

Daniel La Spata

ALDERMAN, 1ST WARD
1958 N. MILWAUKEE AVE.
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60647
PHONE: 872-206-2685
E-MAIL: info@the1stward.com



CITY OF CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL



CITY HALL
3RD FLOOR - ROOM 300
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

Chair, Committee on Pedestrian and
Traffic Safety

Vice Chair, Committee on Contracting
Oversight and Equity

Ex-Officio, Chicago Plan Commission

Committees

Budget and Government Operations

Committees and Rules

Economic, Capital and Technology
Development

Environmental Protection and Energy

Finance

Housing and Real Estate

Zoning, Landmarks and Building
Standards

MONTHLY REPORT – JULY 2025 **COMMITTEE ON PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Pursuant to the Rule 45 of City of Chicago Rules and Order, the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety submits the following monthly report for July 2025.

Date, Time, & Location of Meeting:

On Tuesday, July 8th, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety held a meeting at City Hall, Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 10:12 a.m.

Members in Attendance:

Chairman La Spata (1st Ward)
Alderman Hopkins (2nd Ward)
Alderman Robinson (4th Ward)
Alderman Chico (10th Ward)
Alderman Quinn (13th Ward)
Alderman Moore (17th Ward)
Alderman Burnett (27th Ward)
Alderman Knudsen (43rd Ward)
Alderman Lawson (44th Ward)
Alderman Martin (47th Ward)
Alderman Manaa-Hoppenworth (48th Ward)

Absent Members: Alderman Yancy (5th Ward), Alderman Curtis (18th Ward), Alderman Ervin (28th Ward), Vice Chairman Cruz (30th Ward)

Non-Members in Attendance: Alderman Vasquez (40th Ward),

Public Comment: There was one spoken public comment for this meeting.

- **Mr. Blakemore:** Expressed frustration with the lack of public turnout to meetings and the tardiness of alders, as well as the absenteeism of alders; Upset that alders were talking to each other during the public comment period

Approval of June 2025 Rule 45 Report:

Ald. Chico moved to approve, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Agenda of Matters Considered:

The Agenda of Matters Considered consisted of 10 pages and included 190 matters:

- 168 ordinances related to disabled parking permits,
- 9 ordinances related to traffic warning signs and/or signals,
- 6 ordinances related to parking restrictions,
- 6 ordinances related to residential parking permit zones,
- 1 ordinance related to a municipal code amendment.

Direct Introductions on page 1 Passed without Department recommendations. Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth moved to approve all Direct Introduction ordinances, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 2-5 Passed as Recommended by the appropriate Department(s). Ald. Moore moved to approve all items on pages 5-7, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All matters on pages 6-10 Passed with No Recommendation. These items were submitted as aldermanic overrides or received no recommendations from City Departments. A Substitute Ordinance was submitted by the respective ward office for Item 8 on page 10 [SO2025-0016447]. Ald. Moore moved to accept the Substitute Ordinance, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum. Ald. Manaa-Hoppenworth moved to approve all items on pages 6-10, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

All actions taken at the meeting were by viva voce vote.

Having no further business before the committee, Chair La Spata requested a motion to adjourn. Ald. Hopkins so moved, and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Date, Time, & Location of Meeting:

On Monday, July 21st, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety held a meeting at City Hall, Room 201A. The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m.

Members in Attendance:

Chairman La Spata (1st Ward)
Alderman Hopkins (2nd Ward)
Alderman Robinson (4th Ward) – virtual
Alderman Yancy (5th Ward)
Alderman Chico (10th Ward)
Alderman Quinn (13th Ward)
Alderman Moore (17th Ward)
Alderman Curtis (18th Ward)

Alderman Ervin (28th Ward)
Alderman Martin (47th Ward)
Alderman Manaa-Hoppenworth (48th Ward)

Absent Members: Alderman Burnett (27th Ward), Vice Chair Cruz (30th Ward), Alderman Knudsen (43rd Ward), Alderman Lawson (44th Ward)

The Chair accepted a motion from Ald. Ervin to allow for remote participation by Ald. Robinson, which was approved by the same roll call as was used to establish quorum.

