





New street standards *Tribune 6 Feb 2004*
Pedways vs. roadways

As the city of Columbia strives to codify street standards in new subdivisions, a civilized war has broken out.

Partly cultural and partly economic, it's a battle of bikers and hikers vs. developers, with homeowners and the vast majority of other citizens standing by, bemused.

Promoters of new standards want narrower streets and additional pavement alongside for sidewalks and bikeways. The main controversy has to do with money. Developers contend the new standards will be more expensive, raising the cost of housing. Change mongers, led by pedway guru Chip Cooper and Ian Thomas, believe the new arrangement can be built at no more cost. Both sides have economic analyses supporting their position.

The big question involves more than money. Even if the new plan does cost a

basic standards have escalated. Most people, including buyers and their financiers, would not want to roll back the clock. Surely the additional cost of the new street plan won't dissuade homebuyers. It might even encourage them. Cost alone is not a persuasive argument.

However, does the new design make sense, regardless? Should we reduce accommodations for the beloved automobile in favor of biking and walking? Does the new plan really interfere with motor vehicle use?

Mayor Darwin Hindman and other proponents argue that if we don't make a basic change in our transportation philosophy, biking and walking will be ever more seriously hindered. As streets are made wider and smoother and more vehicles cruise here and there, often at higher speeds, the inevitable cycle will produce streets for cars only. Think

THE TRIBUNE'S VIEW *Feb 24, 2004*

Street standards
Let's go for a new approach

Mayor Darwin Hindman wants to "go for" new city street standards on the April council agenda, and, good golly, he has a growing army behind him.

Details are not yet fully in place, but the general principle is clear and likely to be implemented: Streets will be narrowed, and more space will be built for bikes and walking.

A substantial movement has arisen in Columbia for this sort of change stemming from strong community support for the MKT trail and other similar developments. Promoters have invented a rallying cry: They want to make Columbia "The City of Trails."

Hindman himself is our most powerful promoter of more and bigger sidewalks. He wants to increase the

The streets were less than 20 feet wide! Today the big debate is whether to reduce streets from 32 to 28 feet! Of course we can do this, and perhaps the specs should call for even narrower streets than that. As I look at older neighborhoods and observe the quality of life therein, I'm convinced streets could be 24 feet, leaving more space for alternative transportation. Going to 28 feet will be an improvement.

I've been suggesting a timorous move beginning with a single demonstration subdivision, but those wanting change explain that a comprehensive bike network is necessary so people can get around town. Even if basic standards are changed now, it will take years to develop. Going for the new standards instead of sticking a toe in the water is



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- 2001:** Initial meeting of interested parties
Unofficial "Street Design Standards Working Group"
Lobbying of City Council and Planning/Zoning Commission
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(same people, now with institutional mandate)
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- 2003:** Advisory Committee recommendations
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