



CITY OF HOUSTON

Public Works and Engineering
Department

Interoffice

Correspondence

To: Marta Crinejo
Mayor's Agenda Director

From: Dale Rudick, P.E.
Director

Date: April 13, 2015

Subject: **Items 24 and 61 - April 8, 2015 City Council
Agenda- Sidewalk Permit Fees and Award of
Contracts for Privately Funded Sidewalk Repair**

Howard Hilliard
Chief of Staff

During consideration of the above-listed Agenda Items at the April 8, 2015 City Council session, several questions were raised by various Council Members. We have taken their questions and formulated the Frequently Asked Questions list below. Please let us know if we can provide additional information or be of further assistance.

- **What is the process today to obtain a sidewalk permit? What are the costs for permitting and bonding? Which costs are going away (Agenda Item 24)?**
 - *Currently, the applicant submits plans for review and approval to Office of City Engineer. After approval, the applicant submits the plans and the "Sidewalk – Driveway Curb & Gutter – Culvert Parking Lot Permit Application," pays the appropriate costs, and pull a permit. The current cost is \$37.47 for first 100' of sidewalk, \$9.09 for each additional 100', plus an administration cost of \$27.52 per permit. However, the minimum permit cost is \$102.17. The bond amount is for \$2,000.00, which is good for one year. The actual cost of the bond varies depending on bonding agent and contractor. Under the ordinance change the permit, administration, and bond cost will not be required only if it meets certain conditions. Namely, removal and replacement of an existing an EXISTING sidewalk in an inhabited single family residence. Sidewalks through driveways will still require permit fees and a bond regardless of criteria.*
- **What will be the new process for obtaining a sidewalk permit (Agenda Item 24)?**
 - *If the sidewalk meets the requirements within the ordinance change, complete and transmit the form found on the on-line Notification of Sidewalk Panel Replacement page located on the PWE/ Planning and Development Services/Office of City Engineer website. After completion of the work, transmit the completion form found at same web location.*
- **Will other contractors be required to pull permits for sidewalk work? (Agenda Item 24).**
 - *Not as it relates to the agenda item. Any new sidewalk or reconstruction of an existing sidewalk that does not qualify under this agenda item will be required to purchase permits and have a \$2,000 bond (good for one year).*

- What are the estimated costs for the installation of a typical sidewalk under the new program (Agenda Item 61)?
 - *Estimated cost is \$75 to \$90 per linear foot.*
- Regarding the estimated cost of \$75 to \$90 per linear foot, what was the number used in the bids (Agenda Item 61)?
 - *Please see the attached worksheet representing a typical cost along with the information from the Request for Proposals. Also note this cost can vary widely based on the specific site conditions. The specific multipliers from the proposals are listed in the RCA.*
- What are the estimated costs for the installation of a typical sidewalk when self-hiring a contractor (Agenda Item 61)?
 - *It may be lower or higher, but will not have the quality control and inspection of a City-managed project.*
- When citizens can begin to utilize the installation services (Agenda Item 61)?
 - *Citizens will be able to apply through the PWE Privately Funded Sidewalk website no later than thirty days after the approval of the sidewalk construction contracts by City Council.*
- What process will citizen's utilize to access the services along with how long it would require to put those processes in place and have them ready for use (Agenda Item 61)?
 - *Process is similar to the Safe Sidewalk Program through Privately Funded sidewalk Repair website.*
- Is the PowerPoint presentation from the 10/14/14 TTI Committee meeting was still accurate (Agenda Item 61)?
 - *Yes, with the exception of the Key Milestones dates.*
- Will contractors who are awarded these sidewalk replacement construction contracts be required to pull permits (Agenda Item 61)?
 - *Yes.*
- Under the existing process, people have to file plans up front. Does that hold true with the "general permit" (which as I understand it is basically just two forms keeping the city informed of the work)? Does the schematic included with the "general permit" simply act as guidance for the contractor the homeowner hires?
 - *No. If it meets the criteria of the Ordinance changes, then no plans need to be filed. Yes, the schematic acts as general guidance.*
- As of late 2013, PWE estimated there were 4,390 miles of sidewalks in Houston, and another 3,180 miles of streets without sidewalks. It was also estimated that 50 miles of sidewalks are laid each year, most as part of a larger infrastructure repair. Are there any updated figures available?
 - *The figures are approximately 4490 miles of sidewalks and 3080 miles without sidewalks.*

- **It was mentioned that if tree roots are the cause of the problem, city parks experts would be involved to determine if an exception to concrete/asphalt standards can be applied. Is there an additional time/cost component for involving a city tree expert?**
 - *No cost, but they would have to check with the City's Urban Forester which will take extra time.*

- **Does PWE inspect all sidewalks repairs or only the ones done through the new proposed program?**
 - *If a permit is pulled, an inspection is performed. However, under this program, self-managed sidewalk replacements meeting the criteria under the Ordinance change will not have formal inspections. However, cursory inspections will be performed on a sample of the projects.*

- **The role of the bond is for the city to use the \$2,000 to fix a botched repair job? What roughly be the expected cost for a bond?**
 - *Yes the bond pays for a job which does not meet City standards. Please check with a bonding company for the cost estimate.*