

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 6, 2017
To: Planning Commission
From: Gerald Green, AICP, Executive Director
Subject: Sidewalk Policy - **12-D-17-OB**

Agenda Item # 64

MPC staff recommends that the Commission approve a one-year postponement to the amendment to the Knoxville-Knox County Subdivision Regulations new Section 3-05 A.2 passed during the October 2017 meeting requiring sidewalks in Knox County to be provided “for access to schools, recreational facilities, commercial establishments, or any other areas where obvious future pedestrian traffic is anticipated”.

The postponement would delay the implementation of the amendment to the new Section 3-05 A.2, which was adopted in a separate motion after the updated Knoxville-Knox County Subdivision Regulations were approved as recommended by staff at the October 2017 MPC meeting. The postponement would be for one (1) year from the effective date of the updated Subdivision Regulations which take effect February 1, 2018. The reasons for delaying the implementation of Section 3-05 A.2 are:

- The Knox County Department of Engineering and Public works is assessing existing sidewalks for compliance with ADA standards. Information provided by this assessment will be valuable in answering questions regarding complying with ADA standards in the design and construction of new sidewalks. The delay in implementation of the sidewalk policy will provide time for completion of the assessment and the compilation of lessons learned from the assessment. The delay will also provide time to develop an ADA compliance training program for staff and contractors.
- The Knox County Department of Engineering and Public Works has been authorized to undertake a sidewalk master plan for Knox County. This plan will identify priority areas for new sidewalks, identify locations and condition of existing sidewalks, and establish policies for new sidewalks. This information will assist the MPC staff and the Commission in identifying in what new subdivisions sidewalks are most needed.
- MPC Commissioners and staff are working with Knox County Department of Engineering and Public Works staff to identify opportunities for lessening the additional cost of development that would be incurred by the construction of sidewalks. One such possible opportunity is the reduction of required street pavement width on certain streets if sidewalks are provided. The delay in implementation of the Section 3-05 A.2 would provide time for identification and evaluation of potential opportunities to reduce the cost incurred by sidewalk construction.
- Design and construction standards must be developed for sidewalks. MPC staff will have to work closely with others, particularly the Knox County Department of Engineering and Public Works, in the development of these standards. The delay in the implementation of the Section 3-05 A.2 would provide time to develop and vet the design and construction standards.
- There will be requests for waivers from the requirement for sidewalks. A procedure for considering waiver requests must be developed. Additionally, criteria will have to be developed for the evaluation of these requests. The delay in the implementation of Section 3-05 A.2 will

provide time for staff to develop a procedure for considering waiver requests and criteria for evaluating the requests.

The objective of the delay in the implementation of the amendment to Section 3-05 A.2 is to enhance the success of implementation. This delay will affect only the implementation the amendment to Section 3-05, A.2 of the updated Subdivision Regulations.

If you have any questions, comments, or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at gerald.green@knoxmpc.org or phone at 215-3758.