

2020 Downtown Pavement & Sidewalk Improvement Project (Phase II)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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

Yes. Property owners can hire a licensed and bonded contractor to do their sidewalk work. Public Works has a list of licensed and bonded sidewalk contractors. The list can be obtained from the Public Works Sidewalk Division at 651-266-6120. Sidewalk contractors will have to obtain the required permits from Public Works to do the work. Property owners will be required to have all sidewalk work completed by August 1, 2020, if they choose to use their own contractor.

2. Why would it be better and easier for property owners to have the City contract to have the sidewalk work done?

In 2019, the Department of Public Works conducted a sidewalk condition assessment in the northern portion of downtown and identified locations where sidewalk area/panels need removal and replacement. Public Works is in the process of preparing the necessary contract documents to have the sidewalk work competitively bid. After bids are received, Public Works will recommend award of the sidewalk work to the lowest responsible bidder. The benefits for property owners to have the City contract for the sidewalk work versus doing it themselves include:

- 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. Contractors are likely to bid less per foot for a larger total volume of work.
- Public Works will be able to coordinate construction activities with one contractor to minimize both the extent and duration of construction disruption in the northern portion of downtown. *Note: There will be disruption to vehicle traffic, parking, ramp/driveway access and pedestrian movements throughout sidewalk construction. Having one contractor will make it easier to manage construction activities and to notify property owners of when and where work activities are scheduled to take place.*
- Sidewalk construction will be inspected by Public Works staff to ensure the quality of the work being performed and that specifications are being met.
- Having one contractor performing the sidewalk work will ensure quality and consistency of sidewalk work throughout the project area.
- Public Works will be responsible for making all payments to the contractor.
- Property owners will be sent a bill from the City for the sidewalk work performed and will have the option of paying it in full upon receipt of the bill or having it certified to their property taxes and paying for it over time.

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

Sidewalk/concrete work in the northern portion of downtown will take place throughout the 2020 construction season. Sidewalk work is anticipated to begin in April 2020 and be completed by

September 2020. As with any construction work, the schedule is subject to change based on weather conditions, but generally we are targeting April through September for sidewalk work.

4. Is sidewalk removal and replacement mandatory? Will any of the brick pavers in the sidewalks or street be replaced?

Yes. The City is committed to improving pedestrian safety and mobility access in downtown. Having sidewalks that are free from defects and hazards are key components to keeping pedestrians safe and allowing access for all regardless of mobility needs.

All existing brick pavers will be removed and replaced with ADA-compliant concrete sidewalks or asphalt streets.

5. How is Public Works going to address areaways and vault locations that are in the sidewalk areas?

Public Works has identified where the known areaways and vaults are located in the northern portion of downtown (at least those that have been documented in some way). Public Works welcomes the opportunity to meet with individual property owners to better understand the location, use, and condition of any areaway or vault. That review will determine the next steps to address individual areaways or vaults. The city's preference is to have areaways filled in that are no longer in use. The cost for addressing areaways or vaults will be the responsibility of the property owner(s).

6. Is the City running conduit in sidewalks when they are replaced? What if the adjacent property owner wants to run conduit in the sidewalks?

No. Public Works will repair or replace any conduit that is exposed and damaged due to sidewalk removal, but we will not be installing new conduit in sidewalk areas for future use. Putting conduits in sidewalk areas is problematic because it will inevitably be damaged in the future if the sidewalk needs to be removed and replaced.

If property owners/management companies believe that they will need or want additional fiber or connectivity in the next five years, we recommend they reach out to their service providers to review opportunities now while the street is open and sidewalk panels are being replaced.

7. Are there any stamped concrete finish options?

Public Works would prefer not to use stamped concrete. Research has shown that stamped concrete does not hold up as well as non-stamped or smooth-surfaced concrete.

8. Can property owners install heated sidewalks?

Heated sidewalks are very time consuming and expensive to install. All operations and maintenance costs of any heated sidewalk is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner(s). There may not be sufficient planning and construction time to accommodate a special provision for heated sidewalks. If a property owner is interested in having heated sidewalks, contact Public Works as soon as possible.

9. Will Public Works coordinate with utility companies to have their facilities located and/or relocated if needed to avoid having to mark up new panels with paint? Does the city require locators to use a removable paint?

Yes. Public Works has met with Xcel Energy, District Energy, Saint Paul Regional Water Services and various communication companies about this project. They have been provided a map showing the locations of proposed sidewalk work that may impact their facilities. Public Works will work with utility companies to ensure their facilities will be located and/or relocated if needed to avoid future markings with paint.

Yes. Public Works does require locators to use a marking paint that can be easily removed and one that fades/disappears quickly over time.

10. How will this project affect the interim design of the Capital City Bikeway on 9th and 10th Streets and either St. Peter or Wabasha?

Implementation of the interim design of the Capital City Bikeway is being coordinated with the 2020 and 2021 downtown pavement and sidewalk improvement projects. It is anticipated the bikeway on 9th and 10th Streets will be implemented in Fall 2020. The St. Peter or Wabasha Street portion of the Capital City Bikeway interim design is scheduled to be implemented in Fall 2021 with the downtown pavement and sidewalk improvements project.

11. Will the sidewalk removal and replacement work trigger additional expenses to meet watershed requirements?

No. The project scope is only reconstruction or replacement of the existing sidewalk. Because we will not be expanding or adding more sidewalks, the watershed requirements do not have to be considered.

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

Any tree damage caused by the contractor during construction will be the responsibility of the contractor to fix or replace. Public Works inspectors will be on site to ensure damage is noted and fixed.

13. Is Public Works coordinating with the City forester to have trees replaced as part of this project?

Yes. Public Works will work with the City forester to determine where trees may be removed as a result of sidewalk removal and replacement. At the design and direction of the City forester, new trees may be added within the project area where feasible. Ash trees in the project area will be removed and replaced where possible.

14. What are some other projects that are scheduled for Downtown Saint Paul in the coming years?

The areas on the project map highlighted in green and purple, generally south of 7th Street and west of Jackson Street, are scheduled to be done in 2021 as part of the third phase of the downtown pavement and sidewalk improvements project.

Robert Street, which is a state-owned road, will undergo a microsurfacing pavement improvement in 2020, and the Robert Street Bridge over the river will be closed for repairs for six weeks in July/August 2020.

Wabasha from Kellogg Boulevard to 6th Street is scheduled for full street reconstruction in 2021. Wabasha from 6th Street to 11th Street will be milled and overlaid in 2021.

Minnesota Street from Kellogg Boulevard to 11th Street is scheduled for a full street reconstruction beginning in 2023 and completed in Fall 2024.

15. What happens to existing bus stop locations during construction?

As with all construction projects, Public Works will work with Metro Transit to determine where temporary bus stop locations will be needed during construction. Metro Transit will notify riders and temporary locations will be signed.

16. How is the Downtown Pavement & Sidewalk Improvement Project (Phase II) being funded?

The estimated project budget (without sidewalk work) is \$3 million. All project work, except for the sidewalk repair and replacement work, is being funded 50% by the city's general fund and 50% by a special tax assessment to adjacent property owners. The final rate has not yet been determined.

Sidewalk work is 100% assessed to the adjacent property owners.

17. How can property owners stay informed of project work?

Public Works has established a project webpage at www.stpaul.gov/downtownsidewalks to provide regular project updates and maps. Public Works encourages property owners, businesses and tenants to visit the website and sign up to receive email project updates.

Updated 2/13/2020