



CITY OF SOUTH EL MONTE

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Sidewalk Policy

July 2013

Preface

On July 13, 2004, Council had directed City staff for the purpose of the construction and improvements of City sidewalks, including related street improvements to conduct and evaluate a uniform sidewalk policy. Recognizing that the City is a built-out urban center, there may not be adequate funding and/or resources to expand and acquire sufficient rights-of-way, to implement an entire system. On November 9, 2004 the City adopted the following approach and priority criteria as part of this sidewalk policy. The City adopted a modification to the sidewalk policy on December 14, 2004 to specify a minimum of five (5) feet wide sidewalks on residential areas.

In January, 2013, the City Council directed the City Manager and City engineer to bring forward some modifications to this sidewalk policy that provides flexible design guidelines, when attempting to protect existing street trees in a new sidewalk project. Recommendations have been added to various sections, to encourage minor modifications in width of sidewalks, the use of inverse curbs and inverse parkways, to preserve existing street trees in South El Monte.

Policy Statement

For the purpose of providing accessibility, mobility and a circulation network for pedestrians to shopping and commercial centers, parks, transit stops, area businesses, City buildings, facilities, and programs and encouraging general safety for pedestrians, it is the policy of the City to provide, in a timely manner, through City funds, grants, and/or private commercial and residential development funds, a system of connecting sidewalks and to install sidewalks on at least one (1) side of a street where there is sufficient right-of-way. Where there are existing street trees, this policy is also intended to encourage city planners, engineers, and developers to preserve mature or historic trees in the public right of way intended for new sidewalks.

The system of publicly accessible sidewalks, is to be constructed in such a manner that it will enhance pedestrian safety by eliminating pedestrian hazards and minimizing conflict with vehicular traffic.

A Sidewalk Implementation Map (SIM) shall be prepared which outlines primary destination and access routes and establishes first priority for the installation of new sidewalks where none existed; a second priority is the repair of existing sidewalks and in-fill to complete a block section; and a third priority are those streets identified in the map where sidewalks already existed but needs to be upgraded to standard.

Sidewalk Requirements

Sidewalks, shall, to the greatest extent feasible, meet state and federal standards for design, installation and maintenance. Sidewalk installation shall also be coordinated with street construction activity, if feasible, as part of the City's infrastructure improvement program, and private development improvement.

Except as provided below, on streets with front facing lots, sidewalks shall be installed corner to corner along the side(s) of street abutting the fronts of the homes. Blocks with predominately side lots facing street may have sidewalks on one side. The side-receiving sidewalk should be determined by:

1. Inventory of existing, complying sidewalks and determination of least new work required for connectivity.
2. Inventory of existing qualifying trees and other immovable obstructions that would suggest placement on opposite side.
3. Request of a majority of the lot owners abutting the street in question.
4. The street side where streetlights are located.
5. Location of school tor Safe Route to School (SR2S) path.
6. Location of parks and other pedestrian generators.

If a sidewalk is installed on only one side of the street, the adverse impact of alternating from side to side shall be avoided. However, to preserve mature street trees in the existing right of way, this may not be avoidable.

Sidewalk Classification and Standards

Sidewalks shall be classified into the following categories:

A. Existing Condition

1. **Residential** - Minimum 5 feet width with parkway width of 5 feet to a total of 10 feet. Exception to be considered when contiguous sidewalks would protect existing mature street trees in the parkway. Minimum may be reduced to four feet when new sidewalks are required, to meet ADA standards and there is a conflict with the existing right of way between property owner and city uses. Goal is to preserve existing street trees, if they are within the parkway, by looking to design either inverse curbs, and inverse parkways. The sidewalk may transition and meander as necessary to preserve a historic or mature tree.
2. **Commercial** - 8 to 10 feet of width with street trees
3. **Industrial** - 8 to 10 feet of width with street trees

B. New Development

1. Residential Development

- (a) When front yard setback is 20 feet, provide minimum five (5) feet width of sidewalk with 5 feet easement (landscaped area) from back of walk to property line for a total of 10 feet parkway width.
- (b) In new development area with lots of at least 25 feet front yard setback, the landscaped area shall be paced adjacent to the street curb.
- (c) Multi-family residential development (attached, and de-attached) shall consider a pedestrian oriented design extended to public streets.

