

# Missing Sidewalk Links FAQ's

## **What is the Missing Sidewalk Links project?**

The City of Saratoga Springs Missing Sidewalk Links project is a NYS Department of Transportation funded project to install new sidewalks on public property in the City Right-of-Way. The project will consist of concrete sidewalks, ADA crosswalks, and in designated areas curbing which may create the necessity to install gutters and drainage structures. Construction of missing sidewalk links supports the City of Saratoga Springs Complete Streets Plan (adopted by City Council on December 20, 2016) by eliminating breaks and discontinuities in the sidewalk system and ensuring adequate connections to schools, parks, businesses, public facilities, Skidmore College, medical facilities, and residences.

## **What is a Public Right-of-Way?**

City Code § 180-1 defines the public Right-of-Way (ROW) as any real property in which the City of Saratoga Springs holds an easement for the benefit of the public. Its purpose is to allow the city to build the street, curb and gutter, storm sewers and possibly underground utilities. This land is the responsibility of the landowner but the city has the right to determine what takes place there. A ROW may include curbs, sidewalks and utilities. See Section

## **How did the City determine the right-of-way (ROW) for this project? How is ROW determined?**

Property line determinations, which delineates where private property ends and the City's ROW begins, were performed by a licensed Land Surveyor in the fall of 2020. The land surveyor is currently registered to practice in New York State and followed the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) ROW Mapping Procedures. To find out more, go to [NYSDOT Chapter 4 - Highway Boundary and Property Line Determination](#).

While many may assume that the property line, and the Cities ROW, begins at the curb that is not always the case. The depth of a ROW varies from location to location and the fall survey was conducted to determine the exact dimension of the ROW for this project.

The ROW boundary lines are shown on the preliminary engineered plan maps and are marked as HB - Highway Boundary. See map:

<https://www.saratoga-springs.org/DocumentCenter/View/12932/Saratoga-Springs-Missing-Sidewalk-Links---Preliminary-Plans?bidId>.

## **How much of my property will the city use to create the sidewalk?**

The City is constructing new sidewalk in the public Right-of-Way and is not taking any private property as part of this project. Additionally, the City worked with the engineer to create sidewalk plans with as little disturbance to property owners as possible.

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### **What if the construction of the sidewalk damages my property (lawn, driveway, vegetation, sprinklers, etc.)? Will the city make repairs or pay for repairs?**

While the Missing Links Sidewalk project is taking place within the City ROW, if the project impacts or disrupts the adjacent property, the disturbed areas will be restored at no cost to the property owner. If you incur any damage during the construction process, please contact the City BEFORE you attempt to repair it. The City will work with the contractor to repair the damage.

### **What if the project damages my driveway?**

Driveway pavement will be restored as part of the project by the project contractor at no expense to the homeowner.

### **Who will be responsible for replacing my mailbox if it is damaged or needs to be moved at no cost to the homeowner?**

Mailboxes in the ROW will be moved and replaced if needed by the contractor for the project.

### **What if I have an irrigation/sprinkler system?**

Please send an email to [Tina.Carton@saratoga-springs.org](mailto:Tina.Carton@saratoga-springs.org) to get the City know that there is an irrigation system in the ROW area.

### **Do I need to shut-off my irrigation/sprinkler system during construction?**

Yes, for the duration of construction.

### **Why must my irrigation be turned off during the repairs?**

Irrigation should remain off until contractor verifies that no irrigation lines are damaged. If irrigation is not turned off, water run-off can damage fresh concrete and not allow it to set and cure properly. Please avoid water run-off for at least 48 hours after concrete has been poured.

### **What steps will the city take to preserve vegetation (trees, etc.) impacted by the new sidewalk?**

In collaboration with the City Arborists and Sustainable Saratoga's Urban Forestry committee, plans were evaluated and modified if possible to minimize damage or removal of trees. Unfortunately, some trees will be removed as part of this project.

In unison with the project, the Department of Public Works City Arborist received an Urban and Community Forestry Grants to complete a Phase I Street Tree Inventory by a team of ISA Certified Arborists to document urban forest health and data. The Inventory data will be utilized

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to develop a comprehensive Urban Forest Management Plan to organize work function priorities & improve the efficiency of the Urban Forestry Division which will facilitate the preservation, maintenance, improvement, expansion & long term stewardship, and sustainability of the City's urban forest infrastructure. Based on the findings, the City will be creating a management plan with recommendations for locations of new street trees in these locations where trees were removed.

### **Will the City replace any damaged or torn down trees?**

Trees on private property impacted by this project will be replaced. The City arborist currently has an urban forestry grant and will be mapping all street trees in the City as well as creating a plan for tree maintenance and replacement.

### **Will the City be planting trees as part of this project?**

Unfortunately, new street trees are not part of the project scope and funding.

### **How does this project address accessibility issues and public safety?**

Sidewalks help pedestrians get off of the street and increase safety. Additionally, the new sidewalks and crosswalks will be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant increasing access for disabled users. The new sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps, will be made accessible to the maximum extent practicable.