Public Comment: There were five spoken comments for this meeting and eight written comments (pg 6-9).

- **W. Robert S.:** Representing the Active Transportation Alliance and Transportation Equity Network; appreciative of the Committee's hearings on how people are getting around Chicago and named locations around Chicago that are dangerous for pedestrians and need more investments in sidewalks with a holistic approach to safety
- **Kyle L.:** Executive Director of Better Streets Chicago; stated that Chicago has a lot of work to do to make sidewalks accessible to all; said the current way of addressing repairs is inequity and inefficient, mentioning the OIG report on inequities around 311; urged looking at different methods for that like a grid-based approach to increase access for all
- **Mr. Blakemore:** Talked about the importance of Black residents being civically engaged and attending meetings; said he doesn't see Black people walking around, using sidewalks much
- **Austin B.:** Shared about his neighbors who use wheelchairs who couldn't leave their block because of the sidewalk conditions, which took a new story to be resolved by the City; stated the need for proactive repairs and dedicated funding for sidewalks by CDOT; stated that Chicago could fall out of compliance with the ADA, citing the example of the court mandate related to accessible pedestrian signals
- **Hugo C.:** representing the Metropolitan Planning Council; urged the City to prioritize sidewalk investments; named the lawsuits related to sidewalk conditions that have been settled as one result of not investing in sidewalks; urged for the adoption of a proactive approach and named concern around the lack of an ADA transition plan in Chicago as well

Agenda of Matters Considered:

The Agenda of Matters Considered consisted of one page and one matter: R2025-0016034 calling for a hearing on the City's process for sidewalk repairs. No votes were taken on the topic.

Ald. La Spata, the sponsor of the resolution, opened the subject matter hearing by grounding the need for discussion on this topic in the universal use of sidewalks and the need for accessible sidewalks to ensure everyone in the city is able to get around.

The hearing included presentations from the following groups and individuals:

Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT): Craig Turner, *Action Commissioner*

Chicago Metropolitan Agency For Planning (CMAP): Victoria Barrett, *Senior Transportation Planner* and Jules Voigt, *Planner*

Access Living: Laura Saltzman, *Senior Policy Analyst* and *Chair of Chicago Transit Authority ADA Committee*

Project Sidewalk: Yochai Eisenberg, *Associate Professor at University of Illinois Chicago*

Key points shared during the presentation include:

CDOT:

- CDOT oversees 7,400 miles of sidewalk.
- CDOT's sidewalk investment strategy has three components: capital project integration, targeted investment (via the shared cost program), and consumer-driven investment (via 311).
- From 2020-2024, \$170 million was invested directly in sidewalks, amounting to over 15,000 work orders. This total does not include capital projects that included sidewalk investments.
- In 2024, 30% of aldermanic menu projects were related to sidewalks.

CMAP:

- Chicago has over 680,000 people with disabilities and over 165,000 people with mobility difficulties. Approximately 301,000 households in Chicago do not have a vehicle.
- Pedestrian wheelchair users' risk of death is about 36% higher than non-wheelchair users.
- The benefits of a proactive approach to sidewalks are a more comprehensive view of the sidewalk network, informed prioritization of projects, coordinated project delivery, enhanced legal protection, and improved safety and mobility for all.
- Sidewalk investments have the curb cut effect, in that while they might occur with certain populations in mind, they actually benefit a much wider scope and range of people.

Access Living:

- There are complaints about sidewalks from literally every ward in the city, even downtown where people assume and expect there are the best sidewalk conditions.
- In order to be accessible, the *full path of travel* on a sidewalk must be accessible to use. Accessible sidewalks are needed everywhere because disabled people need to be able to go everywhere.
- The City has had to pay \$50 million previously for falling out of compliance with the ADA, and it could fall out of compliance again.
- A new way to address sidewalk conditions and to drive investments in sidewalks is urgently needed to resolve existing issues and prevent future problems.

