

Sidewalk Advisory Committee

Meeting #1 Summary

June 29, 2017, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Shoreline City Hall Council Chamber



Meeting Purpose

This was the first of nine meetings for the Sidewalk Advisory Committee (SAC). The scope of work for the SAC will focus on analyzing how to prioritize and fund pedestrian needs for both repair of existing sidewalks and installation of new sidewalks and alternative pedestrian treatments. This meeting aimed to kick off the SAC process by introducing SAC members to draft criteria for prioritizing sidewalk projects. Initial feedback on the draft criteria was solicited through a set of group exercises.

Welcome / Introductions

Deputy Mayor Shari Winstead welcomed and thanked all committee members. Deputy Mayor Winstead let the committee know that development of an interconnected pedestrian network is a very important issue to this Council. The committee will be making recommendations for prioritizing and funding new sidewalks, and maintaining the existing sidewalk system, as one source to help guide the City Manager who will eventually be presenting a Sidewalk Prioritization Plan to Council.

Marcia Wagoner, with 3 Square Blocks, introduced herself as facilitator and indicated she would be managing project information. Each committee member introduced themselves with brief a background and/or interests in serving on the committee.

Presentation – Overview of Shoreline Sidewalks

Shoreline staff Nora Daley-Peng (Senior Transportation Planner with a specialty in pedestrian and bicycle facility design) and Tricia Juhnke (City Engineer) presented an overview of the process and schedule. Presentation highlights included:

- The City of Shoreline inherited an incomplete network of sidewalks, previously governed by King County, after incorporation in 1995. The current Council is embracing tackling this issue as reflected in several of the Council's current goals. Citizens have regularly voiced concerns over lack of sidewalks or poor condition of existing sidewalk.
- There are two pieces of the sidewalk network: building new; and maintaining existing and/or bringing existing sidewalks up to code.
 - There are separate ways to prioritize and fund each piece.
 - The City's Transportation Master Plan (TMP), last updated in 2011, supports efforts toward the sidewalk system.
 - The Sidewalk Prioritization Plan is one of the first pieces that will be used in the next TMP update.
 - The City works with flexible standards for sidewalks as needed, and this committee will be looking at various optional facilities or treatments.
- Currently, sidewalks throughout the City are not continuous, vary in width and condition, obstruct in some places, and are not accessible or abruptly ending in other places.

- The City of Shoreline is required to have an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Transition Plan to ensure facilities are being brought up to ADA guidelines. Two pieces of this plan include:
 - Public outreach and input.
 - Prioritization. It will take years to retrofit out-of-compliance facilities in the 78 miles of existing sidewalk. Where do we start and what criteria do we use?
- Building out the remaining sidewalk in the current sidewalk network with standard sidewalks is currently estimated to cost \$186 million. The committee will look at various facility types providing alternatives to standard sidewalks and their pros and cons.
 - Standard sidewalks (5-8 feet wide with curb/gutter/5-foot amenity zone) help users to feel safer with their separation from fast moving vehicles.
 - Alternatives to these standard sidewalks are treatments such as at grade sidewalk with cast in place curb. Surface treatments such as painted areas can define or demark pedestrian space.
- The committee will look at the Safety of various treatments, analyzing the context of the road and what options are viable and safe.
 - Treatments may be safer than most people think. Most pedestrian collisions are not the result of drivers striking pedestrians walking along a roadway without sidewalk (only about 6% in Shoreline, lower than the national average of about 8%).
- The committee will be revisiting the current sidewalk prioritization process in the TMP which was based on six equally weighted criteria.
- In updating the criteria, the committee will be looking at a starting point with four major themes: Safety, Equity, Accessibility, and Walkability (the first two are common themes from Council).
- The committee will be presented more in depth information on costs to build the pedestrian system and maintenance and retrofit costs to existing.
- Future committee agendas will be dedicated to looking at funding strategies including both pay-as-you-go and debt financing, bringing in subject matter experts to speak to the group.

Question: There are currently 78 miles of built sidewalk. How many more miles would complete the current planned sidewalk network?

Answer: About 75 miles.

Question: The sidewalk built-out plan does not cover every street?

Answer: Correct. A lot of thought went into the sidewalk network in the TMP. Logical streets included major arterials and collector roads where there was connectivity to schools, transit stops, etc.

Question: Could crushed gravel paths be used?

Answer: This would not meet ADA standards in most situations, but gravel paths through “unopen” right-of-way (similar to a grass field) may be an option in places.

Question: Are there privately owned sidewalks in the City? Some sidewalks seem extra wide with planting strips.

Answer: The City has a wide variety of sidewalk. The space between the curb and sidewalk is called the amenity zone. Although the City standard for the amenity zone is 5 feet, it is wider in areas where there was more room. This amenity zone not only provides a buffer between pedestrians and traffic, it provides a place other than the sidewalk for things like utility poles and vaults, traffic signs, etc. There are privately owned sidewalk on private property such as sidewalk paths in Ballinger Commons.

Question: What does the current code for sidewalks require?

