



# City Council Report

**Date:** May 2, 2016  
**To:** City Council  
**Through:** Karolyn Kent, Assistant to the City Manager  
**From:** Lenny Hulme, Transportation Department Director  
Sabine Ellis, City Traffic Engineer  
**Subject:** Update to City Code: Increase Sidewalk Width  
Citywide

## Strategic Initiatives



## Purpose and Recommendation

To be in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Standards ('ADA'), Mesa Standard Details and Engineering and Design Standards as well as promote the vision of Mesa as a walkable and livable community, staff recommends the following update to City Code:

Title 9, Chapter 6, Section 9-6-5 (B): Modify sidewalk width on local residential streets within the public right-of-way ('ROW') from four feet to five feet.

## Background

Sidewalk widths are regulated within Mesa's Standard Details as well as Engineering and Design Standards. Recently, the city standard for sidewalk width on local residential streets was changed to five feet to comply with ADA and align with the City of Mesa 2040 Transportation Plan. Title 9, Chapter 6, Section 9-6-5 (B) of City Code discusses Desert Uplands Development Standards and includes a reference to sidewalk widths within this planning area, which needs to be updated to five feet as well. See attached figure for the proposed update to City Code.

## Discussion

The ADA mandates that accessible routes (which include sidewalks) be a minimum of three feet of clear width of walking surfaces. See ADA Section 403.5.1. The ADA further requires that an accessible route with a clear width of less than five feet provide passing spaces at intervals of 200 hundred feet maximum. Passing spaces shall be either a space five feet minimum by five feet minimum; or, an intersection of two walking surfaces providing a T-shaped space where the base and arms extend a minimum of four feet beyond the intersection. See ADA Section 403.5.3. For the

ease of implementation, the overall sidewalk width is recommended to be increased from the old standard of four feet to five feet along all local residential streets within the ROW to comply with the most recent Mesa Standard Details and Engineering and Design Standards.

One of the focal points of the 2040 Transportation Plan is making Mesa more inviting and accommodating for pedestrians by providing choices that give people the opportunity to walk. Walking for recreational and utilitarian purposes has great benefits to the pedestrian and the surrounding environment, positively affecting the quality of life as well as the health of the walking individual and the community while reducing traffic and congestion. Increasing the sidewalk width in residential communities from four feet to five feet promotes this vision by offering pedestrians additional space to walk at their chosen pace, stand, sit, socialize, or merely enjoy their surroundings.

Increasing the sidewalk width will not have a negative impact on any utilities that are located within the ROW. This has been discussed and coordinated with Engineering. Aside from the ROW, utilities can be accommodated within utility easements that are required along all public streets in addition to the ROW.

The City Engineer or City Traffic Engineer may review and approve requests for a deviation from the five-foot sidewalk requirement as long as it is in compliance with ADA.

## **Alternatives**

Doing nothing is an alternative that is not recommended. Making no changes to City Code would not only result in non-compliance with the requirements of the ADA, but also contradict Mesa's current standards.

## **Coordination**

The proposed update to City Code has been coordinated with Engineering, Development Services, and the City Attorney's office. The Transportation Advisory Board has reviewed and concurred with the recommendation to implement this change at their February 16, 2016 meeting. It was also presented to the Developers Advisory Forum on February 17, 2016.

## **Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact to this update.