Project Sidewalk:

- Chicago exists as a patchwork of accessibility, in the sense that there are not many fully accessible corridors in the city. Sidewalks are not currently treated as an asset or being invested in through looking at people's path of travel.
- The lack of data around and on sidewalk accessibility makes it hard to understand the extent of the actual issue.
- About 546 miles in Chicago have been audited through Project Sidewalk (13.5% of Chicago) by 352 different users with an overall accuracy rate of 91%
 - o Of the 28,902 curb ramps audited, 23.4% had accessibility barriers.
 - o There were 6,118 surface problems for sidewalks, 15% of which were considered severe.
 - o Of the surface problems, there were 2,742 instances of obstacles, like poles blocking or in the middle of a sidewalk.
- Comparing the 40th Ward sidewalk audit using Project Sidewalk to the 311 data shared with the ward, it is clear that some of the most severe sidewalk issues were not being reported to 311.

Alders Martin, Manaa-Hoppenworth, Curtis, Yancy, and La Spata shared comments and asked questions following the presentation. Questions were about the use of Project Sidewalk in the city, the sidewalk survey review process and staffing in CDOT, the backlog related to sidewalk investments, CDOT spending on sidewalk repairs and replacements annually, alder roles in prioritizing ADA compliance, and discrepancies in stated need and capacity at CDOT. Chair La Spata closed the discussion by uplifting the need for an ADA transition plan for the City of Chicago and the need to better prioritize accessibility in the city.

Having no further business before the committee, Chair La Spata requested a motion to adjourn. Ald. Yancy so moved, and hearing no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Written Public Comment:

Melissa K., submitted July 21, 2025:

I've been reaching out to my Alderman's office for the past six years and have submitted multiple 311 requests regarding the dangerous condition of the sidewalk in front of my home. Unfortunately, my concerns have been repeatedly ignored, or marked as "completed" despite no repairs ever being made. The sidewalk is visibly sinking, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to drive over it to access our garage. As taxpayers, this level of neglect is completely unacceptable. More importantly, it poses a growing safety risk— not only to my family, but also to the children and caregivers from the nearby daycare who walk across this hazardous area daily on their way to the park. This is no longer just an inconvenience—it is a serious liability for the City. I'm asking that this issue be properly addressed and repaired immediately before someone is seriously injured.

Vikram S., submitted July 21, 2025:

I recently led a student research project with UChicago's Paul Douglas Institute that focused on pedestrian accessibility in Hyde Park, Washington Park, and Woodlawn. We observed significant disparities in sidewalk quality between our target neighborhoods, pointing to the flawed nature of complaint-based sidewalk repair processes. I strongly believe that a more centralized and proactive repair process would be a significant step towards a more accessible and equitable city. Thank you for your time, and our full paper is attached for your reference.

Cherlnell L., submitted July 21, 2025:

To Daniel LaSpata, The Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety, Mayor Brandon, and the entire Chicago City Council.

My name is Cherlnell Lane. I want to give you some reasons we the residents of Chicago need for better sidewalk accessibility especially installation and repairs.

This imagine your daughter uses a wheelchair. Much like mine. She wants to go shopping, buy some clothing, she wants to grab some things from the dollar store, she wants to grab some groceries, and she has got to stop by Harold's on 87th and the Dan Ryan.

