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# Coeur d'Alene addresses sidewalks, police survey

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**COEUR d'ALENE** — Coeur d'Alene wants to save some money telling homeowners it's time to fix the sidewalks outside their properties.

The City Council is also hiring an outside agency to perform an evaluation of the police department, to give the new chief a glimpse at the department's strengths and weaknesses.

The City Council on Tuesday changed a city ordinance requiring notice be sent by certified mail to an estimated 400 property owners, advising them the sidewalks they are responsible for need repair.

"The notices have not gone out yet," said Renata McLeod, who is coordinating the sidewalk improvement project.

She said the notification is part of the plan to improve sidewalks throughout the city.

The city, she said, is recording where the bad sidewalks are.

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Deputy city administrator Jon Ingalls said during Tuesday's meeting that not only are thousands of feet of the city's sidewalks in poor shape, they are in violation of federal law.

"A lot of our sidewalks are not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act," he said.

Concrete contractor Bill Cardwell of Coeur d'Alene said the average cost to replace a sidewalk is \$5-to-\$6 per square foot.

Property owners will be required to fix the sidewalk adjacent to their house if it juts up more than a quarter-inch.

Last October, the city passed an amendment to city code, streamlining enforcement of the ordinance.

The council on Tuesday further tweaked the law, allowing notification by first-class mail. The move is expected to save the city about \$2,000.

City officials said the cost difference between regular and certified mail is about \$5 per notice, depending on weight.

McLeod said when the notices go out, they will tell the property owners what needs to be fixed. The owners are then given a year to make the repairs, after applying for a \$50 city right-of-way encroachment permit.

If the repairs are not made in that time, the city will make the repair and the bill will be added on to the next year's property taxes.

Council members also discussed hiring an Oregon firm to conduct an organizational assessment of the Coeur d'Alene Police Department, in preparation of the hiring of a new chief to replace Wendy Carpenter, who retires this summer.

City Administrator Wendy Gabriel said the assessment begins with a community telephone survey, community meetings, an internal survey of department employees, on-site assessment and interviews.

"We want to have it done in 30 days," Gabriel said, in time for the new chief to take command. "We call it 'hit the ground running.'"

Results of the assessment, by The Results Group, Ltd. of Hood River, which will cost the city about \$33,000, will become

available to the public after the new chief is hired.

The project will give the new chief information it might take a year or more to learn on the job, Gabriel said.

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