



# CITY OF HOUSTON

Department of Public Works and  
Engineering

Office of City Engineer

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## Practice for Sidewalk Requirements

Chapter 40 of the City of Houston Code of Ordinances requires the construction of sidewalks with the erection of buildings within the city. Both the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) and the City of Houston amended International Building Code (IBC) are compatible with this requirement. In order to create a safer and better quality of life for pedestrians and the public, requirements for new development and redevelopment include sidewalks to be a minimum of 5-feet wide and meet Texas Accessibility Standards. These standards have not changed.

Instances where OCE may consider a request for variance to the standard requirement for construction of a sidewalk abutting a property that is being redeveloped or developed include:

1. Instances of technical infeasibility; a report signed and sealed by an Engineer, Architect or Landscape Architect demonstrating that alternative methods/alignments have been considered and the construction of the sidewalk is not technically feasible.
2. Instances where Deed Restrictions prohibit sidewalks in the neighborhood where the lot is being developed. A map must accompany a copy of the deed restrictions detailing the area under these deed restrictions.
3. Instances where the covering of an open ditch would be necessary in order to construct the sidewalk. This does not apply to areas being developed with on street parking per Chapter 42.

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4. Instances where a neighborhood has had a street and drainage project that successfully petitioned the city not to install sidewalks.
5. Instances where the Board of Directors of a Home Owners Association (HOA), listed with the City of Houston, submits that sidewalks are not desired by the HOA's residents. This must be accompanied by a map detailing which streets are under the HOA's authority.

Information/documents identified above must accompany an application for a sidewalk variance in order to be considered for approval. Submittals without such documents will be returned without consideration.

Requests for variances will not be favorably considered for new development/redevelopment along Major Thoroughfares, Collector Streets, along local streets within Safe School Sidewalk Areas, and along Pedestrian Accessibility Routes approved by the Mayor's Office for People With Disabilities.