

Barton Drive Engagement Guided Walk Summary

Oct. 1, 2024, 6-7 p.m.

- Purpose - of this guided walk is to gather community feedback, concerns, comments, questions pertaining to the 2026 Sidewalk Gap Elimination Project along Barton Drive from Brede Place to the M-14 Entrance. For the next hour we will walk and stop at different places, but feel free to raise your hand for a question so we can capture your questions or comments.
- Project Overview - We have a project overview informational video on our website where we introduce the purpose and timeline and more information on the project, we encourage all of you to watch that if you haven't already.
- Design - We have begun design so we may not be able to answer some specific questions, however once we do have a preliminary design, we will hold another meeting and gather feedback.
- Feedback - The project team will consider feedback and engineering best practice recommendations as project design continues.

Questions from the public

1) A petition was made to advocate for the installation of a sidewalk, but only a few people signed it, why is the sidewalk still being built?

Filling gaps in the sidewalk system is a goal of both Ann Arbor's Moving Together Towards Vision Zero Transportation Plan and A2Zero Climate Action Plan. Providing sidewalks where they currently do not exist improves safety, encourages non-motorized transportation, and connects our transportation network to better service people of all ages and abilities.

The city developed a prioritization system for sidewalk gaps which considers proximity to schools, transit, and other pedestrian attractors; equity; classification of adjacent road; community support/citizen requests; and safety. This system identifies the highest priority sidewalk gaps for inclusion in the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Sidewalk petitions are only one of the factors to consider. This section of Barton has a high prioritization score.

2) Speeding and racing cars on this narrow road are a big concern. Is there anything that can be done about this?

The project team will evaluate the feasibility during preliminary design.

3) Can increased and safer crossing/access points to the boardwalk/park be considered as a part of this project? Can additional measures for safety be considered, such as RRFBs, HAWK Signals, etc?

The project team will evaluate the feasibility during preliminary design.

4) If the sidewalk is placed in my backyard, who will shovel the sidewalk and maintain the retaining walls?

If sidewalk is placed in a rear lots of Hilldale between Brede Place and 352 Hilldale, the City's Public Works Department has agreed to be responsible for snow removal of sidewalk and also maintenance of the retaining wall if placed on Public Right of Way.

5) What is the sidewalk maintenance policy throughout the seasons? (grass/snow)

Clearing ice and snow from sidewalks, concrete bus stops and crosswalk ramps are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. Please visit www.a2gov.org/sidewalksnow for more details. Adjacent property owners are also responsibility from keeping grass, trees, and other vegetation from intruding onto into the public right of way or creating sight hazards. <https://www.a2gov.org/departments/police/units/Pages/Community-Standards.aspx>

6) Where will the snow removal from the road be placed? Will it be placed on the new sidewalk where I need to shovel?

Normally the snow from the road is pushed onto the nearby sidewalk, some of it might fall within the greenbelt(grass) area between the road and the sidewalk however that will depend on final design.

7) Has the City performed a cost-benefit analysis of this new sidewalk?

No. The sidewalk gap prioritization process helps to gain an understanding of the benefit of this project. Based on criteria defined by the Complete Streets Policy, the Moving Together Towards Vision Zero Transportation Plan and the sidewalk gap prioritization process, this project is being implemented because of its high priority to increase safety and provide nonmotorized options. The cost of the project will certainly be evaluated, however it will not change the priority of the project.

8) Is there a possibility that we may lose our bike lane to make space for the sidewalk?

The project team will evaluate the feasibility during the preliminary design.

9) What are the dimensions of the new sidewalk?

The new sidewalk must be a minimum of five feet wide in order to meet City of Ann Arbor requirements.

10) What will happen to utility poles, fire hydrants, and trees that are in the way of the new sidewalk?

We will do our best to design the sidewalk to avoid conflicts such as these but if they are in the way, utility poles and fire hydrants will be relocated, and trees may be removed and replaced or relocated.

11) Is a protected bike lane possible?

The project team is not considering this as a scope of this sidewalk project.

12) What is an easement, and why would the City ask me for one?

An easement is a legal agreement where a property owner grants the City the right to use a specific part of their land for a designated purpose, like running utility lines, building a road, or providing public access. For this project, an easement may be given for detouring a sidewalk around a tree or an obstacle.

13) Can the City consider additional street lighting for the new sidewalk?

Unless we add crosswalks, additional street lighting is not being considered.

14) Can the City consider a mixed-use pathway to accommodate both pedestrian and bicyclist instead of just a sidewalk?

The project team will evaluate the feasibility during the preliminary design.

15) Can the City consider an access point to Barton through the neighborhood using the DTE Easement located near 352 Hilldale Dr?

The idea of a constructing a sidewalk in the utility easements on the north side of Barton in lieu of building sidewalk along Barton Drive is not being considered by the City for multiple reasons:

- These easements are not under the City's control
- construction in these easements would likely be very difficult and expensive given the steep slopes and limited accessibility of rear lots
- considering that there are no sidewalks along Brookside/Hilldale, such a sidewalk would not lead to another pedestrian facility.
- It would not achieve the goal of increasing pedestrian connectivity along Barton Drive.

16) What considerations have been made about the environmental impacts of removing trees, and adding impervious area (contributing to stormwater runoff)?

Filling sidewalk gaps is a Key Mobility Strategy in the Moving Together Towards Vision Zero Transportation Plan (pp 4, 53-54), and sidewalks benefit everyone in the community. Filling sidewalk gaps is essential for creating a connected, accessible system of sidewalks covering all areas of the city.

Sidewalks additionally provide opportunities for people to shift their mode of travel. Ann Arbor's transportation and climate action plans have a goal of reducing single occupancy vehicle trips by 50% and create a transportation system that contributes zero emissions towards climate change. Ensuring the community has more opportunities for people to walk, bike, scooter, and take transit helps meet these goals.

These are some of the reasons that sidewalks positive impacts offset the potential negative environmental impacts.

17) Will all of the trees be replaced if they are removed?

We would like to preserve as many trees as possible. If we do need to remove a tree, our goal, at a minimum, is to replace it.

18) Will a guardrail or any other sort of protection be placed between the road and the sidewalk?

The project team will evaluate the feasibility during the preliminary design.

19) Where will the mailboxes go?

Mailboxes are placed at the same location or very near to it. Mailboxes will be accessible during construction although they might need to be temporary relocated.

20) At the M-14 and Barton intersection, is a flashing stop sign possible? How about a pedestrian signal?

The project team will evaluate the feasibility during the preliminary design.