

# Sidewalk Advisory Committee

## Meeting #4 Summary

October 26, 2017, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm  
Shoreline City Hall - Conference Room 303



### Meeting Purpose

This was the fourth 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. Items for this meeting included:

- Debrief on the recent project open house.
- Funding presentations by Shoreline staff: Sara Lane (Administrative Services Director) and Tricia Juhnke (City Engineer).

### Introductions / Housekeeping

Project manager Nora Daley-Peng welcomed everyone, introduced the several Shoreline staff and consultant present, and went over the night's agenda and materials. Nora noted that the project schedule had been updated and copies were included in the materials given to SAC members.

Special thanks were given to SAC members that were able to attend the open house and engage with attendees. Thanks were also given to the group for looking at early drafts of open house materials in meeting #3 which helped the project team to create finalized versions.

### Open House Debrief

Nora started the debrief by going over the presentation from the open house. Some of the key messages included:

- The open house provided overviews of two plans.
  - First is the ADA Transition Plan which relates to the 78 miles of existing sidewalk.
  - Second is the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan. There are currently approximately 75 miles of proposed new sidewalk outlined in the City's Pedestrian System Plan, developed for the 2011 Transportation Master Plan (TMP). Since 2011, there has been a small dent in completing new sidewalk. Council has directed an update in methods for prioritizing new sidewalk projects.
- The ADA Transition Plan began in the summer of 2016 with field crews taking measurements of sidewalks and creating an inventory of current condition. This sidewalk inventory has been recently completed and crews will move on to measuring curb ramps which is expected to be completed summer 2018. The complete ADA Transition Plan is expected late 2018 or early 2019.
- Concurrently, the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan is on a shorter schedule, beginning with the first SAC meeting in summer 2017. Recommendations are scheduled to go to Council in May 2018.
- There is a rich history of how Shoreline developed into a community and developed its current sidewalk network. Some pertinent highlights:
  - While the community was unincorporated King County, Forward Thrust Funds were used to build most of the sidewalk system and plant trees.

- For the most part, trees were the wrong species (too large) for the minimal sidewalk/amenity zone widths, and have resulted in many issues we see today with uplift and/or encroachment of sidewalks.
- Shoreline incorporated in 1995. Since incorporation, some sidewalk has been constructed as a result of major capital improvement projects (Aurora Corridor is one example). In 2011, the City completed its Transportation Master Plan which included plans for identifying a complete sidewalk network.
- Currently the City is faced with an aging sidewalk system that is not a complete network and in many locations not up to ADA (American with Disabilities) standards.
- The open house presentation introduced the work that the SAC was doing, introduced the prioritization criteria of Safety, Equity, Connectivity (closing gaps), and Walkability, and briefly talked about standard sidewalk and alternative options (pinned down curb, curbsless, painted treatments, and trails).

**Question:** What were the main questions asked at the open house during Q and A?

**Answer:**

- Why was there no member from the Briarcrest neighborhood?
  - Staff replied there had been an application process, advertised in Currents, and no applications had been received from this neighborhood.
- Who is responsible for maintaining the landscaping in the amenity zone?
  - This was a multi-layered question. Not just about single family dwellings, but what about mixed use where a small business is on the ground floor with several residential stories above. It would be unlikely that either these small businesses or residents would keep tools for maintenance of this kind. City staff stated that the Shoreline Municipal Code currently states that keeping sidewalks maintained is the adjacent property owner's responsibility. The City does not have the resources to maintain all. There have been some exceptions, Aurora Avenue being one as the City would not want people in this busy right-of-way doing maintenance.
- In looking at the spectrum of sidewalk/alternative options, has the City completed safety analysis for each?
  - Staff replied that Shoreline has not conducted specific analysis, but there are case studies that supply data.
  - Data shows that most pedestrian/vehicle collisions occur when crossing, not walking along the roadway, which is not affected by the type of sidewalk treatment.
  - Staff intends to continue reviewing sidewalk options with the SAC and get more specific about how each performs.
  - If it is an arterial with higher speed, the City would construct standard sidewalk with amenity zone for separation and added safety.

