

**Moscow Transportation Commission Recommendations**  
**To Mayor and City Council**  
**for**  
**Pedestrian System Enhancements**  
**July 27, 2006**

**I. Concept/Goals**

- A. The Moscow Transportation Commission (MTC) advocates improvements to Moscow's pedestrian systems. As an advisory commission to the Mayor and Moscow City Council MTC believes that the approach and recommendations found in this summary will lead to a strengthening of Moscow's pedestrian system over time. These recommendations, if adopted, will lead to accomplishment of both general and specific goals found in Moscow's Comprehensive Plan.
- B. The general goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a transportation system "that will make it possible for all people utilizing various modes of transportation to reach their destination as safely and as easily as possible".
- C. The specific pedestrian goal is "to increase the safety and convenience of pedestrians."

**II. Engineering**

**A. Basic Approach**

- 1. MTC's proposed program has three components with different objectives, precedents, and policy backgrounds:
  - a. *Repair/replacement of existing sidewalks;*
  - b. *New sidewalks* where none exist; and
  - c. *Crosswalks.*
- 2. Repair of existing sidewalks
  - a. A primary objective is to keep existing sidewalks in good repair and to mitigate against impediments to safe and unobstructed use by Moscow citizens, included but not limited to collapsing retaining walls, overhanging limbs and bushes, etc.
  - b. A formal program of sidewalk improvements was implemented in the 1990's and progress toward improved sidewalk maintenance resulted. The formal program was discontinued some time ago. A new policy to re-establish this program is needed.
  - c. Policy about responsibility for undertaking repairs to sidewalks within public rights of way, adjacent to private property, is not universally understood and needs to be clarified.
  - d. Repair of existing sidewalks should be managed as an on-going, annual program of improvements, similarly important to street repair/replacement, coordinated by the Moscow public works department, and may or may not be funded by city government.
- 3. New sidewalks/path systems
  - a. The primary objective is to create a comprehensive system of fully interconnected sidewalks and path systems throughout Moscow. Some areas may adequately serve pedestrian needs without designated paths or sidewalks (see discussion in section 4 below).

- b. Sidewalks/paths are integral to Moscow's total transportation system. In some areas of town they were not required as part of new developments, and have left "gaps" in the integrated system needed to connect all parts of the community with safe and effective pedestrian routes. This precedent of sidewalk treatment is unsatisfactory if Moscow is to live up to the "pedestrian friendly" community environment it seeks to promote, and as a means to improve citizen wellness and to avoid unnecessary use of automobiles.
  - c. New sidewalks should be installed as a result of one of the following:
    - i. New development should require sidewalks as a part of adherence to development standards per city requirements; i.e., require sidewalks on both sides of streets at the time of development.
    - ii. Where sidewalks were omitted from segments of streets when original development occurred, the need for construction of new sidewalks on one or both sides of the street (i.e., *retrofitting*) should be analyzed in light of the considerations outlined in section C below.
4. Crosswalks
- a. The purpose for crosswalks is to safely and effectively direct pedestrians to locations where they should cross roadways. Crosswalks are integral to the pedestrian network of the multi-modal transportation system within the community.
  - b. Various styles of marked crosswalks are used within Moscow based upon professional judgments by public works staff, and depending upon use patterns and visibility. Marked crosswalks are installed at the discretion of the City Engineer.
  - c. Requests for changes in crosswalks often come as a result of citizen concern for safety. This concern focuses especially upon the safety of children, the elderly, and/or members of Moscow's disabled community, but applies to all who use Moscow's sidewalks.
  - d. MTC recommends that the city develop a systematic method for establishing marked crosswalks and give serious consideration to finding the most permanent, reflective coating materials possible.

## **B. Evaluation/Analysis of Need**

- 1. Basic inventory information assembled by the City of Moscow public works staff will document areas potentially needing sidewalk repair, retrofitting, or new crosswalk treatments. The inventory would minimally consist of the following "layers" of data:
  - a. Base map illustrating known sidewalk conditions;
  - b. Areas requiring repair of existing sidewalks, regardless of location within city boundaries; this information should be kept independent of new sidewalk needs data;
  - c. Arterial, collector, and de-facto collector streets (within some neighborhoods) without sidewalks along both sides;
  - d. Areas without sidewalks on either side of street within a "reasonable" distance of all public and private K-12 schools in Moscow;
  - e. Presence/absence/condition of wheelchair access ramps at intersections;
  - f. Traffic count data for city streets;
  - g. Street widths; and right-of-way widths;
  - h. On-street parking locations and approximate counts; and
  - i. Marked crosswalks.

