

CITY OF COLUMBUS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE
PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT HANDBOOK



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Director Mark Kelsey

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INTRODUCTION:

The implementation of developer's responsibilities surrounding their project is an important aspect in all developments. Those responsibilities range from determining a development's impact on traffic flow to ensuring that the development complies with all rules and regulations with the City of Columbus, Department of Public Service. Fully understanding what these responsibilities are can sometimes be a cumbersome process which can lead to confusion as to what is expected of the development community. This can lead to unexpected changes that impact both budget and schedule for the developer.

Many Department of Public Service requirements are established by City Code or adopted policies. Other requirements have not been clearly defined in the past, but yet have been enforced at the time of plan submittal. The development community has asked for some predictability to be brought to the process. If a developer fully understands what is going to be asked of them up front, they can account for those expectations in their project. The better understanding everyone has up front, the more likelihood there is of a successful project.

The Department of Public Service strives to be fair and consistent in its application of requirements with developers. It is our desire for the development community to have a clear understanding of what our expectations are when a site is developed. The best way to accomplish this is to provide a document that states what our expectations are. This is the goal of this handbook: To provide clear and predictable guidance to the development community with regard to the Department of Public Service's expectations and requirements.

The handbook is separated into specific areas within the purview of the Department of Public Service that may be impacted by a development. Each area provides a general description of what is required by the developer. In cases where there is a specific process to follow in order to determine improvements required, that process is identified as well.

DEVELOPER SCOPING PROCESS:

The Planning and Operations Division in the Department of Public Service is responsible for determining what a developer's responsibilities are, or their Scope of Improvements. The Scope of Improvements will be based on the City's current Rules and Regulations and this handbook. This will be determined based on what is proposed by the developer, and the guidelines established in this handbook. The following is the general process that will be utilized:

1. Developer submits Preliminary Site Plan to the One Stop Shop (OSS) for review.
2. The Preliminary Site Plan is reviewed by representatives from the Division of Planning and Operations, and input will be obtained from other divisions in the Department as necessary.
3. If improvements are required by the Department of Public Service, a Scope of Improvements document will be created.
4. The Scope of Improvement document will be included in the Department of Public Service's comments for the site plan.
5. Developer updates the site plan to reflect the comments given by all city agencies from their review of the Preliminary Site Plan submittal and submits the updated plan as the Site Compliance Plan.
6. If an E-plan is required, the Scope of Improvements will be provided to the OSS plan reviewers.
7. When the E-plan is submitted for review, it is to be reviewed against the provided scope and the Site Compliance Plan. At this stage, nothing is to be added or taken away from the Scope of Improvements unless approved by the Division of Planning and Operations.

This is the process that will be followed for determining the required Scope of Improvements for all private development projects through the One Stop Shop. The timelines for this process will follow the timelines established between the City and the development community in the current Memorandum of Understanding. Specific questions or concerns regarding the Department of Public Service's requirements can be directed to the Planning and Operations representative at the One Stop Shop:

Mike Beaver, PE
mebeaver@columbus.gov
614-645-7979

In cases where the developer proposes improvements that are not associated with a site plan, the developer is to coordinate with Mr. Beaver to develop a scope.

STREET IMPROVEMENTS:

The developer is responsible for the impacts of their development only. This could include installing a turn lane that has been determined to be necessary by a traffic study, installing a new access into their site, or offsite improvements that are not contiguous to the site as determined by a traffic impact study. Generally, if there are improvements required beyond the installation of a driveway, the developer's responsibility will be determined by either a traffic impact study or an access study.

The Traffic Standards Code, City Code 4309, details what level of development requires a traffic impact study to be performed. Generally, a study is required if the proposed development generates either 400 or 200 trips in the peak hour depending on the proposed land use. If a study is required, the study will determine what, if any, street improvements are required.

