



## Memorandum

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
CC: Members of Administration and Public Works Committee  
From: Christopher Venatta, Senior Project Manager  
CC: Edgar Cano, Public Works Agency Director; Lara Biggs, City Engineer  
Subject: Sidewalk Improvement Program Plan  
Date: October 10, 2022

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Recommended Action:

Staff recommends City Council Accept and Place on File the Sidewalk Improvement Program Plan.

Funding Source:

Detailed funding information is included in the attached Sidewalk Improvement Program.

CARP:

Transportation & Mobility, Vulnerable Populations

Council Action:

For Action: Accept and Place on File

Summary:

Sidewalks allow all community members, regardless of economic status or physical ability, to travel safely throughout the City. Providing safe pathways to pedestrians not only helps the city's most vulnerable groups but also offers multi-modal travel options that are essential to meeting the goals outlined by the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP). Overall, the City of Evanston has approximately 280 miles of installed public sidewalks, of which 19 miles are estimated to be in need of repair.

Historically, the City has used the 50/50 sidewalk program as the primary means to replace substandard sidewalks. This was a voluntary program for replacing damaged sidewalk squares. On 9/27/2021, a recommendation was brought to the City Council to replace the 50/50 program, as the program did not comply with CARP, was not equitable, and did not meet City Council Goals. The proposed changes shifted the cost of sidewalk repair away from property owners to the City, prioritized repair locations based on equity and need, established a program for sidewalk gap infill and streetlight modernization, and increased funding for sidewalk

improvements. Under the new sidewalk improvement program, the City covers 100 percent of the cost associated with sidewalk replacement. While some previously contracted locations from last year's 50/50 program are still being constructed in this year's sidewalk contract, 2022 is the first year of the new Sidewalk Improvement Program.

The Sidewalk Improvement Program provides a framework for the administration of both sidewalk replacement and sidewalk gap infill. This guide outlines sidewalk replacement criteria, sidewalk improvement phases, and costs associated with the program. The sidewalk phases are as follows:

- Phase 1: Public and Private K-12 Schools, including Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and Senior Living Facilities
- Phase 2: Hospitals and Medical Clinics
- Phase 3: Transit Facilities
- Phase 4: Grocery Stores
- Phase 5: City Facilities and Parks
- Phase 6: Arterial Streets
- Phase 7: Residential Streets

Phases 1 and 2 were chosen to promote equity by prioritizing sidewalks used by vulnerable populations. This includes children, senior citizens, and those using medical facilities.

Phases 3, 4, and 5 are prioritized to improve the City's pedestrian transportation networks and promote safe and efficient non-vehicular travel. Transportation and mobility is a focus area of CARP with the specific goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing trips made by walking, bicycling, and transit. These phases were ranked based on demand by pedestrian travelers, public transportation stations, places to access fresh food, and public facilities such as libraries and parks.

The final phases will address the remainder of the City's sidewalks. Since the final phases will have the largest amount of work, they will be broken out into sub-stages. These sub-stages will provide a rotation to move through the City until all locations have been addressed. Depending on funding levels, some stages will take multiple years to complete.

The locations for each phase shown in the attached guide will be updated by the City as new facilities are added and any necessary changes need to be made. Each year, additional areas may be improved through the program that does not follow the phasing order due to geographical funding restrictions. This may include Community Development Block Grant funds that must be used in defined low/moderate income areas; Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funding that is restricted to TIF district boundaries; as well as other location-specific funding sources.

In addition, the Sidewalk Improvement Program Plan provides guidance, based on the current City Code, for what constitutes a sidewalk needing repair. This provides clarity to staff and property owners to focus on serious deterioration that impedes the safe use of the sidewalk by vulnerable populations versus focusing on small cracks and deterioration that are more

aesthetic in nature. This will allow the City's funding to go further in dealing with the biggest safety needs.

Legislative History:

On September 27, 2021, the City Council accepted and placed on file recommendations for the 2022 Sidewalk Improvement Program.

