

Victor Ashe: Sidewalks to be built in West Hills, other Knoxville locations

West Knoxville City Council member Andrew Roberto announced Tuesday, Aug. 21, that the long-sought sidewalk on Sheffield Drive in West Hills from Wesley Road to Portsmouth Road would be started in the current city fiscal year.

The sidewalk is 4,300 feet long and is estimated to cost \$860,000. Mayor Madeline Rogero in an email to City Council outlined six sidewalk projects, with one in each of the six council districts.

Residents' activism bears fruit

West Hills residents over the past years, led by Sandi Robinson, had staged early morning walks annually with over 80 people showing up each time before dawn. She hosted a reception for several council members in their campaigns. Their actions became a textbook case of residents working the system, officeholders and candidates. Despite setbacks and forward moves, it was a lengthy process that required an enthused and committee council member to make it happen. That was Roberto.

This effort began over five years ago, but it was only when Roberto was elected to City Council last November and took office that the project was taken seriously at city hall. Roberto is close to Rogero. He made it clear that this was a top priority in his district. With less than one year on City Council, Roberto has delivered to West Hills what they could not get the previous four-plus years.

Rogero could cut the ribbon

Rogero in her email said “it is generally a couple of years before a sidewalk is fully completed.” While this may be true on occasion, if it is pushed by the city leaders it could be accomplished before Rogero leaves office Dec. 19, 2019. She could cut the ribbon opening it. In this case, much of the right of way is already owned by the city, which cuts time and cost.

Victor Ashe, Shopper News columnist - Published 5:00 a.m. ET Aug. 22, 2018