**Question:** If a stretch of roadway utilized various treatments, would all meet ADA requirements?

**Answer:** Anything the City builds must be ADA compliant and meet current standards. The alternatives being discussed can be built to ADA standards.

SAC members in attendance at the open house gave their feedback of the evening including:

- People really became engaged with the exercises, leaning over the tables to review maps and talk with fellow attendees and staff.
- A comment was received that this one of the most informative open houses they had attended.
- One person had brought photos of a location with lots of questions and the SAC member wanted to hook them up with the project team but was unable to before they left. It was determined in

talking it over at tonight's SAC meeting just where the location was and it has been identified by others, so will get looked at. Possibility for next time, if staff is busy, may be good to provide materials to take down a person's name and contact info if they prefer.

- It seemed easier to engage with people after the presentation. They were more hesitant prior.
- Talked with a person who lived at Crista senior living. Had not realized that this community existed and had difficulty accessing stores or the bus due to incomplete sidewalk network and poor crossings in the neighborhood.

The project webpage has been updated with open house materials and survey (survey open until December 1, 2017). The next open house has been scheduled for March 8, 2018.

## Open House Exercise

SAC members were asked to complete the exercises that were conducted at the open house. The following feedback was shared about areas each wrote up as most in need of sidewalk/maintenance (in no particular order):

- Near Shorewood High School between 175<sup>th</sup> and 185<sup>th</sup> where there is a high concentration of apartments. School kids and lots of vehicle traffic.
- Carlyle Hall Road is a high traffic road near the community college with high volume of bikes and pedestrians. Very dark at night, not well lit.
- Off of 8<sup>th</sup> NW, near Snohomish county line between 8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Connects to Edmonds. There are speed humps but no sidewalks.
- 190<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> NW to Richmond Beach Road. Busy street used as a cut-through/connector. Students use this street. Not well lit. Safety and connectivity issues.
- 195<sup>th</sup> & Ashworth needs connector to trail.
- 198<sup>th</sup> & Meridian "lone" bus stop (no sidewalk connection).
- Stretches of Linden and Firlands that were well represented from the open house event.
- 15<sup>th</sup> between Perkins and 180<sup>th</sup>. Sidewalk only on one side. Other side cut off from commercial center unless jaywalk across busy street or take a long detour.
- 5<sup>th</sup> between 180<sup>th</sup> and 185<sup>th</sup>. Will be rebuilt eventually by Sound Transit but currently shoulder is not wide enough to safely walk on (cannot walk NB against traffic), blind curve, no safe crossing (locations where need to walk 1/4- 1/2 mile to safe crossing).
- 5<sup>th</sup> at 185<sup>th</sup>. Blind curve on 5<sup>th</sup> approaching 185<sup>th</sup>. Bus stops in areas where access is not safe. Busy street. An access to Shoreline pool.
- 12<sup>th</sup> and 155<sup>th</sup>. Near park with lots of diverse pedestrians. People accessing bus stop. Where 155<sup>th</sup> turns onto 12<sup>th</sup> there is a ditch and no sidewalk. Used as cut-through to 145<sup>th</sup>. Families, kids, elderly.
- North side of 145<sup>th</sup>, Greenwood to Aurora. Utility poles in middle of sidewalk (impedes wheelchairs).
- 15<sup>th</sup> west side from 165<sup>th</sup> to south of 163<sup>rd</sup>, raised sidewalk panels due to tree roots. In wheelchair have to turn around and cross to other side.
- Linden from 175<sup>th</sup> to 185<sup>th</sup>. High school to Fred Meyer. Compass Housing, lots of students, trucks. East side improvements needed so that people do not walk in the road. If improved as more of a neighborhood street with stronger residential character, would be less of a raceway.
- 185<sup>th</sup> between Dayton and Aurora. Sidewalk is overgrown with vegetation. Whose job is it to clear and when is it appropriate to get a work crew out there? 185<sup>th</sup> and Dayton on Happy Valley side have seen people stop traffic to help wheelchair user around blockage. Dark – speeding.
- Dayton / Carlyle Hall. Access to Shoreline Community College. Dark, speeding vehicles. No sidewalk. Abrupt bike lane.