Attachments:

[Sidewalk Improvement Program](#)

# Sidewalk Improvement Program



## Introduction

Sidewalks allow all members of the community regardless of economic status or physical ability to safely travel throughout the City. Providing safe pathways to pedestrians not only helps the most vulnerable groups within the City, it also provides multi-modal travel options that are essential to meeting the goals outlined by the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP). Overall, the City of Evanston has approximately 280 miles of installed public sidewalk, of which 19 miles is estimated to be in need of repair.

Historically, the City has used the 50/50 sidewalk program as the primary means to replace substandard sidewalks. This was a voluntary program for replacing damaged sidewalk squares. Per the City Code, the maintenance and repair of sidewalks is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, however, the 50/50 program was in place for several years. In 2020, the cost to the property owner was approximately \$100 per typical sidewalk square and only small repairs were eligible. The 50/50 program did not handle larger sections of damaged sidewalk where repair would require multiple property owners to agree to participate in the repair program. Additionally, the program did not address sidewalk gaps. The City does not currently have a program for closing sidewalk gaps except under major reconstruction projects, which do not typically occur on residential streets.

On 9/27/2021, a recommendation was brought to the City Council to replace the 50/50 program. The program did not comply with the Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), equity, and City Council Goals. The proposed changes shift the cost for sidewalk repair to the City, prioritize repair locations based on equity and need, establish a program for gap infill and streetlight modernization, and increase funding for sidewalk improvements. Under the new sidewalk improvement program, the City will cover 100 percent of the cost associated with sidewalk replacement.

## Sidewalk Maintenance

Prior to the dissolution of the 50/50 program, the City of Evanston did not have a program for the regular inspection of the condition of the City's sidewalk. Instead, staff relied on community members to file 311 requests when the sidewalk has deviated enough to form a trip hazard or has fallen into a general state of disrepair. Once a community member is aware of the sidewalk issue, the following process was followed:

1. The City is made aware of sidewalk concerns primarily by way of a request filed in the 311 system, which gets assigned to the Streets Division of the Public Works Agency
2. The Streets Division assesses the site and completes a temporary patch. In most cases, the temporary patch is completed within 2-3 days. The request is then transferred to the Capital Planning & Engineering Bureau for inclusion in the sidewalk replacement program.
3. The adjacent property owner is sent information by Capital Planning staff explaining the 50/50 sidewalk program and inviting them to participate. The community members sign up for the program in mid-May and the sidewalks are replaced by the end of August.
4. If interested, the property owner marks the square(s) to be addressed and notifies the City of their interest.
5. Once the sidewalk replacement contract is awarded by City Council and the cost per square is calculated, the property owner is sent an invoice for their share of the replacement cost
6. If the property owner does not respond, City staff follows up to verify if they are still interested in participating in the program
7. The property owner pays the invoice, verifying their participation

This seven step process requires significant resources and time commitment for both community members and City staff. Switching to a priority based program will streamline the process and implement sidewalk improvements at the most critical locations first.

## Replacement Criteria

According to Section 7-3-2-10 (B) of the Evanston City Code, in order for a section of sidewalk to be considered substandard and qualify for replacement, it must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Vertical Displacement. A shifting in the underlying base causing an unevenness of pavement between sidewalk panels. Sidewalk squares that have sunken or risen to a height difference of one (1) inch or more to the adjacent sidewalk square shall be replaced;
- Sloping. An abrupt change in the slope of the whole sidewalk square;
- Cracking. A separation of the sidewalk pavement caused by cracks forming in the concrete. Sidewalk squares that are broken and/or separated into three (3) or more pieces with cracks equal or greater to one-fourth ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) inch in width shall be replaced;
- Spalling/Scaling. The flaking away of the hardening concrete. Sidewalk squares that have spalling or scaling to thirty-three percent (33%) or more of the surface shall be replaced;
- Sidewalk squares that require improvement to meet the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

Within these criteria, staff estimates indicate that approximately 19 miles (7%) of the City's existing sidewalks are in need of replacement.

## Sidewalk Not Meeting Criteria

The City does not repair sidewalks and curbs that do not meet the criteria of the Sidewalk Improvement Program. Conditions such as ponding water on a sidewalk, icy conditions or mud on the sidewalk are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain. According to Section 7-2-9-3 of the City Code, the property owner or tenant must maintain sidewalks clear of snow, ice, dirt, weeds, and other obstructions.

