

Sidewalk Advisory Committee

Meeting 5 Summary

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



Meeting Purpose

The fifth Sidewalk Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting was held on November 30, 2017. The overall 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 of November 20 and 27 Council discussions on sidewalk maintenance funding and discussion of a SAC recommendation as requested by Council.
- Presentation on equity.
- Discussion of draft prioritization scorecard.
- Preparation for Council dinner meeting on January 29, 2018.

Introductions / Housekeeping

Facilitator Marcia Wagoner welcomed the group and provided an overview of the meeting agenda. Marcia reminded the SAC that the chance for residents to comment on the current sidewalk survey ends December 1. As of Monday, November 27, 178 surveys had been received with highest percentages from the North City, Parkwood, and Ridgecrest neighborhoods. Marcia briefly reviewed the schedule of upcoming meetings in early 2018.

Nora thanked the SAC for their flexibility with agenda and schedule. The project team adjusted the SAC Meeting 5 agenda to allow for more time to discuss the Council's request for the SAC's recommendation on a possible Vehicle License Fee (VLF) increase to help fund existing sidewalk repair and maintenance. Nora also noted that she anticipates the need for an additional SAC meeting(s) in 2018 in order to address all the components of the project in a timely manner (more details of additional meeting dates forthcoming).

Funding Report Back

City Engineer Tricia Juhnke reported back on the two recent Council meetings (November 20 and 27) where she had presented on the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Transition Plan and funding for sidewalk repair and maintenance. The main alternatives for funding include increasing Vehicle License Fees (VLF), sales tax increase, or levy lid lift. Staff was recommending VLF increase of \$20.

- Out of approximately 74 miles of built sidewalk, only 10.8 miles are fully ADA compliant.
 - Most of the ADA issues revolve around non-compliant cross slope, width deficiencies, and vertical displacements (i.e. lifts in sidewalks).
 - Contrary to common perception, Aurora Avenue accounts for only about 2 miles of the 10.8 compliant miles, as sections of earlier constructed segments tend to fall just short of cross slope requirements.
 - Aurora Avenue was designed to have sidewalks with compliant cross slopes at 2% or less construction, but inspectors may have missed identifying non-compliant cross-slopes (some that are barely over at 2.1%). In recent years, the tools and methods to verify cross slopes have become easier to administer.

- The City has begun mapping the deficiencies.
 - Prioritization still needs to occur.
 - There are partial areas or portions of blocks that may only need small repairs, mostly due to tree root displacement. These would be targeted repairs for those panels.
 - For cross-slope, ADA requirement is less than 2% slope. The City would consider anything greater than 3% to be of highest concern.
 - ADA requirement for sidewalk width is greater than 4 feet. The majority of sidewalks are in compliance. The City would consider anything less than 3 feet wide of highest concern.
- The City would likely address width and displacement issues first as they represent bigger gaps/discontinuity (presentation slide provides percentages for types of non-compliant issues).
- The City will generally attempt to complete all upgrades at any given site if it makes sense.
 - For instance, Meridian Avenue required ADA ramps in a certain area. It only made sense to upgrade the sidewalk between those ramps while the work was being done in the area to make a safe passage for all users between ramps.
 - The City can complete partial segments and not whole blocks if that makes sense.
- With current funding of \$180,000 - \$200,000 budgeted per year, it could take hundreds of years to complete all of the estimated \$65 - \$119 million needed for sidewalk and ramp repair.
- Staff's recommendation to City Council was for approval of an additional \$20 VLF.
 - This would support an annual budget of \$680,000 per year for sidewalk repair.
 - Could be used for pay-as-you-go or debt service.
 - This would allow the City to get a start on higher priority repairs.
 - Sidewalks have been a Council and community priority over the years.
 - If this maintenance action is addressed now, it will not have to compete with new sidewalk projects in the future.
 - If we adopt the additional VLF in 2018, staff can plan for projects in 2019.
 - If passed for January 2018, the City must wait 6 months prior to collecting (state law), so in 2018, the City could collect half of the annual revenue under this funding source.
- There is a current VLF for \$20 that goes toward street maintenance.
 - A \$20 VLF for sidewalk maintenance would be consistent with this.
 - It is an ongoing source of revenue.
- Council had some concerns for a VLF.
 - It is regressive (flat fee per car regardless of make or year).
 - Possible fee fatigue (residents seeing Sound Transit fee increases).
 - Council was split for starting now with VLF or waiting for a comprehensive funding plan for existing and new sidewalks.
- Council asked for a SAC recommendation.
- Council will decide on the VLF at the December 11, 2017 council meeting.

