



Watertown City Council
Monday, January 8, 2018
7:00 p.m.

WORK SESSION AGENDA

Discussion Items:

1. DPAO 2018 Summer Concert Series
 - Joseph Rich

2. Sidewalk Program
 - Eugene P. Hayes, Superintendent of Public Works
 - Justin L. Wood, City Engineer

3. Budget Priorities
 - Sharon Addison, City Manager



CITY OF WATERTOWN
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 5, 2018

TO: Sharon Addison, City Manager

FROM: Justin Wood, City Engineer

SUBJECT: Proposal for 2018 Sidewalk Improvement Program

At the October 10, 2017 City Council Work Session, the future of the City Sidewalk Improvement Program (SWP) was discussed. City Council also inquired what benefits and challenges are associated with the City taking over maintenance responsibility of sidewalk from the abutting property owner. As a follow up to that meeting, staff researched possible programs and investigated the other topics for Council to consider for future sidewalk improvement programs.

A summary of key points made in the October 6, 2017 Memorandum;

The City of Watertown's sidewalk network consists of approximately 130 miles of concrete sidewalk, of various widths and conditions. Maintenance of the sidewalk is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, as specified in Section 53 of the City Charter.

The City's current Sidewalk Improvement Program (SWP) is budgeted for \$125,000 per year and replaces approximately 0.5 miles of sidewalk per year (< 1%), which results in a 100 year plus replacement cycle. The work is performed by a combination of DPW, Water Dept, and Parks and Recreation staff, who provide one full time employee each, and are supplemented by seasonal laborer positions. Essentially, the City starts a new sidewalk company every year, filled with employees who do not necessarily have any concrete experience, except the crew chief.

As staffing levels and resources within City departments continue to shrink, their support of the SWP is having a significant impact to core City operations. Furthermore, the efficiency and quantity of sidewalk production is decreasing due to those lack of resources. Thus staff brought the current sidewalk improvement program's scope, cycle time, and impact to City operations to Council's attention, as well as ideas to reevaluate priorities and the future of the program.

The City Sidewalk Program, as currently structured, allows City Council to create an Assessment District and specify what properties will be included for sidewalk improvements. The SWP was originally conceived upon an assessment rate to charge 75% of the cost to property owners and subsidize 25% with City funds. *The present assessment rate charged to property owners is \$5.75 per square foot (sf), which covers only about 50% of the cost.* One of the significant benefits of this program, is it allows the property owner an option to pay the full cost upfront or pay it incrementally over ten years on their property taxes.

In regards to the City taking over maintenance responsibility of sidewalks, the major implication is the exorbitant cost to do so. By Section 53 of the City Charter, maintenance responsibility (including snow removal and repair) is given to the abutting property owner.

Should Council decide to amend the City Charter to accept maintenance responsibility, the City would have to provide a snow removal service, and perform systematic improvements to keep the sidewalk network in satisfactory condition.

Most sidewalks are less than 5' wide, which means typical snow removal equipment owned by the City (bobcat, or small Jeep) cannot be used. New equipment would have to be purchased, and a snow removal program would have to be devised by Public Works, which would include the hiring of additional staff to support the program. Alternatively, the snow removal and maintenance could be contracted out. The rough order of magnitude (ROM) cost, while clearly significant, is unknown and widely variable due to weather and requires further study.

From a Sidewalk Replacement life cycle perspective, hiring dedicated City staff to replace sidewalk is less expensive than contracting out the work, especially if Council allocates higher levels of funding for larger scale improvements. As an added benefit, those same staff could be used to remove snow, although they would account for only a portion of the staff/resources needed to perform it City-wide.

The current SWP process allows City Council to establish the assessment rate as each district is created, which provides a consistent subsidy across the board, flexibility on the rate year to year, and enables City Council to direct improvements to areas of the City as they see fit.

We commonly get requests from citizens to be included in a future SWP district, however, the program's goal and focus is to make improvements to a neighborhood's sidewalk network, not spot improvements randomly across the City.

If Council so chooses, the SWP program could be designed around performing improvements to a specific neighborhood, while also including a limited number of individual requests by property owners in the proposed district. Performing work on individual requests scattered across the City will decrease efficiencies and result in higher square foot costs, but does open up the program to the City as a whole.

