic safety projects, or City tree planting.

7. If the property owner has vegetation, a lead walk, retaining wall or other item located in the right-of-way, the project will include the cost for removal and relocation of that item when appropriate.

8. The City has established stormwater management requirements that will be followed and will be included in the design development. These require providing for infiltration of stormwater runoff through grassy swales, bio-retention areas, or other methods.

9. The standard width of new sidewalk will meet or exceed ADA accessibility standards. The sidewalk may be wider if a wider width is specified in a master, sector, development or site plan or design guidelines; connects existing

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wider sidewalk segments; is needed to accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic (e.g. adjacent to storefronts, institutions or transit access); or is requested by the community during the design process.

10. When the right-of-way space is wide enough, the design preference will be to include a green strip between the curb and the proposed sidewalk. A green strip provides for runoff infiltration, sufficient space for new tree planting, and provides a buffer from the street which is particularly beneficial during snow removal operations.

11. Depending on the size of the new sidewalk, the City may need to apply for a sediment and erosion control permit (if the project will disturb over 5,000 square feet) and a Forest Conservation Plan (if the affected area is 40,000 square feet).

III. Implementation Responsibility

The Public Works Director or designee shall be responsible for advising the Council and public on the proper placement of sidewalk facilities on City streets, and for overseeing the installation and maintenance of sidewalks in the City.

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City Manager

	Existing TC	Existing SW	Proposed TC/SW Alternative #1	Proposed TC/SW Alternative #2	Proposed TC/SW Alternative #3
Policy Structure	Administrative Regulation	City Council Resolution	Administrative Regulation (Two separate)	Administrative Regulation (Two separate)	Administrative Regulation (Two separate)
Initiation	1. Residential Petition; or CC request re: parks/playgrounds; or City staff discretion	1. Resident Request	1. City staff request; or CC request	1. Resident request; or City staff request; or CC request	1. City staff request; or CC request
Evaluation			2. City staff evaluation A project prioritization based on DDOT TSI 2.0 for traffic calming and Toole Design prioritization tool for sidewalks would guide staff on whether or not a project advances further and/or how highly it is prioritized. See "Prioritization Alternatives" tab for full breakdown.	2. City staff evaluation A project prioritization based on DDOT TSI 2.0 for traffic calming and Toole Design prioritization tool for sidewalks would guide staff on whether or not a project advances further and/or how highly it is prioritized. See "Prioritization Alternatives" tab for full breakdown.	2. City staff evaluation A project prioritization based on DDOT TSI 2.0 for traffic calming and Toole Design prioritization tool for sidewalks would guide staff on whether or not a project advances further and/or how highly it is prioritized. See "Prioritization Alternatives" tab for full breakdown.
Consultation	2. Community Meeting	2. Community Meeting (1)		3. Community meeting (discussion of options)	3. Community meeting (discussion of options)
		3. Community Vote (1)	3. Annually publish the queue in advance of budgeting season; whether via Newsletter, public meeting, public hearing, or other		4. Annually publish the queue in advance of budgeting season; whether via Newsletter, public meeting, public hearing, or other
Approval (New Process)	N/A	N/A	4. Project approved for implementation via City Council budget vote	4. Project approved for implementation via City Council budget vote	5. Project approved for implementation via City Council budget vote
	N/A	N/A			
Design/Confirmation		4. Proposed design developed	5. Proposed design developed	5. Proposed design developed	6. Proposed design developed
	3. City Council Public Hearing		6. Community meeting (present proposed design for review)	6. Community meeting (present proposed design for review)	7. Community meeting (present proposed design for review)
			7. Design finalized	7. Design finalized	8. Design finalized
Approval (Existing Process)	4. City Council Vote	5. Community Meeting (2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
		6. Community Vote (2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Implementation	5. Immediate implementation	7. Project added to work queue	8. Project added to work queue	8. Project added to work queue	9. Project added to work queue
Traffic Calming Process	https://s3.amazonaws.com/cityclerk-takomapark/administrative-regulations/ar1996-01.pdf				
Sidewalk Process	https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/resolutions/2015/resolution-2015-32.pdf				