Answer: For standard development and Capital Improvement Projects, a 5-foot amenity zone and 5-foot (residential) or 8-foot (business) sidewalk is required, although there can be some exceptions.

Question: How many of the high priority ranked projects/miles in the TMP have been built to date?

Answer: Do not have the exact number, but it is negligible. Most recent sidewalk construction has been for sidewalks next to schools as the City has been able to secure some Safe Routes to School grants.

Question: Stormwater potential treatments and permeable concrete should be considerations. Will this be part of the conversation?

Answer: Agreed. There should be discussion about these opportunities. Projects should aim to get maximum use out of the right-of-way.

Question: It seems like there are other capital projects where curb ramps and sidewalk are going in. Is it in the yearly budget? For instance, the overlay project at 15th/Meridian.

Answer: Our surface preservation projects mostly have federal grant funding and are required to be brought up to standard. The City incorporates all allowable costs into the grant so that it will pay for some of the improvements. Grants generally do not pay for the sidewalk between ramps. On Meridian, to complete the project, the City used curb/gutter/maintenance dollars for the sidewalk piece.

Question: It was said the cost of building out the remaining sidewalk in the current proposed sidewalk network would be \$186 million. What is the City's annual budget?

Answer: The annual Capital Budget is about \$20 million. Overlays are over \$1 million of this, then various other projects (some grant funded). *[This was researched and after the break was clarified that the annual 2017 budget was \$86 million. Of this, \$47.5 million was Operating and \$26 million was Capital, with about \$12-\$13 million for Roads Capital.]*

Question: Does the TMP include the Sound Transit light rail stations, and does Sound Transit funding include building sidewalk?

Answer: The TMP did not prioritize around light rail. Sound Transit is responsible for building sidewalk immediately adjacent to their project. Where they are reconstructing a part of the roadway, they are responsible for bringing sidewalks to standard. There is some access mitigation funding that is targeted for other improvements and the City continues to work with Sound Transit on safe access to stations. The I-5 interchange at 145th Street and section of 145th Street from I-5 west to Aurora Avenue are two City projects, both currently under design with federal grant funding.

Project Overview and Schedule

The provided schedule lays out a work plan for the coming year. It is intended to be a living document and will continue to be updated. The schedule compares those for the ADA Transition Plan, the new Sidewalk Prioritization Plan, Sidewalk Advisory Committee (SAC) and Public Outreach, as well as Council and Board check-in meetings and presentations. The SAC will look at various topics each month including prioritization criteria, trees/sidewalks, alternative options, ADA plan, and funding.

Question: Information will be provided to the public at open houses. Is it okay for committee members to share information via other forums, such as Next Door?

Answer: It is okay to share information as long as it is made clear that it is the individual's perspective as a citizen, it is not the committee.

Question: Is any of the information considered sensitive?

Answer: Again, it is important to be clear that it is a personal message, and that an individual is not speaking on behalf of the committee. This group may wish to decide what the norm should be, but until

then, just use some caution as to how you are presenting the information. It may be best to refer people to the project webpage: shorelinewa.gov/sidewalks. People can also sign up for email alerts regarding this process at [Alert Shoreline](#) found on the City's homepage.

Question: Will meeting summaries be posted for the public?

Answer: Yes, meeting summaries and meeting materials will be posted on the project website 1-2 weeks following each meeting.

Question: When will data metrics be introduced to the process? Will it be an iterative process?

Answer: Starting tonight in the group exercise, members will be introduced to a draft set of prioritization criteria as a starting point for discussion. This will be an iterative process and these criteria will be revisited and refined.

Question: The SAC meetings are an open forum, can anyone come and give their opinions?

Answer: Due to the amount of material this committee needs to work through, guests are invited to come and observe. They can also provide written comments. They will not be allowed to address the committee.

Draft Committee Charter

Marcia introduced the draft committee charter. This group is a working committee which will be doing a fair amount of analyzing. The City will be investing in the committee by bringing in experts and staff from various City departments. Committee members will be asked to take a hard look at the information provided to augment their personal interests and experiences. Staff is on hand to support the work of the committee. The members should function with the guidelines of the charter including:

- Everyone has an equal voice. Listen patiently to each other. And be courteous while discussing or debating topics.
- Come prepared to meetings. Try to look at materials provided in advance if feasible (work will be done at meetings).
- Work toward a consensus.
 - The committee will present the City Manager with their report. The City Manager must ultimately provide Council with a Sidewalk Prioritization Plan.
 - If a consensus ultimately cannot be reached, there is an option of preparing a minority report.
- Share information but be clear you are speaking from your perspective; guide people to the project's webpage.

Group Work Session and Report-Outs

The committee was divided into four groups for an exercise to provide initial feedback on the Draft Sidewalk Prioritization Framework (with criteria in the four major themes of Safety, Accessibility, Walkability, and Equity) and to "test drive" the equity criteria against a current project using census data maps showing possible metrics for equity. Each group chose a member to report back to the entire committee. The following were comments from the groups (and sometimes individuals) on the criteria and metrics (refer to the Draft Sidewalk Prioritization Framework dated June 29, 2017 provided at this meeting):

Safety:

- Could add the density of walkers in each area as a criteria ranking. (Realizing that a lack of walkers could be the result of a lack of sidewalks.)

