



Agenda Item No. 17.

Staff Report

Date: November 10, 2016

To: Mayor Hoertkorn and Council Members

From: John Moe, Contract Public Works Director

Subject: Design Guidelines for Sidewalks and Pathways within the Public Right-Of-Way

Recommendation

Council approve Resolution No. 1976 Design Guidelines of Sidewalks and Pathways within the Public Right-of-Way.

Background and discussion

The Town strongly encourages walking as a means of exercise and transportation. There are currently a number of pathways and sidewalks within the public right-of-way that have been constructed using various paving materials, including asphalt, concrete, and decomposed granite (with resin binder). Currently, the Town does not have written guidelines as to acceptable sidewalks and pathways within the Town right-of-way. Written guidelines are beneficial in providing direction to property owners and Town staff when construction or repair of sidewalks and pathways occurs as well as creating a more consistent look within neighborhoods and across Town.

Over the years the Town has used a Public Works Committee to help select sidewalk materials for various streets in Town. The Public Works Committee looked into Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliant materials for improving at that time the deteriorating pathway along Shady Lane. They researched, discussed and compared various ADA compliant materials such as concrete, asphalt, and decomposed granite with a resin binder.

At the request of the Public Works Committee, the pathway along Shady Lane was constructed using a product called NaturalPAVE, which is a decomposed granite material with a resin binder. This material is available in a range of colors, and the color was chosen to blend with the existing area, retaining the natural look of the existing dirt path. Although the desired effect was achieved at first, within a few years the pathway changed color and is now very similar in color to a normal asphalt pathway. The NaturalPAVE material also turned out to be less durable than asphalt, necessitating significantly more maintenance. When maintenance and repairs are made, the repairs need to be full depth repairs and are distinctly noticeable. The Public Works Committee determined that NaturalPave and/or other resin binder type products should no longer be recommended for use within the right-of-way.

When the Town received a grant to install a pathway along Sir Francis Drake (SFD), the Public Works Committee chose to use asphalt as the path because of all the problems that occurred with the decomposed granite with the resin binder on Shady Lane. The Committee did choose to paint the asphalt to make it look more natural and blend into the surrounding, and because of the parking along the street and pathway, the application of color helped identify the pathway as separate from parking. Painting the asphalt is somewhat more expensive and paint changes color with age. Also, when the pathway needs to be patched it is difficult to paint and match the color of the existing pathway so the patched areas are noticeable.

Sidewalk and Pathway Materials Recommendation:

Staff recommends concrete be used for improvements and replacement to the sidewalk along commercial or high traffic areas of Town such as Poplar Road, Ross Common (except around the park and school), Bolinas Avenue, and portions of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. In addition, areas that are predominantly using concrete materials such as Winship Park and a portion of Redwood should continue using concrete materials.

Asphalt pathways exist in many areas of town, including Ross Common, much of Lagunitas Road and along Sir Francis Drake Blvd (SFD). Asphalt has durability, strength, can be repaired easily, and is a relatively cost-effective material. The downside to asphalt is that some residents feel that asphalt is unsightly. It is recommended that when asphalt pathways are installed that it is per the Marin County standard for Concrete Sidewalks, but with a 3/8" maximum aggregate size wherever possible. It is recommended that asphalt pathways be used in other areas of Town where concrete is not recommended and a pathway is recommended. In locations such as along Sir Francis Drake Blvd. where the pathway is contiguous with the roadway, the pathway should be colored or slurry sealed a beige color to differentiate the pathway area from the road or parking.

Staff recommends against using the decomposed granite material with a resin binder due to the lack of durability, strength, and higher cost of installation and maintenance. Other materials that do not meet ADA standards should not be used within the public right-of-way.

Furthermore, in locations, such as corner ramps where the pathway would intersect a street, contrasting tactile mats (commonly called truncated domes) must be installed to warn the visually impaired that they are entering a roadway. The mats come in a variety of colors, and the Town has recommended that a dark Charcoal Grey be used for concrete sidewalks, and Colonial Red be used with asphalt pathways. The commonly seen yellow domes are not recommended for use in the Town.

