



October 1, 2024

POLICY SUMMARY

The Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy balances the preservation of Lawrence's historic brick streets and sidewalks with the need for modern accessibility and infrastructure maintenance. It includes design and construction standards, maintenance standards, and preservation guidelines for both brick sidewalks and brick streets

The Multimodal Transportation Commission and Historic Resources Commission have both provided a recommendation of approval for the policy with respective conditions. The City Commission provided feedback and recommended approval of the policy on September 17, 2024. The administrative policy was approved by the City Manager on October 1, 2024.

KEY POINTS

- The City of Lawrence has never had an adopted brick streets or brick sidewalks policy.
- There are approximately 14 miles of brick sidewalks in Lawrence and 429 miles of total sidewalk city-wide.
- There is approximately 3 miles of exposed brick streets in Lawrence, about 20 miles of covered brick streets, and 350 miles of total public streets city-wide.
- The policy was developed through a city-wide community engagement driven approach to understand the community's values, while adhering to engineering standards, asset management best practice, accessibility standards, and practical implementation strategies.
- Brick sidewalks in good condition, meaning they are accessible and meet PROWAG standards, will be preserved and maintained. If brick sidewalks are in *poor condition*, then this policy will be consulted and options for reconstruction considered. ([PROWAG: Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines](#))
- Section 6 of this policy will work alongside the Americans with Disability (ADA) Transition Plan to inspect and reconstruct brick sidewalks not meeting PROWAG Standards. ([City of Lawrence ADA Transition Plan for the Public ROW](#))
- Exposed brick streets are to be preserved through the use of two different preservation "statuses" which indicate how limited resources are to be utilized for maintenance. Brick streets will be assessed and prioritized using the City's asset management policy.
- Covered brick streets are to remain covered, until an Adopted Neighborhood Plan indicates there is community desire to reconstruct a local street in brick. As funding becomes available, those streets may be included in future capital improvement projects pending further review.
- Section 7 of this policy will work alongside the Street Maintenance Plan and MSO Design Standards and Specifications to assure brick streets meet safety and asset management standards.
- The Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy was initiated by the Multimodal Transportation Commission (MMTC) on February 5, 2024.
- The project website can be found at www.lawrenceks.org/brick
- The City Commission recommended approval of the policy, with the inclusion of recommendations made by the Historic Resources Commission, on October 17, 2024.

HISTORY

Multiple efforts over the last 10+ years have aimed to draft a brick streets and/or brick sidewalks policy. However, these past efforts have yet to be comprehensive in their approach to this complex topic; therefore, they have not been adopted.

In 2013, the Public Works department assessed Lawrence's streets for their condition and proposed a maintenance plan. Sidewalks were not considered in this policy. The policy was brought before the [City Commission on January 21, 2014](#) and was not adopted; rather, the City Commission directed staff to rework the policy with more community feedback and Historic Resources Commission input, but progress stalled amid other priorities.

In 2019, city engineers began crafting a new policy with input from neighborhoods with the highest number of brick streets: East Lawrence, Old West Lawrence, Pinckney, and Oread. Residents developed their priorities, emphasizing historic preservation and aesthetics in the original townsite area, but the policy was ultimately shelved due to staffing changes, the pandemic, and implementation challenges.

In February of 2024 the Multimodal Transportation Commission initiated the Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy development process. They advised that staff should work alongside a steering committee made of community stakeholders and develop a policy which identifies how and where to maintain brick streets and brick sidewalks.

CITY ADOPTED PLAN VISIONS

Lawrence Comprehensive Plan - [link](#)

The Comprehensive Plan provides a vision and expresses a community's desires about the future. It provides the foundation and framework for making future physical development and policy decisions. Chapter 7, Community Resources states the following goal, "Protect and maintain publicly owned historic resources... Maintain, protect, and restore existing brick streets, sidewalks, and hitching posts within Lawrence.