Tricia opened a discussion for a possible SAC recommendation, asking if members could come to a general agreement on a recommendation on whether the VLF should be approved now or if the discussion should wait until the spring and be combined with a discussion on new sidewalks. Following is a summary of discussed comments/points from the SAC, both pro and con:

- Against VLF because it does not generate enough for significant improvements.
- Councilmanic decision may create a negative public reaction and poison the well for a real solution downstream to make significant change.
- Do not like that it is regressive.
- A sales tax increase of 0.2% would better provide for ongoing repairs that will always be needed.
 - At current sales rate, this increase would produce about \$1.84 million annually.

- This is a high enough priority for citizens to support a bond levy lift and/or sales tax.
- Do funding for all (existing and new sidewalks) at one time (in one election/voting cycle).
- Could the Council approve a “temporary” VLF now to get improvements started stating that it would be lifted once voters approved a more significant funding package?
 - Answer: The Council does have the authority to initiate or end VLF.
- Approving the VLF now would show leadership to this commitment.
 - Sidewalks have been one of the City’s biggest issues since incorporation in 1995.
- There is the need for a very comprehensive public awareness / outreach plan so that Shoreline residents understand all the needs.
 - Make it very clear what the City needs to do.
 - 2011 TMP (Transportation Master Plan) addressed sidewalk enhancement needs.
- When prioritizing, listen to appropriate users to determining a starting point, i.e. find out at what slope wheelchair users start feeling uncomfortable and set that as the early threshold for repairs.
- Other cities have set or increased VLF. Sound Transit is also collecting in this manner. Seems to be a lot of negative response in the communities.
 - A 10.2% sales tax (add 0.2% for sidewalks) may be absorbed more readily. It does not show up as a line item as with VLF.
- [staff in answer to question] As part of the TBD (Transportation Benefit District) the current \$20 VLF in Shoreline all goes to the City of Shoreline. It is used for road service maintenance.
- May be logical to tax items that are used in association with sidewalks, e.g. shoes, etc., not cars.
- If sidewalks will be targeted in areas with higher density, property taxes should focus on apartments.
 - Apartments pass along tax expenses to tenants through increased rents.
- A VLF would not generate enough revenue for ongoing maintenance and repair. The general public may have a difficult time understanding this.
 - There are both the ADA/maintenance and new sidewalk needs. If voters will be faced with two funding sources in one election, as a package, there should be a strategy for how to communicate this to the public in order to successfully approve a funding package.
- Some people may be more interested in new sidewalk simply because there is nothing in many locations now.
- Go out for funding as a package – do not set up a perception of nickel and diming.
 - If separate, there may be voter confusion that they have already approved the funding.
- In favor of the VLF. Further, it seems advantageous to use the fee income for debt service on bonds to maximize the impact and make significant progress sooner.
 - Have heard some feedback that the community is weary of a large levy to expand sidewalks while the present conditions are so poor.
 - The community may be more amenable to additional taxes if the City can demonstrate immediate, tangible improvements to the system.
 - Prioritizing maintenance – and possibly minor extensions to close gaps – will be sufficient to improve citizens’ perceptions (and mobility) while holding funding to a relatively low investment per individual.
- The decision on VLF is too rushed. Would like proper messaging, fiscal analysis, and a detailed plan to back the action.
- Concerned if we use the VLF as a temporary solution.
 - When more robust funding solutions come forward, people may think they already funded sidewalks.
 - Or, they may believe the City failed at the VLF approach, thus weakening confidence for a new funding approach.
- The proposal for sidewalks should be more specific, listing the area and type of work planned.