Sections of sidewalk prone to ponding water that don't meet the program criteria may be eligible for a post-rainfall event check. This check is designed to assess whether areas of concerns have sufficiently drained within 72 hours, the duration the City allows for normal drainage. These checks are performed in the spring, summer and fall following a moderate rain event. If a post-rainfall event check finds a property to have standing water on the sidewalk or curb for a longer duration than acceptable, City staff will contact the property owner regarding options to improve the condition and discuss further City participation.

When a sidewalk drains in an appropriate amount of time, the City will not take any further action on the matter.

The following is a list of suggestions that may improve sidewalk drainage.

1. Identify sources of water and evaluate if the sources can be reduced or relocated to minimize discharge to the sidewalk
2. Consider using a power edger to edge your lawn adjacent to the sidewalk. The intention is to create a small reservoir which will hold the water off pavement.
3. Consider hiring a contractor to regrade the parkway. Only a small section of parkway immediately adjacent to the area of concern may need to be re-graded to allow water to continue to move off of the sidewalk.
4. Consider installing an infiltration trench along the edge of sidewalk to allow the water to drain more quickly into the soil.
5. Consider hiring a contractor to rebuild or repair the sidewalk at an elevation or slope that improves drainage.

## Sidewalk Program Phases

In order to use sidewalk replacement funding in the most equitable manner, the City was broken down into phases based on a hierarchy of priority locations. The phases are as follows:

- Phase 1: Public and Private K-12 Schools including Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and Senior Living Facilities
- Phase 2: Hospitals and Medical Clinics
- Phase 3: Transit Facilities
- Phase 4: Grocery Stores
- Phase 5: City Facilities and Parks
- Phase 6: Arterial Streets
- Phase 7: Residential Streets

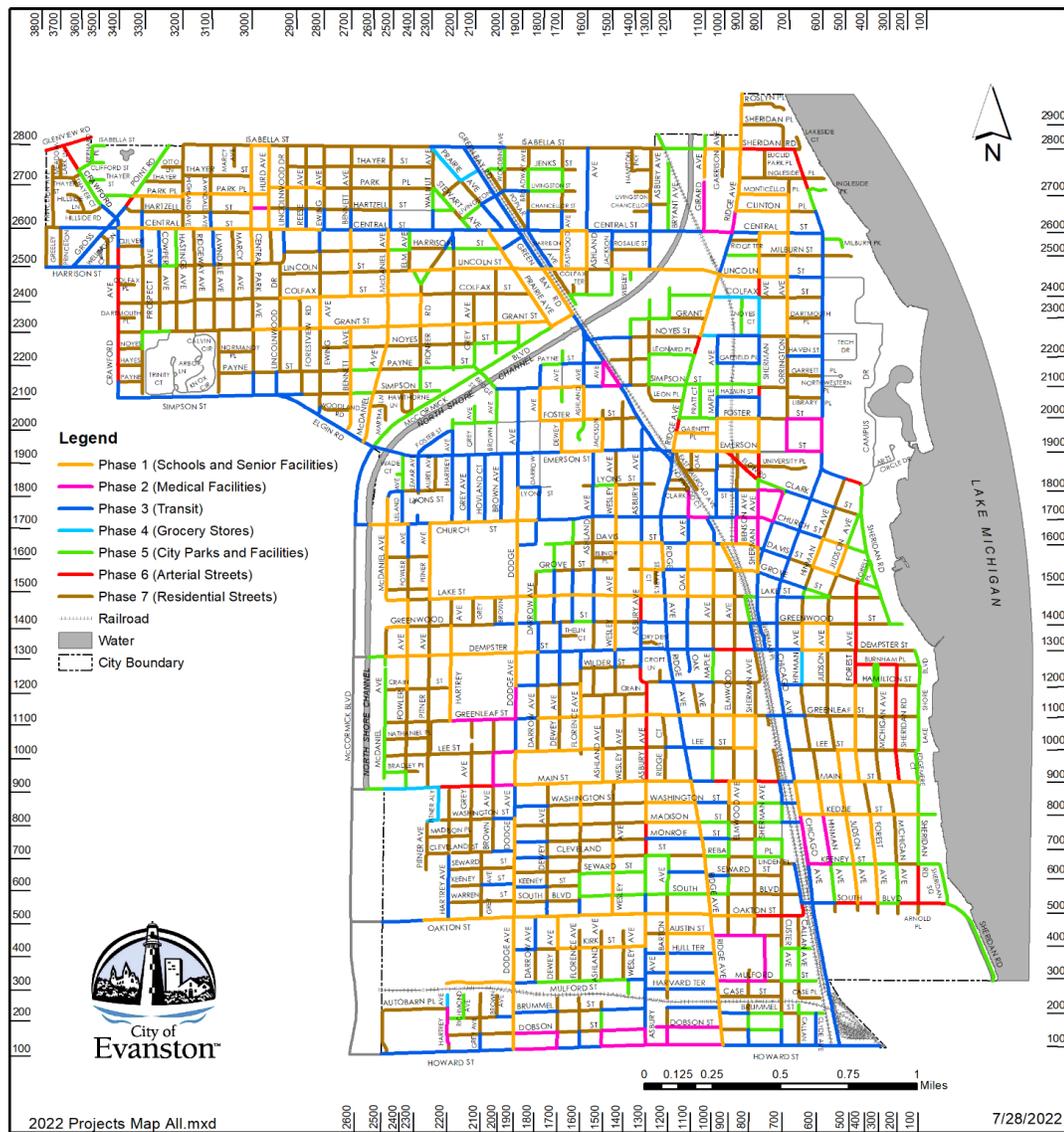
Phases 1 and 2 were chosen to promote equity by prioritizing sidewalks used by vulnerable populations. This includes children, senior citizens, and those using medical facilities.

