

PRESERVE OUR SIDEWALKS

VOTE AT THE MAY 6TH TOWN MEETING

7 PM AT WACOHNAH HIGH SCHOOL

The Sidewalk Petition, Article 1 on the 2024 Town Warrant, adds a “concrete sidewalk standard” into Dalton’s construction guidelines. But why is this important...or needed?

1. The Town is currently proposing to replace sections of damaged cement sidewalk with asphalt – and also install new extended sections of asphalt sidewalk – and wants to purchase equipment to do this. According to Dalton’s most recent sidewalk survey, nearly **90% of sidewalks in Dalton are currently cement concrete**, and just over **10% are asphalt**. This petition aims to *preserve the existing classic New England character and charm of our town* by making cement concrete our preferred sidewalk standard.
2. Can there be exceptions where asphalt is used? **Yes, and passing this warrant article will not prohibit use of asphalt when necessary.** Our Highway Department can use asphalt for emergency repairs, as well as request an exception or “variance” from the Town to use asphalt for situations where concrete doesn’t make sense. In such instances, the public can attend those meetings **to hear the proposal and be part of the discussion.**

What about costs?

3. Although initial costs of cement sidewalks are higher than asphalt, **cement concrete sidewalks will actually save the Town money over time – as much as 35% in sidewalk costs over the next 25 to 50 years.** This is according to [available government research](#), MassDOT 2023 actual project costs, and historical trends in pavement materials prices (see **200ft Sidewalk Costs graph** at <https://shorturl.at/bNTW1>).
4. To save money and speed up repairs, an alternative to replacing entire lengths of sidewalk is to level existing concrete slabs that are still intact, and do targeted [replacement of damaged individual sidewalk slabs](#) with new cement concrete.

How does this petition change Dalton’s existing regulations?

5. Current Dalton regulations have *no exact specification* for sidewalk materials, but do say we should follow MassDOT standards. Interestingly, according to current, updated MassDOT practices and [written guidelines](#), **cement concrete is now the “preferred building material”** for all new MassDOT sidewalk construction. The result of this petition will be to have guidelines consistent with these existing, updated MassDOT practices.

What are some other benefits of concrete sidewalks?

6. According to the [latest independent research](#), cement concrete pavement is **more environmentally sustainable** over its total service lifecycle than asphalt pavement. Additionally, due to 2021 Executive Order 594, **lower carbon cement concrete** is now the preferred material for all MassDOT projects.
7. Concrete sidewalks add “curb appeal” to neighborhoods, and [walkability directly improves home values.](#)

Is there anything else helpful to know?

10. The [2023 BRPC ADA Transition Plan for Dalton](#) says the following about our existing, mostly concrete sidewalks: “While Dalton’s sidewalk system is in need of upgrading to meet current ADA standards, the existing system greatly contributes to the **warm and inviting atmosphere and walkability** of the town.” *The aim of concrete sidewalk warrant article is to keep Dalton’s inviting New England atmosphere and inviting walkability.*

What can I do to help?

11. Come vote at the **Town Meeting on May 6th at 7:00 PM at the Wahconah High School.** The sidewalk warrant article is the **first** item on the agenda. *Please be assured that your vote truly matters!*

Please visit www.daltoncitizen.org for more information about the concrete sidewalk petition – including a [“questions and answers” page](#). **Please note there will also be an informational session this Monday, 4/29, at Wahconah at 7 p.m.**