

LAFAYETTE IN A CENTURY **PEDESTRIAN PLAN**

1.0 Introduction

One of the main objectives of the Lafayette IN a Century Comprehensive Master Plan (LINC) is to develop strategies to accommodate and encourage pedestrian traffic throughout Lafayette Parish. To accomplish this goal, guidelines should be established for the construction of sidewalks/mixed use paths in conjunction with new development. In addition, guidelines need to be in place for the construction of sidewalks along existing roadways and the maintenance of the existing sidewalk system.

The Lafayette Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has an approved 2030 Pedestrian Plan, which is currently being utilized as a tool to create the MPO 2035 Pedestrian Plan. The plan includes a sidewalk inventory, outlines existing sidewalk policies and addresses challenges to the implementation of existing sidewalk policies for proposed development and along existing roadways. This plan was utilized to develop the guidelines for the LINC Pedestrian Plan, which addresses pedestrian access in proposed developments, along proposed roadways and along existing roadways.

This portion of the LINC Pedestrian Plan will provide the Planning Commission a methodology for developing a cohesive pedestrian plan for Lafayette Parish. The first step of the LINC Pedestrian Plan, as outlined in this document, identifies the various standards and guidelines that need to be evaluated and adopted. The second step of the process will be the application of the recommended implementation strategies.

2.0 Purpose

The LINC Pedestrian Plan has five major goals:

1. To establish consistent standards for sidewalk construction Parish-wide
2. To develop policies, guidelines and design standards to make Lafayette a “walk- friendly” community by making walking safer, easier and more attractive
3. To develop a methodology for expanding the existing pedestrian network
4. To coordinate the pedestrian plan with other development portions of the LINC Plan
5. To utilize sidewalks as infrastructure investment in targeted LINC areas

3.0 Design Standards

For a cohesive pedestrian network, design standards should be consistent.

3.1 Sidewalk Standards

Sidewalk construction is addressed in subdivision regulations, local roadway cross-sections, and through the MPO Functional Classification Plan. While each regulation addresses sidewalk construction, the design standards vary and there are no comprehensive design standards for Lafayette City-Parish.

Subdivisions within the city of Lafayette and within 1,500 feet of city limits are required to construct sidewalks four-feet wide. Outside the city of Lafayette and its area of influence, no sidewalk requirements exist.

In 2006, the Lafayette MPO adopted a Functional Classification Plan, which requires 5.5-foot sidewalks on most collectors and an 8-foot shared pedestrian/bike lane on arterials and major collectors with a curb and gutter design. Lafayette Consolidated Government is currently constructing sidewalks five-feet wide in areas along existing roadways.

Sidewalk requirements should be standardized throughout Lafayette Parish. It is recommended that Lafayette Consolidated Government and all the other municipalities in the Parish adopt the 2006 Lafayette MPO Functional Classification Plan and that the sidewalk requirements be enforced. Adoption of these guidelines will maintain the integrity of the Consolidated Thoroughfare Plan and the Functional Classification Plan. Any new roadway construction or reconstruction or new development along an existing roadway should be required to adhere to the sidewalk guidelines established in the 2006 Lafayette MPO Functional Classification Plan.

3.3 Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations throughout Lafayette Parish should be reviewed and updated to require sidewalks in all new residential developments in Lafayette Parish. Guidelines for minimum sidewalk width and separation from the roadway should be established with incentives for sidewalks that exceed the minimum standards. It is suggested that Lafayette Consolidated Government enact sidewalk regulations for all developments within the Parish, and that all of the municipalities in the Parish require sidewalks as a major infrastructure aspect of subdivisions on par with roads and drainage facilities.

3.4 ADA Requirements

All sidewalks should be constructed to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Standards and should include wheelchair ramps and pedestrian signals at signalized intersections.

3.5 Inspections and Maintenance

Implementation of a stringent sidewalk inspection program would help to assure that sidewalks are built to adopted construction standards and should aid in reducing maintenance costs in the future.

4.0 Policies/Guidelines

Once standards are established for sidewalk construction, it is imperative that policies are developed to ensure that sidewalk requirements are indeed met and that sidewalks are constructed properly. As new roadways are constructed or improvements made along existing roadways, the sidewalks should be constructed to meet the requirements established by the 2006 Lafayette MPO Functional Classification Plan.

4.1 Existing Policies

The city of Lafayette as well as Lafayette Parish may allow waivers of the current subdivision regulations. The two waivers relative to sidewalks are: the request for waiver of regulations, which would require construction of sidewalks, and the request for waiver of construction, which require immediate construction. While the intent of these waivers is to provide relief in those instances where strict compliance would impose an extraordinary hardship or injustice, in many instances granted waivers result in an incomplete system of sidewalks. Waivers for sidewalk construction should be eliminated completely.

In an effort to encourage “smart” growth in Lafayette Parish, the General Advisory Panel (GAP) has developed a matrix for evaluating future residential development. Sidewalks and other pedestrian paths in developments are encouraged through a rating system. It is recommended that the GAP development matrix be applied to all new residential development in Lafayette Parish.

5.0 Interconnecting the Existing Sidewalk System

While a mostly contiguous pedestrian grid serves some areas of Lafayette Parish, such as the downtown area, and the area around the university, the sidewalk network is sporadic and randomly sited for the rest

of the City and Parish. In addition, in many areas existing sidewalks are in disrepair. The main challenge in development for sidewalks along existing roadways includes building a contiguous sidewalk network while maintaining the integrity of the existing sidewalk inventory.

Interconnecting the existing sidewalk network should include the development of a Parish-wide plan and fostering action from the various municipalities. The Parish-wide plan should include identification of proposed pedestrian corridors linking municipalities, employment areas, development nodes and recreation areas. In general, these links will be along major arterials as identified in **Figure 1**.