- Truck traffic on Linden to Deseret Industries. No sidewalk.
- 5<sup>th</sup> from 165<sup>th</sup> to 175<sup>th</sup>. Narrow, lifted sidewalks. People need to access library, elementary school, and businesses along this stretch.

There was a brief discussion about the Equity criteria. Conditions such as ADA access/use as well as aged population are easily identified for this category. But equity can be an issue because people with different abilities are likely to look at it differently. How does the City look at equity and do we know enough to rank it appropriately? It was decided that all members should think more about this until the next meeting when it will be further discussed as a group.

## Sidewalk Funding Options Presentation

The first part of this discussion was presented by Sara Lane, Administrative Services Director. The current level of funding is inadequate and new sources of funding, likely a combination of two or more revenue sources, will need to be found as a dedicated sidewalk funding source. After you identify the revenue source, there are basically two methods to finance projects: pay-as-you-go and debt financing (payments over time).

### Pay-as-you-go

- Does not tie up future funds to pay for debt.
- No interest payments.
- Very clear, transparent.
- No risk of not having money for payments.

### Challenges

- Takes longer to accumulate funds and complete projects. May have to wait multiple years to get a project done.
- Inflation would increase cost of project in later years.

### Debt financing

- Can get benefits sooner.
- Generational equity – spreads out costs over life of asset.

### Challenges

- Interest / borrowing rates.
- Debt ties up future budget, future generations have less flexibility.

Some revenue sources are more suitable as pay-as-you-go and some are suitable for debt financing.

**Pay-as-you-go revenue sources** include Vehicle License Fees, Sales and Use Tax, Grants, Property Tax Levy Lid Lift, and Impact Fee. **Debt funding revenue sources** also include Vehicle License Fees, and Property Tax Voted Excess Levy, Voter Approved Vehicle License Fees, and Local Improvement Districts.

**Vehicle License Fees (VLF)** – suitable for both pay-as-you-go and debt financing.

- Could commit a portion to support debt financing.
- Council could authorize an increase from the current \$20 to \$40 for 2 years, then authorize another \$10. This would make the total VLF \$50.
- A \$20 per vehicle increase would create additional annual revenue of \$780,000 providing funding to get started with.
- Funds must be used for transportation related projects, so sidewalks would qualify.

- Shoreline residents currently see a TBD charge (Transportation Benefit District) on their annual vehicle registration for pavement improvements.
- Voted Vehicle License Fees – suitable for both pay-as-you-go and debt financing.
- Voters can approve a rate higher than the \$50 VLF, up to \$100 maximum.

**Question:** What is currently funded for sidewalks?

**Answer:** The City currently is budgeted for \$150,000 - \$160,000 for maintenance which will grow to \$200,000 over the next few years. New sidewalks have been mostly limited to projects with grant funding.

**Question:** What is the per block charge for new sidewalk?

**Answer:** Very roughly \$100,000/block.

**Sales and Use Tax** – suitable for pay-as-you-go

- Burden is not solely borne by Shoreline residents (anyone shopping in Shoreline).
- Must be voter approved. Maximum rate increase of 0.2%.
- Not so good for debt financing – if sales go down (as in a recession) may have to make operating cuts in order to pay on debt.

**Question/Comment:** Need to promote more retail in Shoreline.

**Answer:** City has an Economic Development program working to enhance this.

**Property Tax Levy Lid Lift** – suitable for pay-as-you-go

- Assessed per \$1000 of real property. Subject to \$1.60 limit. This is important because rates generally go down as real estate values increase, but if real estate values decrease then the rate goes up. During the last recession the rate did hit the \$1.60 limit.
- 50% voter approval required (simple majority).
- Could set a rate for a number of years, or ongoing.
- Rate is at \$1.31 for 2018. With a \$0.10 additional lid lift, a home appraised at \$430,000 would have increased tax of \$43/year.

