The City of SAN DIEGO
Mayor Todd Gloria

News Release

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City of San Diego Expands Sidewalk Repair Program, Helping Many Property Owners Save Thousands

ELIGIBLE HOME AND BUSINESS OWNERS WILL HAVE PERMIT COSTS REDUCED BY 94%

SAN DIEGO – Helping property owners save thousands of dollars, the City of San Diego is expanding its Sidewalk Repair Program to reduce permitting costs and expedite the project approval process. Starting this month, eligible San Diegans can take advantage of this program for repairs of uneven and damaged sidewalks, and the City will waive thousands of dollars in fees for eligible homes and businesses using a convenient self-certification process.

Typical sidewalk repair projects can cost up to $3,000 for permits and approvals, not including the actual construction costs. Removing review and inspection fees through the City's Development Services Department brings this amount down to $190, which covers program costs, representing a 94% reduction.

Many property owners are not aware that under state law, they are responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks fronting their private property, creating a potential issue and legal liability.

"Improving pedestrian safety is really a quality-of-life issue for all San Diegans. The City has tested and will now make permanent a low-cost, no-plan-review sidewalk permit that reduces the overall cost for responsible parties and incentivizes these necessary repairs," said Development Services Director Elyse Lowe.

Property owners eligible for fee waivers under the Sidewalk Replacement Expedite program have already received a Notice of Responsibility letter from the City's Transportation Department. These letters were issued as part of a pilot program between November 2023 and June 2026.

During that time, more than 340 of the 550 identified sidewalk repairs were completed, with property owners collectively saving more than $1 million in fees.

Another way property owners can be eligible for the Sidewalk Replacement Expedite program is if they are responsible for sidewalk repair as part of a building permit application through Development Services. Only projects submitted after the program's Nov. 5 start date will be eligible for the program's reduced fee.

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.

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.

Full details on eligibility, requirements and exclusions can be found on the City's website.



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