On the community level, each municipality is encouraged to develop and implement a sidewalk program to connect and expand the existing sidewalk network. Each municipality's sidewalk program should provide links to the Major Arterials identified in **Figure 1**.

The Lafayette MPO's 2035 Draft Pedestrian Plan contains sidewalk inventories for the municipalities of Lafayette, Scott, Broussard, Carencro, Youngsville and Duson that identify the locations of existing sidewalks.

5.1 Evaluating Existing Sidewalk Network Needs

Due to the overwhelming need for sidewalks, a methodology should be established to determine where sidewalks should be constructed. This methodology should take into consideration the existing sidewalk network, proximity to schools and transit, and the concentration of pedestrians as identified in the 2030 Pedestrian Plan. In evaluating sidewalk construction needs, the following conditions should be considered with Tier 1 conditions being weighted more heavily than Tier 2 conditions:

1. Tier 1
 - a. Complete gaps in the existing sidewalk network
 - b. Improve/provide school access
 - c. Improve/provide access to transit or located along transit route
 - d. Locate in area of higher pedestrian traffic
 - e. Locate along an existing foot path
 - f. Pedestrian accident location
2. Tier 2
 - a. Expand the existing sidewalk network
 - b. Improve/provide access to employment center
 - c. Improve/provide access to retail center
 - d. Improve/provide access to recreational/entertainment center
 - e. Locate in a high density area
 - f. Locate along an arterial or collector roadway

5.2 ADA Requirements

Existing pedestrian crossings should also be evaluated to determine compliance with ADA (American with Disabilities Act) standards. Using the guidelines of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, signing and striping guidelines should be implemented. These evaluations will determine the need for wheelchair ramps, crosswalk signing and striping and pedestrian signals and push buttons at signalized intersections.

5.3 Safe Routes to School Program

Since funding grants for sidewalk construction through the Safe Routes to School program, all schools in Lafayette Parish should be encouraged to develop a school access plan evaluating pedestrian access within a one-mile radius of the school. These plans should include existing and proposed sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, school signing and crossing guard locations.

5.4 Sidewalk Maintenance

Many existing sidewalks are in need of repair. The repair includes areas of broken pavement as and areas with overgrown vegetation. A mechanism should be developed to identify sidewalks in need of repair with a program maintenance fund established for the actual repair.

6.0 Coordination with LINC Development Plans

The LINC Pedestrian Plan should also work in concert with other portions of the LINC development plans. Pedestrian access is an important component of each of these plans.

6.1 LINC Land Use Plan

The LINC Land Use Plan calls for growth to be encouraged along major arterials and at development nodes (intersections of major and minor arterials). Including a pedestrian network in these growth patterns will help to provide a systematic method to expand the pedestrian network. The proposed development plan should be considered when prioritizing proposed sidewalk construction.

The LINC Land Use Plan identifies the urban core, including downtown Lafayette, as an area of concentrated growth. The MPO 2035 Draft Pedestrian Plan also identifies the area as having the highest concentration of pedestrians. This area should be taken into account when prioritizing proposed sidewalk construction. The other municipalities in Lafayette Parish can also adopt the methodology of constructing sidewalks from the city center outwards.

6.2 LINC Drainage Plan

The LINC Drainage Plan will identify floodplain areas and drainage corridors. Some of these areas may provide opportunities to develop pedestrian networks. Pedestrian corridors along drainage easements or within flood plains could be used as connectors for neighborhoods and parks and also as sidewalks along roadways.

7.0 Implementation Strategies

The recommendations for the LINC Pedestrian Plan include:

7.1 Sidewalk Design Standards

- Sidewalk construction should be tied to the functional classification of the adjacent roadway and should comply with the 2006 MPO Functional Classification Plan and current subdivision plan guidelines. These sidewalk widths include:
 - Major and minor arterials – 8’ shared pedestrian/bikeway path
 - Major and minor collectors – 5.5’ sidewalk
 - Residential streets – 4’ sidewalk
- Sidewalks should be construction with a minimum distance of 5’ from the edge of the roadway.
- Wheelchair ramps should be constructed to ADA standards at all sidewalk crossings along major and minor arterials and major and minor collectors.
- Pedestrian crosswalks, pedestrian signals and pedestrian push buttons should be installed at all signalized intersections with priority given to intersections with pedestrian accidents and those within identified node developments.
- Sidewalks should be constructed to adopted construction standards and be subject to stringent inspections.

7.2 Sidewalk Policies and Guidelines

- Review existing subdivision guidelines throughout Lafayette Parish and revise, if needed to encourage sidewalk construction in new residential developments

- Review sidewalk requirements along proposed roadways and establish consistent design guidelines
- Encourage developers to create “walk-friendly” communities
- Eliminate waivers for sidewalk construction
- Adopt the GAP Matrix to evaluate proposed residential development

7.3 Interconnecting the Existing Pedestrian Network

- Develop a methodology for evaluating sidewalk needs along the existing roadway network
- Develop a Parish-wide plan to construct sidewalks along proposed pedestrian corridors linking municipalities, employment areas, development nodes and recreation areas
- Encourage area municipalities to develop sidewalk programs that expand the existing sidewalk network and connect to the Parish-wide pedestrian corridors
- Develop criteria for prioritizing sidewalk construction along the existing pedestrian network
- Evaluate pedestrian crossings to determine the need for wheelchair ramps, signing, striping and pedestrian signals and push buttons
- Develop pedestrian access plans for all schools in Lafayette Parish
- Establish a sidewalk repair program for sidewalk repair/maintenance

DRAFT