



## Getting New Sidewalks

Typically new sidewalks are installed in one of two ways: (1) the county requires a developer to install them as a [condition of development](#) or (2) the county installs them as part of a [major road improvement project](#). In both of these cases, the entire road is rebuilt, often adding travel lanes, bike lanes, sidewalks, streetlights, and signals.

Many miles of streets in urban unincorporated Washington County were developed before sidewalks were required, and traffic volumes have increased tremendously since then. What to do? No easy solutions. There are a few small programs that can pay for interim improvements in areas that are not likely to be redeveloped for years to come. These programs are:

- [Minor Betterments](#) - These are small interim projects, usually where there are sidewalks or pathways with a section missing in the middle. We try to fill in the missing section with a pathway or wide shoulder. We have a limited amount of funding for this long wish list, and we add to the list all the time.
- [Urban Road Maintenance District \(URMD\) Safety Improvements](#) – URMD funds can also be used to construct small safety improvements within the District. Typically these projects enhance pedestrian safety.
- **Grants** - The State of Oregon offers grants for bike and pedestrian improvements, and every year we apply for them. Unfortunately, there is very little money and everyone in the state is applying, so the grants are few and far between. A recent success was the [Leahy Road/Stark Street sidewalk project](#) funded by a State Safe Routes to School grant.

All of these publicly funded projects are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For projects to be funded through Minor Betterments or URMD, they are usually low cost otherwise they fall into the capital construction category and have to compete with other major road improvement projects for funding. Low cost usually means that there is adequate road width so we do not have to acquire any private property for road right-of-way; that there are minimal utility conflicts, drainage and driveway problems; and many other factors. We look for projects that generate pedestrian traffic, such as schools, transit stops, recreation centers, parks, libraries, and stores.

Additionally, property owners can choose to pay for installation of sidewalks along their property frontage. A [county right-of-way permit](#) is required. Neighborhoods can choose to form a Local Improvement District for the installation of sidewalks and spread the payments over several years.

## Maintaining Existing Sidewalks

Property owners in unincorporated Washington County are responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks adjacent to their property (ORS 368.910). A [county right-of-way permit](#) is required for sidewalk repair.

For more information, please call **503-846-ROAD** (846-7623) or e-mail [wc-roads@co.washington.or.us](mailto:wc-roads@co.washington.or.us).

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