### **What steps have been taken to address historic preservation?**

The Design Review Commission (DRC) heard a presentation by the design team of the proposed missing links sidewalk project at a March 24, 2021 meeting. Following further discussion at their April 7, 2021 meeting, the DRC provides the following recommendations for consideration:

- “The Commission has reviewed the planned missing links sidewalk application and does not identify any aspects of the proposed project that would negatively impact the character or quality of the adjacent properties or surrounding Historic and Architectural Review Districts.
- The DRC suggests that this may be an opportunity to explore the use of flexible permeable sidewalks for tree-lined streets in order to promote and protect the existing infrastructure.
- Considering the important role that walkability plays in our City, especially within our Historic Districts, this is a great undertaking. The DRC finds that this is a wonderful project and an important step in continuing to fill the missing links in the City.”

The Design Review Commission is strongly supportive of the missing links sidewalk project and voted unanimously (7-0) to endorse it.

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### **Will traffic on street be shut down during construction? What vehicles will be used for construction?**

City streets will remain open during construction. During some construction operations, one of the two travel lanes will be closed to accommodate the construction equipment. When the lane is closed, 1-way traffic will be maintained with flaggers directing traffic. Vehicles used during construction will be a small excavator, dump truck, and concrete truck.

### **Will older sidewalks adjacent to the new sidewalks be repaired as part of this project?**

The project will not be repairing existing sidewalks – only constructing new segments.

### **Who is responsible for maintaining the new sidewalks? Who is responsible for snow removal on the sidewalk?**

While the sidewalk is in the Cities ROW, the adjacent property owner is responsible for maintaining the sidewalk and snow removal. According to city code, the property owner has a responsibility to maintain a safe sidewalk adjacent to their property. Property owners are also required to keep a four feet path cleared of snow whether they have a sidewalk or not.

City Code: § 203-26 Snow and ice removal.

The owner, occupant or person in charge of an improved or unimproved lot adjoining a City street shall remove the snow from the sidewalks in front of such lot within 12 hours after each snowstorm and shall keep the sidewalks clear of snow and ice and, when slippery, keep the same safe by sanding. The portion of the sidewalk required to be kept free from snow and ice is the portion thereof which is paved, if any, and if no portion thereof is paved, a space at least four feet in width shall be kept free and clear as above stated. A storm ceasing after 7:00 p.m. shall be considered as ceasing at 7:00 a.m. the following morning.

The sidewalk is to remain at the established grade, be in good working order and be free of ice, snow, earth, obstructions, etc. Property owners are responsible for any sidewalk repairs and a permit for repairs is required. For more information on sidewalk maintenance, please read the city code which deals with care of sidewalks. § 203-Article X – Care of Sidewalks.

### **Will this project address stormwater issues on the street or within the ROW?**

This project includes funding install curbing and stormwater drainage to mitigate stormwater issues that arise from the new sidewalk construction. It does not include funding to improve current stormwater issues. In some cases, new curbing may help with existing water pooling. The new curb, driveway apron, and some slight pavement work will push the water towards new drainage and mitigate the existing issue.

### **How long will construction take or what is the timeline on the project?**

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The construction phase of the project is expected to last from late spring 2022 until late summer of 2022. Construction on each street is expected to take a few weeks. Access to individual driveways will only be effected for 2 to 3 days. During this time, the construction contractor will place a steel plate over any excavation area so residents will be able to get in and out of their driveway in the evening.

### **Will there be more opportunity for public comment, and how can I comment on this project?**

Comments are currently being collected. The City will be collecting comments regarding the design up to the point of final submittal to the NYS Department of Transportation's Final Engineering submittal. This is expected in the fall. You may submit comments and questions to [tina.carton@saratoga-springs.org](mailto:tina.carton@saratoga-springs.org). If you want get notifications for project specific events, sign up for the Missing Sidewalk Links calendar: <https://www.saratoga-springs.org/iCalendar.aspx> There are instructions on the page so you can get automated calendar invites.

### **Why wasn't I notified about this project?**

A project page was added to the City website after the project grant funds were accepted by City Council, and project information was mailed to homeowners prior to the latest City Council meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup>. The project has been on the City Council agenda six times prior to the May 18<sup>th</sup> City Council presentation (June 18, 2019, Oct. 1, 2019; Oct. 15, 2019; April 7, 2020; June 16, 2020; June 15, 2021). A press release with preliminary map was distributed on June 21, 2019 to the media and added to the City website and Facebook page.

Additionally, a public open house will be held on Thursday June 24<sup>th</sup> at the City Recreation Center on Vanderbilt Avenue. The City plans on hosting at least one other public open house and is currently working on locating a space to host the event.

### **What are the plans for this project, and where can I find more information about this project?**

The City has create a dedicated website for property owners and interested parties to get more information on this project: <http://www.saratoga-springs.org/2554/Missing-Sidewalk-Links> At the bottom of the project web page, you will be able to find the preliminary plans for the project.

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