

The City of Brunswick Sidewalk Improvement Program



The City of Brunswick Sidewalk Improvement Program Loan Funded

Introduction:

The City of Brunswick, Maryland shall implement a Sidewalk Repair Program pilot project. This pilot will allow a sensible and efficient approach to maintaining City sidewalks. By identifying areas needing improvement, prioritizing and tracking repairs, the City will be better able to provide for pedestrian safety and reduce property owner liability for trip and fall incidents. Well maintained sidewalks also improve the appearance of neighborhoods and increase property values.

By codified ordinance, property owners are completely responsible for maintaining the sidewalks adjacent to their property, which includes sidewalks that run along a public street. However, as part of this pilot program, the City of Brunswick is allocating funds to support a zero interest loan to help property owners repair sidewalk sections deemed hazardous, as well as provide for installation of new sidewalks in areas currently without. This program is available to developed properties located in the City of Brunswick. New construction in subdivisions where sidewalks are required are not eligible for funding.

This will be an annual program with funding as provided through the City budget. A maximum of \$5,000 can be allocated in any given year to a single property, although this requirement may be waived at the sole discretion of the City, if deemed in the public interest.

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To determine if a sidewalk qualifies for repair under the program, a sidewalk is rated on a scale 0 through 5 with 5 representing the most severe damage. As part of the program, sidewalk sections will be scored 0 through 5 and the individual projects ranked according to the average score per property or frontage. Sidewalk sections rated 5, 4 or 3 will qualify for repair as funds become available. Sidewalks rated 0, 1 or 2 will not qualify but the scoring will be included to determine rankings for funding.

New sidewalk installations will be scored on a scale of 1 through 5 based on categories of Neighborhood Coordination, Connectivity, and Proximity to Schools. The scoring will be used to rank projects for funding along with the repair requests. Property owners whose sidewalks are not selected for improvement due to lack of funding are encouraged to proceed with the project on their own or wait for additional funding (reimbursement will not be issued for work completed without prior approval). Driveway approaches and aprons are not eligible for funds. To determine what priority your sidewalk damage rates, please complete and submit a Sidewalk Improvement Program Application Form.

Participation:

Developed residential properties and businesses located in the City of Brunswick shall be eligible for participation in this program. A property owner should complete the following steps in order to gain consideration for matching funds:

- 1.) Submit a completed Sidewalk Improvement Program application along with an estimate from a licensed contractor, as well as the required zoning permit application.
- 2.) The City will rate and approve/disapprove the project. If approved, the City will waive the Sidewalk Permit Fee. The City will assign a deadline for project completion and final payment submission. If not approved, the project may be resubmitted based on future funding. The City may waive the Sidewalk Permit Fee for qualified projects that do not receive funding but that the Property owner proceeds with the project.
- 3.) Upon approval, work may commence. Once completed, submission of a final invoice of completed work must be submitted to the city. This invoice should show the completion of the project and the final project dollar amount. This invoice shall be from the licensed and approved contractor.
- 4.) The approved portion of the project shall be compensated. The approved amount will then be paid to the property owner in a timely manner. The loan will be paid back to the City in quarterly installments over a three to five year period, depending on the repayment cycle approved with the City's annual budget. The Property Owner is responsible for payment of the contractor. Qualified projects also pay no permit fees. A property owner may use this project annually if their projects are approved and future funding continues.

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Sidewalk Improvement Program FAQ:

- 1. Why did the City begin this program? Sidewalks are a very important means of travel for residents, especially children and senior citizens. The City began this program in order to accomplish four primary goals: 1) improve defective sidewalks and ensure that walkways remain safe for all residents, 2) provide a low-cost and convenient sidewalk repair option to Brunswick Property owners, 3) give residents the opportunity to add sidewalks to neighborhoods where they currently do not exist, and maintain property values throughout the City.**
- 2. I thought the City took care of sidewalks. Why do I have to pay for it? Sidewalks in Brunswick are the responsibility of the property owner. Cities throughout nation may handle sidewalk maintenance differently. The City does not maintain sidewalks adjacent to private property and/or along a public street. This allows the City to commit more of its limited funds to road and transportation expansion and maintenance.**
- 3. Is the City making money from this program? No. As a matter of fact this program is a way in which your tax dollars are used to improve our City's safety and increase property values. Repayments will ideally be placed back into the sidewalk repair fund for future work.**
- 4. What happens if I do not repair my sidewalk? Code enforcement may issue notices to those who have not participated in the program or have not completed their sidewalk repair independently. However, the goal of this project is not code enforcement, but to eliminate hazardous sidewalks and provide property owners a means to correct the hazard.**
- 5. Are residential apartments eligible for funding? Apartment complexes are eligible for funding for sidewalks that are located along public streets. Single family or single family homes that have been converted to "twin-singles" that are used as residential rental properties are also eligible for funding. However, in both cases priority will be given to owner-occupied residences.**
- 6. Can I use the money from this program to improve sidewalks that are located in my back yard, side yard, or which go to my front door? No, the intent of this program is to improve sidewalks located along public streets. Other sidewalks on a property that are not adjacent to a public street are the responsibility of the property owner.**
- 7. Who do I contact for more information? Please contact City Hall at 301-834-7500 ext. 1. Applications may be found at City Hall, 1 West Potomac Street, or the Annex Building at 601 E. Potomac Street.**

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Sidewalk Repair Examples:

Examples of some common sidewalk defects below that may be eligible for the City of Brunswick Sidewalk Improvement Program:

Step Separations

If a sidewalk panel has lifted or subsided, and it is 1/2" or more higher or lower than an adjacent panel

Grade Change

If two sidewalk panels have lifted into a peak or valley, and the peak/valley is 4" or more higher than the level of the sidewalk 4 feet away in either direction.

Opening in Sidewalk

If there is an opening in the sidewalk measuring 5/8" or greater or significant cracks greater than 1/4".

Spalling of Surface

If a chunk of the sidewalk has broken, and the result is a hole 1/2" or deeper

Sunken Sidewalk

If the sidewalk has subsided, and within a stretch of 8 feet of sidewalk, there is a place that is 3" or more that is lower than the rest of the sidewalk