Design and Geometry:

Staff recommends that pathways and sidewalks in the public right-of-way be typically designed to a nominal 5' width, but in all cases should be a minimum of 4' wide to meet the current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Where an improvement is being made to an existing home or business, the existing sidewalk or pathway should be brought to the current standard by the property owner.

In areas where the pathway is not at grade, it is recommended that a minimum 6" border of approved shoulder backing material or native soils be installed at the sides of the pathway, and then the soils should either slope up or down at a 2:1 ratio until reaching existing grade. Stone walls or other edge treatments may be considered in areas near a drainage swale or steep slope conditions with the written approval of the Director of Public Works.

If there is not a curb, pathways should ideally be no closer than 5 feet from the existing edge of the roadway. Pathways installed at a distance less than 5' from the edge of pavement should be separated by an asphalt berm or similar structure as a vehicle barrier and to discourage vehicle parking.

Approvals Prior to Construction:

All sidewalks and pathways constructed in the Right-of-Way must be properly designed in cooperation with any approved design guidelines. Plans shall be submitted to the Director of Public Works for approval along with an encroachment permit application.

Exceptions:

As in all construction and maintenance projects there are times when an exception to a guideline may be necessary or practical, such as where there is a steep grade in the direction of travel, a temporary narrowing of the pathway, or other features. In all cases, both plans and a written request along with some photos of the area should be submitted to the Director of Public Works with an indication of why the exception should be considered. After careful consideration, the Director of Public Works will then make a final determination.

Council Review and Advisory Design Group Review

The Town Council heard a brief presentation on the design guidelines of sidewalks and pathways at the August 11, 2016, Council meeting. The Town Council directed the Advisory Design Review (ADR) group to review the recommendations provided by Moe Engineering. On August 23, 2016, the ADR considered and unanimously supported the guidelines provided the guidelines utilize the following treatments:

1. Concrete sidewalks and grey truncated domes in existing neighborhoods, such as Winship Avenue, Bolinas, the eastern side of Redwood Drive, Poplar Avenue, and in areas along Ross Common that already have established concrete sidewalks.
2. 3/8-inch maximum aggregate asphalt paths for Shady Lane and Lagunitas.
3. Colonial Red truncated domes when associated with asphalt paths and connections.
4. Painted Asphalt paths along Sir Francis Drake.

Fiscal, resource and timeline impacts

The fiscal impact depends on the sidewalk or pathway material that is selected. When properly installed, concrete sidewalks or pathways are more expensive to construct, but provide an exceptionally stable and long wearing surface, without the need for regular maintenance. Asphalt pathways are somewhat shorter lived due to the inherent nature of asphalt, but can more easily be repaired or sealed to improve its appearance and increase its lifespan. Decomposed granite material with a resin binder is expensive to install and maintain.

As for the relative costs for different materials, as of 2016, an asphalt walkway or path costs about \$9 per square foot, a colored (painted) asphalt pathway costs about \$11 per square foot, a concrete sidewalk or pathway costs about \$15 per square foot, a brick or concrete paver surface will cost about \$25 per square foot, and a resin binder surface will cost about \$18 per square foot. These costs are estimates of inclusive costs of labor and materials and will vary based on site conditions, the size of the area and other factors but is meant to provide sidewalk/pathway costs for various surface types relative to other types.

Alternative Actions

Council may choose to reject the resolution or design guidelines, or modify them as appropriate.

Environmental Review

Not applicable

Attachments

- Resolution No. 1976
- Sidewalk and Pathway Design Guidelines
- Town Council Minutes from August 11, 2016
- ADR minutes from August 23, 2016

TOWN OF ROSS

RESOLUTION NO. 1976

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ROSS APPROVING DESIGN GUIDELINES OF SIDEWALKS AND PATHWAYS WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY.

