

SIDEWALK UTILITY FAQs

The City of Edgerton plans to adopt a sidewalk utility. The sidewalk charge will appear on the December 2022 quarterly utility bill for the first time. Below are some frequently asked questions about sidewalk utilities. If you have additional questions, please call City Hall.

Is a sidewalk utility similar to a sewer and/or water utility? Yes, in many ways they are similar. Like a water utility, the user fees paid by utility customers are used to make improvements to the overall system. Like other utilities, customers will pay a regular fee as part of their quarterly utility bill.

How do we currently pay for sidewalk-related costs? Currently, sidewalk improvements are paid for through special assessments by the property owner directly adjacent to the sidewalk being repaired or replaced. A special assessment is a tax for improvements that is charged to a property owner's property tax bill.

Why not continue to use special assessments? A sidewalk fee charged through a utility is easier for land owners because the charges are small and regularly occurring. Special assessments, on the contrary, are large, relatively infrequent "lump sum payments," which make budgeting difficult for property owners and for the city. Also, some property owners, who happen to have long stretches of sidewalk (like on corner lots), endure large special assessments, which some feel is an unfair burden. With a utility, however, all property owners pay a regular fee with each utility bill, spreading the burden more fairly and also making it easier and less costly for the city to plan and execute sidewalk repairs.

What was the average special assessment when the city last undertook a comprehensive sidewalk repair program in 2017-2019? The average special assessment for all properties that had sidewalk repairs completed was \$428.

What will Edgerton's rate be? The Public Works Committee has recommended a rate of \$11/year for a single-family home, or \$2.75/quarter. The final rates will be established later this year, after a public hearing.

How are sidewalk costs allocated within a sidewalk utility? Residential properties are assessed a flat rate, referred to as an Equivalent Unit (EU). Non-residential properties will be assessed based on their street frontage, and will be a multiple of the EU.

Who will pay the user charge? Almost all property owners will pay a user fee. Only large undeveloped or undevelopable properties will not pay a fee.

Why do all properties pay a user fee? The sidewalk system is part of the city's overall transportation network. The sidewalk network benefits the entire community by providing a safe place for the movement of pedestrians, a place for recreation, and an alternative to vehicular transportation.

How will the sidewalk fees be used? The city will use the fees paid to repair and replace existing sidewalks. The city will also use the funds to pay for up to 50% of the cost of any new sidewalks that are installed. (Under the former system, first-time sidewalk installations were paid 100% by the property owner. Note that the new utility does not compel the installation of sidewalks where they currently don't exist. Those decisions are still driven by city council action, which allows for citizen input.)

Will sidewalks be repaired sooner if there is a sidewalk utility? Yes. In the past, the city has undertaken a city-wide sidewalk repair program about once every 10 to 15 years, with almost no sidewalk work being done in the intervening years. Many sidewalks have remained out of compliance for years. A sidewalk utility will

provide a steady source of funds that can be allocated as needed.

How will I be billed for the sidewalk user fee? The user fee will appear as a line item on your utility bill. It will appear for the first time on the December 2022 statement.