She can't make it across the street after finished in the clothing store because, there's no space for wheelchairs to cross the street by the store. Once she to the other side there no way to get to where the stores are on the other side without rolling through the parking lot. There are a lot of holes and cracks in the parking lot so she can't drive straight where she needs to go. So, she is riding around the far away to the dollar store on 87th Street at night. Then she wants to go get some food. It's the best Harold's in the city. She can't get on to the sidewalk because all of the tactiles have been removed, not broken. Literally, it was there and someone has pulled the textile up and out from the ground. There's a pretty big hole right where the tactile used to be. So now your daughter has to go all the way into 87th street stopping cars to drive as fast as she can to jump over the hole to get on to the sidewalk. Mind you she checked all four corners of the sidewalk and all of them this tactiles were removed. How comfortable are you all with your daughter having to go through such measures just to get food? Just to have a stress relieving day shopping.

Let's say your grandmother was walking with a cane down 54th and Michigan she's having a nice little stroll. She has stumbled sometimes on the different cracks in the sidewalk. She has had some close calls. Then she gets to a sidewalk that looks like the Grand canyon I might add. She's trying to figure out how is she going to get over this. She figures she's gone too far to turn around and go back and find another way to get to her location so she tries to climb over the sidewalk and she falls and breaks her hip. She says while looking at you

"The city is supposed to have this fixed. How is this happening? What are you all doing down there?" Are you going to say, "I know people need the sidewalks and tactile surfaces fixed. I know that there are many people with disabilities that have mobility aids, such as, canes, walkers, and wheelchairs as well as every other resident. But we don't have much money in the budget. So the money we have we are spending it on tourists. We use the

money by buying and putting up flowers, getting the bean cleaned, hanging decorations downtown and maybe some times the outer neighborhoods. I'm sorry."

What excuse is good enough to tell your children, nieces and nephews Grandma's not going to be able to walk anymore.

We have to do something to help the residents. I know you all are used to focusing on streets, cars, bus and bikes routes. I know you all are used to worrying about all of that. But remember most citizens walk and even if they ride the bus they have to walk to get there. They want to get on a train sometimes they have to walk to get there. Kids have to walk to school.

Just because you may have a car. Most of the people in Chicago don't have a car. Please, don't forget about those of us who have to use the sidewalks, crosswalks and a tactile surface. Please, take the time to really think about us.

I implore you all to look at the residents as people with back stories, instead of numbers and figures.

Thank you all for the time and opportunity.

Bridget M., submitted July 18, 2025:

The new neon green cross walk signs on Logan Boulevard from Talman to Richmond need to be analyzed for effectiveness and warrantedness. It is my position that they all need to be removed, as they were not present for the last 100 years and now, hastily added along with the speed camera. Actual data would show that the signs are excessive given the number of people including students, who cross the Boulevard. Data I have collected show the number of people crossing does not warrant the number of signs added. New data by the city needs to be gathered. It seems the data used to install the speed light and signs was based on mis-information about the number of students crossing the boulevard. Literally, so few people-children, families, etc cross even at 8am on a typical day (a street light was added on Rockwell, people can cross at California or Rockwell, or simply wait for cars to pass). The white lines at the cross walks would receive fresh paint to solve the issue. Children who attend Brentano live north of the Boulevard and do not cross, children who live south of the Boulevard attend Goethe and do not cross either... The signs indicate a quick decision, and now a mess to deal with. The boulevard is historic. That fact was not considered at any regard to adding the signs. The Boulevard being historic warrants re-examination of the signs. This issue is important enough to stay on. Please let me know your response. Thank you.

Metropolitan Planning Council, submitted July 18, 2025:

Members of the Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee:

The Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), a regional nonprofit dedicated to advancing equity in the built environment, urges the City of Chicago to prioritize development of new accessible sidewalk infrastructure that will improve the freedom and mobility of every Chicagoan and enhance the economic activity and vibrancy of our neighborhoods. The urgency of this issue is evidenced by multiple recent large legal settlements with residents that have tripped and fallen on broken sidewalks. We encourage the City to both change how it assesses sidewalk conditions and more rapidly fix broken sidewalks. There should be a proactive citywide program to complete an accessible sidewalk network versus the current reactive program, which is less efficient than it could be. Most fundamentally, we urge the City to consider sidewalks as essential public infrastructure similar to City streets—worthy of investment, maintenance and improvement.

