

Current Municipal Policy, Practice, and Criteria for Funding Private Sidewalk Repair and New Construction

Town of Farmington Current Policy

It is the Town's practice and criteria to provide municipal funding or partial funding for the repair or construction of sidewalks located on private property, that focuses on projects that offer substantial direct benefits to the community at large. This policy ensures that any investment of public funds in private sidewalks is justified by broad, tangible benefits to residents, such as enhanced connectivity, accessibility, and walkability.

Definition of Substantial Direct Benefit

A substantial direct benefit is defined as a tangible improvement that serves a substantial number of residents and enhances community-wide accessibility. Eligible sidewalk projects must demonstrate broad utility by, for example, connecting numerous neighborhoods to public schools, recreational facilities, trail systems, or town centers.

Projects that only benefit individual properties or merely connect one neighborhood to another without providing access to a school, recreational area, trail, or town center do not qualify as having a direct public benefit. The improvement must support inclusive, everyday use by the general public and contribute meaningfully to the municipality's pedestrian infrastructure.

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for municipal funding, a proposed private sidewalk must provide a substantial direct benefit by meeting as many of the following conditions in addition to criteria #5:

1. **Connection to a Public School**
 - The sidewalk provides a direct pedestrian route from multiple neighborhoods to a public K-12 school or public educational facility.
2. **Connection to a Recreational Area or Facility**
 - The sidewalk provides access to a public park, playground, sports field, community center, or other recreational facility that serves a broad segment of the population and encourages active, outdoor use.
3. **Connection to a Public Trail System**
 - The sidewalk links multiple neighborhoods to an existing or planned public trail, greenway, or multi-use path that supports public recreation and mobility.
4. **Enhancement of Walkability in Town Centers**
 - The sidewalk connects multiple neighborhoods to a designated town center, mixed-use zone, or commercial area, and improves safe, pedestrian-friendly access to civic and commercial destinations.
5. **Leverage of Outside Grant Funding**
 - A portion of the sidewalk repair or construction project is funded through external grants or third-party contributions, and it connects numerous neighborhoods to a qualifying public destination.

Priority is given to projects that meet more than one of the above criteria, especially those that combine broad connectivity with public destinations and external funding support.

The Town has only repaired private sidewalks when grant funds are available. In these cases, it was determined that the Town and the grant funding would bear the cost of the repairs instead of the property owner. It is the Town's practice to follow the same procedure for construction of new sidewalks as the repair of existing private sidewalks. The Town has not constructed new sidewalks in the last +/- 25 years, but has recently secured grant funding for the construction of a new sidewalk.

Note: Some locations may be deemed infeasible for new sidewalk construction due to topographic challenges, winding road alignments, or safety concerns. Even if these areas meet public benefit criteria, such conditions may render construction cost-prohibitive and therefore ineligible for funding.