- People want services, but usually get upset when they see the financial impact.
- Need more public education on ADA compliance requirements for repairs (ADA Transition Plan).
- Identify ways to build sidewalks cheaper (alternative treatments) and only ask for the amount of funding that is absolutely needed.
- Need to communicate to the public why the City prices out sidewalk as \$500 per linear foot when a Google search indicates \$50-\$100. There are lots of considerations including making ADA compliant and prevailing wage for examples.
- When going to the citizens, promote the sidewalk package not just as sidewalks, but also as stormwater improvements and anything else it would include.
- Demystify key financial perspectives.
- Sidewalks are about people...who are these people that use sidewalks? Tell their stories showing different uses, needs, obstacles and build a sense of community.
- Have a communication plan to pull the community together and develop a path forward.

Question: What is the schedule for the PROS Plan (Parks, Recreation and Open Space) and could this compete with sidewalk funding?

Answer: The PROS Plan is big and is mostly unfunded. A new aquatic center is the bulk of cost. Citizens will likely start organizing in 2018 with a plan to go out to vote in 2020. The project team may bring someone from the Parks Department/Park Board to a future SAC meeting to address this further.

Question: How would a property tax excess levy work?

Answer: Voters approve funding for a specific debt amount within the City's debt capacity. The City would not want to utilize all of its debt capacity at one time. We would define a plan to support our specific need and issue the debt to support the plan.

Question: To fully build out the 2011 TMP sidewalk program, the \$100M could be accomplished through a levy lift of \$340 per household per year for 20 years?

Answer: The project team will talk more about this with the SAC beginning in January. These are preliminary numbers and the City is still collecting data. Generally, preliminary estimates tend to be low. But there are other programs/projects that will build sidewalk and these need to be reflected in the totals. The City will be working to refine its ballpark figures over the next few months.

Tricia verified the following key points from the SAC to bring back to Council for the December 11 Council meeting as the majority recommendation (not unanimous):

- The VLF is too rushed – not ready for it.
- Wait for a comprehensive package.
- VLF is unlikely to be successful.

The ADA Transition Plan and the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan are on two different schedules. Staff will have to figure out if there would be any way to fit these plans together for a funding package.

Equity Presentation

Suni Tolton, Community Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, presented on how the City of Shoreline views and aims to incorporate equity in its processes in order to make sure the City is responsive and proactive in serving all of its residents.

The City's vision is to be welcoming to all and one of its core values is respect, to value and treat everyone with fairness and dignity. City Council Goal 4 calls for enhancing opportunities for connecting with the

community and Resolution 401 sends a clear statement that Shoreline is an inclusive community respecting:

- Diversity – all different groups being included.
- Inclusion – bringing people in and sharing decision making.
- Racial Equity – historical understanding of how people access institutions.

Suni illustrated the difference between equality and equity (see slide show presentation). With equality, everyone gets the same resources, but because of different starting points, may end up at varying distances from the goal. Whereas equity would address where people are at and provide the resources each needs to reach the goal.

The SAC watched “Changing the Lights” illustrating a City of Seattle creative solution for inclusion. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T0k_ydKQdEo

Suni asked the SAC for benefits provided by sidewalks:

Safety from cars – perceived safety – reduce falls/tripping – mobility – wheelchair use – walking places – alternatives to motor vehicles – health (more likely to walk) – community involvement (more likely to meet neighbors – less isolated / more opportunity – commerce (easier to get to stores) – facilitates “aging in place” (happier at home – positive aging) - equity in that not everyone drives (i.e. some depend on walking to get around).

The next question to the SAC was how do we prioritize? Where do we build first? Following are some points from that discussion including comments on how the City is communicating this process:

- Who is accessing the current methods of project communication? Not all community members would go to an open house or be able to access an online survey.
- The community outreach and input for the light rail station re-zone was big and mostly successful. Lots of information was sent out to the neighborhoods, yet there were still people who said they had never heard anything about it.
- Traditionally, there has not been an equity-based dissemination of information. Traditional methods do not reach everyone. The City is doing a dis-service to all of the community if it is missing some.
- Should start with areas that really need sidewalks (e.g. near community centers, homes for elderly, etc.).

The equity category in the sidewalk prioritization criteria shows how the City is being pro-active in identifying areas that are most in need. Currently included in the equity category are:

- Metrics that aim to target communities of people with vulnerable health.
- Metrics that aim to capture those dependent on walking and public transit.

Suni distributed an article regarding health and equity for SAC members who may be interested.

