The Neighborhood Model: Building Block for the Development Areas

Section 6

1. Pedestrian Oriented Neighborhoods

The following techniques are offered to achieve the goal of having pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods that let residents walk to work, to friends’ homes, to parks, to shopping, and to cultural centers. Other sections in this chapter also relate to creating a good pedestrian environment, particularly #2, #3, #6, #8, and #9.

Sidewalks

Definition: A sidewalk is a paved footpath, usually of concrete, parallel to a vehicular thoroughfare.

Suggested application of Sidewalks

- Sidewalks should be provided along all vehicular thoroughfares except high-speed, limited access highways.
- Sidewalks should typically be separated from the roadway by a planting strip, except in commercial areas.
- Sidewalks should typically be provided on both sides of a street, except where there is no development along one side of the street or where topography or vegetation precludes provision.
- Sidewalk widths vary, depending on their use; the range generally extends from 4’ to 18’.
- In lower density residential areas, sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate two people walking side by side (at least 4 feet)
- In commercial areas, sidewalks should include the space commonly required for the planting strip and be at least 9 feet in width. In higher density areas, sidewalks should be 15 to 18 feet in width.
- Pedestrian crossings of roads should be provided at grade, wherever possible, in marked pedestrian crossings to continue the paths across the street.

Appropriate at: All areas.
Pedestrian Path

Definition: A pedestrian path is an off-road foot path that connects places of activity. It is usually constructed of a material different than concrete, such as asphalt, stone dust, compacted gravel, mulch or bark. When an impermanent surface is used, consideration should be given to the need for and appropriateness of accessibility. If wheelchair access is important to a destination, a permanent surface meeting ADA requirements should be provided.

Suggested application of pedestrian paths
- A pedestrian path may be used to connect neighborhoods together where a vehicular thoroughfare is either impractical or unwarranted such as in a very low-density area and where steep terrain makes a sidewalk difficult to construct.
- Pedestrian paths may be used as nature trails such as along a greenway.
- With an urban scale of development, pedestrian paths may be used to augment a sidewalk system when access to or through natural features is important. When augmenting a sidewalk system, pedestrian paths should connect directly with the sidewalk in places that support access through the development.
- Pedestrian paths through wetlands or on very steep slopes may have to be raised as a boardwalk.

Appropriate at: Large open spaces, parks, near natural features, greenways, or in environmentally sensitive areas.

Multi-use Path

Definition: An off-road accessway for pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons in wheelchairs. Such paths are generally paved and fairly wide to accommodate the different users of the paths at the same time.

Suggested application of Pedestrian Paths
- Multi-use path should be used where high volume non-vehicular traffic is expected.
- Multi-use paths may be used to provide off-road connections between high activity areas such as a shopping center and a university center.
- Multi-use paths may also be used if different modes of transport are anticipated in a neighborhood.
- It may be necessary to separate groups or provide directional information on a multi-use path through use of striping.

Appropriate at: High activity areas, recreational areas, school yards, and large parks.
Blocks

Blocks provide a design that produces many opportunities for a pedestrian friendly neighborhood. Multiple vehicular routes can help reduce the width of streets and, when sidewalks are added, produce more opportunities for pedestrian travel. Multiple vehicular routes can also help better distribute traffic load on streets. Reduced traffic on a system of streets can also help enhance a feeling of pedestrian safety.

Suggested application of Blocks
- Blocks require interconnecting streets which fit the Neighborhood Model; they may also act to calm traffic
- Small blocks (300-400 feet) are more conducive to pedestrians than larger blocks (500-1000 feet)
- Smaller blocks (200-300 feet) are appropriate in Center areas

Appropriate at: All areas.