We also urge the City to develop and publicly file an ADA Transition Plan as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. ADA Transition Plans provide an inventory of barriers and obstacles to mobility and help prioritize improvements across the city. Every trip begins and ends with walking, and by ensuring access for those who need it most, we improve mobility for all residents. Nearly every person in the Chicago region, or someone they care for, will experience a disability that affects their mobility at some point in life. Age, illness, injury, and other factors can all impact how people move through public spaces. In addition to the clear need for implementation, it

*is worth noting that Chicago has not yet released an ADA Transition plan despite the now-35 year standing federal ADA requirement that it do so. Through our report *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, MPC has advocated for regional transportation accessibility and improved mobility and documented the status of ADA Transition Plans in the region.*

We stand ready to work with this committee and relevant City departments to help advance this critical work of improving the process of sidewalk repair to make Chicago a universally accessible and more economically vibrant city.

*Sincerely,
Dan Lurie
President & CEO*

Carline M., submitted July 17, 2025:

Dear members of the committee,

My name is Carolina Macias, and I serve as the Senior Mobility Justice Research Organizer at the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization. As a resident and environmental justice advocate, I want to underscore how crucial sidewalk infrastructure is—not only for pedestrian safety, but for public health, equity, and climate resilience.

The City of Chicago oversees over 7,400 miles of sidewalks. Yet, communities on the city's south and west side, like Little Village, continue to experience disproportionate barriers to safe, well-maintained pedestrian infrastructure. In these neighborhoods, cracked and uneven sidewalks aren't just an inconvenience—they are mobility barriers for elders, people with disabilities, parents with strollers, and transit riders walking to bus and train stops. As of January 2025, over 2,200 residents had applied for the Shared Cost Sidewalk Program, one of the few existing pathways to sidewalk repair, but one that requires out-of-pocket payment. This model inherently favors more resourced communities. If you can't afford to split the cost, you're left waiting, sometimes for years. That is why I support this hearing's focus on equity in service delivery and the shift toward a more transparent, grid-based approach. But as we rethink how we repair sidewalks, we also have an opportunity and a responsibility to go beyond just filling cracks. We must build sidewalks that serve multiple community needs, especially in environmental justice communities already overburdened by urban flooding, the heat island effect, pollution, and disinvestment. A just sidewalk repair strategy must:

- Prioritize environmental justice communities, where neglected infrastructure compounds public health risks*
- Be fully subsidized in low-income and overburdened areas*
- Use public data to identify the greatest needs—not rely solely on 311 call volume*
- Include multilingual outreach, clear timelines, and transparency throughout the process*
- Recognize sidewalks not as extras, but as critical public health infrastructure*

Additionally, I urge the City to integrate green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) like permeable pavement, bioswales, and street trees into sidewalk repair. GSI can reduce flooding, improve air quality, cool overheated blocks, and beautify neighborhoods, while helping the City meet its climate and water goals. In environmental justice communities like Little Village, these upgrades are not luxuries. They are essential health and climate resilience interventions. Sidewalk repair shouldn't just fix what's broken—it should help build the healthy, resilient communities we all deserve. Thank you

Stephanie K., submitted July 16, 2025:

I'd like to advocate for investing in clean, level, unobstructed sidewalks across the city. I'm currently bearing a scraped knee from tripping over a massive cracked piece of sidewalk near La Salle and Illinois, and I watch people with mobility issues and strollers struggle to navigate rough and impeded sidewalks throughout my own neighborhood (Ukrainian Village). While we are on the subject, having city services to clear snow and ice from sidewalks in winter would make a huge difference in people's lives and is far overdue. Thanks!

Iris J., submitted July 9, 2025:

There needs to be a left arrow turn on corner of California and Diversey going north bound. The traffic is horrific on this corner at all times of the day but especially in early morning and afternoon rush. It is unsafe and could be made better by having arrows out into this corner.