



RALEIGH PLANNING COMMISSION CERTIFIED RECOMMENDATION

CR# 13409

CASE INFORMATION: TC-11-24 PEDESTRIAN PASSAGES AND CROSSWALKS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE

Applicable Policy Statements	<p>Policy T 5.1 Enhancing Bike/Pedestrian Circulation Enhance pedestrian and bicycle circulation, access, and safety along corridors, downtown, in activity and employment centers, at densely developed areas and transit stations, and near schools, libraries, and parks.</p> <p>Policy T 5.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Maintain and construct safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are universally accessible, adequately illuminated, and properly designed to reduce conflicts among motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.</p> <p>Policy LU 4.5 Connectivity New development and redevelopment should provide pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity between individual development sites to provide alternative means of access along corridors.</p> <p>Policy LU 7.6 Pedestrian-friendly Development New and redeveloped commercial and mixed-use developments should be pedestrian-friendly.</p> <p>Policy T 5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Connectivity Continuous pedestrian and bicycle networks should be provided within and between existing and new developments to facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel free of major barriers and impediments such as cul-de-sacs and large parking lots.</p> <p>Policy T 5.13 Pedestrian Infrastructure Ensure that streets in areas with high levels of pedestrian activity (employment centers, residential areas, mixed-use areas, schools) support pedestrian travel by providing such elements as frequent and safe pedestrian crossings, large medians for pedestrian refuges, bicycle lanes, frontage roads with on-street parking, and/or grade separated crossings.</p>
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	<p>Policy EP 1.1 Greenhouse Gas Reduction. Promote best practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as documented through the U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement. This includes reducing per-capita carbon emissions by allowing residential building types that are more energy-efficient than detached houses, such as townhouses and apartments, in more places. It also includes allowing more people to live and work in walkable or transit-rich places. Allowing more density in those locations is a critical climate change strategy, because vehicle trips are shorter and less likely in those locations, bringing down per-capita carbon emissions.</p>
<p>Action Items</p>	<p>Action T 5.11 Crosswalk Safety Widen crosswalks and install durable painted crosswalks and/or other investments to increase pedestrian safety and visibility at crossings.</p>

SUMMARY OF TEXT CHANGE

Amends the Unified Development Ordinance to:

1. Specify curb extension dimensions in standard street designs in the UDO. The curb extensions would apply to the streets with on-street parking.
2. Add design specifications for pedestrian passages. Specifically, these would address situations where a pedestrian passage intersects with a drive aisle or other vehicular area within a parking lot. In those instances, either the material or the height of the pedestrian passage must be carried through the intersection. If a pedestrian passage runs parallel to a drive aisle or other vehicular area, it must be separated either by height or by vertical barriers. These changes would be made to the city’s Street Design Manual, which is incorporated in the UDO by reference.
3. Expand the existing allowance for a pedestrian passage to meet block size requirements. This would allow pedestrian passages to be used in place of full streets in some instances. Streets that are mapped on the city’s Street Plan would still have to be constructed as full streets.

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

Adoption of TC-11-24 would:

1. Improve pedestrian safety and comfort by reducing crossing distances at intersections and indicating to people driving that pedestrians are likely.
2. Encourage high-quality pedestrian connections in new development.
3. Reduce long-term street maintenance costs for the city.
4. Provide more land for housing and employment uses.
5. Make it possible to not use a car for more trips by creating more direct connections to greenways and to destinations such as workplaces, retail areas, schools, and residential neighborhoods.

6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles and facilitating non-car trips.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Submitted	Committee	Planning Commission
5/9/2025		6/10/25, 6/24/25

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

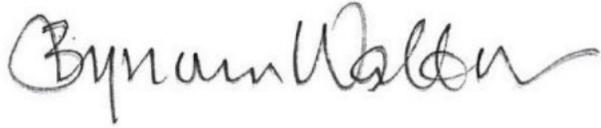
The proposed text amendment is **Consistent/Inconsistent** with the relevant policies in the Comprehensive Plan and **Approval/Denial** of the proposed text amendment is reasonable and in the public interest.

Reasonableness and Public Interest	The proposed text change is reasonable and in the public interest because it enhances pedestrian connectivity and safety, aligns with Raleigh’s Community Climate Action Plan goals to reduce vehicle dependency, and supports more walkable, accessible, and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods. These updates encourage alternative transportation, improve public health outcomes, and promote equitable access to urban infrastructure.
Recommendation	Approval
Motion and Vote	Motion: Otwell Second: Neptune In Favor: Bennett, Cochrane, Fox, Miller, Neptune, O’Haver, Otwell and Shelburne

ATTACHMENTS

1. Staff Report
2. Draft Ordinance

This document is a true and accurate statement of the findings and recommendations of the Planning Commission. Approval of this document incorporates all of the findings of the attached Staff Report and Comprehensive Plan Analysis.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bynum Walter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail.

