

**Introduction**

When Howard County adds new sidewalk segments in the County Right of Way (ROW) the community benefits from improved safety and walkability. Adjacent property owners also benefit from the infrastructure improvements, however, they should also be aware of the maintenance responsibilities.

These guidelines provide the procedure for communication with adjacent property owners regarding new sidewalk segments in the County ROW, replacing the 1999 report “Sidewalk Extensions in Established Residential Neighborhoods Policy”. The new guidelines support the vision and goals of the [Howard County General Plan](#), the [Howard County Pedestrian Master Plan](#) and the [Howard County Complete Streets Policy](#) and **are intended to result in more** positive outcomes in terms of communication to property owners, improved walkability, pedestrian safety, and quality of life in Howard County.

**Process For Community Notification or Approval**

The chart below will be used for new sidewalks in Howard County Right of Way.

Scenario		Notification or Approval	Process
1	Sidewalk segment is identified in current Pedestrian Master Plan.	Notification	Adjacent property owners are notified of the new sidewalk segment but their approval is not required. Notification is by mail at least 8 weeks before construction begins. Project description, community benefit and adjacent property owner maintenance responsibilities must all be included in the notification.  <b>The Office of Transportation will update the list of sidewalk segments identified outside of the existing Pedestrian Masterplan on an annual basis by July 1 of each year.</b>
2	Sidewalk segment is within walking distance of a Howard County Public School, as defined by <a href="#">Howard County Public School System Policy 5200</a> .		
3	Sidewalk segment is an extension requested by Howard County Government as part of a development project.		
4	Sidewalk segment has been identified by the Office of Transportation as required for safe access to a transit stop, commercial or institutional use, use, park, sidewalk, pathway, or other public facility.		
5	Sidewalk segment does not meet any of the criteria in 1 through 4 above.	Approval	Local community must express their support through a community vote to be administered by Howard County. There will be one vote per property on the affected street ( <b>generally</b> - properties on both sides of the street within 1/4 mile of the proposed sidewalk segment). 2/3 majority support of the households that submit a vote is required as expression of community support.

NOTES:

- 1) Sidewalk segments with community support will be considered through a prioritization process for the annual capital budget. **Prioritization Process is being developed as part of Complete Streets Implementation in 2020.**
- 2) **The Office of Transportation and Department of Public Works will work together to identify the properties to be included in the vote based on the parameters above and make adjustments based on the location of each project.**
- 3) Sidewalk segments **proposed** on private property will go through the existing easement process.