In some cases if the development is below the threshold for a traffic impact study, an access study may be required depending on the proposed use and the surrounding street system. The following are guidelines that the Department of Public Service uses to determine if an access study is needed:

1. Traffic access study may be required if:
 - a. Access to the site is from an arterial or collector roadway and
 - i. Proposed development is new construction or
 - ii. Proposed development is an expansion of a building or
 - iii. Proposed development is a change of use that has a substantial increase in the traffic generation of an existing building

These are the guidelines that are used, but the final determination is also based on site specific information such as the volumes of traffic on the adjacent roadway and the volumes of traffic for the existing/proposed land use. If a study is required, the study will determine what, if any, street improvements are required.

Typically, if a traffic impact study is required, it will have been completed through the zoning process rather than the site plan process. In that case, no traffic impact study is required at the time of site plan review. There may be instances where an access study is required at the time of site plan review, as it may be a redevelopment that does not require a rezone.

There are instances when a traffic impact study or access study may identify an improvement that is required based on existing conditions. While the developer is not responsible for upgrading existing conditions, they are not allowed to worsen the existing conditions.

In some cases, the existing pavement and/or curb is in disrepair. In those cases, since that is an existing condition, it is not the responsibility of the developer to repair those items simply because they are developing adjacent to the street. The responsibility for maintaining existing street conditions falls on the City of Columbus, not the developer.

It should be noted that while the City agrees that maintenance of the existing street is the City's responsibility, that does not necessarily mean that upgrades will occur in conjunction with the

development. The City maintains and upgrades existing streets depending on funding available and priorities throughout the entire city. Any City required improvements adjacent to a development could be included in the City's schedule for future maintenance but the timing of that maintenance may not be immediately known.

Additionally, this does not preclude a developer from making a determination to upgrade these items at their cost if they choose to do so. The Department of Public Service will not make this a requirement, but if a developer chooses to perform maintenance work on the existing street, this can be permitted. If the developer makes this decision, the work will need to be included in an E-plan for City review.

In cases when there are existing City maintenance responsibility items on a roadway, the City may wish to collaborate with the developer to upgrade those items. Those instances would be negotiated between the City and the developer to ensure just compensation to both parties.

Street Improvement Process:

- Determine if traffic impact study required
 - Yes
 - Developer to complete traffic impact study in accordance with the Traffic Standards Code
 - Traffic impact study defines required traffic improvements, if any
 - No
 - Is Access Study required based on proposed access and surrounding roadway
 - Yes
 - Developer to complete access study
 - Access study define required traffic improvements, if any
 - No
 - No additional traffic improvements required

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE:

The developer is responsible for ensuring that their development does not create ADA compliance issues in the Right of Way (ROW). Existing ADA compliance issues in the ROW that are not directly impacted by the site being developed, such as the location of signal control boxes, parking meters, or utility poles, are not the responsibility of the developer. In no case should a new development create an ADA compliance issue.

If the development is located at one corner of the intersection, the developer may have responsibilities with ensuring that the pedestrian access route is compliant, including ramps and pedestrian pushbuttons, depending on the level of development. If it is a new development or a redevelopment with an expansion of at least 50%, the developer will be required to upgrade the pedestrian access route at the intersection if the existing is non-compliant. If the proposed development is a redevelopment with an expansion of less than 50%, they are not required to upgrade the pedestrian ramps. The 50% expansion is based on the total building square footage on the site, not the building footprint.

If a proposed development at one corner of an intersection meets the criteria above, they are responsible for ensuring that the corner adjacent to the development is made compliant, as well as opposing ramps as needed in order to avoid an “orphan ramp” situation.

Any development that is required to make roadway improvements at an intersection, such as new turn lanes, new signals, or pavement improvements, the developer is responsible for making the whole intersection ADA compliant. This includes the installation of curb ramps and associated pedestrian push buttons.

In either of the above cases, or in any case where a development requires a City permit or E-plan, the developer is responsible for ensuring that their driveway is ADA compliant as well.

