

**Resolution Adopting a Public Sidewalk Policy for the Town of West Hartford**

WHEREAS the Town of West Hartford (“Town”) adopted a Complete Streets Policy (“Policy”) on July 21, 2015 to ensure that its transportation network is designed, constructed and maintained for users of all ages, abilities and modes of transportation; and

WHEREAS said Policy directed Town staff to review and update policies and procedures to facilitate the implementation of Complete Streets; and

WHEREAS from time to time the Engineering Division receives requests to eliminate public sidewalk gaps and install sidewalks in developed areas of Town as a means of improving the connectivity of the public sidewalk system, which is a critical component of our transportation network; and

WHEREAS the Town’s policy for reviewing said requests was in need of updating.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF WEST HARTFORD THAT the attached Public Sidewalk Policy is hereby adopted.

(Van Winkle)  
07/26/16

**Town of West Hartford**  
**Department of Community Services**  
**Public Sidewalk Policy**  
July 26, 2016

**Public Sidewalk Maintenance and Ordinance**

The Town of West Hartford is responsible for the structural condition of the public sidewalk. However, the abutting property owner is responsible for the removal of ice and snow from the public sidewalk. Town of West Hartford, Code of Ordinances, §115-24, Removal or Covering of Snow or Ice Required, states that:

*The owner, agent of the owner, or occupant of premises bordering on any street or public place within the Town where there is an established sidewalk shall cause to be removed therefrom any and all snow and ice within 12 hours after the same shall have fallen or formed or within 12 hours after sunrise when the same shall have fallen or formed in the night season. When it is impracticable to remove ice, the sidewalk shall be made safe and convenient for travel by covering with sand or some other suitable substance.*

**Public Sidewalk Policy Intent**

The Town of West Hartford has a comprehensive public sidewalk network extending over 300 miles. These sidewalks connect residential neighborhoods, schools, parks, retail establishments, places of worship, bus stops, and other pedestrian destinations to provide a walkable community. They provide an alternate means of transportation and recreational opportunities.

While the sidewalk network is extensive, there still are many areas in West Hartford that either do not have any sidewalks or do not have complete sidewalk connectivity. Reasons for this may include lack of need, opposition from abutting property owners, construction or maintenance cost, structural and winter maintenance issues, topography, environmental considerations, and utility constraints.

This Public Sidewalk Policy guides decision making when a request is made to eliminate existing sidewalk gaps, or to install new sidewalks in developed areas within the public right of way. The Policy takes into consideration the vision, goals, and guiding principles of the Town of West Hartford's Complete Streets Policy (Adopted by Town Council on 7/21/2015). This policy does not preclude the Town Manager, acting as Legal Traffic Authority, from initiating the installation of sidewalks in the interest of public safety, as part of a public improvement or in adherence with other Town policies.

**Public Sidewalk Gap Elimination**

A public sidewalk gap is a missing section of sidewalk up to 500 feet in length along a roadway that was accepted by the Town Council as a Public Street. On occasion, the Town receives requests to extend sidewalks through these gaps or Town staff identifies a gap which appears to be worthy of elimination. Extending sidewalks through these areas may create a burden to abutting property owners who chose to purchase their property without a public sidewalk and would become responsible for winter maintenance. This potential burden must be weighed against the benefits that the gap elimination will provide to the community as identified by the Town's Complete Streets Policy.

The Town Engineer will evaluate and make a recommendation to the Town Manager as the Legal Traffic Authority to decide if the public sidewalk gap should be eliminated. Consideration will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:

- A petition requesting the elimination of the sidewalk gap signed by at least 50 percent of the property owners (not tenants) that live within 1,000 feet of the sidewalk gap. Preferably, this petition is signed by the property owners along the sidewalk gap. If applicable, the petition shall identify the preferred side of the roadway to eliminate the sidewalk gap.
- The sidewalk gap is located along a walking route within 1/4 mile of a school.
- The sidewalk gap is located along a CT Transit route or a walking route that is within 1,000 feet of a place of worship, park, or shopping center.
- There is no complete sidewalk along the opposite side of the street.
- The roadway along which the sidewalk gap exists has an average daily traffic volume of 3,000 vehicles (total of both directions).
- Within the limits of the proposed sidewalk installation, the predominant roadway width (edge of roadway to edge of roadway) is less than 28 feet.
- The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of actual vehicle speed is greater than 35 miles per hour.
- The roadway characteristics in the vicinity of the sidewalk gap limit visibility of pedestrians who are walking in the roadway.
- Vehicles are predominantly parked in the roadway in the vicinity of the sidewalk gap.
- The sidewalk installation will be on a grade less than 5.0 percent.
- The sidewalk installation will not impact public utilities.
- The sidewalk installation will not promote ice accumulation.
- The sidewalk installation will not require tree removal or significant tree pruning.
- Town funding is available for the sidewalk construction.
- There is sufficient room within the Public Street Right of Way

#### **Sidewalk Installation in Developed Areas**

In some areas, sidewalks were not constructed as land development occurred. In many cases, the developers specifically asked the Town to waive the construction of sidewalks and that request was approved. When requests for sidewalk installation in developed areas are received, they will be evaluated using the same criteria as the sidewalk gap elimination criteria except as follows:

- A petition signed by at least 75 percent of the property owners (not tenants) who would receive the new sidewalk and who own at least 75 percent of the linear footage of the new sidewalk is required. The petition should clearly identify which side of the roadway is preferred for the sidewalk installation. If all other factors are equal, locating any new sidewalk along the north side of the street is preferred to allow sun exposure, which will increase snow and ice melting.
- The requested sidewalk must connect to an existing public sidewalk.

**Sidewalk Standards**

The construction of all public sidewalks shall comply with current Town of West Hartford Engineering Standards. The sidewalk width should be five feet unless otherwise approved by the Town Engineer. The sidewalk material may be concrete, asphalt, or brick paver. In most cases, the material will match the adjoining sidewalk material but the Town reserves the right to determine the most suitable material given the conditions where the sidewalk is proposed.