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Who Should Pay to Fix the Sidewalk?

Denver has made sidewalk upkeep a public responsibility, becoming the largest US municipality to fund and maintain this critical but unsung pedestrian infrastructure.

Denver's Colorado Boulevard is a major artery and an important transit corridor; local leaders are considering expanding bus service by adding a Bus Rapid Transit line along its length. But getting to or from a stop often requires trudging along unpaved paths that run between patches of crumbling concrete and then standing in the dirt waiting for the next bus.

The reason: Like a lot of US cities, Denver has a dearth of decent sidewalks. According to an analysis last year, the city is missing 300 miles of pedestrian pathways; of the 2,300 miles that do exist, around 30% are too narrow and an unknown proportion are in disrepair, making them treacherous to negotiate.

Sidewalks are the unsung but essential infrastructure of millions of mundane daily journeys. But they tend to be chronically neglected — especially in neighborhoods whose residents rely on them most.

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Bloomberg CityLab

By David Zipper

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