

# News Tribune

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## City ponders 18-month moratorium on requiring sidewalks in some new developments

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As a result of the poor economy, the Jefferson City Council is looking to ease the requirements of constructing sidewalks to in-fill (non-residential) developments.

The city's current sidewalks ordinance has three stages to address the construction of new sidewalks: major subdivisions, minor subdivisions and renovations.

Both subdivision categories must have sidewalks, although the City Council may grant a waiver. In the event of a minor subdivision waiver by the director of community relations, an impact fee must be paid equivalent to the cost of the sidewalk. Its fee will then be used to build a sidewalk at another location.

Renovations of a new building or an expansion of an existing building require the construction of sidewalks. However, the director may waive the requirement and the impact fee will need to be paid.

The proposed 18-month moratorium on requiring sidewalks for new in-fill developments was introduced at the Nov. 2 council meeting.

Sponsors of the bill say the rough economy makes it difficult for developers to comply with the current ordinance.

Rollins Automotive, 2004 Idlewood Court, is one business that wants to expand, but is holding back because of the current ordinance.

Owner Greg Rollins said he doesn't see the point in constructing sidewalks in an area where there are no existing sidewalks and would like a waiver.

Resident Michael Brownstein voiced his disapproval of the moratorium at the recent council meeting.

"There will be a long-term fiscal impact here when we will have to pay for sidewalks eventually," said Brownstein.

He cited three reasons he believes the bill to be the "dumbest idea" he had ever heard.

According to Brownstein, sidewalks are needed in areas where the city has grown and there is heavy foot traffic to accommodate those residents whose only means of transportation is walking. They also help combat obesity, he said.

Councilwoman Carrie Carroll co-sponsored the bill and thinks there is much more work that needs to go into the sidewalk discussions before a vote can be taken.

"This is a very complex issue and there is definitely room for improvement," Carroll said. "I am not happy with the current ordinance or the one we proposed, but we will find something that will work."

City staff is working on a sidewalk master plan that will help pinpoint some of the areas that are in dire need of construction.

A special meeting is at planned for the Nov. 9 meeting of the Public Works and Planning Committee to discuss the sidewalks issue. It will be held immediately after the 5:30 p.m. City Council Work Session meeting.