2. The City Public Works Department will eventually prepare detailed planning and design documents for accomplishing the goals of this section, or manage a process using external engineers per standard procedures.
3. MTC will review and participate in establishing priority areas for improvements, and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council.
4. The City should conduct a policy review of sidewalk maintenance and management to clarify, insofar as feasible, responsibility for ensuring that obstructions to clear and direct access of walks by pedestrians is prevented. This will include snow/ice removal on walks, vehicles parked in such a way that they interfere with pedestrian use of sidewalks, overhanging trees and bushes, and other obstructions.

### **C. Considerations for Prioritizing Needs**

1. The City Public Works Department would assemble basic inventory and parameters suggested by data layers cited above, and with input from MTC members.
2. Initial emphasis would focus on primary walking routes to:
  - a. Schools;
  - b. Public recreation and park sites;
  - c. Other public buildings and sites;
  - d. Clusters of community retail or commercial businesses, e.g. downtown, Eastside Marketplace, Palouse Mall, etc.
3. Missing pedestrian links along arterials and collectors would receive emphasis over neighborhood streets for new sidewalk segments.
4. Areas for revised crosswalk markings would be established, as warranted.

### **D. Flexibility and Decision-making**

1. The decision-making process leading to final recommendations should seek and respect input from residents of neighborhood units (e.g., Third Street neighborhood east of Hayes, Russell neighborhood, etc.) regarding the need or desire for sidewalks along *neighborhood streets*.
2. Flexibility in determining “needed improvements” should be vested with professional city public works staff or with consultants who will recommend exemptions based upon limitations due to such things as street width, presence of street trees, terrain constraints, and prior homeowner improvements, etc.

### **E. Funding**

1. The sidewalk enhancement program should be initiated by City Council and administered by the City Public Works Department. The city should pursue all financing options available to them, including:
  - a. City appropriations;
  - b. Grants from state and/or federal funding sources:
    - i. Safe Routes to Schools program
    - ii. Transportation Enhancement program
  - c. Bonds;
  - d. Private homeowner funded;
  - e. Voluntary LID; and/or
  - f. City-imposed LID, billed to adjacent property owner.

2. Crosswalks within Moscow's jurisdiction should be a program of The City Public Works Department.
3. Crosswalks within State of Idaho's jurisdiction should be a program of the Idaho Transportation Department.

#### **F. Broader Issues**

1. Existing development standards do not ensure that impacts resulting from new developments result in their "fit" into the existing, surrounding system of sidewalks. For example,
  - a. Some developments have impacts that spread beyond the immediate project area (i.e., shopping areas, ball fields, schools, etc.) that should create extended responsibility when developing highly-used traffic generators.
  - b. Non-contiguous ("leap frog") development results in transfer of impact to the city and Moscow citizens (i.e., creation of more missing links). The goal should be continuous sidewalk connectivity; thus, all new and infill developments should result in sidewalks connected to existing networks.
2. Moscow's Comprehensive Plan should be reviewed for areas where current guidelines are inconsistent with adopted pedestrian system enhancement program recommendations.

### **III. Enforcement**

- A. The purpose of enforcement of state and local codes is for ensuring that safe and effective pedestrian networks within the City are working as intended, in a fair and predictable manner.
- B. Community-wide standards and rules should be developed through a credible public input process.
- C. All applicable departments of city government should work together in a coordinated manner to conduct enforcement. Adequate city resources should be provided to accomplish enforcement.
- D. It is essential to make certain that pedestrian system operations policies are consistent with local and state codes, and/or to seek modification of such codes that may be inconsistent with best practices for pedestrian system safety and effectiveness.
- E. Effective public education will assist greatly to help citizens understand, appreciate, and comply with applicable codes.

### **IV. Education**

- A. Changes in the pedestrian system throughout Moscow will invite both favorable and unfavorable comment. Public education, with a focus on the rationale for change will be needed to overcome negative reaction and build strong public support for changes.
- B. Public input should be sought to understand the potential impacts—positive and negative—of changes in enforcement practices, as will changes in codes intended to provide heightened safety for pedestrians.

## **V. Summary of Recommendations**

- A.** The City Council adopts a resolution to improve Moscow's pedestrian systems, as described above, as part of an overall transportation plan for the city.
- B.** The City adopts a comprehensive existing sidewalk repair program, and establishes a dedicated line in the next fiscal year budget to initiate a program of multi-year improvements.
- C.** City staff, with MTC input, works to develop inventory and assessment tools to prioritize needs in each of the three categories: sidewalk repair, new sidewalk segments, and crosswalk improvements. High, medium, and low priority ratings within each of the categories will define priorities to be implemented through a 10-year improvement plan, as funding sources are identified and committed.
- D.** City staff and MTC conduct public input and awareness sessions for the pedestrian enhancement program, at timelines to be established as options are formulated and priorities are proposed.
- E.** Review and revise Moscow's Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance to ensure that proposed changes and proposed enhancements to Moscow's pedestrian system are clearly articulated.
- F.** The City allocates the necessary resources to increase enforcement to achieve improved pedestrian system performance for its citizens.