Any new installation or replacement of sidewalks and driveways shall fully comply with all City and Federal standards to ensure ADA compliance.

ADA Compliance Process:

1. Determine level of development
 - a. If new development move on to Step 2.
 - b. If redevelopment less than 50% expansion and no direct impact to ROW, then no ADA responsibilities in ROW.
 - c. If redevelopment greater than 50% expansion, move on to Step 2.
2. Determine level of development responsibilities (may be one or all of below)
 - a. Development requires roadway improvements at intersection.
 - i. Developer responsible for ensuring entire intersection is ADA compliant.
 - b. Development occupies one corner of an intersection.

- i. Developer responsible for ensuring ADA compliance at the corner adjacent to the development, as well as opposing ramps as needed in order to avoid an “orphan ramp” situation.
- c. If Development requires a City permit or E-plan, all existing private driveways must be made ADA compliant.

SIDEWALKS/BIKEWAYS:

There are two situations with regard to sidewalk adjacent to a developer's site: Sidewalks are existing or no sidewalks exist. In each case, the Department of Public Service has specific criteria to define the developer's responsibility, and they are both dependent on the level of proposed development. If the proposed development is either new or an expansion of at least 50%, sidewalk requirements are enforced. If the development is an expansion of less than 50%, sidewalk requirements are not enforced. The 50% expansion is based on the total building square footage, not the building footprint.

If no sidewalk exists, the Department of Public Service's *Sidewalks and Bikeways Rules and Regulations* apply. These regulations specify when sidewalks are to be installed. Generally speaking, all new developments and redevelopments with an expansion of at least 50% are required to install new sidewalks. The 50% expansion is based on the total building square footage on the site, not the building footprint. All new sidewalks are to comply with the current City of Columbus standards. In some cases, a construction exemption may be applied for through the Division of Mobility Options (DOMO).

If sidewalk is existing, developers are responsible for ensuring that a four foot (4') minimum pedestrian path is met if there is a tree lawn and a six foot (6') minimum width if the sidewalk is adjacent to the curb. If the existing sidewalk is less than four feet or six feet, depending on the location, then the developer is responsible for upgrading the sidewalk to current City of Columbus standards. Other criteria, such as cross slope, will not be used as a determination for the replacement of existing sidewalk. This requirement will only apply on new developments and redevelopments with an expansion of at least 50%. The following is the process that will be followed for existing sidewalks:

1. Existing sidewalk is less than four feet (4') or six feet (6') in width, depending on location
 - a. Remove and replace sidewalk that is governed by City Code 905.07 and Standard Drawings 2300 and 2301
 - b. Construct a compliant Pedestrian Access Route per city Rules and Regulations – Wheelchair Ramp Requirements if at an intersection
2. Existing sidewalk is greater than four feet (4') or six feet (6') in width, depending on location
 - a. No improvements required

Construction associated with site plan review can occur both outside of the public right-of-way as well as include the public right-of-way (Dr E. roadway improvements or driveway permit). In either case, the city will not routinely conduct sidewalk condition inspections for each site plan application or engineering plan review. However, if in the conjunction of site plan review or infrastructure inspection the city becomes knowledgeable of a potential violation criteria as set forth in city code 905.11, the developer will be notified of such and encouraged to investigate and resolve the issue as part of their development. When the city becomes knowledgeable of a potential violation, the location will be entered into the 311 system and scheduled for inspection. A violation found as a result of the inspection will be handled according to the city's process for sidewalk violations found in Title 9, separate from the site plan review process.

There may be other bikeway responsibilities as defined in the *Bicentennial Bikeways Plan (BBP)*. The BBP identifies what bikeway improvements are identified for streets in the City. If a development is proposed on a street identified in the BBP, the developer is responsible for those improvements as outlined in the sidewalks and bikeways rules and regulations. For example, if the street is identified in the BBP as a shared use path, the developer may be required to install a shared use path rather than a sidewalk if it is determined the shared use path is to be installed on that side of the street. Depending on the improvement identified in the BBP, the developer may be responsible for making a monetary contribution to the City in lieu of constructing the improvement. This requirement will only apply on new developments and redevelopments with an expansion of at least 50%. The 50% expansion is based on the total building square footage on the site, not the building footprint.

