

Petitioning for Neighborhood Improvements



How does a petition project get started?

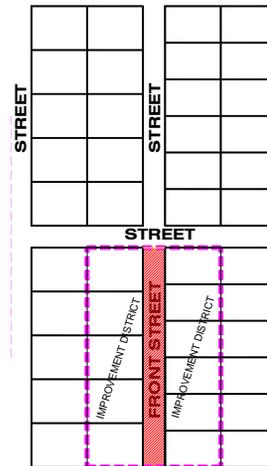
Infrastructure projects such as street paving, sewer extensions, water mains, and sidewalks which serve a neighborhood can be initiated through the petition process. The petition process is started when a citizen requests a petition for such improvements, and the project is constructed once the City receives a petition signed by the property owners within an *improvement district*.

Who pays for the improvement?

Property owners in the improvement district pay for the project. The improvement district is determined when the petition is prepared by the Engineering division of the Public Works & Utilities Department. An information sheet and a map will be mailed out with the petition showing the lots involved, and the current owners of those lots.

How much will the project cost?

A cost estimate will be prepared with the petition. In most cases, each property owner will be responsible for a share of that cost,



either on a fractional basis, lineal foot of property frontage, or relative to the square footage of his/her lot. Typically, paving projects are based on square footage with larger lots paying more than smaller lots. The information sheet included with the petition will show the estimated cost per lot.

How do the property owners pay for the project?

When the project is completed and the final cost is calculated, statements will be mailed to each property owner. At that time, the property owner may pay cash for the assessment or let it automatically be in the City's next bond sale, spread over 15 or 20 years at a relatively low interest rate. The following November, the first assessment will be on his/her tax statement listed as a special tax and will be due along with his/her property tax. The property owner may come in at any time during the next 15 or 20 years to pay off the assessment and save

the remaining interest.

Will my driveway be replaced?

For paving projects, at the beginning of construction, the Contractor will come around door to door with driveway request forms for property owners to sign. At this time, the owner decides on the width and location of his/her drive approach. Driveways are assessed to the property owner and generally cost about \$2000, but the approach work only extends from the street to the property line and does not include the entire drive. Additional driveways are allowed.

For water and sewer projects, driveways disturbed during construction are reconstructed and assessed as part of the total project cost.

What if some people can't afford the cost of improvement?

The City has a deferral program for property owners who fall within certain income guidelines. If the property owner qualifies, the assessment will be deferred and he/she will not have to pay the specials at that time. However, the assessment will stay with the property. An application for deferral is not made until the project is constructed and statements are mailed. To apply for deferral, call the Debt Management division of Finance at 268-4526.

How do I get a petition?

To request a petition (within the city limits) call the Engineering division at 268-4501.

How many signatures are needed?

A valid petition has signatures of over 50% of the number of owners in the improvement district, or signatures representing over 50% of the square footage in the improvement district.

Does everyone have to be contacted?

If there are enough signatures for a valid petition, it may be turned in to the City Clerk. Not everyone has to be contacted. The Engineering division will send a mailer to all of the owners in the improvement district if the petition is valid.

What about the people who are against the project?

If there is a valid petition, property owners who are against the project are advised to attend the City Council meeting that will be announced in the mailer they will receive. At the City Council meeting, property owners will be invited to speak - for or against the project. If the project is approved by the City Council, all owners in the improvement district will have to pay their share of the project cost, whether or not they signed the petition.

How long will it take, once the petition is turned in?

Once the petition is filed, it takes about two months for City Council approval. Upon approval, the design process may take six months to one year. After that, the actual construction time is about two to four weeks for a one-block project with paving projects taking longer than water or sewer projects.

What projects have been petitioned recently?

Engineering has information on petitions that have been filed. Call 268-4501.

What if I have more questions?

You may call Engineering at 268-4501.

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