Case I - Installation of sidewalk where non-existing shall be 5 feet wide next to the property line with a 5 foot parkway. This policy will apply to new development, new tracts, and city projects such as Safe Route to School (SR2S) and Pedestrian Safety Program (PSP) except in cases where there are existing mature or historic street trees which the city does not want to remove or replace.

This policy will minimize the reconstruction of some driveway approaches, it will provide a safety buffer for pedestrians from the traffic flow, it will provide room for street trees, and it will eliminate meanderings around power poles, mailboxes, fire hydrants, traffic signals, sign and other obstructions that are normally found next to the curb.

The only exception to this policy will be to meander around a protected or mature specimen tree such as the California Oak. Any other obstructions such as chain link fences, landscape obstructions including undulating areas, concrete block walls, wrought iron fences, and any other non-permitted structures shall be relocated to the property line at the owner's expense, or removed and disposed of as part of the sidewalk construction by the City at no cost to the property owner.

Exceptions - Concrete block/wrought iron fences/walls that are encroaching into the city right-of-way no more than 12 inches shall remain provided these wall/fences are in good maintenance condition, the sidewalk shall be moved to clear these walls for an entire block for uniformity.

Case II - Installation of sidewalks in in-fill projects shall match the existing sidewalk in line, grade, and width to the adjacent properties in order to develop uniformity within a city block except in cases where there are existing or mature or historic street trees which the city does not want removed or replaced

The only exception to this policy will be to meander around a mature tree that the city has determined it does not want to remove or cause to replace including but not limited to the California Oak. However, other obstructions such as chain link fences, landscape obstructions including undulating areas, concrete block walls, wrought iron fences, and any other non-permitted structures shall be relocated to accommodate the sidewalk at a price to be determined on a case by case basis by the City Engineer and the City Manager.

Exceptions - Concrete block/wrought iron fences/walls that are encroaching into the city right-of-way no more than 12 inches shall remain provided these wall/fences are in good maintenance condition, the sidewalk shall be moved to clear these walls for an entire block for uniformity unless there is an existing mature or historically significant street tree, and the city desires not to demolish or remove or replace it.

In areas where the sidewalk is next to the curb the owner/developer/city shall install a 'depressed' driveway approach with a uniform cross slope of two (2) percent to accommodate the handicap and adjust the driveway accordingly.

Case III - Installation of sidewalk next to the curb shall be 6 feet measured from the face of curb. (This is a new trend for housing developments in the neighboring cities used in order to visually enhance a more expansive front yards.) Unless there are significant street trees in the right of way. If this is the case, a revised sidewalk alignment that looks at inverse parkways or curbs may be considered.

This policy will eliminate meanderings around power poles; mailboxes, fire hydrants, traffic signals, sign and other obstructions that are normally found next to the curb and still provide a safety buffer between pedestrians and traffic flow and protect mature street trees, and the urban canopy.

This policy will apply to new P.U.D. (Plan Unit Development) projects, multi-family high density and single family occupancy projects, and safe routes to schools sidewalk projects in urbanized areas of South El Monte, where some sidewalks existing and there are some non-consistent rights of way patterns. In order to implement new sidewalks, alignments, widths, and ADA grades must be met, and street trees must be preserved, or replaced 2 to 1)

A "depressed" driveway approach with a uniform cross slope of two (2) percent shall be the guideline, to accommodate the handicap and adjust the driveway accordingly.

All of the above policies will allow pedestrians to walk comfortably side by side.

2. **Commercial** - 10 feet of width with street trees. Tree wells shall be placed adjacent to the curb with tree trunks 1.5 feet setback from face of curb.
3. **Industrial** - 10 feet of width with street trees. Tree wells shall be placed adjacent to the curb with tree trunks 1.5 feet setback from face of curb.