WHEREAS, the Town strongly encourages walking as a means of exercise and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the Town currently has sidewalks and pathways created from a variety of materials within the right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, the Town has the responsibility to ensure that any new or repaired sidewalks or pathways within the right-of-way meet current Local, State and Federal Standards; and

WHEREAS, the Town does not currently have written guidelines as to what constitutes acceptable sidewalks and pathways within the Town right-of-way; and

WHEREAS, written guidelines are beneficial in providing direction to property owners and Town staff when construction or repair of sidewalks and pathways occurs as well as creating a more consistent look within neighborhoods and across Town.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Town Council of the Town of Ross does hereby approve the attached Sidewalk and Pathway Design Guidelines Within the Public Right-Of-Way.

The foregoing resolution was duly and regularly adopted by the Ross Town Council at its regular meeting held on the 10th day of November 2016, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Kathleen Hoertkorn, Mayor

ATTEST:

Linda Lopez, Town Clerk



SIDEWALK AND PATHWAY DESIGN GUIDELINES WITHIN

THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY

MATERIALS:

Any repairs, improvements, construction or replacement of the sidewalk along commercial or high traffic areas of the Town, such as Poplar Road, Ross Common (except around the park and school), Bolinas Avenue, and portions of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. shall be made using concrete materials. In addition, areas that are predominantly using concrete materials such as Winship Park and a portion of Redwood Drive should continue using concrete materials. Asphalt should be used in all other areas of Town for the construction of pathways and sidewalks.

All Concrete should be installed according the current Uniform Construction Standards All Cities and County of Marin. Asphalt pathways should be installed per the standard for concrete sidewalks, but with a 3/8" maximum aggregate size.

In locations along Sir Francis Drake Blvd. where the pathway is contiguous with the roadway, the pathway should be colored or slurry-sealed a beige color to differentiate it from the driving and parking areas of the roadway. Written approval will be required before installation.

A detectable warning surface (truncated domes) shall be a dark Charcoal Grey color when installed in concrete, and Colonial Red when installed in asphalt. Yellow domes are not recommended for use in any area of Town.

DESIGN AND GEOMETRY:

Pathways and sidewalks are desired to be 5' wide, but in all cases should be a minimum of 4' wide to meet the current Americans with Disabilities Act requirements and those of the Uniform Construction Standards All Cities and County of Marin.

Where the pathway is not at grade, it is recommended that an additional 6" border of non-recycled Caltrans Class 2 shoulder backing material be installed at the sides of the pathway, and then the soils should either slope up or down at a 2:1 ratio until reaching existing grade. The use of stone walls or other edge treatments may be considered in areas near a drainage swale or steep slope conditions.

Where installed at grade, pathways should be no closer than 5 feet from the existing edge of street pavement. Pathways installed at a distance less than 5' from the edge of street pavement should be raised 6" relative to the street and have a distinct curb, or alternatively, if approved by the Director of Public Works, could be separated from the street pavement with a minimum 6" asphalt berm or similar structure.

APPROVALS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION:

All sidewalks and pathways constructed in the Right-of-Way must be properly designed in conformance with the above guidelines, and plans are to be submitted to the Director of Public Works for approval along with an encroachment permit application.

EXCEPTIONS:

Exceptions may be considered to the above design guidelines on a case-by-case basis. In all cases, the applicant shall submit the written request to the Director of Public Works with a plan, photos, and description explaining why the exception is being requested and should be considered. After careful consideration, the Director will then make a final determination.

August 11, 2016 Minutes

distribution to local schools. They are transitioning from a printed brochure to electronic PDF version in an effort to reduce their carbon footprint.

The Recreation Department will again serve as the lead agency for organizing the Town Dinner scheduled for September 30th. Based on input from staff and the Ross Recreation Advisory Committee, the Town Dinner will return to the original site located on the Ross Common Street. Arrangements for lighting, tables, chairs and music are underway.

