Sidewalk Maintenance and Repair

Revised January 6, 2010

I. What is a property owner's responsibility for streets and sidewalks?

Streets and sidewalks are for everyone's use. They add value to private property by providing access to the property and a way to get to other places in the city.

When property is developed, property owners dedicate part of the land as "public right-of-way" for streets, sidewalks, utilities and similar public uses.

What some property owners do not realize is that they are responsible for maintaining part of the public right-of-way next to their property, including the sidewalk and planting strip, or the roadway shoulder if unimproved. Property owners are also responsible for maintaining unpaved alleys next to their property.

II. Why is sidewalk repair my responsibility?

Seattle Municipal Code, Title 15.72 requires that property owners keep the sidewalk adjacent to their property fit and safe for the purposes of public travel.

As such, property owners must repair cracks and other damage to the sidewalk as well as ensure that snow and ice do not pose a hazard to pedestrians. If the sidewalk is determined to be unfit or unsafe, the Municipal Code requires SDOT to direct the abutting property owner to fix their sidewalk.

III. When does my sidewalk need to be repaired?

A sidewalk is considered to be damaged and in need of repair in the following instances:

- The sidewalk is cracked
- There is a fault or other discontinuity greater than 1/2 inch in the sidewalk
- Any piece of the sidewalk can be moved with ordinary foot pressure,
- If in the view of SDOT the grade or slope of the sidewalk creates a concern for safe pedestrian passage.

See *Attachment 1 Sidewalk Damages that Require Repairs* to view different examples of damaged sidewalks that require repairs.

If SDOT notices that your sidewalk needs to be repaired, the damaged area of the sidewalk will be marked with paint. This is an expedient way of alerting pedestrians to the damage.

You may also notice that asphalt has been placed over cracks and uplifts on sidewalks. These "shims" are temporary in nature and are placed over cracks in order to make the damaged area safe before long-term repairs can be made.

If SDOT determines that your sidewalk needs to be repaired, you will be notified with a Street Use Warning that you need to obtain a Street Use Sidewalk repair permit.

IV. How to obtain a sidewalk repair permit

If there is an unsafe condition and you need to repair the sidewalk, you will need to apply for a Street Use sidewalk repair permit type 55.

You can apply for a permit by going to the Street Use Permit Counter located at:
Seattle Municipal Tower, 23rd Floor
700 5th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124-4996
(206) 684-5253

Alternatively, you can apply online at http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_permits_online.htm.

For more information on online permitting, please see Client Assistance Memo CAM 2105 at http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_docs.htm#CAM_general

Regardless of whether you are applying online or in person, you will need to provide the following information to obtain a street use permit:

A. Name and address of applicant and owner

B. Address of proposed site and description of the area to be repaired

C. Drawings or plan of the site

D. Start date and length of construction time

See below for permit fees for sidewalk repair. Fees for inspection time will be deducted from the required deposit.

- 100 sq. ft. and less = $172.00 inspection deposit
- 101 sq. ft. up to 500 sq. ft. = $146.00 issuance fee, $172.00 inspection deposit
- 501 sq. ft. and greater = $172.00 deposit for field review prior to issuance. Upon issuance, $146.00 issuance fee and $172.00 inspection deposit.

V. Hiring a concrete contractor

The yellow pages and internet can be used as a resource for finding Concrete Contractors. You might also ask friends for recommendations. Always ask for and check references and make sure the contractor is licensed to work in the city of Seattle as well as is bonded. If you are unsure the contractor holds a valid license, check the web at: http://www.seattle.gov/biz/ and search either by a company name or commodity. For example you can look under Concrete Work or General Contractors – Non Residential Buildings as well as other categories.

The contractor must ensure that the repaired sidewalk meets the City's current standards, including wheelchair ramps at street corners and proper drainage of the street area.

For more information see *Attachment 2 STANDARD SIDEWALK PLAN NO 420* or go to *Sidewalks Standard Plan No. 420* at: http://www.seattle.gov/util/Engineering/Standard_Plans_&_Specs/index.asp

VI. Managing Street Trees during sidewalk repair

If a tree on private property is causing sidewalk damage, owners should consult with an ISA Certified Arborist.

Street trees must often grow in a limited space between the curb and sidewalk. Street trees planted by the City are either maintained by SDOT or Parks Urban Forestry crews. Street trees planted by citizens with or without a street tree permit are the responsibility of the abutting property owner to maintain to City standards.

If your street tree is causing sidewalk damage and it is not maintained by the City, you or your contractor must get a sidewalk repair permit and arrange to meet on site with an SDOT Arborist to evaluate the tree for root pruning potential and/or to discuss alternative sidewalk repairs.

To contact the City Arborist call:

(206) 684-TREE or 684-7649
Seattle Municipal Tower, 23rd Floor

If the sidewalk damage has been caused by a street tree, once you have obtained a sidewalk repair permit from Street Use, have your contractor remove the old concrete. When the area is exposed, you should arrange a site visit by the City of Seattle arborist and the right of way inspector for an evaluation and an inspection before proceeding with the new sidewalk construction.

VI. References

A. Ordinance 65482, Relating to the construction and reconstruction of sidewalks.

B. Ordinance 108992, Amending Ord. 65482, to conform with amendments in State statutes

C. Seattle Municipal Code, Title 15, Street and Sidewalk Use

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Attachment 1 Sidewalk Damages that Require Repairs

A sidewalk lift may affect an entire panel or an isolated edge. Sidewalk lifts may be ground down if less than 1 inch or shimmed with a suitable patching material as a temporary safety measure. Broken, loose segments need to be removed and the sidewalk properly repaired.

