



Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy Sample

Scott County Health Department

May 2018

The built environment plays a vital role in community life by increasing connectivity and providing pedestrians access to public spaces. To improve the health, safety, and welfare of **Community** citizens, the City of **Community** recognizes that enhancing sidewalks and bikeways increases physical activity opportunities where residents live, work, learn, and play.

The purpose of this policy is to enhance safety and equity in the City of **Community** by prioritizing pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages and abilities above the minimum guidance outlined by the [Iowa Statewide Urban Design and Specifications](#) (SUDAS), Iowa Model Code of Ordinance, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA requires all public facilities, and private facilities which provide goods or services to the public, to provide access to people with disabilities (e.g., sidewalk curb ramps, street level or ramped entrances, and accessible restrooms). While ADA sets a minimum requirement to accommodate people of all abilities, many sources recommend exceeding minimum requirements for increased accessibility, economic value, and health benefits within a community.

Walkability

The primary form of pedestrian infrastructure is the sidewalk. The City of **Community** considers pedestrians in all transportation planning and aims to design roads and sidewalks that “feel” safe. Walking trips under a half-mile (10 minutes) are considered reasonable, and trips as long as two miles are feasible if amenities are well designed and infrastructure supports walking.

A single pedestrian requires 2 ½ to three feet of walking space, with at least eight feet of vertical clearance. Sidewalks should always be designed to accommodate at least two people side-by-side (i.e., five feet wide). The ideal sidewalk width in a residential area is seven feet and eight to twelve feet in downtown settings.

Providing a separation between streets and sidewalks has many benefits to creating safe, usable sidewalks:

- Creates a buffer for a feeling of safety from automobiles
- Reduces the amount of water, gravel, and other debris thrown on sidewalks from passing automobiles
- Prevents curb cuts and driveway aprons from protruding onto sidewalks
- Provides a place for fire hydrants, poles, signs, trashcans, recycling bins, and other obstacles

The following pedestrian treatments can be implemented in **Community** where pedestrians may be present:

- Bumped surfaces on sidewalk curb ramps
- Countdown pedestrian signals
- Crossing islands (e.g., minimum five to six feet in width to allow for a wheel chair to sit in the island)
- Crosswalk variations (e.g., transverse lines, longitudinal or diagonal lines, custom, pedestrian scramble and diagonal crossings)
- Curb extensions
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Un-signalized midblock crossings (e.g., stop signs, signed, mid-block)

Bikeability

It is recommended that bicyclist do not share sidewalks with pedestrians. To encourage all means of active transportation, the City of **Community** recognizes that development of a bicycle infrastructure network will help to encourage more types of users to choose bicycles as a primary mode of transport. The bicycle is a versatile, affordable, compact, and energy-efficient method of transport.

Bicycle trips of two to four miles (10 to 20 minutes) are considered reasonable lengths. However, commuting bicyclists can travel up to an hour to get to work, and recreational bike trips can range in the hundreds of miles. A single bicycle requires four feet of riding space with eight feet of vertical clearance. Bikeways are typically designed to be five or six feet wide to assure a comfortable riding way.

The following bicycle treatments can be implemented in **Community** where pedestrians and bicyclists may be present:

- Bicycle boxes (e.g., left turn access, right lane priority, box-turn access or two-stage turn queue boxes)
- Bicycle lanes (e.g., transitional, dashing, colored pavement and markings)
- Combined bicycle lane/thru lanes
- Public bicycle racks
- Refuge islands (e.g., protected spaces in the center of the street for pedestrian and bicyclist)
- Shared lane markings (e.g., thru and directional)

Prioritize Implementation

All new residential and commercial developments in the City of **Community** are required to install a minimum of seven foot wide sidewalks. The City of **Community** shall prioritize implementation strategies by first focusing on a quarter-mile circle of highly frequented areas, such as schools, parks, transit stops, and key business destinations. Everything within that circle should be a first priority for sidewalk repairs and new construction. Secondly, the City of **Community** shall focus on filling in gaps that can easily connect current walking and biking amenities at a lower cost.

In all matters not covered by this Comprehensive Sidewalk Policy, the most current edition of the [U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Bicycle and Pedestrian Program](#) shall be considered.