



Frequently Asked Questions 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program

The Munster Town Council is aware of the Town's aging sidewalk and pedestrian access infrastructure and the need to continue to provide safe, effective, and accessible pedestrian travel ways. In most situations, sidewalks are paid for and installed by property owners – usually when a home or building is constructed. Per Section 46-101 of the Munster Municipal Code, owners of any dwelling, building, subdivided lot or property shall be responsible for the repair of the sidewalk in front or alongside the property of the owner. In an effort to offset some of the repair costs, the Munster Town Council has instituted the 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program (Ordinance 1821).

How does the program work?

Under the 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program, the Town pays half the cost of replacing the eligible sidewalk with the property owner paying the other 50 percent. The program covers all existing public sidewalk in the Town, including those in front of homes, businesses, religious institutions, and schools. **Participation in this program does not relieve the owner's responsibility to properly maintain the sidewalk.**

Which sidewalks are eligible?

Public sidewalk that is deteriorated or is deemed a trip hazard is eligible for the program. The Town assumes the total cost for replacement of areas of an intersection where the sidewalk extends to the street corner (i.e., curb ramps).

How do you determine which sidewalks get fixed?

There are two ways sidewalk repairs are added to the program:

1. Town-identified hazards: The Town has performed an inspection of all public sidewalks and has categorized sidewalk conditions on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the worst condition. Each year the Town will identify sidewalks to be replaced based on available budget, sidewalk condition rating, proximity to schools, parks, and other high-pedestrian traffic areas, and other risks/benefits.
2. Resident requests: Residents may request to participate in the program by filling out the form on the website or contacting Public Works at 219-836-6970 or 219-836-6971. Public Works staff will visit the site to determine the extent of the repair, appropriate repair method, and estimated cost. Requests must be received by May 1 to be considered for this construction season. Applications received after May 1 will be added to the list for the following year.

The work is added to the contractor's scope of work only upon full payment of the property owner's 50% match to the Clerk-Treasurer's Office by the deadline.

How will the sidewalk be repaired?

The repair method used, replacement or lifting, will depend on the cause and severity of the damage. Most repairs will be made by completely removing and replacing the damaged slabs. Often tree roots must be removed under the sidewalks to prevent problems from recurring. The Public Works Department Representative will determine the proper method of repair during a site inspection.

How much does it cost?

The Town has requested bid prices from contractors and expects to award a contract soon.

Using last year's costs, a standard 5' x 5' sidewalk square cost approximately \$200 to replace, of which half will be paid by the property owner. The estimated cost is \$225 in 2022 for one square of sidewalk and \$250 for a square of sidewalk across the driveway.

Lifting will be used in limited situations. The cost to lift one sidewalk square is \$110.

Please note: these costs are subject to change based on the bid prices received by the Town. Based on current construction pricing trends, we are expecting to see increases due to labor and material price increases.

What improvements are included?

1. Sidewalk lifting or replacement
2. Root cutting, if necessary
3. Repairs to irrigation systems damaged during construction
4. Yard restoration

What is not included?

1. Replacement of existing sidewalks that are not in violation (e.g., cosmetic reasons)
2. Repair of driveways or drive aprons
3. Repair of sidewalks on private property (including walks in the parkway)
4. Installation of new sidewalks for new home construction
5. Installation of new sidewalks at existing homes

Homeowners' responsibilities:

To help ensure the best outcome:

1. If you have in-ground sprinklers, please mark the location of the sprinkler heads adjacent to the sidewalks, if possible. This will help avoid damage to the irrigation system.
2. Please inspect your irrigation system after sidewalk removal. Notify the town as soon as possible if repairs are necessary.
3. During the construction, we ask that irrigation systems be turned off. Water from the sprinklers can damage newly poured concrete.
4. Restoration will include placement of topsoil and seed in disturbed grass areas. We ask that you water these areas to ensure proper establishment of the grass.

Who does the work and when?

The Town is currently soliciting bids from contractors for the 2022 Sidewalk Replacement Program.

The construction schedule is determined by the contractor. Work is anticipated occur in late summer. Residents will receive notification from the Town prior to the start of work.

I would like to make additional concrete repairs at my property. What do I do?

Additional concrete repairs (e.g., additional public sidewalk not eligible for the program, private walks, driveways, patios) may be negotiated directly with the Town's contractor. This work is not included in the 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program; the cost of these repairs will be the full responsibility of the property owner. Please contact the contractor directly for additional information.