Holes and cracking in the sidewalk can vary in size and must be filled.

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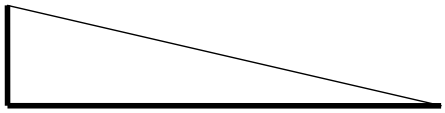
Tree Root heave created by too little growing space. By increasing the size of the tree pit, the sidewalk and the growing conditions are improved.

An asphalt shim is used to keep the sidewalk functioning and safer for pedestrians.



Maximum slope is 1:4
For temporary sidewalk shims and grinding.

Concrete grinding is an effective way to reduce sidewalk lifts that could cause tripping. Lifts of greater than 1 inch should not be ground as this reduces the thickness and strength of the sidewalk. These portions of sidewalk are best removed and replaced.

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Vegetation overgrowth can cause injury and make a sidewalk inaccessible. Seattle Municipal Code requires property owners to maintain vegetation at least 8 feet above the sidewalk, 14 feet above the curb and at least 1 foot back from the edge of a sidewalk.

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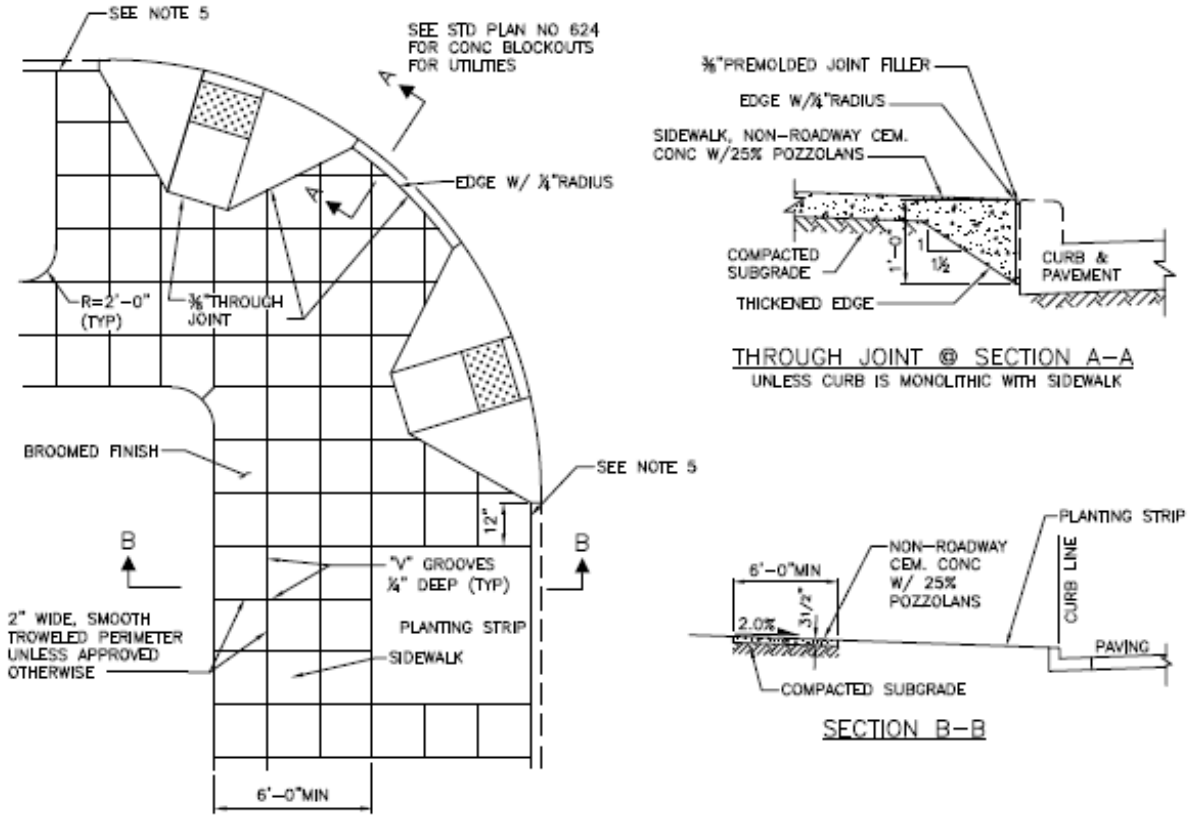
Attachment 2 STANDARD SIDEWALK PLAN NO 420

400 STREET PAVING & APPURTENANCES **STANDARD PLAN NO 420**

REV DATE: DEC 2013



TYPICAL SIDEWALK & CURB RAMP DETAIL

NOTES:

1. ⅜" THROUGH AND CONTRACTION JOINTS SHALL BE LOCATED AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 8-14.3(6).
2. "V" GROOVE SCORING SHALL MATCH PATTERN IN ADJACENT EXISTING SIDEWALK OR SHALL BE A 2' SQUARE SCORING PATTERN UNLESS OTHERWISE OTHERWISE APPROVED BY THE ENGINEER.
3. FOR CURB RAMPS, SEE STANDARD PLAN NO 422.
4. FOR TREE PITS, SEE STANDARD PLAN NO 424.
5. 12" MINIMUM BETWEEN EDGE OF RAMP WING AND PLANTING STRIP IS DESIRABLE.
6. ALL SIDEWALK SHALL BE NON-ROADWAY CEM CONC W/ 25% POZZOLANS.

REF STD SPEC SEC 8-14

City of Seattle	NOT TO SCALE	CONCRETE SIDEWALK DETAILS

2014 Edition City of Seattle Standard Plans for Municipal Construction

This Standard Plan and additional information about sidewalks can be found here:
http://www.seattle.gov/util/Engineering/Standard_Plans_&_Specs/index.htm

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