Sidewalk Policy for Commercial/Industrial and High Density Residential Areas

Installation of sidewalk shall make use of the entire available parkway, which varies from 8-10 feet. Owner/Developer/City shall provide a minimum 3x3 tree well and install a tree adjacent to the curb at 20-foot increments or as indicated by the City Planning Department.

Generally, existing sidewalks were constructed with a minimum of four (4) feet in width in residential areas; however, in areas of available right-of-way in new development (a parkway minimum of ten (10) feet), use of five (5) feet to six (6) feet width is desirable with a parkway width of at least four (4) feet for landscaping. For new development Industrial and Commercial areas, use of ten (10) feet width of sidewalk (i.e. full parkway width) with street trees is required.

Deviation of standards shall be governed and reviewed on a case by cases basis. The conceptual design for all new development and redevelopment projects starting in January 2005 shall be presented to the Planning Commission for review and approval prior to start of final design (i.e. Plan, Specification, and Estimate (PS&E)).

Sidewalk Material

Sidewalks shall be concrete per Standard Plans for Public Works Construction (SPPWC) unless approved for alternate materials. Engineer shall specify thickness, reinforcing, base, and other design criteria.

Alternate materials may be permitted for whole blocks or in specific areas as in installations over tree roots if they meet all criteria in terms of compliance with applicable laws and regulations, Standard Plans for Public Works Construction (SPPWC), performance and maintenance. However, when the selection of alternate materials is for cosmetic reasons and not at the City's choice to preserve trees, the costs above those for concrete shall be borne by the residents on each block on pro-rata basis or the private developers. Alternate materials may include but are not limited to:

- Pre-cast concrete
- Brick pavers
- Textured, galvanized steel plate
- Stone slabs
- Colored concrete
- Stabilized decomposed granite
- Recycled rubber ties or mats

Sidewalk Location

Traditional sidewalk placement near the curb line shall be used. In older subdivisions sidewalk placement adjacent to the property line existed and shall remain. A transition of four (4) feet width from the curbside to the property line side shall be used. Path of sidewalks can deviate or meander to clear obstructions and to connect to wheelchair ramps and driveways adjacent to the street edge curb to form an integral part of the pathway.

For new residential and commercial developments, the sidewalk width shall be determined based on the above **Policy Statement** and **Sidewalk Requirements**, and **Sidewalk Classification and Standards**. In making a determination about the proximity of the sidewalk adjacent to the curb, the City Engineer shall take into account such factors as street classification, anticipated pedestrian traffic, lengths of driveways and side-yard privacy.

Right-of-way

In cases where the City does not have enough right-of-way to accommodate the sidewalk at the prevailing locations within a block per the above three (3) cases, the City shall amicably request the home owner to voluntarily dedicate to the City the required right-of-way. The City shall incur the costs for the preparation of all related documents for the transaction. In the event of refusal the City may exercise eminent domain procedures to acquire such a property.

Street Trees (Also refer to City Street Tree Policy)

Members of the City Council and residents have expressed the opinion that the urban forest (i.e. preserving trees) is of great value in the maintenance of public health and welfare and that trees are a valuable amenity to the urban environment. In instances where sidewalk installation or maintenance would require the removal, damage, or death of a large tree, it is the intent of the sidewalk program that applicable laws and regulations shall be read together and harmonized so that, if reasonably practicable, the large tree is protected. Large trees that are deemed to be in poor condition will not be protected and will not require mitigation techniques for installation of sidewalks. Removal of trees may be required if the tree is determined to be hazardous. The Community Development Director and the City Engineer will determine the condition of the tree to be removed. Options to protect trees may include:

- Installing sidewalks at grade above roots without cutting and adding fill to either side of the walk to transition to grade along with a drainage board beneath the concrete.
- Installing approved alternate materials over the critical root area.
- Altering the path within the right-of-way.
- Providing an easement to the City to relocate the walk to private property.
- Preserve historic and mature trees, by redesigning narrower sidewalks
- Where grade cuts are required, have city engineer and arborist determine if pruning roots and canopy, slope of cuts, and installation of retaining walls or tree wells would be effective and where.
- Any trees removed shall be replaced with an equal amount of four trees of minimum fifteen (15) gallon size each.

