

Sidewalk Repair Program – Special Assessment FAQ

Q: Why is the cost of repairing the public sidewalk assessed to the bordering property?

A: State law dictates that property owners are responsible for repair or replacement of unsafe or defective sidewalk in the public right-of-way adjacent to their property. Many property owners are not prepared to perform the necessary work themselves, so we perform the work and assesses the cost to the property owner. By issuing a bid for all the work in the city under one contract, we typically see economies of scale in price. The state law that outlines this is Wisconsin State Statutes s. 66.0907(3).

Q: How much will this cost?

A: The cost for Sidewalk Repair program varies by year, and the current year's prices are listed on the Sidewalk Program page of the city's website. We will mail a letter to you outlining the work planned and the estimated assessment cost if you are within the sidewalk program area *and* if there is repair or replacement work at your property.

If our inspectors have determined that the roots of a city tree have caused damage to the sidewalk, the assessment of those indicated squares will be reduced by 33%.

Q: Can I choose to hire my own contractor to perform the work you require?

A: Yes, you have the option of hiring your own qualified contractor to perform the required work. If you choose to do this, then you **must** notify the Engineering Division in writing or by e-mail no later than the date specified in the Sidewalk Repair notification letter. You can email these notifications to Paul Fassbender, Engineering Technician, at pfassbender@wauwatosa.net.

You need to sign an agreement form agreeing that you will complete the work by a designated date. We will then delete the work and the associated assessment from the sidewalk repair program. If we do not receive a notification by the date specified in the Sidewalk Repair notification letter, our contractor would perform the required work.

You or your contractor must also obtain a Street Occupancy Permit for Drive Approach, Sidewalk and Paving in City Right-of-Way at the Engineering Division prior to performing the work. We waive the permit fees for you if you are within the sidewalk program area and are repairing or replacing sidewalk that we have identified as defective.

Q: How do you determine the sidewalk sections that are my responsibility and the sections that are my neighbors?

A: If we need to replace a sidewalk near property boundaries, the assessment cost of the work is split between the two adjacent properties according to the property line location.

Q: When do I have to pay my assessment bill? Will this get added to my property taxes?

A: Our inspectors make final measurements of all work actually constructed at each property at the end of construction. Then we generate a Special Assessment invoice for each property and mail it to you in early spring of the year following year. This invoice offers the owner several payment options:

1. Pay the total amount due, without interest, by the beginning of May.
2. Pay the total amount due, without interest, by the beginning of November. However, if you choose this option and do not pay the full amount by November, we put the entire amount due plus interest on your property tax bill.
3. Pay the total amount due plus interest divided into five equal installments on your annual property tax bill, paying one installment per year, beginning with the year of the Special Assessment invoice. This payment plan is only available for an assessment of \$200 or more and we will automatically select this option if you do not select one of the first two options.

Please note that:

- An assessment total under \$200 must be paid using either Option 1 or Option 2.
- An assessment total over \$5,000 is eligible for a 10-Year Installment Payment Plan. Contact our Finance Department at 414-479-8960 for additional information.

Q: I still have questions. Who can help me?

A: For more information about the Sidewalk Repair Program, please contact:

- Paul Fassbender Engineering Technician
Phone: 414-479-8928
E-mail: pfassbender@wauwatosa.net
- Ryan Christensen - Civil Engineer
Phone: 414-479-3558
E-mail: rchristensen@wauwatosa.net