

2019 Downtown Paving and Sidewalk Improvement Project

Frequently Asked Questions (January 24, 2019)

1. How was it determined which sidewalk sections needed to be repaired or replaced?

In 2018, Saint Paul Public Works conducted an assessment of the condition of all sidewalks in downtown Saint Paul and identified locations where sidewalk area/panels are in need of removal and replacement.

2. Can property owners do their own sidewalk removal and replacement work?

Property owners can hire a licensed and bonded contractor to do their needed sidewalk replacement work. Property owners can obtain a list of licensed and bonded sidewalk contractors by contacting Saint Paul Public Works Sidewalk Division at 651-266-6120. Sidewalk contractors must obtain the required permits from Public Works to do the work. If property owners choose to use their own contractor, all sidewalk work is required to be completed by August 1, 2019.

3. What are some of the benefits of going with the city's sidewalk contractor?

Saint Paul Public Works is preparing to request competitive bids for the 2019 sidewalk work. There are several benefits for property owners to have the city contract for the sidewalk work versus contracting the work themselves, including:

- **Cost:** Saint Paul Public Works is contracting for a significant amount of sidewalk work to be done through a competitive bidding process. Given the quantity of work proposed, the city anticipates receiving competitive/lower bid prices.
- **Additional payment options:** By working with Saint Paul Public Works, property owners will receive a bill from the city for the sidewalk work performed, not the contractor. The property owner will then have an option to choose to pay it in full upon receipt of the bill, or have it certified to property taxes and pay for the sidewalk work over time.
- **Coordination:** Saint Paul Public Works will be able to coordinate construction activities with one contractor to help minimize both the extent and duration of construction disruption in Lowertown. Note: There will be disruption to vehicle traffic, parking, driveway access, and pedestrian access throughout sidewalk construction. Having one contractor will make it easier to manage construction activities and to notify property owners about the ongoing project and timing.
- **Consistency:** Having one contractor perform the sidewalk work ensures quality and consistency of sidewalk work throughout the project area. Saint Paul Public Works will inspect all sidewalk work to ensure standards and specifications are met.
- **Contractor management and payment:** Saint Paul Public Works will serve as the project manager for the sidewalk vendor and handle all costs and payments to the contractor.

4. What is the timing/schedule for the sidewalk removal and replacement work?

Sidewalk/concrete work in Lowertown is anticipated to begin as early as April 2019 and be completed by September 2019. The schedule is subject to change based on weather conditions.

5. Is sidewalk removal and replacement mandatory?

The City of Saint Paul is committed to improving pedestrian safety and mobility access in downtown and throughout Saint Paul. Making sure our sidewalks are free from defects and hazards is a key component to keeping our sidewalks safe for people of all mobility needs and connecting our greater community.

6. What should we do if we have areaways and vault locations that are in the sidewalk areas?

Saint Paul Public Works has identified where there are known areaways and vaults in Lowertown. Saint Paul Public Works welcomes the opportunity to meet with individual property owners to better understand the location, use, and condition of any areaway or vault. We will work with property owners to determine how to address individual areaways or vaults. It would be the city's preference to have areaways that are no longer in use filled-in. The cost for addressing areaways or vaults is the responsibility of the property owner(s).

7. Is the city running conduit in sidewalks for future use when they are replaced?

Saint Paul Public Works will repair or replace any conduit that is exposed and damaged as a result of sidewalk removal, but will not be installing new conduit in sidewalk areas. Putting conduits in sidewalk areas is problematic because it will inevitably get damaged if the sidewalk needs to be removed and replaced in the future.

8. Are there any stamped concrete finish options?

Saint Paul Public Works prefers not to provide stamped concrete options. It's been proven that stamped concrete does not hold up as well as non-stamped or smooth-surfaced concrete. We may allow some colored concrete to be installed around Mears Park, but generally we will be installing/replacing what is there today. Saint Paul Public Works will be eliminating any brick pavers from the sidewalk and boulevard areas. Brick pavers do not weather well and are very costly to maintain and replace.

9. Can property owners choose to have heated sidewalks installed?

Saint Paul Public Works does not intend to allow heated sidewalks in the public right-of-way. There is not sufficient time to accommodate heated sidewalks with this project. Heated sidewalks are very time consuming and expensive to install. Ongoing operations and maintenance costs of heated sidewalks are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner(s). If a property owner is interested in heated sidewalks, please contact the Saint Paul Public Works Sidewalk Division at 651-266-6120 as soon as possible to discuss further.

10. Is the city coordinating with utility companies to have their facilities located and/or relocated if necessary to avoid having to mark-up new panels with paint? Does the city require locators to use an easily removable paint?

Saint Paul Public Works is coordinating project efforts with the Sewer Division and a variety of outside companies and agencies including Xcel Energy, District Energy, Saint Paul Regional Water Services, and various telecommunication companies to complete any additional work, including relocation of utility facilities prior to finishing all concrete and paving efforts. They have received maps with areas of proposed sidewalk work. Saint Paul Public Works requires locators to use marking paint that can be easily removed and/or that fades quickly.

11. What will happen if property owners had plans to do projects/work in the public right-of-way this year?

Given the large amount of planned construction work on the streets and sidewalks this year, Saint Paul Public Works strongly encourages property owners to complete any projects in the city's right-of-way before May 31. To expedite the 2019 Paving and Sidewalk Improvement Project, Saint Paul Public Works will be judicious in allowing right-of-way permits in Lowertown.

12. Will any of the sidewalk removal and replacement work require additional expense to meet watershed requirements?

The scope of this project is only to remove and replace existing sidewalk that has been identified. Watershed requirements will be determined as the project moves forward.

13. Who is responsible for damage to trees and other easement plantings?

As a contract condition, any damage caused to trees and plantings by the contractor during construction will be the responsibility of the contractor. Saint Paul Public Works inspectors will be on site to ensure any damage is identified.

14. Will dead trees be replaced as part of this project?

Saint Paul Public Works will work with the city forester to determine where trees may be impacted as a result of sidewalk removal and replacement. There is no budget for replacing trees as part of this project, but dead trees directly impacted by sidewalk work will be removed and the area prepared for future planting.

15. Will bus stop locations be moved during construction?

As with all construction projects, Saint Paul Public Works will work with Metro Transit to move or create temporary bus stop locations if needed during construction activities. Temporary locations are well signed to help riders know where to catch their bus. This information can also be provided to property owners to inform their tenants.

16. How are these improvements being funded?

The project is funded by both city funding and property assessments:

- Mill and overlay of streets (50% city - 50% adjacent property owners)
- ADA-compliant curb ramps at intersections (50% city - 50% adjacent property owners, included in mill and overlay costs)
- Pedestrian safety improvements at intersections (100% city)
- Sidewalk reconstruction throughout the project area (100% adjacent property owners)
- Areaways/vaults that need modification or fill-in (100% property owners)

17. How can property owners stay informed of project construction and schedules?

To stay up-to-date on this construction project or to review documents, maps, or materials, please visit the project website at stpaul.gov/downtownsidewalks. To sign up to receive periodic email updates, please email publicworksinfo@ci.stpaul.mn.us with your name, property address, and email.