The City of Portland's public sidewalk system is intended to provide for the safe and unobstructed movement of pedestrians throughout the city. Portland's Bureau of Transportation has Pedestrian Guidelines that specify sidewalk design widths. However, due to the fact that they were built at different times and under different circumstances, sidewalks throughout the city vary in character and width.

In 2010, the Portland City Council adopted Ordinance 183754 to ensure unimpeded movement for pedestrians in the central city area defined by the ordinance (see map). The ordinance prohibits immobile activities such as sitting or lying in a "Pedestrian Use Zone." Under Ordinance 183754, the Portland Bureau of Transportation is responsible for marking the sidewalks in high conflict areas to clarify the designated zones for the benefit of all sidewalk users.

The Bureau of Transportation will mark the Pedestrian Use Zone in high use areas or areas with irregular zone boundaries. Round brass markers installed in the sidewalk approximately every 50 feet will clarify the Pedestrian Use Zone for all users at these locations.

In addition to the high-use areas defined by brass markers, the Bureau of Transportation may expand the Pedestrian Use Zone to encompass an entire sidewalk where there is a heightened threat to the life or safety of non-pedestrian sidewalk users. On sidewalks that do not meet standard design widths or where there is no buffer from vehicle travel lanes (i.e. "curb tight" sidewalks without parking), the Pedestrian Use Zone shall encompass the entire sidewalk. A sign indicating the Pedestrian Use Zone expansion will be installed on the sidewalk approximately every 100 feet.