Phases 3, 4, and 5 are prioritized to improve the City's pedestrian transportation networks and promote safe and efficient non-vehicular travel. Transportation and mobility is a focus area of CARP with the specific goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled and increasing trips made by walking, bicycling and transit. These phases were ranked based on demand by pedestrian travelers; public transportation stations, places to access fresh food, and public facilities such as libraries and parks.

The final phases will address the remainder of the City's sidewalks. Since the final phases will have the largest amount of work they will be broken out into substages. These substages will provide a rotation to move through the City until all locations have been addressed.

Figure 1 is a map showing the locations of all phases of the sidewalk program. This map will be updated by the City as new facilities are added and any necessary changes need to be made. Each year, additional areas may be improved through the program that do not follow the phasing order due to geographical funding restrictions. This may include Community Development Block Grant funds that must be used in defined low/moderate income areas; Tax Increment Finance (TIF) funding that is restricted to TIF district boundaries; as well as other location specific funding sources.

### 2022 Sidewalk Improvement Phases



This map is provided "as is" without warranties of any kind. See [www.cityofevanston.org/mapdisclaimers.html](http://www.cityofevanston.org/mapdisclaimers.html) for more information.

Figure 1 - Map of the Evanston Sidewalk Network by phase.

## Sidewalk Maintenance Cost

The cost for the full program was established by evaluating sample blocks in many different areas throughout the City and creating an estimate of work necessary to improve all sidewalk locations to the defined criteria. This estimate was then expanded to all City blocks and broken down by Phase.

The cost to replace sidewalks along both sides of a street is approximately \$6.00 per foot of street. The cost estimate for replacing damaged sidewalk squares across all of Evanston is approximately \$3,500,000. Figure 2 shows those costs per Phase.