**Property Tax Excess Levy** – suitable for debt financing.

- Requires voter approval at 60%.
- There is no \$1.60 limit.
- Can create debt strategies to match projects/schedules.
- Debt service (repayment of principal and interest over a particular period of time) on \$1 million would cost \$4 on average per year on 20 year debt
- Is not recession proof.

**Grants** – suitable for pay-as-you-go

- City currently goes after all funding for sidewalks -
- City has been successful in receiving funding for Safe Routes to Schools and other grants related to sidewalks.
- Not much additional is anticipated to be available.

**Impact Fees** – suitable for pay-as-you-go

- Assessed against new development projects.
- Supports projects needed due to growth – very limited application.
- Small dent.

**Question:** What about a Local Improvement District?

**Answer:** Local Improvement Districts would be set up for a specific neighborhood to pay for sidewalks in their neighborhood. These are costly to set up and can be challenged in court. Staff would not recommend.

Shoreline will likely need some combination of pay-as-you-go and debt financing to fund sidewalks.

- If \$100 million debt was voted in, increases to home owners for a 20-year bond would be \$340/year in the first year, on a 30-year bond \$276/year. To give an example of what the \$100 million could do, it would pay for the construction of the high and medium priority sidewalks from the 2011 TMP.
- An extra \$780,000 in VLF is not enough to address all of the City's sidewalk needs but would give the City a quick start and allow us to get started sooner.

In the 2016 Shoreline Citizen Survey, the #1 ranked choice (fell within the top three) for increasing revenues was the Business & Occupation Tax (B&O tax). Second was an increase in car licensing fees (it was pointed out that this may be different now given the increases seen recently for Sound Transit). The overall highest percentage for 1<sup>st</sup> choice was for issuing bonds through property tax increases.

**Question:** Are development impact fees adding to Real Estate Excise tax? Can the City add an additional tax on house sales?

**Answer:** The Real Estate Excise tax (REET) has two requirements. The first The City receives .5% REET. The first .25% of REET received is restricted to general capital facilities. The second .25% funds transportation projects. We are unable to increase the REET.

**Question:** What are options with undergrounding utilities and building out sidewalks?

**Answer:** Seattle City Light (SCL) owns electric power lines in Shoreline. There is a gray area of when this is worked into a project scope as undergrounding utilities increases the cost of a project substantially, and the cost is transferred from SCL to the rate payers of Shoreline.

**Question:** What about a Capital Campaign to fund sidewalks?

**Answer:** This option of asking individuals and businesses to pledge money has not been considered. This type of campaign would likely need to be citizen driven.

**Question:** Are we just looking at funding sidewalks in an isolated environment when there are other facilities, like parks, that citizens are interested in?

**Answer:** The City's budget book goes over the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) and talks about funded and unfunded projects. There are some competing interests with sidewalks for funding at this time, including trails to and through parks and a community center.

## Sidewalk Maintenance – Order of Magnitude Presentation

City Engineer, Tricia Juhnke, was reintroduced for the presentation on sidewalk maintenance funding. Council will begin a discussion on the maintenance of existing sidewalk at the November 20 council meeting. Council will be discussing the potential of an additional \$20 VLF.

The City must submit an ADA Transition Plan illustrating how the City intends to make its facilities ADA compliant. Standards for sidewalks include:

- A minimum width of 4 feet.
- Cross slope of less than 2%.

- No vertical or horizontal displacement (caused mainly by tree roots).
- ADA standards must also be met for curb ramps.

There are several scenarios for maintenance given the severity of the problem:

- Grind or plane small displacements.
- Remove and replace isolated sidewalk panels that are problematic.
- Full sidewalk replacement.

**Question:** Does any of this include crosswalk location or painting?

**Answer:** The City will need to look at crosswalks, and other items such as signals being ADA accessible, as part of the larger ADA Transition Plan.

Crews working this summer/fall have just completed sidewalk inspections of all 78 miles of existing sidewalk. They will be starting on curb ramps next. When the crew was at 60% completion of sidewalk inspections, the City ran some preliminary repair cost estimates. In projecting out to 100% of sidewalks, the total is estimated at \$125 million for ADA improvements.

