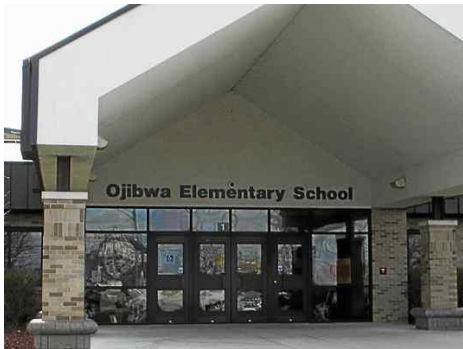


Chippewa Valley board grants Macomb key sidewalk easement



The Chippewa Valley Schools Board of Education recently approved a right-of-way easement, on the east side of Heydenreich Road and the south side of 21 Mile Road in front of Ojibwa Elementary School, to Macomb Township. Nicole Tuttle — For the Macomb Daily

By Nicole Tuttle , **For The Macomb Daily**

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A dedicated right-of-way easement on Heydenreich and 21 Mile Road in front of Ojibwa Elementary School was recently granted to Macomb Township for the sidewalk gap infill project by the Chippewa Valley Schools Board of Education. Nicole Tuttle — For the Macomb Daily

The Chippewa Valley Schools Board of Education has approved a right-of-way easement at Ojibwa Elementary School, locking in a key piece of the sidewalk project in Macomb Township.

The easement is located on the east side of Heydenreich Road and the south side of 21 Mile Road in front of Ojibwa Elementary School. Macomb Township requested the easement to construct a public sidewalk as part of the Macomb Township sidewalk gap in-fill project, according to the school district.

“That was an important section to get,” Macomb Township Engineer James Van Tiflin said.

In 2014, the Macomb Township Board of Trustees approved a pathway and sidewalk gap closure plan. The program was meant to serve as a sliding, 10-year program to acquire needed right-of-ways and construct sidewalks, closing gaps throughout the township.

This year, the township board approved increasing funding for sidewalk projects. According to estimates from Van Tiflin, the first year of the program required about \$1 million, an increase over the \$500,000 originally estimated. Estimates for year two of the project were between \$1.2 million and \$1.3 million including two bridges, according to Van Tiflin.

Priorities for the sidewalk projects are areas around schools, township parks and commercial centers. The first year of the program focuses on closing sidewalk gaps near schools at 21 Mile and Heydenreich roads and at Waldenburg Park.

The Ojibwa Elementary School easement is part of a larger group of easements the township has been working to acquire from various landowners in the same area, according to Van Tiflin.

“We are trying to build sidewalk in all four directions from that intersection to fill in gaps to allow the surrounding residential areas to connect to the school,” he said.

Although the township does not yet have all the easements needed for the project, no more are needed from Chippewa Valley Schools, Van Tiflin said. Of the 45 easements the township needed for the first year project, only about 12 remain to be acquired, the township engineer said.

“We have divided it into various gaps, probably five or six different gaps or designated gaps. We are trying to do it all as one project. We do not have all the easements needed for any one gap. The more sidewalks we can bunch together the better price per square foot we can get from a contractor,” Van Tiflin said.

He said the township would like to begin actual concrete work on the sidewalks this fall, but much is dependent on easement acquisition.

The second year of the sidewalk program will probably be split into two projects, with bridges as a separate contract.