



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of San Diego Rolls Out Safe Sidewalks Program Following City Council Approval

CITYWIDE EFFORT TO IMPROVE SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY WILL ELIMINATE FEES FOR PROPERTY OWNERS TO MAKE REPAIRS

SAN DIEGO – As part of a citywide effort to improve sidewalks in all communities, the City of San Diego is investing resources to fix uneven and damaged sidewalks, while also making it easier for people to make repairs in front of their private property.

Launching this year, the Safe Sidewalks Program will waive costly permit fees and help expedite the process for property owners to make needed sidewalk repairs, saving up to \$2,100 per project. Many property owners are not aware that state law makes them responsible for maintenance of sidewalks fronting their private property, creating a potential issue and legal liability.

Following the approval by the City Council on Monday, the Safe Sidewalks Program will run through fiscal year 2026.

“Our team is focused on improving streets and sidewalks across the city, and we want to help property owners by making it as easy as possible to complete these needed repairs,” said Bethany Bezak, Director of the City’s Transportation Department.

According to [California Streets and Highway Code Section 5610](#), owners of property fronting a public street are required to maintain sidewalks in a safe condition for use by members of the public. Property owners may incur civil liability if a person suffers personal injury or property damage due to a sidewalk issue. Over the past 10 years, the average claim for sidewalk-related injuries in San Diego was \$46,000.

San Diego’s City Council Policy 200-12 identifies certain conditions where maintenance of sidewalks will be performed at City expense, but many sidewalk issues remain the private property owner’s

responsibility, including damage caused by private trees and tree roots, deteriorating concrete and cracking, weather conditions, and normal wear and tear.

Starting in November 2023, the City will begin notifying property owners at approximately 5,000 locations across the City where sidewalk issues have been identified. Under the Safe Sidewalks Program, fees will be waived for the permits to complete repair work. The Program also allows property owners to save more time and money through a self-certification process where they can submit certification and photos of the completed sidewalk repair to the Transportation Department attesting that a licensed contractor performed the work in conformance with City construction standards.

Additionally, the City is allocating \$300,000 per year to cover the costs of sidewalk repair projects for property owners in underserved areas, defined in Council Policy 800-14 as Structurally Excluded Communities. This work on eligible locations will be performed by Transportation Department crews, beginning with locations that experience the most pedestrian traffic. This allocation will cover only a small portion of known locations in need of repair. With limited funding and crews, this approach will allow the City to quickly repair the highest priority locations while eliminating barriers for other private property owners to make repairs that will keep their sidewalks safe and accessible for all users.

The City of San Diego has 4,550 miles of sidewalks, and many of them were built during the rapid construction of the City's roadway system from the start of World War II through the 1970s. The sidewalk system also includes much older sidewalks with some dating to the early part of the last century. The typical useful life of a sidewalk is 50 to 70 years, depending on site conditions.

Learn more about the Safe Sidewalks Program by visiting sandiego.gov/safesidewalks.

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