Bynum Walter
Assistant Planning Director

Date: 6/24/25

Staff Coordinator: Justin Bucher, Justin.Bucher@RaleighNC.gov



ZONING STAFF REPORT – TC-11-24 CLEAN TRANSPORTATION ORDINANCE

Section Reference	Sections 8.3.2 and 8.5
Basic Information	<p>This text change proposes amending the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to create safer pedestrian crossings at intersections and to encourage the use of pedestrian passages, which are 10' wide paths within a 20' easement.</p> <p>Specifically, the text change would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specify curb extension dimensions in standard street designs in the UDO. The curb extensions would apply to the streets with on-street parking. 2. Add design specifications for pedestrian passages. Specifically, these would address situations where a pedestrian passage intersects with a drive aisle or other vehicular area within a parking lot. In those instances, either the material or the height of the pedestrian passage must be carried through the intersection. If a pedestrian passage runs parallel to a drive aisle or other vehicular area, it must be separated either by height or by vertical barriers. These changes would be made to the city's Street Design Manual, which is incorporated in the UDO by reference. 3. Expand the existing allowance for a pedestrian passage to meet block size requirements. This would allow pedestrian passages to be used in place of full streets in some instances. Streets that are mapped on the city's Street Plan would still have to be constructed as full streets.
Planning Commission Recommendation Deadline	July 20, 2025

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GUIDANCE

Applicable Policy Statements

Policy T 5.1 Enhancing Bike/Pedestrian Circulation

Enhance pedestrian and bicycle circulation, access, and safety along corridors, downtown, in activity and employment centers, at densely developed areas and transit stations, and near schools, libraries, and parks.

Policy T 5.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility

Maintain and construct safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle facilities that are universally accessible, adequately illuminated, and properly designed to reduce conflicts among motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

Policy LU 4.5 Connectivity

New development and redevelopment should provide pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connectivity between individual development sites to provide alternative means of access along corridors.

Policy LU 7.6 Pedestrian-friendly Development

New and redeveloped commercial and mixed-use developments should be pedestrian-friendly.

Policy T 5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Network Connectivity

Continuous pedestrian and bicycle networks should be provided within and between existing and new developments to facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle travel free of major barriers and impediments such as cul-de-sacs and large parking lots.

Policy T 5.13 Pedestrian Infrastructure

Ensure that streets in areas with high levels of pedestrian activity (employment centers, residential areas, mixed-use areas, schools) support pedestrian travel by providing such elements as frequent and safe pedestrian crossings, large medians for pedestrian refuges, bicycle lanes, frontage roads with on-street parking, and/or grade separated crossings.

Policy EP 1.1 Greenhouse Gas Reduction.

Promote best practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions as documented through the U.S. Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement. This includes reducing per-capita carbon emissions by allowing residential building types that are more energy-efficient than detached houses, such as townhouses and apartments, in more places. It also includes allowing more people to live and work in walkable or transit-rich places.

	Allowing more density in those locations is a critical climate change strategy, because vehicle trips are shorter and less likely in those locations, bringing down per-capita carbon emissions.
Action Items	<p>Action T 5.11 Crosswalk Safety</p> <p>Widen crosswalks and install durable painted crosswalks and/or other investments to increase pedestrian safety and visibility at crossings.</p>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The ordinance is intended to make it safer and easier to get around Raleigh by walking, biking, or other non-car means of transportation. As a city that grew mainly in the post-World War II era, Raleigh’s infrastructure and land use is shaped mainly around car infrastructure. This has translated into a low percentage of trips made by walking. Fewer than three percent of work trips are made by walking or biking, a figure that is much lower than most other medium or large U.S. cities.



That low percentage translates into a number of other issues, including the cost of providing transportation infrastructure, community health and activity levels, air pollution and climate change, and social connections. A desire for improved walkability is one of the most common points of feedback heard in multiple plans.

This ordinance addresses the topic in two ways – with changes to crosswalk design (see example to left) and for what the development ordinance calls “pedestrian

passages” (example to right). Together, they will create improved pedestrian infrastructure over time. It should be noted that, for the purposes of this section, the term “pedestrian” will be used, but the same infrastructure is also an improvement for people who use mobility assistance devices such as wheelchairs. The “pedestrian passages” also are, by design, intended for use by people walking, using wheelchairs, biking, using a scooter, or other non-car transportation.