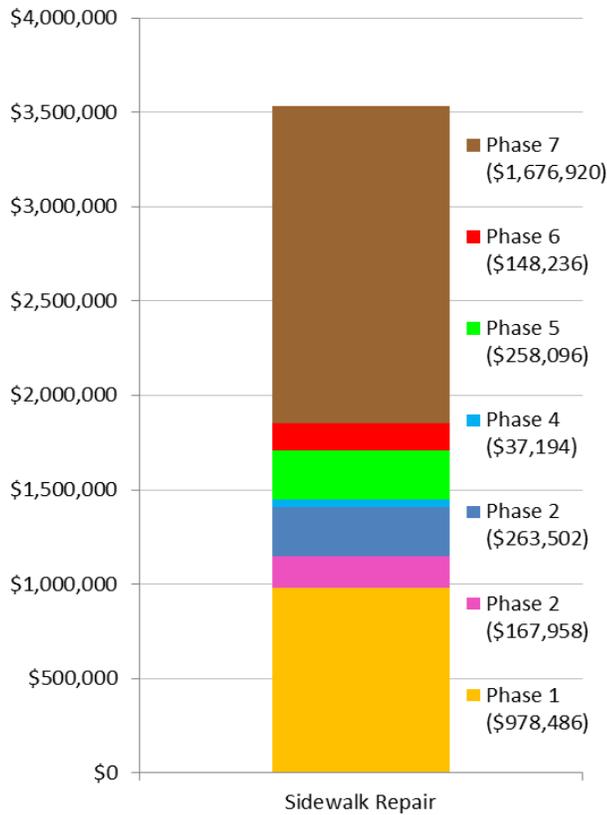


Figure 2 - Cost per phase for substandard sidewalk replacement

Sidewalk Repair Costs		
	Street Length (ft)	Cost at \$6/foot
Phase 1	163,081 ft	\$978,486
Phase 2	27,993 ft	\$167,958
Phase 3	43,917 ft	\$263,502
Phase 4	6,199 ft	\$37,194
Phase 5	43,016 ft	\$258,096
Phase 6	24,706 ft	\$148,236
Phase 7	279,487 ft	\$1,676,920
Total	588,399 ft	\$3,530,392

Table 1 - Cost per phase

Years Per Phase Based on Funding Level			
	\$250,000/year	\$500,000/year	\$750,000/year
Phase 1	3.9	2.0	1.3
Phase 2	0.7	0.3	0.2
Phase 3	1.1	0.5	0.4
Phase 4	0.1	0.1	0.0
Phase 5	1.0	0.5	0.3
Phase 6	0.6	0.3	0.2
Phase 7	6.7	3.4	2.2
Total	14.1	7.1	4.7

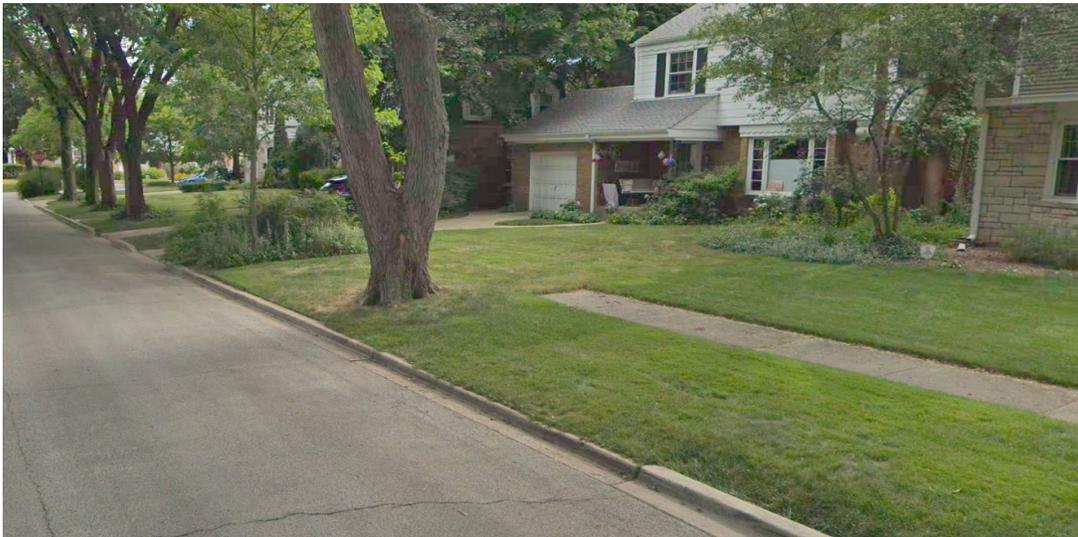
Table 2 - Years per phase based on funding level

