

MEMORANDUM



TO: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
THRU: BARBARA MCBETH, AICP, CITY PLANNER
FROM: LINDSAY BELL, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER
SUBJECT: SIDEWALK MAINTENANCE PROGRAMS
DATE: MARCH 6, 2024

Mayor and Council –

Please see the below summary of a recent webinar attended by staff regarding sidewalk maintenance programs here in Oakland County.

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A recent webinar in the *Planners Gathering* series offered by Oakland County was on the topic of Sidewalk System Maintenance. The presentation offered a chance to learn how two communities with extensive sidewalk networks approach the maintenance of those facilities. Royal Oak and Madison Heights have different approaches to arriving at the process they follow today and lessons that could be applied to the City of Novi.

Both Royal Oak and Madison Heights have divided their communities up into sectors (6 and 8, respectively), with each sector being the focus of maintenance for one year of their cycle. Royal Oak is in the middle of its second 6-year cycle (2021-2026). While the first cycle required an investment of approximately \$1.5 million each year, the second cycle averaged about \$500,000 each year. Both communities have found that while initial investment was high, the use of the cyclical program is resulting in less work being needed as they progress.

Royal Oak has billed the adjacent landowner for the cost of maintenance since their Right of Way Ordinance requires property owners to maintain sidewalks, with the rate determined annually based on the contractor's bid. Missing sidewalk gaps are also addressed in this program. Starting in the next 6-year cycle (beginning 2027), funding will come from a Road Millage rather than billing landowners. Royal Oak anticipates about \$1 million each year to go toward sidewalk maintenance, including a focus on ADA ramps and compliance.

Madison Heights established its first sidewalk maintenance program in 1987. The first phase was a 14-year program where work was done on an area-by-area basis, and primarily addressed extreme tripping hazards. The Phase 2 cycle began in 1990, and began to address more minor trip hazards, spalling and cracking, and filling gaps in the sidewalk network. Funding for these programs was by Special Assessment Districts billed to affected property owners, which could be paid either in a lump sum or over a 3-year period.

In 2014, the Madison Heights City Council approved a new People Powered Transportation Program (PPTP), which will continue the maintenance work and expand to include additional non-motorized facilities (including bike & ped signage, pavement markings for on-street bike routes, sidewalk ramps, and completion of sidewalk gaps). The new program will be on an 8-year cycle and eliminates the use of property-owner Special Assessment Districts for funding. The city now pays for the program through existing road and millage funds. Using a multi-year contract has also helped to reduce costs.

The full [Planners Gathering presentation](#) is available on YouTube (length about 1 hour). The video created by Madison Heights to spread the word about their [People Powered Transportation Program](#) is also available (8 minutes).

Please feel free to contact staff if you have any questions on this matter.