When considering long term strategies to improve the overall condition of sidewalks in the City of Watertown, it essentially comes down to funding levels and who does the work. As the attached spreadsheet illustrates, contracting out sidewalk improvements is more expensive than hiring additional employees to run a dedicated DPW sidewalk crew(s). Establishing a dedicated sidewalk crew(s) for 6-8 months of the year, provides extra man power to maintain infrastructure and support snow removal operations during the other 4-6 months. Depending on the staffing level increase, this could also allow expansion of the Public Square snow removal operation to cover more of the Downtown Business District and thereby improving accessibility to businesses during the winter months.

It is also important to note, the City's ADA Transition Plan is progressing into Phase 2 in 2018, to evaluate the City's facilities. An inspection of each facility will be performed to identify accessibility issues, and develop a schedule and action plan to address them.

Phase 3 of the ADA Transition Plan will be performed as early as 2019 or 2020, to inspect and record deficiencies of mainline sidewalk throughout the City. A systematic improvement plan will be developed to prioritize future sidewalk projects, which will guide the City's Multi Year Capital Sidewalk Plan.

The City will have to invest in substantial sidewalk improvements every year, on a long term basis, to satisfy the ADA Transition Plan. With a long term commitment to substantial sidewalk improvements in mind, there are savings to be realized by hiring additional staff to form a dedicated sidewalk crew versus contracting out the work.

In Summary:

- The City doesn't have the resources to support an in-house Sidewalk Program staffed by individuals from Parks and Recreation, Water Dept, and DPW.
- Assuming maintenance responsibility of all sidewalk would present a significant cost and challenge from a snow removal perspective due to the sidewalk width.
- Sidewalk Program District #12 is approximately halfway complete.
 - o The remainder will be completed in the spring of 2018, and it is recommended this work be contracted out.
- Future CDBG sidewalk projects, including Huntington Street Sidewalk Project Phases 3 and 4 (which will connect new 5' sidewalk to Factory St) will be contracted out.
- Further consideration should be given to opening up the program to a limited number of individual requests. Staff can put out a bid package for sidewalk replacement in a specific district in as well as spot requests. The Assessment Charge will be established by City Council each year in the winter before the construction season.
- The City's ADA Transition Plan will soon mandate and guide substantial long term sidewalk improvements.

Council Action Items:

1. Increase the budget from \$120,000 to \$175,000 for contracting the remainder of SWP District #12, Fiscal Year 17-18 Adopted Budget.
2. For the FY 18-19 Budget, determine how much to allocate to sidewalk improvements throughout the City, and how to provide the service.
 - o Contracting out the work is more expensive, but doesn't require a long term commitment to additional City staff to complete the work.
 - o Hiring additional City staff allows formation of a dedicated sidewalk crew for 6-8 months of the year who can then perform other duties, including snow removal, during the other months. DPW snow removal on Public Square could be expanded to cover more of the Downtown Business District with additional staff.
3. Consider what level of funding to allocate in the budget for sidewalk improvements beyond 18-19.

Cc: Eugene Hayes, Superintendent of Public Works
Jim Mills, City Comptroller
Michael Lumbis, Planning & Community Development Director
Robert Slye, City Attorney

Enc.

City of Watertown Sidewalk Program

Date: 12-26-2017

Total City Sidewalk Network (mi)	130.0
40 Year Replacement Cycle (mi)	3.3
80 Year Replacement Cycle (mi)	1.6
120 Year Replacement Cycle (mi)	1.1

Hourly Rate w/ Benefits	City	Contractor PW	
Laborer	\$ 13.13	\$ 25.00	
MEO Light	\$ 32.22	--	Grade 13F
Crew Chief	\$ 35.67	--	Grade 16F
Mason	--	\$ 36.00	

