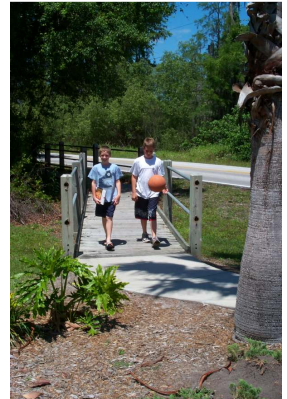




Hillsborough County
Florida

Sidewalk Programs Handbook



*How sidewalks are constructed and maintained
in Hillsborough County*

August 2005

**Public Works Department
Engineering Division
Design and Engineering Support Section**

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Introduction

Your Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is committed to addressing the pedestrian needs of the citizens of Hillsborough County. Among their goals is development of a network of sidewalks that provide a safer means of intermodal travel.

There are approximately 3,600 miles of County roadways, with about 1,200 miles of sidewalks. The County is responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks that have been constructed within its right-of-way. The County also provides new sidewalks in areas that are determined feasible and the need justified.

There are a number of programs under which sidewalks are constructed and maintained in Hillsborough County, including the sidewalk retrofit program, sidewalk gap construction program, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance program for curb cuts and ramps, Community Development Block Grant Program, County maintenance as well as construction by developers and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Each of these programs is outlined in this handbook.



The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a resource for your questions regarding sidewalks in our County. It outlines the programs under which sidewalks are constructed and maintained in the unincorporated areas of the County and provides contact information for each program.

Sidewalk Retrofit Program

In April 2001, the BOCC approved the *Hillsborough County Sidewalk Master Plan* (“*Master Plan*”). The Master Plan is the planning-level tool used to provide an effective and comprehensive approach to proactive programming of sidewalk funding for construction throughout the unincorporated portion of Hillsborough County. The Master Plan contains rankings that prioritize, by benefit/cost factor, approximately 12,000 roadway segments (3,600 miles) throughout the unincorporated county as sidewalk retrofit candidates. There are two needs rankings in the Master Plan: school-focused and other-focused. The school-focused list has been refined by the School Sub-Area Optimization Plan. While pedestrian needs in our County have a broad spectrum, the Board of County Commissioners recognized the need to develop a plan that gives priority to providing safer routes for children to access public schools. Currently, the funding for the Sidewalk Retrofit Program is split, with about 60% of the annual construction funding going to the school-focused candidates and the remaining 40% to the other-focused candidates.

The Retrofit Program incorporates the requirements of Florida Statute (FS) 1006.23 as it relates to hazardous walking conditions for **elementary** school students. The following are the guidelines for determining hazardous walking conditions that apply to a 2-mile radius around the school. For a walkway parallel to the roadway, a 4-foot-wide walking area adjacent to the road is required. Note that the walking area does not need to be a paved surface. If there are no curbs and the speed limit is 55 mph, the walking area must be a minimum of 3 feet from the edge of pavement. No walking area is required if it is located in a residential area with little or no through traffic; or it is located in a residential area and the posted speed limit is 30 mph or less; or the traffic volume is less than 180 vehicles per hour (vph) in each direction during times when students walk to and from school. For a walkway perpendicular to the road (crosswalk), a hazardous walking condition exists if, during the times when students walk to and from school, the traffic

volume exceeds 360 vph and the crossing site is uncontrolled, or if, during the times when students walk to and from school, the traffic volume exceeds 4,000 vph through a controlled intersection or crossing site, unless crossing guards or other traffic enforcement officers are also present. If a hazardous walking condition exists, FS 1006.23 states that the school board is required to provide transportation. The Florida Department of Education then asks the County for a determination of when the condition will be corrected, with the intent for the correction to be made within a reasonable period of time.

Annually, the County's Public Works Department develops a candidate list from the Master Plan and the School Sub-Area Optimization Plan. The candidates on each list are then field reviewed with respect to constraints, with the resulting candidate list for the coming fiscal year being presented to the public through a series of public meetings. The public meetings are typically held in the summer throughout the County, where the candidate lists and alternates are presented. The finalized list of candidates is then presented to the BOCC for final approval.



