



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

CITY OF SYRACUSE, MAYOR BEN WALSH

Jeremy Robinson
Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

City of Syracuse Sidewalk Condemnation FAQs

Why did the City of Syracuse condemn my sidewalk?

The City of Syracuse's condemnation of sidewalks is complaint driven, meaning if you or anyone else calls about the deteriorated condition of your sidewalk, an inspector will be dispatched to inspect it. He or she may also inspect other sidewalks in the area. Your sidewalk was condemned because the condition of the walk was found to be a hazard. Many times this is simply due to the age of the sidewalk or external factors, like severe snow and ice over an extended period of time or, on occasion, roots of trees. The condemnation is the City's process of notifying you that the sidewalk needs to be replaced.

When can a sidewalk be considered "condemned"?

A sidewalk is considered condemnable for a number of different reasons related to condition and safety. See the attached sheet, "Reasons for Sidewalk Condemnation" for more information.

What is my next step to get my sidewalk replaced?

You have a choice on how you replace your sidewalk. The following are your three options:

- 1) Hire a private contractor to perform the work; that contractor will be responsible for getting a permit to put in the new walk. They will need to fill out the sidewalk replacement application, located on the City's website <http://syrgov.net> under the "Documents and Forms" section. They will need to submit the application with a certificate of liability insurance which lists the City of Syracuse as additionally insured, proof of workers' compensation, and a drawing which shows sidewalk dimensions, whether a sidewalk runs through a driveway, and how they plan to block off the sidewalk while the work is being done.
- 2) Replace the sidewalk yourself. You will need to fill out the permit application and provide the City with a certificate of your homeowner's insurance along with the drawing of the work which shows sidewalk dimensions, whether a sidewalk runs through a driveway, and how you plan to block off the sidewalk while the work is being done.
- 3) Have the City do the sidewalk work and have the final cost added to your taxes. Please refer to the condemnation notice you received for instructions on how to proceed.

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If I do have the City perform the work, how does the payment system work?

After the work on your sidewalk is performed, you will receive a letter with the exact cost of the work. The Finance Department will then send a letter in April of the following year to remind you of the amount you owe. You are able at that point to pay back the total amount in a one-time payment by the end of May. If the amount is not paid in May, the total will be paid back in ten yearly installments on your taxes, beginning in July. The interest for the City's sidewalk program is 7%. You may pay your total balance off anytime with no penalties.

What are the requirements for new City sidewalks?

All sidewalks must be constructed at 5' wide. The City requires a two-pour process for contractors or homeowners constructing more than 325 square ft. of sidewalk. For a two-pour process the City standard depth of materials is 4" of concrete with a 1" topping material. When sidewalk runs through a driveway, the City standard depth of materials is 6" of concrete with a 1" topping material. The City recommends all sidewalks be constructed through a two-pour process. However, when a two-pour process is not being used, City standard is 5" of concrete or 7" of concrete when sidewalk runs through a driveway. All driveways are required to have sidewalk running through them. If the sidewalk does not currently run through the driveway, it must be put in when any new work is performed on the driveway or existing sidewalk.

What is the "topping" material?

The topping material is a mix of Portland cement, concrete sand, and water that increases the life expectancy of the sidewalk by making it more durable and better able to withstand the ice, snow, and salt that accompany Syracuse winters. This material is available at many local suppliers.

Does any condemnation require replacement of the whole walk or can sections be "saved"?

If any part of a sidewalk is condemned and the rest of the walk does not meet City standards, the whole walk must be replaced to City standards. Sections of sidewalks commonly referred to as "flags" will be saved where condition allows if the walk does already meet City standards.

What if tree roots caused the damage to my sidewalk?

You or your contractor should call Steve Harris in our Parks Department at (315) 473-4330. An inspector will be sent out to look at the tree and its roots and determine the best course of action to alleviate the issue before the new sidewalk goes in. The City will perform the necessary work on trees that are on City property. If you are having the City perform the work on your sidewalk, you do not need to contact anyone as the City will inspect the tree as part of the sidewalk replacement process.

Are there any options for financial assistance to pay for the sidewalk replacement?

We understand the financial burden that replacing a sidewalk can place on some of our residents. It is for this reason we offer the 10 year payment plan from the City as an option for our residents. However, there are other ways to finance the work, including loans from a financial institution. Other organizations, such as Home Headquarters, do offer loans for sidewalk work where funding allows. You can inquire on these opportunities to Home Headquarters at (315) 474-1939.