- The bulk comes from full replacement of sidewalk for areas with less than a 4-foot width (close to \$33 million) and sidewalk with a cross-slope greater than 2% (close to \$78 million).
- City can't do this all at once, so the next exercise will be to prioritize.
- Not all of this \$125 million will be repair and replace costs. Some will be fixed through redevelopment or other projects.

The City needs to develop funding strategies for repair and maintenance. Council is clear about maintaining the sidewalks we have and the City must work to become ADA compliant. Four options for funding repairs/maintenance are similar as discussed earlier and include Vehicle License Fees (VLF), Levy Lid Lift, Voter Property Tax Levy, and Voted Sales Tax.

Staff stated that they are currently recommending starting with VLF for repair/maintenance of existing sidewalk to quickly get a revenue stream and make progress towards improvements.

- A \$20/vehicle VLF would yield \$780,000 per year which would be a significant change in funding from the present and allow the City to get started on more repairs with current staff to oversee.
- This is not necessarily a growing funding stream. People are owning fewer vehicles but there will be population growth, so it is expected this number would stay relatively the same. The City anticipates a similar base of cars for the near future.
- Once approved, VLF takes about 6 months before the City can start collecting.

**Question:** How might car owners perceive this increase on vehicle registrations seeing that a significant increase with Sound Transit has now been included?

**Answer:** We don't know how it will be perceived, but this is different from the Sound Transit fee that is based on vehicle value. This is a flat fee for a specific purpose. Some cities have voted to increase the VLF maximum of \$50. For example, Seattle is at an \$80 TBD.

Staff asked for feedback on the following:

- Is this the best funding start?
- Are there other recommendations or preferences?
- Should the City consider bonding (debt financing) for quicker results?
- Should adjacent property owners pay for fixing sidewalk?

There was discussion in regard to the property owner paying. If it is a City tree causing issues, then the City should pay. If it was something caused by the property owner (heavy vehicle, inappropriate tree

location) then there may be circumstances where the property owner should be financially responsible. Would need to consider depreciating the amount on an older sidewalk.

It was suggested there should be code enforcement for maintaining a passable sidewalk by the adjacent property owner (cutting back vegetation).

- Have a positive campaign of education/outreach to let people know this is a way they can help maintain the use for all and keep taxes down.
- Should issue warnings first. Advertise in Currents when warnings will begin.
- May want to have a target/test neighborhood to see how it works.
- Maybe neighborhood associations or other community groups (e.g. scouts) could form crews to assist those with difficulty.

It was also asked if the City could capitalize on the land grab that is occurring around the Sound Transit station areas with new zoning. Staff explained that Impact Fees (based on City ordinance) must go to growth projects. There will be no funding from Impact Fees for repairs/maintenance. But redevelopment will have to build sidewalk to City standards as they develop in that area.

SAC members commented on the VLF. If we have a good idea that this will not be the only request for funding sidewalks (maintenance and new), the City must be very careful in how this is communicated. Need to be very clear that this is just a first step to get started on maintenance, and explain the other types of possible revenue to make greater progress on repairs and/or build new sidewalk. Don't want residents to think, okay we have funded sidewalks with the VLF when there may most likely be additional asks for funding. Need to be very transparent.

SAC members were interested in just what the VLF funding would get in regard to repair/maintenance. What is the average cost per block for various repairs? Due to the meeting having gone beyond time, conversations will need to continue.

## Quick Next Steps

- Next SAC meeting is November 30 (meeting #5).
- SAC members are invited to the November 20 and 27 council meetings where existing sidewalk repair and maintenance funding will be discussed. Staff will provide an overview of those Council discussions at the November 30 SAC meeting.
- Prior to the next SAC meeting, staff will try to map out upcoming projects in the CIP that will be including pedestrian elements.
- January 25 is SAC meeting #6. There will be continued discussion of sidewalk priorities and funding options.
- The Council will be inviting the SAC to the January 29 Council Dinner Meeting (5:30 pm) to discuss sidewalks. At the SAC meeting on January 25, it would be good to identify 2-3 spokespersons to address Council and discuss talking points.

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