



Lexington Sidewalk Request Process FINAL

Requesting the construction of a new sidewalk is a lengthy process that typically takes several years and requires input from numerous Town boards and committees. Depending on the eventual scale and scope of a request, it may also involve securing funding from Town Meeting. Below is an outline of the process that should be followed when a resident, or group of residents, are interested in the creation of a new sidewalk.

The Transportation Safety Group (TSG) has been designated as the party responsible for processing and coordinating new sidewalk requests. TSG is led by the Assistant Planning Director, and supported by representatives from the Police Department, Department of Public Works, School Department, and Human Services Department, with liaisons from the Bicycle Advisory Committee, Safe Routes to School, Commission on Disability and Transportation Advisory Committee. Further information can be obtained by emailing transpsafety@lexingtonma.gov or calling 781-698-4500.

Phase 1 – Initial Review

1. Request Form Submitted by Petitioner

The petitioner(s) should complete and submit a [request form](#) to the TSG. The request should identify the roadway(s), starting point(s) and end point(s), as well as include some rationale for the request. Some information on the pedestrian activity in the area and any potential connectivity to existing sidewalks, trails or bikeways, as well as surrounding land uses (e.g. schools, parks, commercial areas) should also be provided. A list of signatures indicating local support is encouraged but not necessary at this stage.

2. TSG Staff Review

After receipt of a request, TSG staff will perform an initial review of the request to determine if further consideration should be given. If deemed inappropriate, staff will notify petitioner(s) with rationale for denying the request (e.g. request is on a private road or under State jurisdiction, sidewalk is already programmed in subsequent construction cycle).

3. Initial Meeting with Petitioner

If deemed appropriate, a meeting will be scheduled with the petitioner(s). This preliminary discussion will provide the petitioner(s) an opportunity to submit additional information and learn about next steps.

Phase 2 – Evaluation

1. TSG Staff Evaluation & Data Collection

Staff will conduct a more in depth review to identify the existing characteristics of the roadway(s) and surrounding area as well as approximate general activity and utilization. The goal is to evaluate the overall safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists using the roadway(s) and determine if the introduction of a sidewalk would improve or worsen conditions. During this process, TSG staff will also review any existing reports, studies, and other relevant information as well as determine if the requested roadway(s) could potentially be incorporated as part of any long term capital plans or programmed improvements. Typically, the following data is collected at this time:

- Speed and volume counts (only collected during school year)
- Census Data (identify # of households & population)
- School bus routes and stops (approximation of the number of children in the area)
- Posted travel speed
- Crash Data History
- Geometry of the road (curvature and grades which affect sightlines and speeds)
- Roadway designation/jurisdiction¹
- Inventory of posted signs, road striping, lighting, parking regulations
- Existence of and/or proximity to transit services (i.e. MBTA and Lexpress)
- Identification of surrounding land uses (potential to create links between destinations)
- Existing sections of sidewalk (opportunities to fill in gaps)

In addition to the factors cited above, staff have developed an objective tool that will help prioritize new sidewalk requests in a quantitative manner. The Prioritization Tool, developed with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software, generates a utilization score for particular segments of roadway in Town. [Click here to view a map of the results](#). The utilization score as well as the safety and the findings of the data collected above will be evaluated to ensure that sidewalks are constructed where existing need and potential for pedestrian traffic is greatest while considering limited Town resources.

2. Collection of Signatures by Petitioner

While information is being gathered by TSG staff, the petitioner(s) should collect signatures from abutters. Staff will work with petitioners to identify an abutters list. Abutters should be asked if they are in favor of or against a sidewalk as well as identify any concerns they may have. The list will be submitted to TSG and will be another factor used to either make the case for or against conducting further analyses.

¹ The jurisdiction of a roadway refers to the agency that owns it and has responsibility for its repair and maintenance.

3. Public Meeting with Direct Abutters and Petitioner

A public meeting will be scheduled inviting all of the direct abutters to the roadway(s). TSG will present the rationale for their decision and outline next steps. Petitioner(s) and abutters will have an opportunity to share their comments/issues and asks questions. Note, if the TSG staff recommendation is to not pursue this further based on the staff evaluation and data collection process then no public meeting is necessary. A meeting with the petitioner(s) will be scheduled to explain TSG's rationale for not moving forward.

4. Presentation to the Board of Selectmen

TSG staff will present their recommendation before the Board of Selectmen. The Board has ultimate say as to whether further analysis takes place and if a capital article should be placed on a future Town Meeting Warrant to fund further analysis of this request. If the project or funding is not approved by the Board, the proposal will not move forward.

5. Town Meeting Request

Depending on the scale and scope of the project, further analysis may require a request for funding before Town Meeting. If funding for further analysis is approved by the Board of Selectmen and brought forward to Town Meeting, the petitioner(s) should be prepared to speak to explain the importance of having a sidewalk installed. If the funding is not approved at Town Meeting, the proposal will not move forward.

Phase 3 - Further Engineering Analysis

1. Procure Consultant

TSG staff will procure a consultant and oversee the work while ensuring that comments received from the public are considered. Depending on whether funding is required, this phase may not proceed until funds have been approved and allocated. The goal is to determine the feasibility of the project by identifying costs and impacts. Below are some of the details that will be determined during this process.

- Detailed Road Survey (e.g. determine precise topography, right of way limits, tree locations, roadway grades, etc.)
- Walkability Audit (assesses the safety, quality and accessibility of the surrounding environment)
- Traffic Study
- Construction Costs (a detailed estimate will be produced based on the findings)
- Granting of Easements (determine if any permanent or temporary construction easements are required)
- Tree and/or Wetland Impacts
- Neighborhood support or opposition (the input of residents via email, phone calls and petitions will be considered throughout the process)

2. TSG Reviews Results and Makes Recommendation

The results of the additional engineering analysis shall be reviewed by TSG and a recommendation will be made. This recommendation will be based on the factors cited above, including the utilization score, to determine when future funding will be applied for.

3. Public Meeting

- 4.** A public meeting will be scheduled to review the findings and announce the recommendation that will be submitted to the BOS for their consideration. Petitioner(s) and abutters will have an opportunity to share their comments/issues and ask questions.

5. Board of Selectmen Meeting

TSG staff will come before the Board of Selectmen to reiterate the findings and recommendation for approval or disapproval. Petitioner(s) and abutters will have another opportunity to demonstrate support for or opposition to the project. If the BOS approves the recommendation, a capital article will be submitted to a future Town Meeting for funding of design and installation. The request's prioritization score and the Town's ability to fund competing capital projects will determine when this is placed on a Town Meeting Warrant. If the BOS disapproves the recommendation, the proposal will not move forward.

6. Town Meeting

If a capital article request for funding design and construction is brought forward to Town Meeting, the petitioner(s) should be prepared to again address Town Meeting to gain their support. If Town Meeting approves funding, the project will be scheduled into DPW's overall work plan for future design, bidding and construction. If the funding is not approved, the proposal will not move forward.

Phase 4 - Design & Installation

Once funds have been approved and allocated, Town staff will work with petitioner(s) and abutters during the design and installation phases in an effort to address any issues that may arise and ensure a safe and accessible project is completed.