## Sidewalk Gap Infill Phases

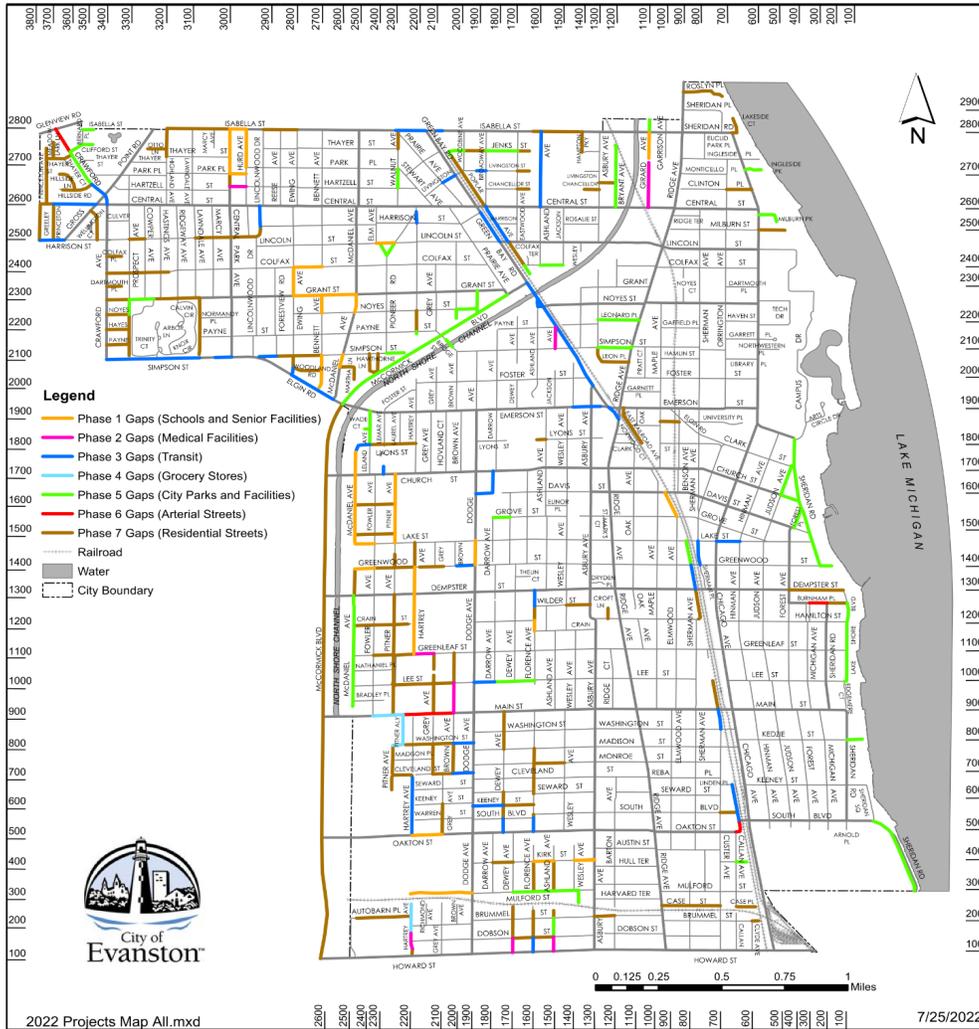
Drawing on the City's Multi Modal Transportation Plan and other data on sidewalk gaps from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's Regional Sidewalk Inventory, staff estimates that there are approximately 30 miles of streets with sidewalk gaps. This includes locations where the sidewalk is missing on one or both sides of a street.

Sidewalk gap infill is not possible at all locations due to space limitations or property line constraints. There are utility poles and mature trees in areas that also impact the construction of new sidewalks. Additionally, at many locations, property owners have built infrastructure such as fences, landscaping elements, and patios into the City's ROW in areas where no sidewalks exist. This infrastructure must be removed from the City's ROW to construct new sidewalk. While this may be an inconvenience for individual property owners, many of these locations create an unsafe condition where community members must walk or ride in the street to bypass the sidewalk gaps.

Figure 3 shows all phases of the sidewalk gap infill. Similar to sidewalk maintenance, the sequence of work may change due to funding restrictions.



