

MOTION & EXPLANATION FOR ARTICLE 1

MOTION FOR ARTICLE 1: *I move that the Town amend current regulations for the Town of Dalton by adding the following sidewalk materials specification into all appropriate sections (for example **§501-19 Curbing and Sidewalks**): "The Town of Dalton, its Highway Department, and all contractors working under the Town's direction, shall utilize cement concrete pavement, or a material with equivalent service life and appearance, rather than less durable materials such as bituminous asphalt, as the specified standard building material for all permanent public sidewalk repairs, replacements, and new installations, in all zones of the Town. Dalton sidewalk work standards shall conform to the requirements of subsection 701 of the **Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation Standard Specifications for Highways and Bridges, 2022 Edition**, or any amendment thereof, addition thereto, or substitution therefor."*

A "yes" vote authorizes a change to Dalton's sidewalk regulations to specify cement concrete as the Town's standard sidewalk material. Currently, Dalton's regulations do not specify cement concrete as the Town's standard. A "no" vote maintains the status quo, and supports proposals made by the Town to use bituminous asphalt for extended sections of new sidewalk, and to replace sections of existing damaged concrete sidewalk with asphalt. Objectives of the Town's proposals include saving the Town money in the short run, and potentially accelerating sidewalk repairs. However, there are good reasons why establishing a **cement concrete sidewalk standard** in Dalton will benefit our town:

1. **Cement sidewalks will help preserve Dalton's character and charm.** Nearly **90%** of Dalton's 16 miles of sidewalks are currently cement concrete, while just over **10%** are asphalt. Replacing a significant number of damaged cement concrete sidewalks in Dalton with asphalt will change the existing **classic New England look and feel** of our town. A "yes" vote for the cement concrete standard will better preserve Dalton's character and charm.
2. **What does MassDOT recommend?** 2018 MassDOT guidelines specify cement concrete as the **preferred surface material** for sidewalk construction in Massachusetts because of its durability. Per 2021 Executive Order 594, MassDOT also now utilizes lower-carbon concrete, enhancing **greater environmental sustainability** over the total service lifecycle of cement sidewalks.
3. **What about costs?** Initial costs of cement sidewalks are higher than asphalt. However, when long-term costs are considered, cement concrete sidewalks will actually **save the Town money over time – as much as 35% over the next 25 to 50 years**. These savings result from cement concrete having twice the durability of asphalt, and requiring less maintenance. In 2023, Dalton budgeted \$11,000 for sidewalk repairs, an annual amount insufficient to address 16 miles of sidewalks **regardless of whether concrete or asphalt is used**. We will need to better fund our sidewalks in either case.
4. **Is there an impact on home values?** Cement sidewalks add "**curb appeal**" to neighborhoods, and, according to Redfin Real Estate, higher walkability scores correlate directly with higher home values.
5. **What about places where asphalt might be a better option?** A concrete sidewalk standard **does not prohibit use of asphalt or other sidewalk materials** in Dalton. If the Highway Department believes an exception needs to be made for a new sidewalk installation or repair, a variance can be requested that triggers **public discussion** about that project. Additionally, for short-term sidewalk repairs, the use of asphalt would not require a variance.
6. **What impact is there on health and safety?** Cement sidewalks better support **Americans with Disabilities Act** accessibility standards than asphalt sidewalks, and according to government research, cement concrete surfaces have **four times the reflective brightness** (i.e. better visibility) in low-light conditions than asphalt, reducing potential trip hazard risks.

*****POWERPOINT PRESENTATION WILL HIGHLIGHT THESE SIX POINTS*****