Inherent in any retrofit construction project are difficulties in dealing with existing conditions. The factors that constrain the County's Sidewalk Retrofit Program are numerous and include, among others, right-of-way limitations, wetland impacts, roadside drainage facilities, waterway and railroad crossings, mature vegetation, cost feasibility and public input.

POINT OF CONTACT

To view the Master Plan, visit the County's website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org/publicworks/engineering/manuals/sidewalk or contact the Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852 or 813-307-1815 for information.

Sidewalk Gap Construction Program

Within the Sidewalk Retrofit Program, the Public Works Department administers a flexible set-a-side program to remedy small gaps that have been identified by School District staff, Traffic School Safety staff, citizen request, and/or listing in the Master Plan. This gap program typically handles construction of short segments that are easily constructed. There are situations, however, where the gaps exist due to constructibility or right-of-way challenges that have historically deemed the segments infeasible.



POINT OF CONTACT

For questions regarding the Sidewalk Retrofit Program, contact the Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852 or 813-307-1815.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Curb Ramp Transition Plan

The ADA contains specific requirements for sidewalk conditions, since sidewalks are a primary transportation mode for many disabled citizens. Currently, curb ramp construction in the public right-of-way in unincorporated Hillsborough County follows the specifications adopted by the Florida Department of Transportation and those found in the *ADA Accessibility Guidelines*.



The Public Works Department has an ongoing ADA Curb Ramp Transition Plan to remedy substandard curb cuts and ramps where feasible.

POINT OF CONTACT

For more information on the ADA Curb Ramp Transition Plan, contact the Communications Department, Community Relations Section at 813-272-5275.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Other County Projects

CDBG PROGRAM

The Hillsborough County staff administers funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. These grants are used to provide needed infrastructure for revitalization efforts in established target areas in the County. Sidewalks are frequently funded as part of these infrastructure improvements.

POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding the County's CDBG program, call the Communications Department, Community Relations Section at 813-272-5275.

OTHER COUNTY PROJECTS

Sidewalks are frequently constructed and/or repaired as part of other County projects, such as roadway extension and widening projects, intersection improvement projects, park projects or other facility construction.

POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding the County's Capital Improvement Program, visit the County website at

www.hillsboroughcounty.org/managementbudget/budgets/adopted/fy05/capitalimprovement

or contact the Communications Department, Community Relations Section at 813-272-5275.



New Developer-Constructed Sidewalks

The Hillsborough County Land Development Code (LDC) requires that sidewalks be constructed for specific development construction. For example, all non-residential



developments must construct sidewalks along the limits of their property along County and State roadways. Likewise, residential subdivisions must construct sidewalks internally and along the entire frontage of roads to which they connect.



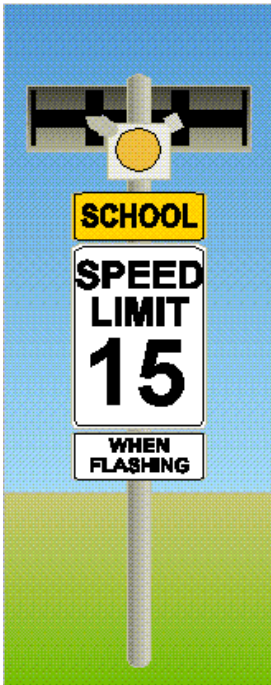
When these sidewalks are constructed along the development frontage, they frequently do not connect to any other sidewalk in the County's sidewalk network. This in turn can lead to a missing segment in the pedestrian network, which may become the responsibility of the County.

POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding new developer-constructed sidewalks, contact the Hillsborough County Planning and Growth Management Department at 813-272-5920.