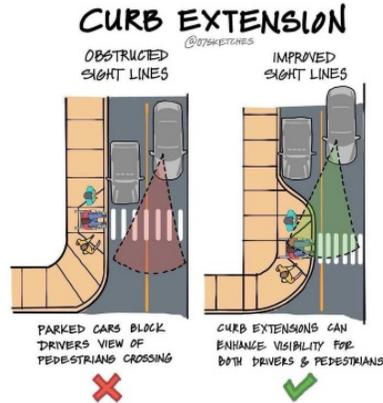


Crosswalks

The first is to create more comfortable crosswalks for pedestrians. This involves adding specifications for curb extensions, sometimes also called bump-outs or bulb-outs, to

intersections. These would apply to streets with on-street parking, so that the parking lane can be used for the curb extension at the intersection.

The UDO specifies widths for a range of street types (neighborhood streets, two lane streets with a turning lane, four lane streets, and so on). For each of those types, it specifies the width for travel lanes, parking lanes (if any), planting strips, sidewalks, and other elements. To reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and to signal to drivers to be aware of pedestrians, best practices are to create a curb extension or “bulb out” at intersections (see image below). TC-11-24 does this by specifying widths at intersections.



The diagram to the right shows an example of how the extensions improve visibility and reduce crossing distance. They also serve as a sign to people driving that pedestrians are likely to be present.

Pedestrian Passages

A pedestrian passage is a facility for people walking, biking, or using other non-car means of travel. In essence, it is a very wide sidewalk, sometimes also called a multi-use path. It is similar in width to a greenway trail. It is a minimum 10' wide and within a 20' public access easement (see image below).



Width	
A Public access easement (min)	20'
Travelway	
B Paved area (min)	10'
General	
Walkway type	Sidewalk

Currently, a new or altered block (the shortest distance around a site and nearby properties that can be travelled on public streets) can be 50 percent larger than otherwise if it includes a pedestrian passage. To further encourage the use of these facilities, TC-11-24 modifies that provision to allow blocks that are 100 percent larger if they include a pedestrian passage.

This means that, over time, the city will see pedestrian facilities become a larger percentage of overall transportation infrastructure. Relative to older northeastern cities, Raleigh’s percentage of vehicle infrastructure likely will always be high. However, TC-11-24 would over

time begin to create a network of comfortable places for people walking.

Many recent developments contain examples of what these spaces look like. In addition to serving as high-quality pedestrian infrastructure, they also create places that serve as social connections, because they are pleasant places to be (see example below).



In some cases, a pedestrian passage will intersect with an internal driveway at a site, such as a grocery store or other retail space with a large parking lot in front. Best practices are to give priority to people walking in those situations by continuing the pedestrian passage (essentially a sidewalk) through the driveway. This can be done either by raising the passage slightly above the driveway or by continuing the paving materials across the driveway. The example below does both.



TC-11-24 amends the city's Street Design Manual to specify that any future pedestrian passage has one of these treatments. Additionally, if a passage runs parallel to a vehicle drive aisle or similar space, there must be some separation between the two. Either the passage must be elevated, like a sidewalk, or physically separated with bollards, planters, or similar means.

Text Change Authorization

At its November 19, 2024 meeting, City Council authorized drafting the Pedestrian Passages and Crosswalks ordinance. Following that meeting, staff brought the proposed language to multiple boards and commissions, which took place in late 2024 and early 2025. The summary of these reviews is as following:

December 19, 2024. Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities. Unanimously voted to recommend in favor of TC-11-24.

January 9, 2025. Development Services Advisory Committee. Received as information.

January 16, 2025. Park, Recreation, and Greenway Advisory Board. Received as information.

Monday, February 17. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission. Developing formal language in support of ordinance.

IMPACTS

ADOPTION OF TC-11-24

Adoption of TC-11-24 would:

1. Reduce Improve pedestrian safety and comfort by reducing crossing distances at intersections and indicating to people driving that pedestrians are likely.
2. Encourage high-quality pedestrian connections in new development.

3. Reduce long-term street maintenance costs for the city.
4. Provide more land for housing and employment uses.
5. Make it possible to not use a car for more trips by creating more direct connections to greenways and to destinations such as workplaces, retail areas, schools, and residential neighborhoods.
6. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the adoption of electric vehicles and facilitating non-car trips.

NO CHANGE

No change would continue the existing status quo and mean the reverse of the above impacts. It would require more streets compared to pedestrian facilities and mean a lower percentage of future trips would be in the form of walking, biking, or transit.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

An alternative to the crosswalk portion of the text change involved a broader change to all street widths. Many of the city's standard street designs include lanes that are 11', which is wider than current guidance suggests. This results in more cost, more impervious surface, and higher vehicle speeds than slightly narrower lanes. This option will continue to be an area of exploration.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The draft ordinance was posted to the public engagement portal on May 9, 2025. The ordinance received XX comments from XX participants. An engagement report is attached.