Sidewalk Program Historical Costs	Annual Cost	Sidewalk Installed (miles)	Cycle Time (years)	Cost per SF	
SWP District #9 - 2013 (4' wide, <10% 5' wide)	\$ 235,000	1.18	110	\$ 9.40	Knickerbocker School area
SWP District #10 - 2015 (4' wide)	\$ 126,000	0.69	188	\$ 8.63	Franklin-Cadwell-Flower area
SWP District #11 - 2016 (4' wide)	\$ 120,000	0.65	199	\$ 8.70	Mill-Division East area
SWP District #12 - 2017 (4' wide) 45% complete	\$ 55,000	0.18	--	\$ 14.47	Mundy-Lansing-Lynde area
CDBG Gaffney Drive - 2015 (5' wide)	\$ 125,000	0.38	--	\$ 12.46	Commerce Park to Coffeen St
CDBG Huntington St - 2017 (5' wide)	\$ 100,000	0.16	--	\$ 23.53	Phase 2, bedrock & retaining walls

Assumes 50-70% sidewalk replacement, plus driveway reconstruction, topsoil, seeding, work zone traffic control (varies depending on sidewalk condition)

Transferred (3) permanent staff & hired temp laborers

SWP District #9 - 2013, had (3) experienced DPW transfers and production was much higher as a result

SWP District #12 - 2017, Assessment Rate \$5.75/SF. Only 3,800 sf of 9,400 sf installed to date

Form ONE City Sidewalk Replacement Crew	Annual Cost			
Salary of (1) Crew Chief + 2 MEO Light	\$ 208,243			
Salary of (3) Seasonal Laborers (24 weeks)	\$ 37,814			
Materials for 25,000 SF installed sidewalk	\$ 93,678	Sidewalk Installed (miles)	Cycle Time (years)	Cost per SF
Total Cost	\$ 339,735	1.18	110	\$ 13.59

Assumes 50-70% sidewalk replacement, plus driveway reconstruction, topsoil, seeding, work zone traffic control (varies depending on sidewalk condition)

Permanent staff allows greater efficiency and production per season

Spend 6 months on sidewalk, and 6 months on other DPW priorities

Materials cost is estimated at 55% of 6 month labor cost + 20% contingency

Form TWO City Sidewalk Replacement Crews	Annual Cost			
Salary of (2) Crew Chief + 4 MEO Light	\$ 416,486			
Salary of (6) Seasonal Laborers (24 weeks)	\$ 75,629			
Materials for 50,000 SF installed sidewalk	\$ 187,355	Sidewalk Installed (miles)	Cycle Time (years)	Cost per SF
Total Cost	\$ 679,470	2.37	55	\$ 13.59

Assumes 50-70% sidewalk replacement, plus driveway reconstruction, topsoil, seeding, work zone traffic control (varies depending on sidewalk condition)