Lawrence Strategic Plan - [link](#)

The strategic plan outlines a systematic process for moving toward a vision in a manner that involves the development and prioritization of strategic goals along with measurable strategies. The Connected City outcome of the Strategic Plan states the following, "The City of Lawrence has well-maintained, functional, and efficient infrastructure, facilities, and other assets. Connectivity supports accessible, sustainable methods for safely moving people and information throughout the community and the region. Investment in these assets reflects the City's commitment to contribute to the well-being of all people."

Transportation 2050 Plan - [link](#)

Transportation 2050 (T2050) is the blueprint for our future transportation system; it is a vision for a healthy, safe, and efficient transportation system which adequately serves the metropolitan region. The plan identifies future transportation needs, investments, and improvement strategies for all forms of transportation (automobile, public transit, bicycle, pedestrian, etc.) necessary to meet the transportation needs of the region through 2050. This plan identifies multimodal projects and strategies including, "City of Lawrence should Establish Brick Sidewalk and Street Standards." and mentions "brick sidewalks, especially those in poor condition, can be difficult (if not impossible) to traverse for those with limited mobility."

ADA Transition Plan for the Public ROW - [link](#)

The ADA Transition Plan was established to comply with the requirements of the ADA and outlines the City's ongoing commitment to developing and maintaining public ROW infrastructure that removes barriers and increases accessibility and equitability for all people with the City. This "Community for All" approach is fundamental to the Equity and Inclusion Commitment in the City's Strategic Plan. This Plan outlines the process to address the maintenance backlog, set priorities, and establish an overall spending plan. It states, "Brick sidewalks won't be included in inspected routes until the community stakeholders working on the brick sidewalk and street standards have completed their work" alluding to this Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy.

STRATEGIC PLANS COMMITMENTS

Community Engagement:

Feedback collected from the community was integral to the policy development process. This began with a steering committee and city-wide value prioritization survey that provided a framework for policy direction and finished with collecting public comment and revising the policy to better fit the community vision.

Engaged and Empowered Teams:

The staff working group assured the policy was feasible and practical throughout development. The steering committee utilized the subject matter expertise that staff brought to the conversation and respected their input to collaborate on drafting a policy that worked for all parties.

Equity and Inclusion:

In addition to assuring the public engagement opportunities were available to all Lawrence residents, the policy sets sidewalk standards which provide improved mobility and access for all. This policy will work alongside the ADA Transition Plan which prioritized transportation disadvantaged groups for implementation.

Efficient and Effective Processes:

This policy intentionally aligned itself with existing policies and plans, e.g. Asset Management Plan, ADA Transition Plan, Sidewalk Improvement Plan, Street Maintenance Plan, etc. to assure that the City utilizes existing systems to be most effective and efficient with limited resources.

Sound Fiscal Stewardship:

Understanding that historic bricks are a limited resource & that the cost to install a brick street or brick sidewalk has a higher upfront cost than city-standard materials, the policy seeks to manage this resource with care and conscious asset management.

Environmental Sustainability:

Through utilizing design standards which are durable and consistent with best practice the brick streets and brick sidewalks will be long-lasting and sustainable. Additionally, the policy encourages reuse of historic bricks to the greatest extent possible.

EXISTING CODE

Chapter 16 Lawrence City Code, STREETS, SIDEWALKS AND ROW, Section 16-213 - [link](#)

"All sidewalks constructed in this City shall be constructed of Portland cement concrete or material approved by the City Commission in strict accordance with the specifications adopted by the commission and on file in the City Engineer's office except if a brick sidewalk exists and the owner chooses, the walk may be reconstructed or repaired with brick. No person shall construct any sidewalk in this City unless such sidewalk shall conform to the specifications... [above]."

Kansas State Statute: K.S.A. 12-1808- [link](#)

"It shall be the duty of the owner of the abutting property to keep the sidewalk in repair ..."

POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The brick streets and sidewalk policy was drafted using pertinent policy building blocks to ensure that it reflects the community's values and priorities while also providing practical implementation strategies for the City of Lawrence. These "building blocks" include the staff work group, the MMTC brick policy subcommittee, and the community-wide values survey.