If improvements are required in addition to sidewalks, such as roadway improvements, that require an E-plan, any required sidewalk improvements are to be included on the E-plan. If no other improvements trigger the submission of an E-plan, yet sidewalk and driveway improvements are required, the sidewalk and driveway design can be included on the CC-plan.

Sidewalk/Bikeway Process:

1. Determine level of development
 - a. If new development move on to Step 2.
 - b. If redevelopment less than 50% expansion, no sidewalk or bikeway requirements.
 - c. If redevelopment greater than 50% expansion, move on to Step 2.
2. Determine sidewalk requirements
 - a. Sidewalks exists on frontage
 - i. If sidewalk is less than four feet (4') or six feet (6'), depending on location, sidewalk is to be replaced with City standard sidewalk, unless BBP requires a shared use path. In that case, developer to construct shared use path.
 - ii. If sidewalk is greater than four feet (4') or six feet (6'), depending on location, no improvement is required.
 - b. No sidewalk exists
 - i. Determine if street is identified on BBP for shared use path.
 1. If yes, Division of Mobility Options determines which side of the street shared use path to be installed.
 - a. Developer installs either sidewalk or shared use path depending on direction of Mobility Options.
 2. If no, developer to install sidewalks.
3. Determine Bikeway requirements
 - a. Is the adjacent street identified on the BBP for bikeway?
 - i. If yes, developer is responsible for bikeway contribution as defined in the rules and regulations
 - ii. If no, developer has no responsibilities in accordance with the BBP

TRAFFIC SIGNALS AND INTERCONNECT:

The developer is responsible for the impacts of their development and any requirements included in current City policies, such as the ADA rules and regulations. Other than what is required by policy, required signal upgrades will typically be defined by improvements recommended in a traffic impact study. The developer's responsibility could range from simply installing new push buttons to accommodate pedestrian ramps as required by the ADA rules and regulations to upgrading the entire signal system as defined in a traffic impact study.

When improvements are defined by a traffic impact study, the developer is responsible for modifying or upgrading the existing signal system to accommodate those improvements. For example, a traffic impact study may recommend changes to the existing lane configuration at an intersection. Changes to the lane configuration may result in a signal modification being required to accommodate the new lane configuration, which would be the developer's responsibility.

In some cases, a developer's impact to a signal is only related to the requirements of the City's ADA policy and the installation of curb ramps. The City's ADA rules and regulations details the developer's responsibility with regard to pedestrian push buttons at signalized intersections in conjunction with the installation of curb ramps. Generally speaking, the developer may be responsible to install new push buttons in association with the ramps as required by the policy. The ADA rules and regulations are silent on the installation or replacement of pedestrian signal heads, and therefore are not required to be upgraded by the developer.

In no case will the developer be required to upgrade existing signal system components that are currently in disrepair or of a type that is below current standards, unless those components are required to be replaced to follow the ADA rules and regulations or as a result of developer related improvements. Any modifications or improvements that are required must follow the current City of Columbus standards. Additionally, if there are existing operational concerns that are not impacted by the developer, it is the responsibility of the City to address those concerns.

In cases when there are existing City maintenance responsibility items on a signal, the City may wish to collaborate with the developer to upgrade those items. Those instances would be negotiated between the City and the developer to ensure just compensation to both parties.

When a leg of a signalized intersection serves a private access to a development, the developer is responsible for the installation costs to accommodate the development as well as a portion of the ongoing operations and maintenance of the signal. The developer will be required to enter into a Signal Agreement, which will define their obligations regarding the signal.