Draft Sidewalk Prioritization Scorecard and Discussion

Project Manager Nora Daley-Peng presented a sample scorecard composed of the prioritization criteria that had been discussed at prior SAC meetings. Metrics will be measured through GIS (Geographic Information System) software with US Census and other data so it will be a data-driven priority process. Nora re-iterated that the project team recognizes that any public outreach conducted could miss certain people, so criteria is being built into the process to try to identify the areas that most vulnerable user groups are dependent on. The project team assigned draft thresholds for the equity metrics based on standards and/or an expressed methodology.

- Children through 18 years of age were combined rather than putting in separate metrics (for babies and school age children).
- Older adults metric is equal to or greater than 60 based on the Older Americans Act.
- Income metric includes households less than or equal to 80% of median income based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Households with less than or equal to 80% of median income are eligible for King County Housing assistance.
- Metrics for community of color, disabilities, and limited English speakers are based on the top 20% of population density for each.

For the January SAC meeting, the project team will complete a few sample runs of this process. The 2011 Pedestrian System Plan was prioritized without metrics for safety or equity, so it is expected that there may be some new results in how projects are categorized as high, medium, and low priority.

Question: Do the age metrics identify the top 20% of population density for each designated age group (children and seniors)?

Answer: Yes

Question: How did the project team define the concentration for metrics?

Answer: The data was normalized by looking at the density on census tracts. The team took all census tracts and broke into 100 highest percentages based on real population numbers. Some census blocks are bigger, but have lower population density than some smaller census tracts. Normalizing the data around population density aims to identify areas in greatest need.

Question: Are all points in criteria prioritization created equal?

Answer: With this first pass, all metrics are worth 1 point, except for a few tiered safety metrics. After further review, points could either be changed or rolled up to the criteria level and given a higher weight if that criteria is considered to be more important than other criteria.

Question: What areas are being considered for the scorecard exercise in January?

Answer: For now the analysis will be on projects in the Pedestrian System Plan (in 2011 TMP), but based on public comment, some additional segments may be evaluated.

Question: How do we know if the scorecard is a good fit?

Answer: The project team will look for samples that fall into a high, medium, and low range. The SAC will then discuss in groups and do a “sniff test.” SAC member David described this as face validity – does it look like what it should?

Question: Which census material was used?

Answer: Believe it was based on the 2015 data, but will confirm.

Question: Could the project team create a test case by running existing sidewalk through the criteria to use some built examples as benchmarks?

Answer: The project team will prepare a pack of three scorecards (high, medium, and low) for each new and existing to use at the next SAC meeting.

There was a brief discussion on using the word “Walkability” for that set of metrics and also whether “Walkability” and “Connectivity” should be merged. It was determined that “Proximity” may be a better term than “Walkability” as its metrics are all about the distance to a place/feature. It was also believed that “Proximity” and “Connectivity” should be kept separate as they represent two types of metrics, one referring to walking from point A to point B, the other about the completeness of the pedestrian network.

January 29 Council Dinner Meeting Preparation

The SAC has been invited to attend the January 29, 2018 Council Dinner meeting. At this meeting, there should be time for 3-4 SAC members to make short 5-minute presentations followed by questions and answers, both from Council and to Council. To prepare, the project team asked for topic suggestions that could be presented and discussed. Following are those suggestions, which were arranged into four groups. SAC members present at the Meeting 5 also stated which group they may like to work with:

Scorecard (Prioritization Criteria) / Existing Sidewalk and Sidewalk Expansion

Pam, Lisa, Dustin*

Funding Options / Scale / What does success look like?

David A., Ryan, Dennis

Sidewalk Treatments / Implementation Plan / Funding Packages / Stormwater Management

Tana, Stephanie, Tim

Communications / Public Relations / Anecdotal Discoveries / List of sites for Council to walk

Rosa, Andrew, David D., Robin*

** Member was not in attendance, but expressed interest in joining the group either before or after Meeting 5.*

The project team will send out the list of topics/groups with contact information and invite those not present tonight to join a group. Nora and Catherine will provide support to these subgroups, printing materials, booking meeting rooms, etc.

Meeting adjourned.

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Project webpage: www.shorelinewa.gov/sidewalks