



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2025

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS WARDS: ALL

**SUBJECT: APPROVE STREET CROSS-SECTION REDUCTION FROM THE CITY
GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATION AND COMMUNITY MOBILITY ELEMENT FOR
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT STREET IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

ISSUE:

Approve a reduction to the required right-of-way and curb-to-curb widths included in the General Plan Circulation and Community Mobility Element when the Public Works Department is completing street improvement projects such as new sidewalks that serve as a betterment for the public.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approves a street cross-section reduction from the City General Plan Circulation and Community Mobility Element when the Public Works Department is completing street improvement projects.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Riverside's General Plan is intended to implement the community's vision for the City over a 20-year period. The City is a fast-growing, progressive community and its engaged citizens shape its priorities. The vision of the General Plan is generally summarized into five themes including economics, life enrichment, housing, transportation/land use, and education. The General Plan's Circulation and Community Mobility Element (Circulation Element) recognizes the ability of our transportation network to serve our community's needs. The vibrancy of the General Plan's five themes is directly impacted by multiple forms of transportation including pedestrian foot traffic. Key objectives of the Circulation Element include protecting neighborhoods and reducing the risk to children and residents by vehicular traffic on local roadways, and providing an extensive regionally linked public sidewalk system.

The City maintains approximately 876 miles of paved roadways, and approximately 35 percent do not have sidewalks on one or both sides. Most roadways missing full street improvements are streets previously annexed into the City from the County of Riverside. The City Public Works Department (Public Works) typically pursues grant funds to construct the missing street improvements including curb, gutter, and sidewalk. These projects often require minor street

widening and the acquisition of additional right-of-way from adjacent private property owners to accurately construct the improvements per the Circulation Element.

DISCUSSION:

Public Works prioritizes residential minor and collector streets to construct missing sidewalks focusing on connecting sidewalk network links for schools, parks, and other regional areas of interest. The Circulation Element designates standard dimensions for various roadway classifications including minor streets, collector streets, and arterial streets. The following are the typical dimensions for residential minor and collector streets:

- Minor Streets: 66-foot right-of-way width; 36-foot curb-to-curb width; 15-foot parkway width consisting of a sidewalk and a landscape/utility corridor.
- 66-Foot Collector Street: 66-foot right-of-way width; 40-foot curb-to-curb width; 13-foot parkway width consisting of a sidewalk and a landscape/utility corridor.
- 80-Foot Collector Street: 80-foot right-of-way width; 40-foot curb-to-curb width; 20-foot parkway consisting of a sidewalk and a landscape/utility corridor

The City acquires the necessary right-of-way and constructs all street improvements per the Circulation Element when completing street capital improvement projects. Additionally, any existing private improvements located within the existing or acquired right-of-way are relocated at the City's sole expense, including enclosed fences, block walls, and landscape features. The cost to acquire the right of way and to reconstruct existing facilities is typically excessive and will deter the City from pursuing projects due to the lack of funding availability.

Often, the City requires a wide right of way to secure land for public improvements such as utilities, sidewalks, or additional vehicle lanes. However, along many collector and residential roadways the amount of envisioned right of way exceeds the physical space needed to install a sidewalk. Public Works is currently obligated to pursue the full General Plan right of way width even when simply added a much-needed sidewalk. Public Works proposes to limit the right of way acquisition for sidewalk or similar projects to only what is needed at the time of the project.

If Public Works were able to reduce the project impacts on a case-by-case basis to property owners, the project costs would be reduced, the City would likely receive more public support for proposed projects, and Public Works would be able to provide sidewalk to neighborhoods that otherwise would not be feasible. Reductions to the Circulation Element street cross-sections that would support this effort would include the following (Attachment 1):

- Reducing the curb-to-curb width to 36 feet for collector streets, if necessary; and
- Reducing the right-of-way acquisition to 1.5 foot behind the proposed sidewalk location.

These reductions, on a case-by-case basis, would only apply to Public Works capital street improvement projects that include continuous sidewalk segments for the betterment of a neighborhood. However, Public Works shall still attempt to complete all projects per the Circulation Element, when feasible. These reductions would not apply to private development projects associated with the entitlement process per Section 13.16.060 of the Riverside Municipal Code. Additionally, all utility purveyors would continue to be responsible to secure any easements required for the completion of utility improvements.

The Riverside Public Utilities Director and the Community and Economic Development Director concur that the recommendation to reduce the street cross-section on a case-by-case basis will

not impact the use of the roadway.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact in the report, however this action could result in reduced costs for future capital street improvement projects requiring sidewalks.

Prepared by:	Ed Lara, Engineering Manager
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Certified as to availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by:	Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Modified Roadway Cross-Sections Exhibit