

## Engineering Division of the Public Works Department

To: Mayor Stocks and Plan Commission Members  
From: Andrew Beyer, P.E.  
Date: June 5, 2025  
Subject: Sidewalk Construction in Edge Field Subdivision

### Background

The applicant, Loos Homes, is requesting Plan Commission consideration to allow sidewalk on only one side of all streets within the proposed Edge Field Subdivision, a new residential development. City standards and past implementation of the sidewalk ordinance have required sidewalks on both sides of local streets in recent developments to promote pedestrian connectivity and accommodate future growth.

#### Code Reference – City of Watertown Code § 545-37(B):

*“The subdivider shall be required to install sidewalks on both sides of all major streets and arterial streets and those local streets where access needs to be obtained to and from uses such as but not limited to business establishments, schools, churches, neighborhood parks, shopping districts, restaurants, and high-density multifamily residential developments. Cul-de-sac streets need not have sidewalks except where access is necessary to and from uses such as but not limited to business establishments, schools, churches, neighborhood parks, shopping districts, restaurants, and high-density multifamily residential developments. C. Construction standards.”*

The applicant has stated that because the subdivision is composed entirely of local streets and is not in proximity to the listed land uses, sidewalk on one side is sufficient. Hepp Heights was referenced as precedent for this approach.

Recent subdivisions, including Rock River Ridge Phase I, and the proposed Bielinski Homes Enclave, have followed the standard of sidewalks on both sides.

#### Staff Analysis and Recommendation

While § 545-37 provides some flexibility, staff recommends requiring sidewalks on both sides of all streets within the Edge Field subdivision. Staff interpretation of the intent of the ordinance is

not only to serve existing adjacent land uses, but also to ensure long-term pedestrian access and network connectivity as the City grows.

## Considerations

### 1. Planned Growth and Connectivity

- The Edge Field subdivision is not isolated; it is anticipated to be part of a broader future build-out.
- Providing sidewalk on both sides now is the most cost-effective and impartial way to plan for future public access, pedestrian connectivity, and safe routes to schools, parks, or other eventual land uses.
- Precedent for Future Development: Allowing sidewalk on only one side of the street in Edge Field could set a precedent for adjacent future residential developments to adopt the same standard, potentially undermining efforts to create a cohesive and connected pedestrian network across neighborhoods.

### 2. Pedestrian Safety

- Residents on both sides of the street should have equal and safe access to walkways.
- One-sided sidewalks force pedestrians to cross streets unnecessarily, often mid-block, increasing safety risk.

### 3. Consistency with City Planning and Form

- As previously stated, recent subdivisions, including Rock River Ridge Phase I, and the proposed Bielinski Homes Enclave, have followed the standard of sidewalks on both sides.

### 4. Future Cost Avoidance

- Constructing sidewalk on both sides during initial development is significantly less costly than retrofitting later as individual lots develop. Additionally, the cost of sidewalk is generally borne by lot owners at time of home construction

## Budget Goal

1. Proactively maintains and improves our parks and infrastructure to ensure safety, quality, and equity
2. Maintains a safe and healthy community, with an eye toward future needs and trends

## Financial Impact

When required, sidewalk is generally required at time of home construction at which point it is most cost effective. Sidewalk is often poured concurrently with concrete driveways. Retrofitting a subdivision with sidewalk at a later date is often difficult and less cost effective than sidewalk construction during individual home construction.

## Recommendation

Approve the Edge Field Subdivision with the condition that sidewalks be installed on both sides of all proposed local streets, consistent with past implementation of the City's sidewalk ordinance.

## Next Steps

Language reflecting the Plan Commission's decision regarding sidewalk installation in the Edge Field Subdivision will be incorporated into the Development Agreement to provide clarity.