

Frequently Asked Questions: Sidewalk Repair and Reimbursement and Right-of-Way Permitting

July, 2015



PLEASE NOTE: ALL public sidewalk work requires an Application for Excavations in Public Right-of-Way Permit by the person/persons doing the work. Please see <http://www.cityofcr.com/sidewalkrepair>

The cost of the permit is \$50, and applications are usually approved in approximately 2 business days. Any reimbursement request is contingent upon proper permitting.

Q. Why is the City focusing on sidewalks?

A. In July 2014, the City Council formally adopted the Complete Streets Policy, Complete Streets Design Standards, and Sidewalk Master Plan. The adoption encourages the inclusion of safe and accessible walking environments – a *complete* approach to infrastructure. Sidewalk maintenance and growth will continue to play a key role as we work to support walkable and connected neighborhoods.

Q. How are sidewalks reviewed?

A. In 2014, we began reviewing all City sidewalks on a 4-year rotating cycle. We also respond to comments and requests from the public to review a sidewalk that may be causing concerns.

Q. Am I eligible for reimbursement if I repair the sidewalk?

A. Property owners, or owner-hired contractors who make the repairs themselves, qualify for reimbursement, per the City of Cedar Rapids Sidewalk Repair and Reimbursement Policy. NOTE: The contractor needs to be bonded to work in the Public Right-of-Way. It should also be noted property owners or contractors still need a Right-of-Way permit. Property owners doing the work personally (no contractor) will need a copy of the declaration page of their property owner’s insurance for our records.

Q. How is the reimbursement calculated (March 2015 Policy)?

A. For 2015, the City determined the fair market value for the unit price per square foot of sidewalk is \$8 per square foot. Per page 3 of the policy, the reimbursement rate would be 35% of the unit price, or \$2.80 per square foot. The table below is from page 3 of the March, 2015 Sidewalk Repair and Reimbursement Policy. It shows the 2015 data for reimbursement:

Sidewalk Repaired by the PROPERTY OWNER for March 2015 Policy		
Unit Price Reimbursed by CITY per Square Foot		
Type of Repair	Sidewalks Up to 7.5' Wide	Maximum Reimbursement (In a 4-Year Period)
GENERAL SIDEWALK REPAIR	\$2.80 per square foot (35% of \$8)	\$1,000

Q. If I do the repairs myself, do I need to hire a contractor?

A. No, property owners do not need to hire a contractor, but sidewalks must be built to City standards. Failure to do so could lead to reconstruction and/or denial of reimbursement until the sidewalk is installed in compliance with City standards. We strongly suggest you seek multiple bids before hiring a contractor.

Q. What do I need to provide to get reimbursed?

A. A pre-inspection* is performed by the City, and the repair areas are marked with spray paint. Also required is an approved right-of-way permit along with proper permit inspections. After construction, a Reimbursement Registration Form must be completed. This can be found on the City’s website (www.cedar-rapids.org). We can email or mail you the form, or you may pick one up at the City Services Center (500 15th Ave SW). Invoices or receipts are also required. The invoices or receipts should be from verifiable businesses. Acceptable examples: specified concrete (C or M Mix from an IDOT certified supplier), concrete forms, curing compound, reinforcing steel, stone under paving, concrete disposal charges, tool rental and traffic control. Non-acceptable examples: labor, tools that can be reused, and backfill dirt. A Public Right of Way Permit is also required.

(Additional information on reverse side)

Q. Do I need pre-inspection* in order to get a reimbursement?

A. Yes. Without knowing the original condition of the sidewalk, it's impossible to know what areas may have been eligible for reimbursement.

Q. What are proper permit inspections?

A. Our Right-Of-Way department currently performs pre-pour** inspections which automatically trigger the final inspection. FOR PRE-POUR INSPECTIONS, CUSTOMERS SHOULD LEAVE A VOICEMAIL AT LEAST 1 BUSINESS DAY PRIOR TO THE POUR AT 286-5825.

Q. When the City performs the repairs, are there other options for payment?

A. Current state code provides that if invoiced over \$500, you may defer paying in full, and the City will provide the invoice to the Linn County Treasurer to add onto your tax bill in 10 annual installments plus interest. Linn County currently charges 9% interest.

Q. Will I be assessed for the sidewalk repairs, and if so, when?

A. If the property owner does not complete the necessary corrections in the given time frame (on the notification letter), the sidewalk will be repaired and assessed in accordance with the Sidewalk Repair and Reimbursement Policy. Properties are grouped into projects and will be assessed after the project is substantially completed.

Q. The roots from a City tree appear to be pushing up my sidewalk. How do I install new sidewalk without damaging the tree?

A. Trees are an integral and vital part of the City of Cedar Rapids. They provide air quality, energy savings, carbon sequestration (removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere), storm water retention, increased property values, and reduced water treatment benefits. We make attempts to protect them wherever possible. Some ideas may be to slightly elevate the sidewalk over the root system, or, in extreme circumstances, making a slight radius in the sidewalk alignment. If it appears that there may be a need to remove tree roots over 2", please notify Mr. Keith Abkes at the City Public Works Department at (319) 286-5802. This is in order to protect the street traffic, the liability of the person doing the work, and the tree's health. It is also recommended to minimize construction traffic below the tree's drip line to protect the root system.

Q. Is there a special reimbursement for a root from a City tree that appears to pushing up the sidewalk?

A. Trees provide shade, oxygen, and enjoyment to the residents of the City of Cedar Rapids. Sidewalk that is damaged is eligible for reimbursement under the general sidewalk repair category; however special financial consideration is not given for tree root issues.

Q. Who can I contact regarding the assessment, or with other questions?

A. Please contact Mr. Keith Abkes at the Cedar Rapids Public Works Department at (319) 286-5802, or email sidewalks@cedar-rapids.org

Q. Can I get a copy of the bonded contractor list?

A. Yes, it can either be mailed, or emailed to property owners by support staff. It is also found at <http://www.cityofcr.com/sidewalkrepair>

***PRE-INSPECTION = Inspection prior to any construction performed by Engineering.**

**** PRE-POUR INSPECTION = Inspection after the construction has been set started, but before the concrete pour. This is done as part of the Right-Of-Way Permitting process.**