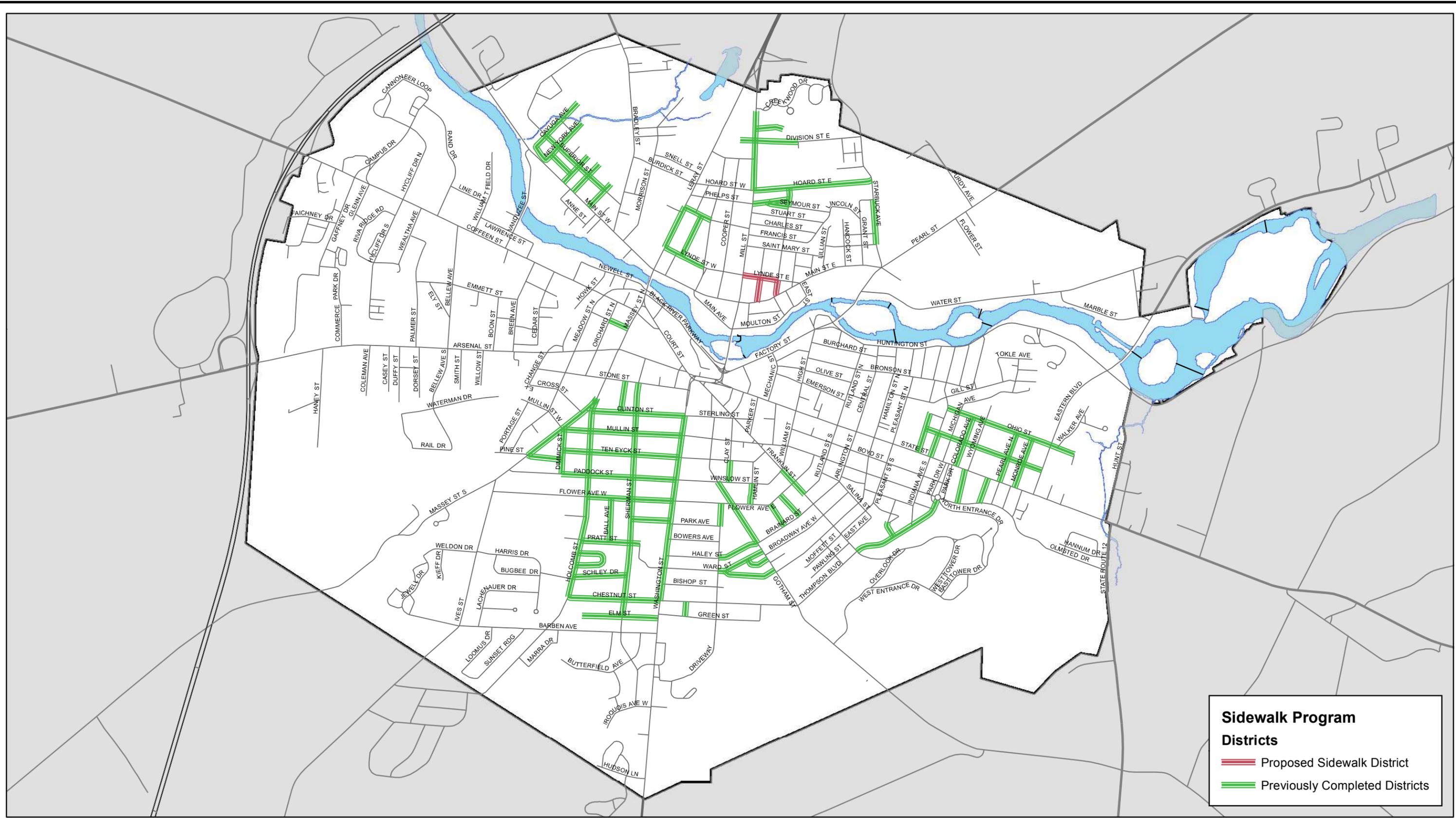
Permanent staff allows greater efficiency and production per season

Spend 6 months on sidewalk, and 6 months on other DPW priorities

Materials cost is estimated at 55% of 6 month labor cost + 20% contingency

Contracted Program	Annual Cost	Sidewalk Installed (miles)	Cycle Time (years)	Cost per SF **(estimated)
40 year cycle	\$ 1,510,080	3.25	40	\$ 22.00
55 year cycle	\$ 1,100,000	2.37	55	\$ 22.00
60 year cycle	\$ 1,006,720	2.17	60	\$ 22.00
80 year cycle	\$ 755,040	1.63	80	\$ 22.00
100 year cycle	\$ 580,800	1.25	104	\$ 22.00
110 year cycle	\$ 550,000	1.18	110	\$ 22.00
130 year cycle	\$ 464,640	1.00	130	\$ 22.00

Assumes 100% sidewalk replacement, 4' wide, plus driveway reconstruction, topsoil, seeding, work zone traffic control



