

Intersection Subcommittee Recommendations for Committee Approval to Recommend to the City

Intersections are where blocks end (on at least one side) and cross traffic enters/leaves. Legally, they encompass the full width of the public right of way. In Sandpoint, sidewalks are on public property, at the outer edge of the right of way.

Until very recently, the emphasis among traffic/transportation engineers was to move motor vehicles through the intersection as quickly as possible. Only relatively recently have the needs for all modes started to be recognized as important in basic planning.

The speed of motorized traffic is largely determined by the drivers' calculation of what is safe and doable. If sight distances are long, roadways and lanes are wide, traffic will move faster. If corners are set back (meaning the curb radii are wide) turns will be quick.

Curb radius: in Sandpoint, it always used to be 12 ft. We recommend a return to the 12 ft. curb radius. The advantages are: turning speeds are lower, pedestrians are more visible and have less distance to travel in traffic lanes, and curb ramps can easily point in the direction of travel. Slower speeds improve safety for all.

AASHTO (American Assn of State Highway Traffic Officials) calls for wider radii on collectors in neighborhoods. They are assuming large trucks will be using those collectors in bigger cities. Our design vehicle for Sandpoint neighborhoods should be a FedEx van or very small delivery truck. Larger vehicles can negotiate a 12' radius curb if parked vehicles are not close by.

The Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) endorses tighter urban curb radii on urban streets. (cite report)

The Committee recommends that neighborhood streets, collectors and arterials in neighborhoods all have 12' curb radii.

Curb ramps: The Access Board as just published PROWAG (Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines) and it has been approved by USDOT.

PROWAG calls for curb ramps in both directions at intersections as the strongly preferred option. Those ramps are required on any new sidewalk or pathway or when improvements are made to the traffic lanes. Where pedestrian travel is prohibited (and thus curb ramps are not provided) a physical barrier must prevent all pedestrians from crossing.

The city installed new sidewalks on the north side of Pine from Boyer to Division, with almost no curb ramps provided to cross Pine Street. That means a blind person can get lost trying to cross Pine Street and someone in a wheelchair or pushing a stroller has to go into the cross street, turn and wait in the street for a gap in traffic to cross Pine.

The Committee recommends that all new or improved sidewalks be constructed with curb ramps at all corners. Those ramps should be pairs pointing in the two directions of pedestrian travel (straight and crossing).

Motion: I move that SPBAC

- 1. recommends that neighborhood streets, collectors and arterials in neighborhoods all have 12' curb radii.**
- 2. recommends that all new or improved sidewalks be constructed with curb ramps at all corners. Those ramps should be pairs pointing in the two directions of pedestrian travel (straight and crossing).**