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Walkways to get a facelift

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A new partnership between local development associations could literally pave the way for new sidewalks and sidewalk repair in the Argentine and Rosedale neighborhoods of Kansas City, Kan.

The project was created by Unified Government 3rd District Commissioner Ann Murguia, who also serves as executive director of the Argentine Neighborhood Development Association.

Also partnering in the project are the UG and the Rosedale Development Association.

"It was relatively easy to partner with RDA," Murguia said. "My two roles work together very well."

Murguia, who was elected as commissioner last April, believes her constituents elected her based on her platform of repairing and replacing the district's curbs and sidewalks.

"My goal is to see that the urban core neighborhoods of Argentine and Rosedale are positioned to enjoy their share of prosperity," Murguia said. "Kansas City, Kan.'s future is bright, but we are still in a transition period that requires help."

Under current UG policy, property owners are responsible for sidewalk repair and replacement, though a program does exist that allows property owners to only pay half of the costs, with the remaining 50 percent coming from the UG.

However, Murguia says many residents in her area aren't able to afford to pay even half of



the costs, leaving many streets in her district either without sidewalks or with sidewalks in very poor condition.

Murguia's Argentine NDA is raising money from area businesses in an attempt to pay for the property owner's portion of the bill.

"The Kansas City metropolitan area is full of people that want to make our community better, and ANDA will be seeking them out to assist with the project."

Her district, which runs south of the Kansas River from the Johnson County border on the south, Missouri on the east and in stretches as far west as 42nd Street, contains some of KCK's oldest public infrastructure.

Corporate entities that contribute at least \$20,000 to ANDA's efforts will have their name or logo stamped into the concrete at a sidewalk corner.

Murguia says the Sunderland Foundation has already contributed to sidewalk project.

"We are delighted to see a non-profit organization and government entity work together to solve a community problem," foundation president Kent Sunderland said. The foundation has nearly \$100 million in assets. Lester T. Sunderland, who served as president of the Ash Grove Cement Company, established the foundation in 1945.

"This is a creative idea that will improve the entire 3rd District," said Commissioner Don DeSeure. DeSeure serves as an at-large commissioner.

Dennis Hays, UG county administrator, also says the partnership will bring much needed investment into the area.

"This project is about bringing citizens, businesses and government together in a partnership that provides a direct and tangible benefit to the neighborhood," Hays said in a press release.

Although Murguia hopes the project will begin disbursing funds next spring, the project still has to be approved by the UG's Board of Commissioners.

"We're working on the logistics of getting this project approved, but the other commissioners have been very supportive of the project," Murguia said.