Sidewalk Program Districts

- Proposed Sidewalk District
- Previously Completed Districts

Revision	Description of Revision	Date	By

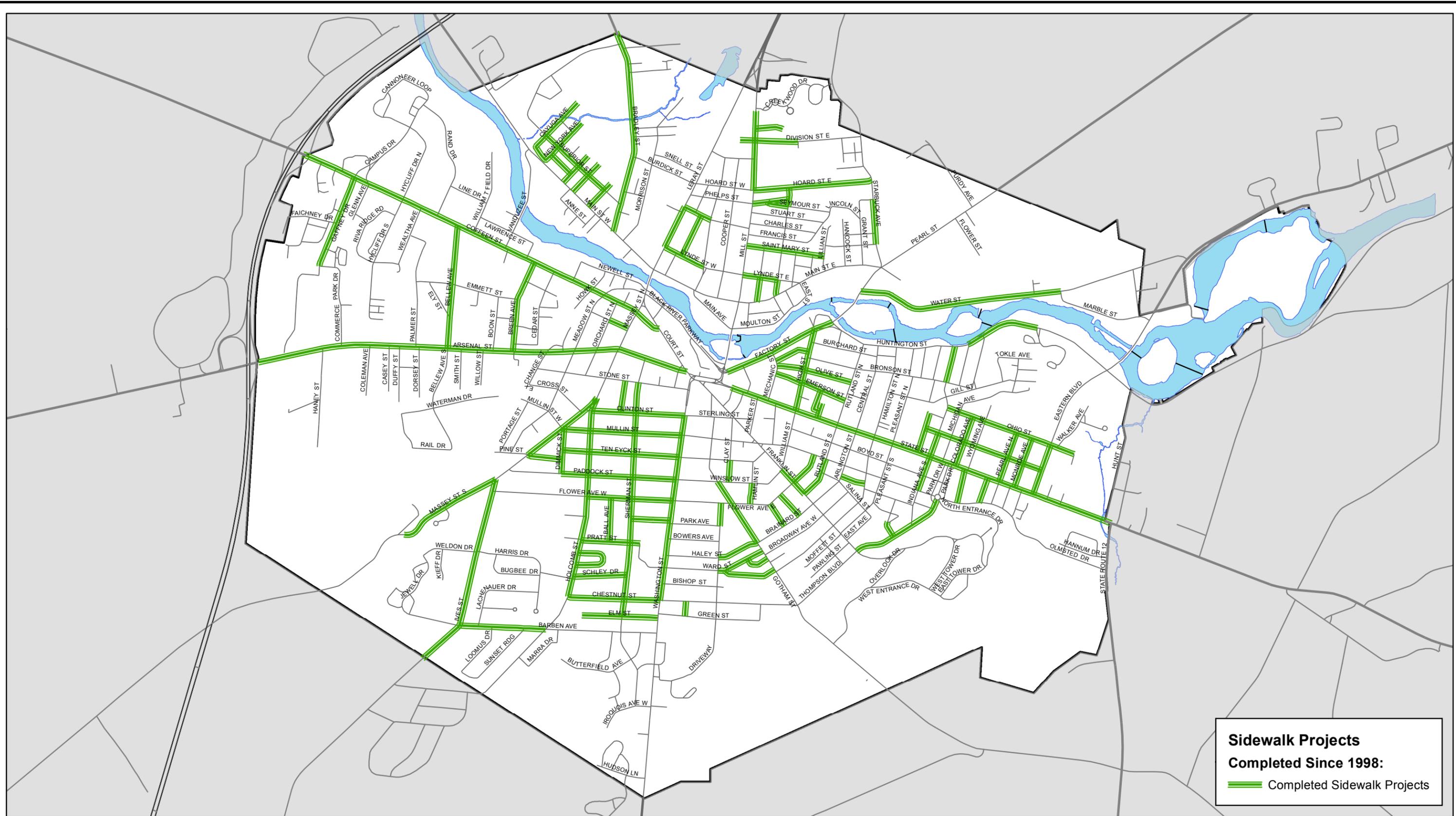
Project: **City Sidewalk Program**

Title: **2003 - 2017**

 **CITY OF WATERTOWN, NEW YORK**
GIS DEPARTMENT
 ROOM 305B, MUNICIPAL BUILDING
 245 WASHINGTON STREET
 WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601
 TEL: (315) 785-7793



City Sidewalk Program Districts	
Requested By: S.O'Connor	
Drawn By: J.Carlsson	Approved By:
Date: 11/2/2016	Date:
Scale: 1 inch = 2,000 feet	
Title: 2003 - 2017	



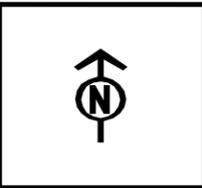
Sidewalk Projects
Completed Since 1998:
 Completed Sidewalk Projects

Revision:	Description of Revision:	Date:	By:

Project:
City of Watertown Sidewalks

Title:
Sidewalks Completed Since 1998

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GIS DEPARTMENT
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City of Watertown Sidewalks	
Requested By: S.O'Connor	
Drawn By: J.Carlisson	Approved By:
Date: 4/11/2017	Date:
Scale: 1 inch = 2,000 feet	
Title: Sidewalks Completed Since 1998	