



April 10, 2024

RE: Asphalt vs Concrete Sidewalks & Complete Streets Policy/Guidelines

Dear Planning Board and Council:

We applaud Councillor Carrie Adams for introducing the topic of “asphalt vs. concrete sidewalks” during the April 2, 2024, Committee of the Whole meeting. Additionally, we were pleased to hear this issue will be jointly discussed when the Planning Committee meets to discuss a Complete Streets policy document.

Asphalt vs Concrete Sidewalks

We wish to share three points with the Committee on this topic.

First, the Parkview Senior Citizen Club¹ reported that members would rather use asphalt than concrete sidewalks since, with age, comes a decrease in mobility and an increased risk of falling—the flat and smooth pavement was felt to be safer and more predictable than the concrete sidewalk.

Second, we only have to look at our streets to see evidence of residents making the daily choice to use a walker or a mobility scooter directly on the asphalt of a street, not the available concrete sidewalk. This action, we believe, increases the potential for harm. Below are some collected images (we have many more):



Lastly, while we understand that asphalt does not have as long a lifespan as concrete, resulting in more maintenance costs, we hope we have highlighted the human and accessibility issues of the asphalt vs concrete debate.

¹ at a November 13, 2023, meeting.

Complete Streets

This is great news! We're so happy to hear that the City of Summerside is working on a Complete Streets policy document. We remind the city that we are more than willing to collaborate and be involved in the draft development of these guidelines if asked.

In the meantime, here are four key Complete Street ideas to consider:

1. Reconsider the city's removal of community benches during winter months. For seniors with health concerns who rely on walking as their primary form of exercise, this practice can negatively impact their ability to maintain their fitness levels. These benches offer a valuable opportunity for seniors to rest and then continue walking when they are able.
2. The installation of Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) at signalized intersections. LPIs give priority to pedestrians crossing at intersections 3-7 seconds before vehicles are given a green indication. This small (cost-effective) change can make a significant impact on safety, according to the Canadian Association of Road Safety Professionals². With 12 signalized intersections in the city, we could set a target of 3 per year and, in four years, have all intersections operating with LPIs.
3. Installing more Rectangle Rapid Flashing Beacons in high-risk areas. We have identified some.
4. Increasing the crossing time at the signalized crosswalks as it can take people with disabilities and seniors longer to cross the road.

We are pleased by the City of Summerside's progressive outlook toward Complete Streets and look forward to following the development as it nears completion.

Respectfully,

Ken Trenholm
President
SAFE Summerside Alliance Ltd.

² <https://tinyurl.com/LPIsAtWork> and <https://tinyurl.com/LPIsStudy>