- Rather than just pedestrian crash history, could add overall crashes. This gives an idea of the overall safety in the area. May not want to wait to measure the safety once a pedestrian collision occurs. List more statistical data on types of crash/collision. Compare with densities.
- Specify the nature of the crashes and use more statistically significant collision data (e.g. more than one collision in five years).
- Should points be awarded for streets all the way down to 25 mph (or would this include almost all streets).
- Assign 3 points for any road 40 mph or over (if they exist without sidewalk).
- May want to measure “actual” speed on the roadway, not the posted speed limit, in order to award criteria points.
- Use street lighting or absence of street lighting for criteria.
- Need metrics for limited sight lines and visibility. Hills, corners, steep slopes, location of curb cuts, parking, and lighting.
- Criteria for speed limit and street classification seem to be redundant.
- Criteria for “improvement provides an alternative to travel along a motorized facility” should be rephrased for better clarification.
- Add criteria for population density (with more points assigned to denser areas).

Accessibility:

- Some discussion groups felt that the accessibility criteria required explicit definitions of words like “accessibility” and “pedestrian,” stating that “pedestrian” excludes wheelchairs and strollers. Committee members agreed that ADA standards should be heavily weighted when prioritizing potential sidewalk improvements.
- Instead of pedestrian facilities, call these “pedestrian and wheeled facilities.”

Walkability:

- Add a school bus route map layer and school bus stops for additional criteria.
- Using a ¼-mile radius to some of the facility criteria should be extended to ½-mile radius as that may better encompass the distance people would walk to the facility. Look at walksheds.
- Maybe instead of within ½-mile radius, use or within a 10-minute walk.
- Clarify the ¼ mile radius. Does this mean all streets within that radius get points or should it further clarify some limit for heavily trafficked pedestrian routes in that radius.
- Other destinations should be included along with parks and activity centers, such as libraries, medical facilities, group homes, apartment buildings, major pedestrian confluences, etc.
- Need criteria for where growth is expected to be in the future (including re-zoned areas).
- Metric in regard to crossings or crosswalks.

Equity (*committee members worked with the equity criteria during both exercises*):

- School age children followed by seniors may be the best indicators of need in this category. Maybe criteria should tie into facilities, for instance day care centers (2 points), facilities for people with disabilities (1 point), etc.
- Assign points for the presence of children between the ages of 0-5 because there is an increased likelihood that parents will be bringing children to daycare in strollers.
- A metric for not just where we are today, but where we are headed (is an area getting older, likely to draw younger families, etc.).
- Some of the metrics listed seem to be double counting. Are ‘community of color’ and ‘limited English speakers’ too close of a metric? Can income, color, and limited English be addressed by looking at other factors?
- Assign points for proximity to a facility that serves a community with disabilities in addition to residential communities that serve a community with disabilities.

- Meet equity goals through other metrics such as car ownership or housing type.
- Some metrics overlap, seem to have redundancies.
- Need to define thresholds (e.g. if an area is 15% children, 10% seniors, etc.).
- Look at condo/apartment density for a criteria.
- Metrics need to be weighted correctly. Framework lists school age children (should it be proximity to school instead?) at 1 point and low income at 2 points?
- Need to better define low income. More information about median household income in Shoreline would be needed to assign thresholds.

This first exercise helped illustrate some of the difficulties in creating a data-driven method to prioritize sidewalk projects that the committee will continue to work on. Members stated it is important to use consistent metrics (such as quantity or percentage) throughout the prioritization criteria. Committee members felt that outreach to groups/communities identified in the equity criteria or underrepresented communities will be important throughout this process in order to hear their voices given some limited diversity of certain groups on the Sidewalk Advisory Committee.

Closing Remarks / Next Steps

The suggestion for a walking tour was proposed. Due to limited time, it was suggested that during the next committee meeting, members brainstorm examples of deficient areas or areas where the criteria is illustrated and staff can compile these locations on a map and provide to members should they wish to go out on their own time. For instance, a member indicated a problem area where there is gravel adjacent to the travel lane that pedestrians could walk on, but cars often cut the curb onto the gravel for turning. This may be an opportunity for a cast in place curb location.

One member reminded the group that it is important to remember that even though a person may have mobility limitations, they are still mobile. One small length of sidewalk could be the difference in their freedom of mobility.

It was asked if on steep hills, ridges could be provided in pedestrian paths for increased friction. Staff responded that it would need to be ADA compliant. This type of treatment may be considered a tripping hazard.

Group members were interested in topographic maps to assess where people are more or less likely to walk. City staff will provide information to the group at a future meeting.

Next meeting is Thursday, July 27, 2017.

The group will continue work on prioritization. Staff will review the comments provided on worksheets.

An agenda will be sent to committee members a week prior to the next meeting. Committee members are encouraged to call or email with any questions.

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Project webpage: shorelinewa.gov/sidewalks