School Safety Program

Working with the Hillsborough County School District, the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office and individual schools, the Public Works Department's Traffic Services Division develops plans for school-related traffic projects. These projects include pedestrian signals and crossings, school zones, parking prohibitions, school signing, turn lanes, pavement markings, school flashing signs, driveway locations, and sidewalk needs.



In support of this, they conduct traffic studies, radar speed studies, and vehicle and pedestrian traffic counts. This data is evaluated to determine appropriate traffic control devices for each situation, using established standards and engineering judgement.

POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding the School Safety Program, visit the Hillsborough County website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org/publicworks/traffic/programs/safety.cfm or contact the Hillsborough County Public Works Department, Traffic Services Division at 813-307-1871.

New School Construction

As new public schools are built in the County, the School District is responsible for construction of sidewalks along the limits of their property along County and State roadways. The Hillsborough County Planning and Growth Management Department reviews and provides comments to plans for proposed school sites regarding infrastructure needs associated with each proposed new school site. Those comments include the sidewalk segments needed to provide students safe access to and from school. These sidewalk segments, which are intended to provide connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods, may become candidates for the Sidewalk Retrofit Program. Like the developer-constructed sidewalks, this can also result in retrofit needs to comply with ADA requirements and it can prompt the County to remedy any hazardous walking condition within the new elementary school area that meets the definition contained in FS 1006.23.

POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding sidewalks adjacent to new public schools, contact the Hillsborough County Public Works Department, Traffic Services Division, at 813-307-1871 or the Hillsborough County School District Safety Office at 813-872-5263, extension 228.



Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Many of the major roads within unincorporated Hillsborough County are under the jurisdiction of FDOT. Residents frequently request sidewalks along these State roadways. It is FDOT policy in an urban environment to include sidewalks as part of roadway improvement projects and road widening projects, where feasible. Under this policy, FDOT has constructed many miles of sidewalk in the County. However, FDOT does not currently fund a sidewalk retrofit program.

Funding is available for sidewalk projects through the Scenic Enhancement Fund under the Federal Transportation Bill. Hillsborough County typically applies for these enhancement funds annually, and has used these funds to retrofit sidewalks along State-maintained roads.

POINT OF CONTACT

For information on the County's TEA-21 projects, contact the Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852.



County Design Standards

The County's design standards for new sidewalk construction are detailed in the *Hillsborough County Transportation Technical Manual for Subdivisions and Site Development Projects*. In general, sidewalks are to be concrete and five (5) feet in width.

Current County criteria call for the sidewalk to be placed 1) at or near the right-of-way line and 2) as far from the edge of the driving lane as practical. The distance between the travel lane and the sidewalk is typically four feet. However, in some locations, it may vary in order to accommodate drainage, right-of-way constraints or utility conflicts.



POINT OF CONTACT

The Transportation Technical Manual is available on the Hillsborough County website at www.hillsboroughcounty.org/publicworks/engineering or by contacting the Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1875.

Sidewalk Maintenance, Repair and Replacement

The County budget provides sidewalk funding for the sidewalk maintenance program to make necessary repairs to existing sidewalks or replace existing sidewalk that is too damaged to repair.



POINT OF CONTACT

To report sidewalk maintenance and repair needs, call the Communications Department, Community Relations Section at 813-272-5275.

Opt-Out Procedure for the Sidewalk Retrofit and Gap Programs

If a sidewalk in your neighborhood is programmed for construction under the County's Sidewalk Retrofit Program as an Other-focused candidate or gap, and there is public sentiment opposing the project, there is an opt-out procedure that can be requested by citizens. The County will then determine if the project should be removed from the candidate list. This procedure applies only to sidewalks on local streets and roadways and not to those on arterial or collector roadways, segments that would provide significant system connectivity, or projects funded with Scenic Enhancement (federal) funding. (For a segment that is on the School-focused list, but not officially designated as "hazardous" by FS 1006.23, an opt-out request may be presented to the County for consideration, but if at any time the segment is designated as hazardous, the County has no other option under Florida Statute but to install it.)

