

Govt should protect pedestrians

EDITOR: Kampala's streets are sending a clear message: they were not designed for the people who use them most.

Every day, thousands of pedestrians navigate narrow, broken, or completely absent pavements across the city. From bustling downtown corridors to growing suburban roads, walking in Kampala often means competing directly with vehicles, boda bodas, and roadside vendors for space. The result is not just inconvenience—it is danger.

Expanding and improving pavements is no longer a luxury urban upgrade; it is a public safety necessity. Pedestrians make up a significant portion of road users in Kampala, yet they remain among the least protected. When sidewalks are too narrow, obstructed, or non-existent, people are forced onto the road, increasing the risk of accidents. Children walking to school, workers commuting on foot, and elderly residents are especially vulnerable.

Wider, well-designed pavements would immediately improve safety by creating a clear separation between vehicles and pedestrians. But the benefits go beyond that. Proper pedestrian infrastructure enhances mobility for everyone, including people with disabilities, parents with strollers, and street vendors who rely on foot traffic. It also supports local businesses, as walkable streets encourage more people to stop, shop, and engage with their surroundings.

Urban planning decisions reflect priorities. When roads are expanded primarily for cars without equal consideration for pedestrians, it sends a message about whose safety matters. Kampala has an opportunity to correct this imbalance. Road upgrades and new developments should include mandatory provisions for wide, continuous, and unobstructed pavements. Enforcement is equally important — sidewalks should not be treated as parking spaces or extensions of commercial stalls.

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The writer is a concerned citizen