

We Need a Safe, Accessible and Complete Sidewalk Network

PROBLEM

Seattle has a sidewalk problem. Twenty four percent (11,000 blocks) of our city's streets are [missing sidewalks](#), and according to a [2017 sidewalk assessment](#), more than half our existing sidewalks are inaccessible because of [unrepaired cracks and bumps](#). At our current rate of sidewalk construction, it will take us [1,800 years](#) before all of Seattle has sidewalks. And who knows when our sidewalks will get repaired: under current practice, [adjacent property owners](#) are responsible for maintaining the sidewalk, but few take action, or even realize it's their responsibility to do so.

IMPACT

Sidewalks for Transportation

Without usable sidewalks, some disabled people who would prefer to take the bus end up having to pre-schedule rides with paratransit. More often than not, those of us who can't drive end up being stuck at home much more than we'd like, [giving up activities that would keep us healthy and connected to our communities](#). [Adults with disabilities who work walk for a greater share of trips](#) than workers without disabilities and deficiencies in safe sidewalks impact economic mobility, access to opportunity, and participation in our communities.

Sidewalks for Safety

[Transportation research has shown](#) increased crashes on blocks that are missing sidewalks. In Seattle, missing sidewalks north of 85th Street, parts of South Seattle, and in some industrial areas, mean that people living and traveling in these neighborhoods experience increased risk. Having safe places for people to walk and roll is an important step in addressing our current [epidemic of traffic violence](#).

Sidewalks for Climate

In Seattle, transportation emissions are by far the [largest contributor](#) of greenhouse gas emissions for the City of Seattle. It's critical we create safe and accessible connections to get where we need to go, whether that's around the corner to the store or to the nearest bus or light rail stop.

SOLUTION

Just like we can expect our city to build and maintain roads, the same should be true for our sidewalk network. We believe that any time our city repaves a road, the Seattle Department of Transportation should also take action to repair broken and inaccessible sidewalks and install any missing sidewalks along the corridor.

Signed:

350 Seattle

America Walks

Be:Seattle

Cascade Bicycle Club

Commuter Seattle

David Miller, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist, The Lighthouse for the Blind

Disability Rights Washington

Empower Movement

Feet First

HopeLink Mobility

Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

Transit Riders Union

Transportation Choices Coalition

The Urbanist

Sources:

[Sidewalk Repair Report](#) (2020)

[Sidewalk Repair Audit](#) (2021)

[SDOT Sidewalk repair storymap](#) (2022) [SDOT Missing Sidewalks Storymap](#) (2022)