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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council"](#)

Date: 3/18/2025 2:31:37 PM

Subject: Memo - The State of the Sidewalk Network

Attachments: ENG - Memo - The State of the Sidewalk Network.pdf

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- This memo provides additional information on the state of the City's sidewalk network including budgets, asset condition, curb ramps, SR volumes, and public satisfaction.
- The total estimated backlog of sidewalk repairs exceeds \$500M. The current Sidewalk Rehabilitation capital budget is \$1.25M/yr, enabling the replacement of less than 1 km of sidewalk per year. To meaningfully respond to this backlog, the capital budget would need to increase to at least \$10M/yr.
- Over the last six years, the City has received nearly 10,000 service requests for sidewalk repairs. Crews respond with temporary asphalt patches, but current capital budgets are insufficient to provide permanent concrete repairs, even when the condition of the sidewalk warrants them.
- The City has made notable progress in addressing missing curb ramps thanks to increased funding from Council in recent capital plans. The historical backlog of resident curb ramp requests has been cleared, and staff are now able to design and construct new requested curb ramps within one year of receiving a request.
- As the City continues to densify, as our population ages, and as we work toward our sustainable transportation targets, the state of repair of our pedestrian infrastructure will become even more critical. Service request volumes, community feedback, and the increasing visibility of sidewalk defects suggest that public expectations for the sidewalk network are outpacing the City's ability to respond.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or [lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca](mailto:lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca).

Thanks,

Karen

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Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager (she/her)  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x m k y m/Musqueam, S wx\u817 \_wú7mesh/Squamish and s lilw ta /Tsleil-Waututh nations

## MEMORANDUM

March 18, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire  
General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: The State of the Sidewalk Network

RTS #: N/A

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In response to a request from Council on Feb 10, 2025 at a briefing for the Uplifting Communities Fund, this memo provides additional information on the City's sidewalk network including maintenance budgets, condition information, missing curb ramps, service request volumes, and public satisfaction with the current asset management approach.

### **Sidewalk Network Condition**

There is approximately 2,200km of sidewalk citywide. In 2023-24, staff completed the most comprehensive sidewalk network condition assessment ever undertaken. Inspectors walked every sidewalk and collected detailed measurements and photos of sidewalk defects, greatly improving both our asset data and understanding of the network's condition. Based on this assessment, the sidewalk network condition is as follows:

- 6% Very Poor,
- 6% Poor,
- 11% Fair,
- 21% Good,
- 46% Very Good, and
- 10% Insufficient Data.

While the majority of the network is in Good or Very Good condition, approximately 253 km (12%) of sidewalks are in Poor or Very Poor condition — requiring full reconstruction to restore them to an acceptable standard. Sidewalks in Fair or Good condition may still have localized defects that require smaller-scale repairs, but sidewalks in Poor or Very Poor condition represent the highest priority for full replacement.

The vast majority of sidewalk renewal across the City is achieved through redevelopment (as frontages are reconstructed), as part of the City's capital projects (Granville Connector, plazas, etc.), along with underground utility renewal or with larger regional projects like the Broadway Subway. While renewal of any kind is helpful to improve overall sidewalk condition, these investments rarely coincide with the areas of greatest need.

For more targeted sidewalk renewal, the City's annual Sidewalk Rehabilitation capital budget is \$1.25M — enabling the replacement of less than 1 km of sidewalk per year. The total estimated backlog of sidewalk repairs exceeds \$500M. At this rate, addressing the existing backlog is not feasible. To meaningfully respond to this backlog, the annual capital budget would need to increase to at least \$10M per year.

### **Service Requests and Tree-Related Defects**

Over the last six years, the City has received nearly 10,000 service requests for sidewalk repairs. When defects are reported, Street Operations crews respond within 7 days to install temporary asphalt fillets to mitigate immediate trip hazards. However, due to limited capital budgets, staff are unable to provide permanent concrete repairs in most cases — even when the underlying condition warrants them. The City also conducts an annual proactive trip hazard survey to identify defects and dispatch crews for temporary asphalt repairs.

Many of these requests relate to tree root heaves, which impact roughly 20% of the sidewalk network. Street trees planted decades ago, sometimes in narrow lawn boulevards, have now grown to the point that their roots or trunk flares are pushing up and breaking the adjacent sidewalk. For street trees planted more recently, this issue should be mitigated in the future, as the City's standards for soil volume, tree species selection, and streetscape design have changed in more recent years. Tree-related defects are particularly prevalent on sidewalks in Poor or Very Poor condition.

### **Curb Ramps**

The City has made significant progress in addressing missing curb ramps thanks to increased funding from Council in recent capital plans. The historical backlog of resident curb ramp requests has been cleared, and staff are now able to design and construct new requested curb ramps within one year of receiving a request.

Approximately 2,300 corners across the city still lack curb ramps. While this represents a significant accessibility challenge, the City's increased funding and improved responsiveness to requests puts us in a better position to make steady progress.

## **Public Satisfaction and Future Outlook**

The City does not currently have a direct measurement of public satisfaction related to sidewalk repairs or missing curb ramps. However, service request volumes, community feedback, and the increasing visibility of sidewalk defects suggest that public expectations are outpacing the City's ability to respond.

As the City continues to densify, as our population ages, and as we work toward our sustainable transportation targets, the state of repair of our pedestrian infrastructure will become even more critical. Meeting these growing expectations will require significant, sustained increases in capital funding for sidewalk rehabilitation and accessibility improvements.

## **Conclusion**

While the City has made notable progress in recent years — particularly in addressing curb ramp requests — the sidewalk network as a whole is facing growing repair needs and mounting public concern. Staff are committed to proactively managing these challenges with the resources available, but meaningful improvements to the overall network condition will require increased investment over current levels.

Staff would be pleased to provide a more detailed briefing to Council on this topic if desired. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or for further information.



Lon LaClaire, M.Eng., P.Eng.  
General Manager, Engineering Services

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