Installation of Trees

In all cases parkway trees shall be limited to indigenous, drought resistant species. Trees shall be installed with root barriers (refer to attached standard: “Tree Well Design”) and deep root watering system to encourage deep root growth.

Trees located under power lines shall be limited to species that reach no more than 25 feet in height at maturity.

There is a draft map, attached to the City’s Street Tree Policy. That indicated recommended species of trees, by neighborhood, and general plan area.

Intersections

When streets are newly constructed or altered, ramps must be constructed to eliminate barriers to entry from a pedestrian walkway. Similar rules apply when new sidewalks are built or altered. Generally this will require accessible curb ramps or sloped areas wherever sidewalks intersect with a street. Alternative routes to City buildings and facilities that make use of existing curb ramps may be acceptable where people with disabilities must only travel a marginally longer route.

Implementation

The City Manager and the City Engineer are authorized to review on a case by case basis, exceptions to this policy. Inventory of existing sidewalks will be conducted and value analysis performed to determine extent and location of new sidewalks and those to be retained and street tree designation by tree well.

Conducting right-of-way inventories shall be reviewed and augmented with respect to recommended changes, and coordinated with as-built drawings for the sidewalk program.

Prior to the approval of a specific area sidewalk plan, preliminary drawings shall be made available for public review and comment. Affected homeowners shall have a reasonable amount of time to request modifications to a sidewalk plan. Requests for modifications shall be submitted to the Community Development Director and the design consultant. If the modification is denied, the property owner may file an appeal with the Community Development Director for a hearing by the planning commission. The decision of the planning commission may be appealed to the City Council in accordance with the City Council’s established standard procedures. Final sidewalk drawings will be submitted to the City Council, at which time any affected person may provide further comments on the proposal. The Council may revoke, modify, or confirm the proposal prior to public bidding.

The design consultant shall conduct an analysis of the initial implementation project to document lessons learned and Information to be incorporated in future phases.

Grading

Case I - Grade differential between sidewalk at back of walk and private property is between 0-2 feet. Owner/Developer/City shall grade property at a 2:1 slope.

Case II - Grade differential between sidewalk elevation at back of walk and private property is between 2-4 feet. Owner/Developer/City shall install a combination retaining wall/grading with a 2:1 slope behind the wall not to exceed grading of four (4) feet into private property.

In both cases the parkway shall be graded at two percent (2%).
All driveways affected by this grading shall be adjusted accordingly as part of the project.

Caution - Existing trees with exposed roots or roots that have been cut to accommodate the sidewalk and are deemed unsafe by assigned personnel of the City Corporation Yard or an arborist shall be removed and replaced by an approved species.

Work on Private Property

The City shall acquire a temporary construction easement or permission from the property owner to grade, adjust, remove and replace driveways to comply with the Sidewalk Policy and the City Standards. In case of refusal the City shall skip such a property and impose these improvements at the homeowners expense when such an owner request the City construction permits for improvements over 500 square feet or for the construction of a garden wall adjacent to the right-of-way.

