

**CITY OF SEATTLE**

**ORDINANCE** 126984

COUNCIL BILL 120658

AN ORDINANCE relating to sidewalk construction and pedestrian mobility improvements; adding a new Section 15.70.040 to the Seattle Municipal Code.

WHEREAS, the 2023 Adopted Budget states that the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) maintains 3,944 lane-miles of arterial and non-arterial streets, compared to 2,293 miles of sidewalks; and

WHEREAS, SDOT’s Sidewalk Accessibility Guide notes that approximately 24 percent (11,000 blocks) of Seattle streets are missing sidewalks; and

WHEREAS, at the current annual rate of new sidewalk construction (approximately 27 blocks per year over the course of the Move Seattle levy), it will take 407 years before all of Seattle streets have sidewalks; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle Department of Transportation’s (SDOT’s) 2018 sidewalk assessment identified 154,600 instances of conditions impacting pedestrians including sidewalk uplifts, cracking, settling, cross slope issues, fixed obstructions, vegetation obstructions, and vertical obstructions; and

WHEREAS, without usable sidewalks, disabled non-drivers are limited in their sphere of mobility; and

WHEREAS, when public transportation is inconvenient or unsafe to access due to a lack of sidewalks, non-drivers must either put themselves in unsafe situations, spend an unreasonable amount on rideshare services, an excess amount of time following circuitous routes that offer moderately more safety, or choose to stay home altogether unless leaving is an absolute necessity; and

1 WHEREAS, SDOT’s Vision Zero Top-to-Bottom Review (July 28, 2023) noted that pedestrian  
2 fatalities have trended up since 2013, with 20 pedestrian fatalities recorded in 2021; and

3 WHEREAS, having safe places for people to walk and roll is an important step in addressing our  
4 current epidemic of injuries and death occurring when people walking, or rolling interact  
5 with people driving motor vehicles; NOW, THEREFORE,

6 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**

7 Section 1. A new Section 15.70.040 is added to the Seattle Municipal Code as follows:

8 **15.70.040 Requirements for Seattle Department of Transportation projects**

9 A. Whenever the Seattle Department of Transportation constructs a major paving project  
10 as defined in Section 15.80.010 or a reconstruction project along a segment of road that lacks  
11 sidewalks on both sides of the street, the construction project shall include installation of a  
12 sidewalk on at least one side of the street.

13 B. Whenever the Seattle Department of Transportation constructs a major paving project  
14 as defined in Section 15.80.010, the construction project shall include an evaluation of existing  
15 sidewalk conditions and correct any deficiencies identified in the evaluation that are within the  
16 major paving project.

17 C. Full compliance with the provisions of subsections 15.70.040.A and 15.70.040.B is  
18 not required where the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation determines that the  
19 characteristics of the physical features or usage of a street, or financial constraints of full  
20 compliance prevent the incorporation or restoration of sidewalks or the demonstration of  
21 pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

22 D. Every year, by February 1, the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation  
23 shall present a report to the City Council with a detailed list of major paving projects as defined

1 in Section 15.80.010 that are planned for that year, with an evaluation of sidewalk presences or  
2 absences and any physical constraints that would make sidewalk installation infeasible. For each  
3 project for which it is determined that full compliance with subsections 15.70.040.A or  
4 15.70.040.B is not required, the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation shall  
5 provide the following details as part of that report:

- 6 1. Why it is impractical to comply with subsections 15.70.040.A or 15.070.040.B;
- 7 2. The alternatives analyzed in determining that full compliance with subsections  
8 15.70.040.A or 15.70.040.B is not required; and
- 9 3. How pedestrian connectivity and pedestrian safety could be advanced in the  
10 absence of a sidewalk in that segment, including a cost estimate for physical improvements, if it  
11 impractical to comply with subsection 15.70.040.A or 15.70.040.B.

12 E. For other Seattle Department of Transportation capital roadway improvement projects  
13 that are not a major paving project, sidewalk installation and sidewalk repair shall be prioritized  
14 for when:

- 15 1. There are locations where the absence of a sidewalk substantially impairs  
16 pedestrian movement within the roadway improvement project boundary;
- 17 2. There are missing sidewalks within the roadway improvement boundary and  
18 the missing sidewalk provides access to one or more schools;
- 19 3. There are missing sidewalks within the roadway improvement project and the  
20 missing sidewalk provides access points to parks and recreational facilities;
- 21 4. The roadway improvement project includes blocks with transit stops and  
22 adjacent cross streets within the project boundary;

1                   5. The roadway improvement project boundary includes high-density land uses;  
2 and

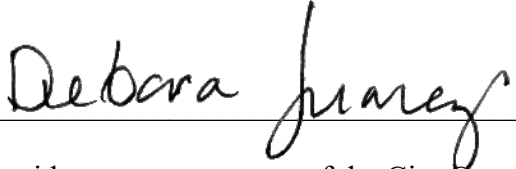
3                   6. The roadway improvement project boundary includes equity-priority areas at  
4 high risk of displacement.

5                   This subsection is not intended to apply to pavement maintenance projects such as chip  
6 seal, pothole repairs, arterial major maintenance (AMM) projects, or emergency repairs.

7

1 Section 2. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by  
2 the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it  
3 shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.


4 Passed by the City Council the 12th day of December, 2023,  
5 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 12th day of  
6 December, 2023.

7   
8 President \_\_\_\_\_ of the City Council

9  Approved /  returned unsigned /  vetoed this 28th day of December, 2023.

10   
11 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

12 Filed by me this 28th day of December, 2023.

13   
14 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

15 (Seal)