WHY ARE THE SIDEWALKS IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD BEING INSPECTED?

Most sidewalk trip hazards in Oregon City are reported by citizens. As a general rule, City staff does not go to neighborhoods looking for violations. City Code Enforcement staff verify hazard reports in accordance with City Code and the guidelines established through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If a sidewalk is found to be defective, the Code Enforcement Division sends notice to the abutting property owner.

WHY AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR SIDEWALK DAMAGE RESULTING FROM STREET TREES?

In Oregon City, as with most cities, property owners are responsible for upkeep of street trees and sidewalks in the public right-of-way adjacent to their property. They can also be held liable for any injuries sustained as a result of defective sidewalks.

Trees provide numerous benefits (see *Planting trees* panel). Unfortunately, many homeowners inherit tree problems when purchasing homes where an inappropriate tree species was planted. Lifting sidewalks and cracked curbs are common in neighborhoods developed in the 1990's and earlier when tree species was not regulated.

HOW DO I REPLACE MY SIDEWALK?

You may replace the sidewalk yourself or hire a licensed contractor. The City cannot make recommendations, but we suggest that you talk with neighbors or reputable organizations that deal with contractors. Whether you do the work yourself or hire a contractor, a right-of-way permit from the Public Works Department is required.

Sidewalk damage caused by tree roots

SIDEWALK REPAIR PROCEDURES

If a sidewalk repair is required, you will need to:

- Review web site resources (see *Contact Information* panel on back).
- Contact Public Works for a permit and pay the fee.
- Saw cut and remove the defective sidewalk panels. Patching is not allowed except as a temporary precaution.
- Place forms for the new panels. Call for inspection of the forms prior to pouring concrete.
- Construct new sidewalk per the City Standard Drawing 508. Residential driveways shall be built per City Standard Drawings 504 and 504A.
- Within 24 hours following the concrete pour, call Public Works for a final inspection.
- If a sidewalk panel is raised less than ½ inch, you may be able to grind the sidewalk to repair it. If it is raised more than ½ inch, full panel replacement is required.

WHAT IF I CHOOSE TO IGNORE A HAZARDOUS SIDEWALK NOTICE?

If you decide not to complete necessary sidewalk repairs, the City may contract out the work and assess enforcement and construction costs against the property owner.

WHAT IF SOMEONE IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD HAS A TRIP HAZARD OR SIDEWALK OBSTRUCTION?

You may contact Code Enforcement to investigate the concern and take action if there is a hazard.

PLANTING TREES...

WHAT IS THE URBAN FOREST?

Oregon City's urban forest includes all trees on private and public property. Currently, the City only regulates trees on public land (streets, parks, open space), within Overlay Districts, and on private land during the development review process.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING TREES IN THE URBAN FOREST?

Property owners are responsible for the upkeep of street trees in the public right-of-way abutting their property. Most routine maintenance (such as proper pruning and cleanup of debris) can be done by homeowners and helps to keep trees healthy and streets and sidewalks clear. A certified arborist is recommended for significant work such as major pruning and is required for tree removal and replacement in the right-of-way.

Planning, Code Enforcement, and Public Works departments all work together to ensure that Oregon City's urban forest canopy is maintained and enhanced.

BENEFITS AND COSTS OF TREES

Trees provide environmental benefits such as stormwater retention, shade, wildlife habitat, and reduced energy consumption. They help to keep our water and air clean and fight climate change. Trees help to bolster property values and improve the aesthetic appeal of urban streets. Street trees help to calm traffic and provide separation between vehicles and pedestrians.

If properly selected and planted with sufficient space to grow, urban trees can provide all of these benefits at little cost. However, trees do have a life span. Trees that are dead, diseased, or hazardous (as verified by a certified arborist) must be replaced.

RIGHT TREE, RIGHT PLACE

It is critical that the tree species chosen is appropriate for the planting area. The City has adopted a recommended list of street trees, organized according to width of the planter strip. This list helps prevent damage to infrastructure and prolong the life of the tree.

In certain subdivisions, street trees were planted that have outgrown their fairly narrow planter strips. The replacement trees need to be appropriate for constrained areas.