Staff Work Group

The staff work group included members from various City departments and divisions, serving as subject matter experts for managing this historic asset. The staff work group included 14 members of city staff from the following divisions:

- Asset Management
- Engineering
- ADA Compliance
- Historic Resources
- Forestry
- MSO Field Crews
- Transportation & Land-Use Planning

They met before each subcommittee meeting and attended open house events. Their technical expertise was respected and appreciated by the subcommittee and the public alike when specific questions or concerns were raised. The staff work group assured that the policy was practical and realistic to the real-world constraints the City of Lawrence has when looking at our budget, staff time and knowledge, and assuring this policy aligns with the existing plans and strategies of the City.

MMTC Brick Policy Subcommittee (also referred to as a steering committee)

The Multimodal Transportation Commission advised city staff to create a subcommittee of nine community stakeholders when initiating the policy on February 5, 2024. They specified that the subcommittee include members from the following community organizations, groups, and agencies:

- Multimodal Transportation Commission (1)
- Neighborhood Association members (4)
 - The Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods facilitated finding volunteers, these members included residents from East Lawrence, Oread Neighborhood, Old West Lawrence, and Pinckney.
- Independence, Inc Accessibility taskforce (1)
- LiveWell Douglas County (1)
- University of Kansas (1)
- Historic Resources Commission (1)

Community-Wide Values Survey

The subcommittee recommended staff host a city-wide survey which asked how members of the public would rank 10 different values relating to both brick streets and brick sidewalks. The survey was available for 15-days and received 176 responses. The ranked values are shown in Figure 1. The summary of comments received was presented to the subcommittee, MMTC, HRC, and available on the project website – [link](#)

Figure 1.

<u>Priorities for Brick Sidewalks</u>	<u>Priorities for Brick Streets</u>
1. Safety	1. Safety
2. Accessibility	2. Sustainability
3. Sustainability	3. Tradition
4. Tradition	4. Charm
5. Charm	5. Cost
6. Uniqueness	6. Uniqueness
7. Cost	7. Accessibility
8. Community	8. Community
9. Equity	9. Efficiency
10. Efficiency	10. Equity

This survey allowed staff and the subcommittee to understand the priorities of Lawrence residents when faced with conflicting values.

The highest priority for both brick streets and brick sidewalks was “Safety”. This value was reflected in the policy through including clear and detailed installation standards which follow best practice and industry standards. The survey also indicated that Lawrence residence valued accessibility and sustainability when it came to brick sidewalks, and sustainability and tradition for brick streets. The stakeholder subcommittee used this feedback to guide the policy direction and make key decisions during the policy development process.

In addition to the above-mentioned public engagement opportunities, the following activities and public meetings, shown in Figure 2, were hosted by city staff as a means to provide the public ample opportunities to provide feedback.

Figure 2.

02/05/24	Multimodal Transportation Commission
02/15/24	Historic Resources Commission
03/25/24	Brick Streets + Sidewalks (BS+S) Subcommittee Meeting #1
04/04/24	Brick Streets + Sidewalks Open House And Values Discussion
04/04/24 – 04/19/24 Values Survey	
04/11/24	Tabled At Lawrence Public Library
04/17/24	Tabled At Lawrence Public Library
05/07/24	Brick Streets + Sidewalks (BS+S) Subcommittee Meeting #2
05/16/24	Brick Streets + Sidewalks (BS+S) Subcommittee Meeting #2.5
06/07/24	Brick Streets + Sidewalks (BS+S) Subcommittee Meeting #3
06/11/24 – 06/25/24 Open Public Comment Period	
06/20/24	Brick Streets + Sidewalks Open House
07/01/24	Study Session with Multimodal Transportation Commission
07/18/24	Historic Resources Commission
07/22/24	Brick Streets + Sidewalks (BS+S) Subcommittee Meeting #4
08/05/24	Multimodal Transportation Commission
08/15/24	Historic Resources Commission
09/17/24	City Commission

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

The policy includes a variety of standards for both brick streets and brick sidewalks. Within the policy there are design and construction standards, maintenance standards, and preservation

guidelines for both brick sidewalks and brick streets. The policy utilizes section numbers to provide a clear format to indicate the topic throughout the document.