PARKING:

The Department of Public Service is responsible for ensuring that all developments comply with City requirements with regard to parking. This applies to both off street and on street parking.

The off street parking requirements are defined in City Code Chapter 3312, Off Street Parking and Loading. This section of the code includes design features, such as minimum parking stall size and minimum aisle widths, which are to be included in all development plans.

With regard to on street parking, all development plans should be cognizant of their impacts to the existing on street parking adjacent to their site, and make every effort to minimize that impact. The Department of Public Service strives to maintain as much on street parking as possible.

This is especially true in areas with parking meters. In general, the Department of Public Service is opposed to the permanent removal of parking meters, and developers should make every effort to maintain all parking meters. If a developer does wish to permanently remove meters, a written request must be reviewed and approved by the Division of Mobility Options Administrator prior to site plan approval. This request should include at a minimum, the number of meters requested to be removed, justification for their removal, and a site plan showing what is proposed to take the place of the metered parking. The request is to be submitted through the One Stop Shop Chief Plans Official, who will coordinate the request with the Division of Mobility Options Administrator.

COMPLETE STREETS/TRAFFIC CALMING:

Resolution 0151X-2008 states City Council support for complete streets policies on all street construction, reconstruction, and repair projects. While the rules and regulations govern when the complete streets elements of sidewalks and bike facilities are built or paid for and disabled facilities are governed by the wheelchair ramp rules and regulations, other geometric design features can enhance travel for all users and will be decided on a case by case basis. The complete streets policy of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission provides design guidance supported by the City.

Subdivision layout shall contain street design elements that minimize the ability to travel above the posted speed limit as well as minimize impacts of cut-through traffic, as connectivity is a desired condition. Elements could include avoiding lengthy straight street segments, curvilinear design, multiple turns and traffic calming features. It is the City's desire to be proactive in designing new subdivisions to ensure that future traffic calming installation is not required.

ROW UPGRADES:

In some instances, a developer may wish to install or place items in the ROW that do not conform to City standards. Depending on the request, these items may require additional approvals. If necessary, review and approval may need to follow the process established by the new products committee. If approved, they may require some additional documentation through either a ROW permit or a maintenance agreement.

If a developer does request the installation of non-standard items, the approval of those items will occur during the preliminary site plan review and scope development process. The necessary permits or agreements that result from this approval will be completed concurrently with the developers plan development, but the developer should be aware that the approval of non-standard items may require additional time.

DEVELOPER PLAN RESPONSIBILITY:

The developer, and their engineer, is responsible for ensuring that the street plans submitted conform to both the scope of improvements document and comply with the plan requirements in the City of Columbus plan format. The scope will be provided upon completion of the City's review of the site plan. Plan requirements and sample sheets of the City of Columbus plan format are available on the City's website. If plans are submitted that do not conform to these requirements, the plan submission will be rejected, and the plans will be returned to the engineer.

Additionally, the developer is required to enter into a construction agreement, submit surety, and deposit inspection fees for all E-plans.

POLICY/CODE REQUIREMENTS:

The following are specific City Code or Department of Public Service policies that may impact a development site. All developers should be familiar with these provisions.

- City Code Chapter 3312 – Off street Parking and Loading
- City Code Chapter 3321 – General Site Development Standards
- City Code Chapter 4309 – Traffic Standards Code
 - Traffic Standards Code Users Guide
- City Code Chapter 910
- City Code Chapter 903
- Columbus Thoroughfare Plan
- ADA Parking Space striping/signage policy
- Rules and Regulations – Approval of Driveway Plans for Access to Public Right-of-Ways
- Loading Zone Rules and Regulations
- Valet Zone Rules and Regulations
- Sidewalks and Bikeways Rules and Regulations
- Wheelchair Ramp Rules and Regulations
- 2012 Construction and Material Specifications (CMSC)
- Non-Residential Pavement Policy
- Residential Pavement Policy
- E-plan requirements
- Permit requirements