PROCESS

Typically, in the summer of each year, the County holds public meetings throughout the County where the candidates (School-focused, Other-focused and alternates) are presented to the public for their input. Soon after the public meetings, flyers are sent to citizens whose property fronts the proposed candidate roadway and alternate segments, notifying them of the County's intent to construct sidewalks. The flyer will include a deadline date by which residents must apply for the opt-out process in order to complete the process within 60 days following the public meetings.

Step 1: Initiation - The official Contact Person is the initial resident who contacts the County about opting out and whose property fronts the roadway along which the sidewalk is proposed. The Contact Person must submit a letter stating the location and limits of the proposed sidewalk project to the Public Works Department's Engineering Division with signatures of five (5) residents whose properties front the proposed project, all declaring their opposition to the sidewalk.

Step 2: Initial Consideration for Opt Out Request – The County Engineer will consider the request based on factors such as roadway classification, system connectivity, and safety. If accepted, the request will move to Step 3. If denied, the County Engineer will respond in writing to the Contact Person.

Step 3: Petition - The Public Works Department will issue a petition with map and parcel information to the Contact Person with instructions that 90% of the **actual property owners** fronting both sides of the roadway along which the sidewalk is proposed must see the petition and sign the petition, voting to opt out or not. (A person or married couple that owns multiple parcels on the affected street only counts as ONE vote.)

Step 4: Opt-Out - Of the total number of fronting property owners (100% of the number of properties fronting both sides of the roadway along which the candidate segment is proposed), the following percentage must vote to opt out for the segment to be removed from the candidate list:

Other-focused candidates on local roads:	60%
School-focused candidates on local roads*:	75%

* - *not officially hazardous*

The County will verify the property owners who sign the petition using the Property Appraiser's Database. Final decision and approval authority for opt-out actions rests with the County Engineer, as approved by the adoption of these procedures by the Board of County Commissioners.

Step 5: Future Consideration as Candidate - If a segment is opted out of the retrofit program, it will not be reconsidered for five (5) years, unless the County decides to reconsider it for safety or other engineering reasons.

CANDIDATE LIST - GAPS

The opt-out procedure can also be applied to gap segments. However, the gap candidate list is developed later in the year. If the Public Works Department receives a complaint, the project will be deferred for up to 60 days while the opt-out process is followed. A decision will then be made to proceed with construction or to remove the candidate from the list. If a gap segment is opted out of the retrofit program, it will not be reconsidered for five (5) years, unless the County decides to reconsider it for safety or other engineering reasons.

POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding the procedures for opting out of the Sidewalk Retrofit Program, contact the Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who do I call to request a new sidewalk?

For County roadways: Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852

Who should I call to report a gap in a sidewalk segment?

Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852

Who do I call to report a sidewalk that needs repair or maintenance?

Communications Department, Community Relations Section at 813-272-5275

Who do I call to report a condition that does not comply with ADA requirements?

Communications Department, Community Relations Section at 813-272-5275

How do I find out when the County plans to build a certain sidewalk under the Sidewalk Retrofit Program?

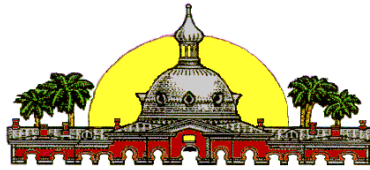
Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852

If I want to object to proposed construction of a sidewalk, whom do I contact?

Public Works Department, Engineering Division, Design and Engineering Support Section at 813-307-1852

For general assistance, contact the Citizen Action Center at 813-272-5900.

Visit the County website at: www.hillsboroughcounty.org



Hillsborough County
Florida

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Wally Hill

Public Works Department

Robert R. Gordon, P.E., Director, Public Works Department
Scott B. Cottrell, P.E., Director, Engineering Division
Leigh Ann Pyron, P.E., Manager, Design & Engineering Support Section

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