Section 1-5 of the policy includes information on the stated purpose, scope, context, and helpful definitions and general applicability.

Section 6 of the policy outlines the standards for brick sidewalks. To summarize, existing brick sidewalks are permitted so long as they meet PROWAG accessibility standards (PROWAG: Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines). PROWAG standards are federal guidelines, adopted in August of 2023, which outline accessibility standards for areas in the ROW to assure that users of all abilities feel comfortable and safe. Notably, there are no exceptions for historic properties or historic areas when it comes to accessibility. The Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy will work alongside the ADA Transition Plan to inspect, enforce, and reinstall or repair sidewalks not meeting these accessibility standards.

Installation standards for brick sidewalks are described in Section 6.3 and in the Detail and Specification sheet in Section 1900 of the MSO Design Standards and Specifications. These standards were developed through review of industry standards, comparable city codes, and interest from the subcommittee and staff work group to set sidewalk standards which were both safe and sustainable as these were among the top priorities of the community at large based on the community-wide values survey. The base material of AB-3, a crushed limestone aggregate, was the most economically feasible option – as well as having proven success in other city installed brick sidewalks in Lawrence. The subcommittee considered using a concrete base for brick sidewalks, but the greater impact on street tree roots and a lack of proven success using this higher cost alternative were both a deterrent for the subcommittee and staff work group. Additionally, the policy outlines a standard for “a uniform surface” varying no more than 1/8 inch when installed. This is a common standard found in other city codes for brick paver installation, as well as the recommendation from the Brick Industry Association on how best to install brick pavers on a sand setting bed. Installing brick sidewalks to 1/8” allows for a bit of inevitable settling throughout the lifetime of the brick sidewalk infrastructure, while still meeting the PROWAG maximum vertical separation standard of 1/4" for an accessible walkway.

The Brick Sidewalk Permissive Map indicates where new public brick sidewalks may be constructed, subject to meeting the conditions established by the policy. It also identifies which properties may utilize the cost-partnering model available through the ADA Transition Plan for brick sidewalks or concrete sidewalks. The ADA Transition Plan has outlined an intent to provide all property owners the option to “opt-in” to cost partnering for concrete sidewalks, if their existing sidewalk is not meeting PROWAG standards. However, those properties in the Permissive Area have the unique opportunity to choose which material they would prefer – brick or concrete. There are likely additional costs associated with choosing to have your sidewalk reconstructed in brick and some of those costs will be the responsibility of the property owner. The cost-partnering model available through the ADA Transition Plan exists outside of the Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy and is subject to change and availability per the city annually adopted budget.

The mapped boundary of the Brick Sidewalk Permissive Map changed throughout the policy development process based on feedback from the community. Initially the subcommittee proposed to utilize only local, state, and nationally designated historic districts and the areas encumbered by UC and Historic Overlay Zoning Districts. These areas are identified as being significant due to their historic nature and the boundaries of these areas was set either through a public re-zoning process or by designation of a local, state, or national historic preservation office. After publication of what this mapped area included, many community members felt concern that the permissive area didn't include many areas of town which had existing brick sidewalks and are also known for their historic character – like East Lawrence. The staff work group and

subcommittee reviewed the feedback received from the public and found that the platted boundary of the Original Townsite encumbered a large portion of the area of concern and felt that this addition utilized the same rationale for adopting existing boundaries of historically significant areas as the initial mapped area. Due to the economic impact the Brick Sidewalk Permissive Map may have on the ADA Transition Plans budget and allocation of limited historic resources, the subcommittee and staff felt it reasonable to limit the expansion of this area to only the Original Townsite Plat. There was discussion at the August 15 HRC meeting of expanding the boundary further and that feedback has been provided on the Memo provided to the City Commission on September 17, 2024.