### 2022 Sidewalk Gaps



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Figure 3 - Map of Evanston Sidewalk Gaps by phase.

## Sidewalk Gap Costs

The cost to install a sidewalk where one does not exist is estimated at \$100 per foot of street, based on averages of recent inspections. This cost includes additional work such as driveway repairs, tree removal, correcting grading issues, and landscape restoration, and is an average that combines gaps with no completed sidewalks and gaps with sidewalks on one side of the street. In total, the cost estimate to infill all of the identified gaps is approximately \$16,000,000. Half of the total replacement cost comes from residential streets in phase seven.

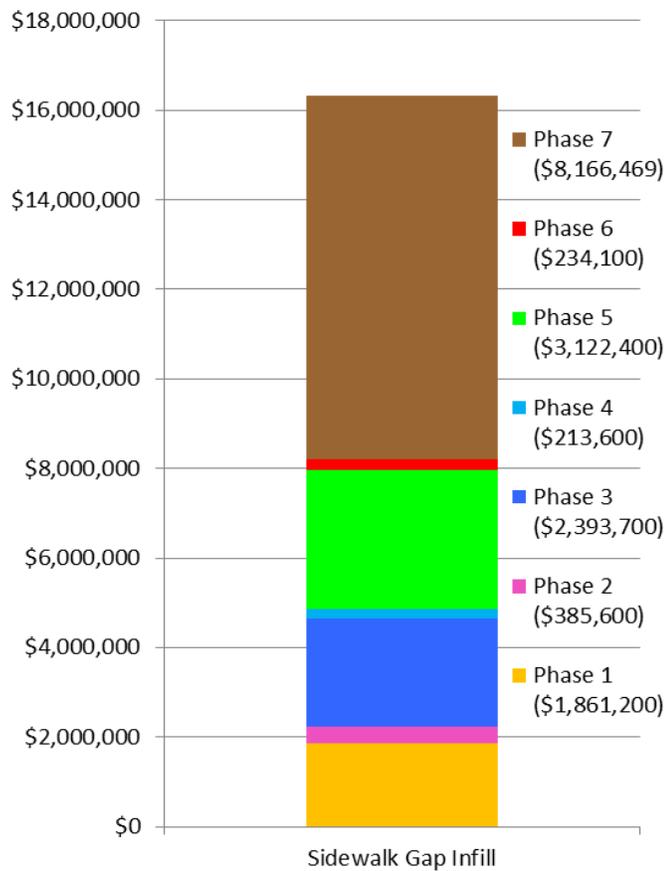


Figure 4 - Cost per phase for gap infill.

Gap Infill Cost		
	Street Length (ft)	\$100/foot
Phase 1	18612 ft	\$1,861,200
Phase 2	3856 ft	\$385,600
Phase 3	23937 ft	\$2,393,700
Phase 4	2136 ft	\$213,600
Phase 5	31224 ft	\$3,122,400
Phase 6	2341 ft	\$234,100
Phase 7	81165 ft	\$8,116,469.97
Total	163271 ft	\$16,327,070

Table 3 - Cost per phase

Years Per Phase: Gap Infill			
	250,000/year	500,000/year	750,000/year
Phase 1	7.4	3.7	2.5
Phase 2	1.5	0.8	0.5
Phase 3	9.6	4.8	3.2
Phase 4	0.9	0.4	0.3
Phase 5	12.5	6.2	4.2
Phase 6	0.9	0.5	0.3
Phase 7	32.5	16.2	10.8
Total	65.3	32.7	21.8

Table 4 -Years per phase based on funding level

## Summary of Costs

Summarized Costs		
	Sidewalk Repair	Sidewalk Gap Infill
Cost per foot	\$6	\$100
Phase 1	\$978,486	\$1,861,200
Phase 2	\$167,958	\$385,600
Phase 3	\$263,502	\$2,393,700
Phase 4	\$37,194	\$213,600
Phase 5	\$258,096	\$3,122,400
Phase 6	\$148,236	\$234,100
Phase 7	\$1,676,920	\$8,116,469.97
Total	\$3,530,392	\$16,327,070

Table 5 - Total cost per phase for sidewalk repair and gap infill