



February 22, 2018

Dear Mayor Boley and City Commissioners;

PedCo sees the following problems and unanswered questions in the Sidewalk Hazard Repair Program Administrative Policy:

- 1) In order to repair their sidewalks, property owners would need to assume the role of general contractor, a role few are equipped to take on. Property owners would need to:
 - a. determine whether grinding is an option for vertical separation, and if it is, find a contractor who offers this service,
 - b. if they want to retain their brick sidewalk, find a contractor who offers this service,
 - c. contact multiple contractors and arrange for estimates,
 - d. follow up repeatedly when estimates are slow to arrive,
 - e. investigate the reputation of each contractor,
 - f. negotiate a final price and start date,
 - g. become familiar with all relevant city codes,
 - h. follow the progress carefully and make certain all city codes are followed,
 - i. deal with slow progress or failure to appear when promised, and
 - j. deal with increases in the price due to unforeseen circumstances.

Hundreds of property owners would need to grapple with this challenging task. Instead of dealing with one contractor (city staff), contractors would need to repeat this process hundreds of times with property owners who are new to the process.

- 2) The cost-share component for homeowners with more than one sidewalk appears to pay for replacement with concrete only; there is no provision for brick sidewalks. This also appears to be true of the program to assist low-income homeowners. How will the issue of historic brick sidewalks be resolved? Will the homeowner eligible for either the cost-share or assistance be required to pay for the more costly brick option?
- 3) When property owners fail to repair as required by the policy, and their sidewalk is condemned and repaired by the city, will the city replace historic brick sidewalks with concrete? This would appear to be the case, although the policy is unclear.
- 4) Low-income homeowners seeking assistance must use the HUD procedure for establishing eligibility. Would this process be onerous? Could they get help from the city if the process is challenging?
- 5) Where will the funding come from for:
 - a. Repair of sidewalks that are the responsibility of the city,
 - b. Cost -sharing for homeowners with more than one sidewalk, and
 - c. Assistance for low-income homeowners.

The Administrative Policy states that “The City Manager will recommend with the annual City budget/CIP, appropriate funding” for the city’s responsibility, the cost-share component, and the financial assistance component. Will appropriate funding be funds the city has designated for improving pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure? If so, it is quite possible that most or all ped/bike funds for the next 8 years could go solely toward sidewalk repair. This is certainly not what advocates for increased funding of improvements to ped/bike infrastructure have been demanding for many years.

If the Sidewalk Hazard Repair Program Administrative Policy is to be used as a starting point, we ask that it be amended to:

- 1) guarantee the city bid price is available to **all** property owners,
- 2) identify adequate funds to guarantee that **all** HUD-qualified homeowners can get assistance to cover the **entire** cost of repair,
- 3) identify adequate funds to guarantee that **all** homeowners with more than one sidewalk receive city cost-share to cover the **entire** cost of the additional sidewalk,
- 4) clarify how the city will repair brick sidewalks that are adjacent to city property, are damaged by city infrastructure, or are funded by cost-share and HUD-qualified assistance. Brick sidewalks have never been mentioned in any policies developed by staff,
- 5) provide help upon request to applicants for HUD-qualified assistance to make certain they are able to complete the paperwork and provide documentation required to qualify, and
- 6) identify the funds that will be used to pay for;
 - a. repair of sidewalks that are the responsibility of the city,
 - b. cost sharing for homeowners with more than one sidewalk, and
 - c. assistance for low-income homeowners,

Funding for these repairs must not come from our hard-won bike/ped infrastructure funds.

Thank you for your hard work on this important issue,
Gary Webber
Facilitator, Lawrence Pedestrian Coalition