Section 7 of the policy outlines the standards for brick streets. The brick streets in Lawrence were largely constructed over 100 years ago and many are reaching the end of their 100-year life cycle. This policy aims to assist the decision-making process for where to prioritize reconstruction and resurfacing for brick streets. To summarize, all exposed brick streets are proposed to be preserve through the use of two different preservation “statuses” which indicate how limited resources are to be utilized for maintenance. Streets with Primary Preservation Status shall remain exposed brick and all maintenance work, including utility repairs, will prioritize completing repairs with historic bricks. Streets with Secondary Preservation Status should remain brick; however, they may be maintained with city standard materials to prioritize brick streets with Primary Preservation Status.

This purpose of this primary vs secondary distinction was to assure the exposed brick streets with higher concentrations of residential driveways are prioritized first in situations where due to limited resources, difficult decisions may arise. These streets were chosen with the assistance of the staff workgroup and brick subcommittee and were based off the data gathered during the previous policy endeavor of 2014. Should the need arise to source additional brick pavers, then the policy identifies where they can be salvaged from streets without primary preservation status, including alleys and alley aprons.

Reconstruction, restoration, and maintenance of brick streets will be assessed and prioritized using the City’s Asset Management Policy. Exposed public brick streets and covered brick streets are shown on the Brick Street Existing Condition Map. Covered brick streets are to remain covered, until an Adopted Neighborhood Plan indicates there is community desire to reconstruct a local street in brick.

Throughout the policy development process, many community members advocated for “uncovering” asphalt streets to expose the brick below. Unfortunately, this process isn’t as simple as it sounds and includes a high up-front cost. Additionally, the covered brick streets in Lawrence are found in various conditions and frequently the time intensive process of removing the asphalt can further damage the brick pavers below. To accommodate this community call-to-action, the policy proposes a new process for the City which provides a path for neighborhoods to express which covered streets they have desire for restoration to exposed brick. The neighborhoods can review the Brick Street Existing Condition Map and choose which streets they’d like to express desire for restoration through an adopted neighborhood plan. Neighborhood Plans get incorporated into Plan 2040, then as funding becomes available, those streets may be included in future capital improvement projects. It should be noted however that not all streets are appropriate to be constructed in exposed brick, such as Arterial or Collector streets and Bikeways.

Section 7.7 of the policy outlines how accessories to brick streets, like driveways, curbs, crosswalks, and intersections will be installed and maintained.

RESOURCES

- [Brick Industry Association Technical Notes](#)
- [Topeka Kansas Brick Street, Alley, and Sidewalk Policy](#)
- [City of Lawrence Street Maintenance Program](#)
- [City of Lawrence Sidewalk Improvement Program](#)
- [City of Lawrence Historic Resources](#)
- [City of Lawrence ADA Transition Plan for the Public ROW](#)
- Kansas State Statute ([K.S.A. 12-1808](#)) governing responsibility for sidewalk maintenance
- Accessibility Guidelines for the Public Right-of-Way ([PROWAG](#))

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment has been received throughout the policy development process and during the Multimodal Transportation Commission and Historic Resources Commission meetings.

Community Values Survey Results and Feedback - [link](#)

Draft Policy Public Comment - [link](#)

CONCLUSION

The Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy was possible due to the culmination of years of community advocacy work and engineering standard review and considerations that came before it. The policy development process included 6-months of active community engagement and staff worktime, built off the foundation of successes and setbacks we as a community have learned from over the past 10+ years of work. This policy aims to balance a number of competing values and desires with the real-world fiscal implications associated with managing a historic asset.

The staff working group and steering committee collaborated on the Brick Streets and Sidewalks Policy and are confident this policy makes strides towards supporting a unique community where all people can live, work, learn, and play safely, sustainably, and in a place that feels like home.