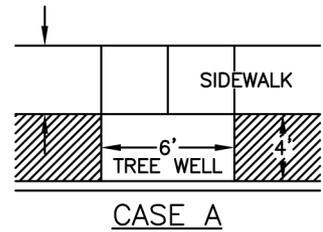
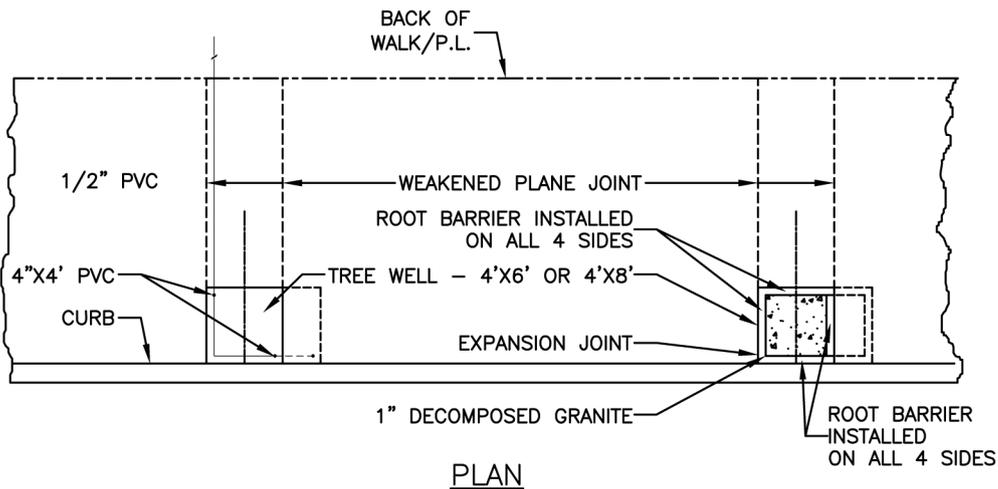
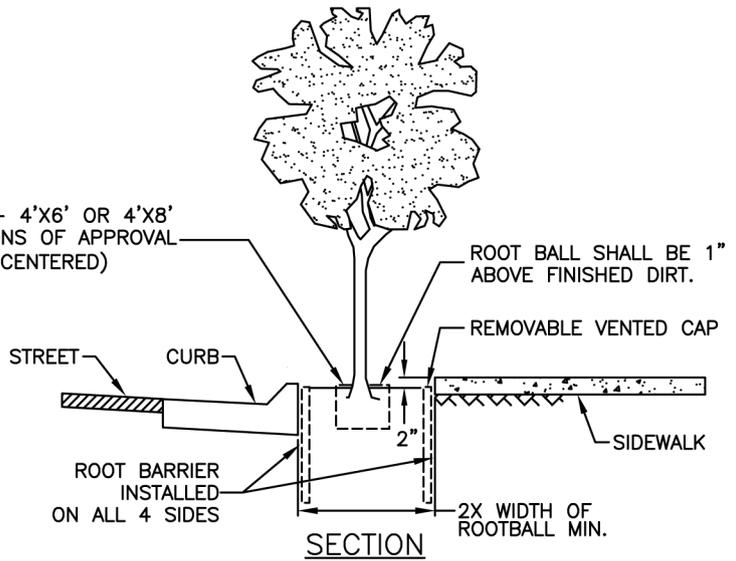
Maintenance

The Community Development Director is authorized to accept improved sidewalks for maintenance by the City upon the filing of a formal, written acceptance document with the City Clerk.

Tree Removal Mitigation

The City shall replace in-kind specimen tree (24" box) with the removal of a street tree at a 2:1 ratio, with one (1) tree replanted in the lot frontage and the other one (1) planted in the street corridor or immediate community area. The City Manager authorized to utilize General Funds as an appropriate funding source for this effort.

TREE WELL - 4'X6' OR 4'X8'
PER CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
(TREE CENTERED)



NOTES

1. FOR LUMBER FOR TREE WELL SHALL BE 2" x 4".
2. NO TREE WILL BE PLANTED UNLESS WATER IS PROVIDED TO PLANTER AREA.
3. 1" DECOMPOSED GRANITE IS REQUIRED WHEN TREE PLANTING IS NOT CONJUNCTION WITH PROJECT.
4. MAINTAIN 4' CLEAR SIDEWALK WIDTH BETWEEN TREE AND BACK OF SIDEWALK.
5. TREE WELL SIZE CAN BE INCREASED DEPENDING ON SIDEWALK WIDTH.