TREE REMOVAL IS A LAST RESORT!

Sometimes tree removal is necessary. A certified arborist can help decide if a tree should be removed and how to safely and efficiently remove trees when appropriate. Tree removal may be warranted in the following situations.

- The tree is assessed as irreparably hazardous.
- It causes hazardous conditions that are impossible to mitigate by other means.
- It causes crowding or harm to other trees.
- It is being replaced by a more suitable specimen.
- There is a mobility hazard that cannot be adequately repaired without removing the tree.

CONTACT INFORMATION

City of Oregon City
www.orcity.org

Sidewalk (ROW) Permits
Public Works Department
Engineering Division
625 Center Street
503.657.0891
www.orcity.org/publicworks/right-way-row-street-permits

Code Compliance
Police Department
Code Enforcement Division
320 Warner Milne Road
503.496.1559
www.orcity.org/codeenforcement

Street Trees
Community Development Department
Planning Division
221 Molalla Avenue, Suite 200
503.722.3789
www.orcity.org/planning/how-remove-and-replace-public-street-tree

Making it easy to get around actively is critical to the health, economy, and well-being of Oregon City. The City wants to protect neighborhoods against deteriorating influences in order to protect property values. The simple solution to code enforcement action is voluntary compliance. Oregon City requests your support by maintaining your property (including the adjacent sidewalk and planting strip) in compliance with City Code.

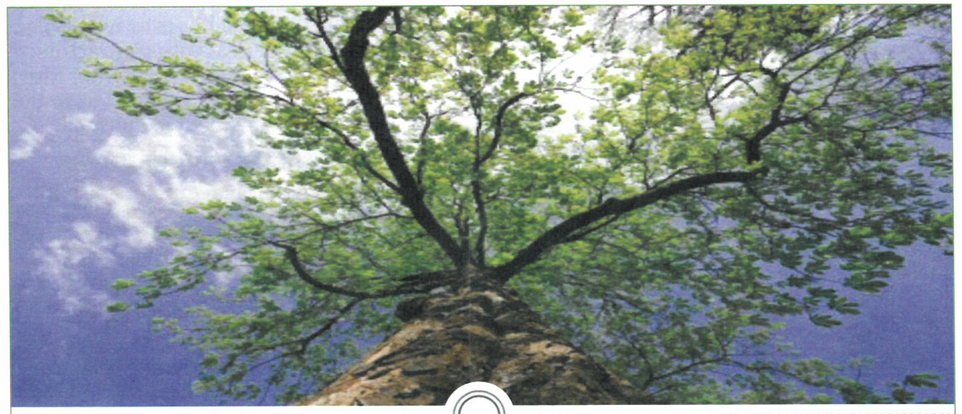
Your cooperation in keeping sidewalks safe and our community a more pleasant place to live and work is appreciated!

11/2/2017

OREGON CITY

Safe Sidewalks

City of Oregon City
What you need to know about the community amenities adjacent to your property



Oregon City Municipal Code (OCMC)

To promote safety, OCMC 12.04.032 states that the property owner will be contacted to make needed repairs when a sidewalk hazard exists. OCMC 12.08.025 also states that maintenance of street trees and planting strips is the responsibility of the abutting property owners.

This brochure is intended to answer some of the most common questions about rights and responsibilities in the public right-of-way (ROW).

What does this mean for me?

You and your neighbors have a right to expect Oregon City sidewalks to be in good condition and free of defects in order to prevent possible injury. Typically sidewalks are a safe haven for pedestrians. Well-maintained sidewalks help create a vibrant community. Unfortunately, tree roots, ground settlement, freezing weather, and other acts of nature can damage sidewalks.

Property owners are responsible for maintaining the sidewalk and planting strip abutting their property. This includes keeping sidewalks clear of debris such as leaves, ice, snow, weeds, and overgrown shrubs. Trees must be pruned to allow safe pedestrian and vehicle passage. A defective sidewalk is one that creates an unreasonable risk of danger to persons or property. For example, if a portion of the sidewalk is elevated enough to cause someone to trip, it is considered an unreasonable risk.