X

15. Town Council direction for design guidelines of sidewalks and pathways within the public right-of-way.

Town Manager Joe Chinn received a request for this item to go to the Advisory Design Review (ADR) Group, which is a reasonable request, so the Council could provide guidance tonight or wait until after the ADR meeting.

Nathan Valles, Moe Engineering, summarized the staff report and recommended that the Council provide direction to staff for the development of sidewalks and pathway design guidelines within the public right-of-way.

Town Manager Chinn pointed out that currently the Town does not have written guidelines as to acceptable sidewalks and pathways within the Town right-of-way. Due to resident input and concerns, consistency of look, and efficiency in processing sidewalk plans it would be beneficial to have a written guideline for the construction or repair of sidewalks and pathways.

Council Member Kuhl asked staff who has the duty to build sidewalks. Mr. Valles explained that when a residence comes in along Lagunitas where there is a dirt path, they would be asked to improve to safe standards as part of their improvements, just as they may be asked to improve their culvert or asphalt surface of their driveway within the right-of-way.

Mr. Valles added that asphalt pathways exist in many areas of Town, including Ross Common, much of Lagunitas Road and along Sir Francis Drake Blvd (SFD). Asphalt has durability, strength, can be repaired easily, and is a relatively cost-effective material. The downside to asphalt is that some residents feel that asphalt is unsightly. The pathway along Shady Lane was constructed using a product called NaturalPAVE, which is a decomposed granite material with a resin binder. This material is available in a range of colors, and the color was chosen to blend with the existing area, retaining the natural look of the existing dirt path. Although the desired effect was achieved at first, within a few years the pathway changed color and is now very similar in color to a normal asphalt pathway. The NaturalPAVE material also turned out to be less durable than asphalt, necessitating significantly more maintenance. When maintenance and repairs are made, the repairs need to be full depth repairs and are distinctly noticeable. The Public Works Committee determined that NaturalPave and/or other resin binder type products should no longer be recommended for use within the right-of-way. Staff recommends against using the decomposed granite material with a resin binder due to the lack of durability, strength, and higher cost of installation and maintenance. Other materials that do not meet ADA standards should not be used within the public right-of-way. In locations such as corner ramps where the pathway would intersect a street, contrasting tactile mats (*commonly called truncated domes*) must be installed to warn the visually impaired that they are entering a roadway. The mats come in a variety of colors, and the Town has recommended that charcoal grey be used for

August 11, 2016 Minutes

concrete, and colonial red be used with asphalt. The commonly seen yellow domes are not recommended for use in the Town.

Council Member Brekhus felt it is appropriate for ADR to review the recommendations before the Council provides direction.

Mayor Pro Tempore Robbins opened the public hearing on this item, and seeing no one wishing to speak, the Mayor Pro Tempore closed the public portion and brought the matter back to the Council for direction.

The Council directed the ADR Group to review the recommendations provided by Moe Engineering.

- 16. Town Council consideration of introduction of Ordinance No. 675 amending Title 18 "Zoning" of the Ross Municipal Code Chapter 18.52 Nonconforming Structures and Uses, to clarify what constitutes the repair, maintenance, and alteration of a nonconforming structure and to establish a new finding that requires that the project may not increase the nonconformity unless a variance is granted pursuant to Chapter 18.48 of the Ross Municipal Code.**

Planning Manager Heidi Scoble summarized the staff report and recommended that the Council consider introduction and first reading of Ordinance No. 675 to amend Ross Municipal Code Chapter 18.52, nonconforming structures and uses, to clarify what constitutes the repair, maintenance, and alteration of a nonconforming structure and to establish a new finding that requires that the project may not increase the nonconformity unless a variance is granted.

Council Member Brekhus wanted to know why a variance is not required when expanding the nonconformity, so when an applicant adds into the setback and also adds height by extending across. Planning Manager Scoble stated that staff took consideration the spirit of the existing regulations and the flexibility it offers the Council in making lands use decisions regarding nonconforming structures. Planning Manager Scoble further stated that the regulations are proposed to be amended to require a variance if the nonconformity is proposed to be exacerbated.

