



Staff Report

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Date: 10/23/2023
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TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Keith Stahley, City Manager
FROM: Brian D. Martin, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Update on the City’s Sidewalk Repair Program

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure.

SUMMARY:

To provide information to the City Council on the history and accomplishments of the City’s Sidewalk Repair Program, as well as provide an update on work completed in 2023 and work planned over the next six months. The current program began in 2007 and since that time has made significant progress in improving the condition of the community’s sidewalk system.

ISSUE:

Information

RECOMMENDATION:

Information

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Since November 2007, the Public Works Department has operated a funded, sustained program repairing and replacing sidewalks and pedestrian American with Disabilities Act (ADA) corner curb ramps.

Currently, the City has approximately 815 miles of sidewalks within its City limits that abut a total of

36,273 properties. Based on the provisions of Ordinance Bill No. 99-2007, 44 percent of those properties now have sidewalks that have been turned over to the property owners for on-going maintenance, unless the damage is caused by a City street tree. The City is currently responsible for bringing 54 percent of the property frontage sidewalks up to acceptable standards before turning them over to the property owners for on-going maintenance, again, unless damage is caused by a City street tree. Government agencies are responsible for the remaining 2 percent of the property frontage sidewalks.

The Public Works Department operates three concrete repair teams that focus on sidewalk and pedestrian corner curb ramp repair:

- Sidewalk Rehabilitation Team focuses on large-scale, planned sidewalk repair projects that prioritize critical pedestrian routes to transit, parks, schools, and areas of public accommodation.
- Sidewalk Response Team responds to critical, spot repair locations of customer concern. The Team makes repairs in each of the 17 neighborhood associations, cycling through all the associations in about two to three years.
- Patch and Grind Team performs minor temporary repairs as staff and resources are available.

Over the past five fiscal years (FY2018-19 through FY2022-23) the Sidewalk Repair Program has brought 263,711 square feet of sidewalk up to acceptable standards, equivalent to 10.5 miles of sidewalk. In addition, it has replaced 18,373 lineal feet (3.5 miles) of curb and replaced 396 pedestrian ADA corner curb-ramps.

Additional information on the Program is included in Attachment 1 - Sidewalk Repair Program. Work completed from January 2023 through September 2023 is included in Attachment 2 - Completed Sidewalk Repair Locations. Work scheduled to occur within the next six months are listed in Attachment 3 - Scheduled Sidewalk Repair Locations.

BACKGROUND:

Prior to 1989 property owners were largely responsible for the maintenance and repair of sidewalks abutting their properties. In 1989, responding to citizen complaints that a large percentage of sidewalk repairs were caused by City-owned street trees, City Council directed the Public Works Department to take responsibility for sidewalk repair. During the following eighteen years, limited resources restricted the amount of sidewalk repairs completed by City forces. In 2001, the City completed the Sidewalk Construction and Maintenance Plan (SCAMP) study that called for more resources be directed to the construction of missing sidewalks and repair of existing sidewalks. Subsequently, City Council adopted a Streetscape Utility Fee in 2002 that would have directed \$3 million annually toward sidewalk construction, sidewalk repair, street tree/right-of-way landscape maintenance, streetlight operations, and streetlight installation. The fee was repealed by voter referendum in 2003 before any funds were collected. A small increase in funding was made available from the City's General Fund through the Save Our Streets (SOS) Council Committee effort

in 2005.

In 2006, Council formed the Sidewalk Repair Task Force charged with developing a program that would improve the condition of existing sidewalks using a one-time funding amount of \$1 million. On October 1, 2007, City Council adopted Ordinance Bill No. 99-2007 that amended the *Salem Revised Code* (SRC) Chapter 78 Sidewalks, changing assignment of responsibility for sidewalk repair. Effective November 1, 2007, owners of property within the City limits (excluding Salem-Keizer School District) with property frontages having sidewalks built on or after September 1, 1992, became responsible for repairing or replacing damaged sidewalks unless the damage was caused by a City street tree. Property owners with frontage having sidewalks built prior to that date became responsible for repairing and replacing damaged sidewalks once the City made necessary repairs to bring the sidewalks up to acceptable standards or after the sidewalks were inspected and found to be in acceptable condition. Repairing damage caused by City street trees would continue to be the City's responsibility. Since 2007, Public Works staff continue to inspect, repair and replace damaged sidewalks and pedestrian corner curb ramps throughout the City.

Mark Becketl, AICP
Assistant Director - Operations

Attachments:

1. Sidewalk Repair Program, October 2023
2. Completed Sidewalk Repair Locations
3. Scheduled Sidewalk Repair Locations