Council Member Kuhl pointed out this would permit increasing maximum bulk, which is a concern. Planning Manager Scoble responded that in order for a nonconformity permit to be approved there are specific findings that must be achieved, and one finding is consistency with design review standards and criteria section of the design review chapter, which is a very lengthy list of items. Essentially design review is embedded in the nonconformity permit process. In this situation, because they are making a structural alteration to a building, a nonconformity permit is automatically triggered.

Council Member Brekhus noted confusion for the variance portion. She desired flexibility in the future. She then discussed a house on Lagunitas in regard to the main house with two rentals both in the setback, and if that person wanted to change one of those rentals to a garage, she asked staff if that would not be allowed under that provision. Planning Manager Scoble noted that garages are a permitted use, but the use of the structure can trigger a variance. Town

MINUTES
Meeting of the
Ross Advisory Design Review Group

Tuesday, August 23, 2016

1. 6:04 p.m. Commencement

Mark Kruttschnitt, called the meeting to order. Joey Buckingham, Jim Kemp, Stephen Sutro, and Mark Fritts were also present. Heidi Scoble was present representing staff.

2. Open Time for Public Comments- *None*

3. Approval of minutes- *Continued*

4. Old Business-

a. Milani Residence (Application No. 2016-030) – 34 Allen Avenue

Staff Planner Scoble advised the ADR Group that the applicant has withdrawn the project for ADR Group review as the project was redesigned to not require Design Review or any other discretionary permits.

b. Glasser Residence (Application No. 2016-026) – 440 Upper Toyon Drive

c. Glasser Residence (Application No. 2016-027) – 404 Upper Toyon Drive

Project applicant Jarod Polsky with Polsky-Pearlstein Architects presented the revised project for the new construction of two single family residences on vacant lots. The applicant stated that the project impervious surfaces was reduced, the roof eaves were expanded, the building color was modified to be more earth tone, and cable rails replaced the previously proposed glass rails.

The ADR Group generally supported the project as it relates to the design, materials, and colors. The ADR Group further discussed the location of the residences on the ridgeline, the visibility of the residences, and the Town's Design Review criteria and standards relative to ridgeline development.

Comments made by the ADR Group included that there was nothing in the regulations that states that a project cannot be visible and that maybe the Town should revisit its design guidelines to address ridgeline developments. No specific comments beyond those provided at the July 26, 2016 ADR Group meeting were provided by the sitting ADR Group.

5. New Business



a. Town Hall Sidewalks and Paths (Application No. 2016-038) – Town wide

Staff Planner Scoble provided a presentation to the ADR Group requesting direction on what sidewalk and path materials and colors should be provided Town wide.

The ADR Group concluded their review by supporting the following treatments:

1. Concrete sidewalks and grey truncated domes in existing neighborhoods, like Winship Avenue, Bolinas, and the Downtown that already have established concrete sidewalks.
2. $\frac{3}{4}$ inch asphalt paths for Shady Lane and Lagunitas.
3. Colonial Red truncated domes when associated with asphalt paths and connections.
4. Painted Asphalt paths along Sir Francis Drake.

b. Town Hall Portable (Application No. 2016-037) – 31 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Staff Planner Scoble provided a presentation to the ADR Group requesting direction on whether they would support the installation of a temporary portable building for Building department, Planning Department, and Public Works Department staff. Staff Planner Scoble also requested an ADR Group member to help with the landscaping associated with the installation of the temporary portable building.

Although the ADR Group did not specifically support the use of a temporary portable building, they did understand the spatial needs for staff. Accordingly, the ADR Group supported the installation of the temporary portable building provided the following:

1. The color of the building be dark to camouflage into the surroundings.
2. The building be heavily screened with landscape vegetation.
3. The Town Staff work hard to ensure the building is not used for longer than 5 years.

ADR Group Member Buckingham volunteered to work with staff regarding the landscape screening of the building.

6. Communications- *None*

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.