

Sidewalk Advisory Committee

Meeting #7 Summary

February 8, 2018, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm
Shoreline City Hall – Council Chambers



Meeting Purpose

Sidewalk Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting 7 was held on February 8, 2018 as an additional meeting to the monthly schedule. The overall scope of work for the SAC focuses on analyzing how to prioritize and fund pedestrian needs for both repair of existing sidewalks and installation of new sidewalks and alternative treatments. Items for this meeting included:

1. Debrief of January 29 Council Dinner Meeting with SAC.
2. Report back on roadway geometry and Street Light Master Plan.
3. Presentation by Eric Friedli (Parks Director) and Betsy Robertson (Chair of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services / Tree Board) on the PROS Plan (Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Space Plan).
4. Review of draft existing sidewalk prioritization criteria and group exercise/discussion.

Introduction / Housekeeping

Marcia Wagoner welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda noting that the discussion on cost estimates initially slated for tonight was moved to the next meeting in order to accommodate a better discussion on prioritization of existing sidewalks.

Debrief of January 29 Council Dinner Meeting

Nora Daley-Peng (Project Manager) thanked the SAC for a very engaging evening with the Shoreline Council. Nora forwarded compliments from the City Manager and Mayor Hall for the well run evening and thoughtful questions. Some noted highlights:

1. Council seems in agreement that the City needs to take care of existing sidewalks first and look at a whole menu of ideas for funding new sidewalks including grants, redevelopment especially in station subareas, larger roadway capital projects, and tax revenue.
2. Council expressed some interest in using cost effective alternative sidewalks treatments to build more with less money. The SAC subcommittee on sidewalk treatments will further this discussion in April.

Question: Does it seem like the Council is split on using all standard sidewalks vs. considering lower-cost sidewalk treatments in some places?

Answer: Yes, it would appear that Councilmembers fall on both sides.

Comment: It is important to understand where people are using sidewalks. Promote the value of sidewalks through social media.

Comment: There is an idea that using different types of treatments might raise equity questions in that not all neighborhoods get the same type of treatments.

1. Need to be clear that this is not the approach, rather we are considering which treatments are appropriate for each street type i.e. an arterial would always get a standard sidewalk treatment due to need for more separation when there's greater traffic volume and speed and also in relationship to greater pedestrian usage and connections to destinations.
2. Staff should dispel the notion that treatments other than standard sidewalks are a lesser treatment.

3. Sidewalks are similar to trees as represented by Tony Hamilton's (Park Dept.) earlier presentation about planting the right tree in the right spot. Use the right pedestrian facility in the right spot.

Comment: At the dinner meeting, a Councilmember indicated that not all neighborhoods have representation on the SAC (Innis Arden was mentioned). Regardless of how priority rankings of the planned sidewalk system ultimately plays out in Innis Arden or any neighborhood, it is important that Council and the public understand that the SAC members are not representing their neighborhoods. They are looking at common issues throughout the City and applying a data driven prioritization process based on criteria that reflect Council Goals and community values.

1. Nora stated that staff would be working on an FAQ (Frequently Answered Questions) to address some misconceptions and in general help build the public's understanding and awareness of the project.
2. Nora will ask the SAC for feedback on questions and answers that can be included in the FAQ at a future meeting.
3. Suggestion to limit the use of neighborhood name along with the SAC member name.

Roadway Geometry and Street Light Master Plan

City staff have internally discussed the SAC's expressed interest in addressing blind curves and dips in the road as part of the prioritization process. Not all windy streets and dips in roads are safety hazards. In fact, curves in a road sometimes help drivers to slow down and be more cautious. On the draft prioritization scorecard, the collision history metrics help identify hot spots for safety hazards.

Once there is an updated sidewalk prioritization plan and secured funding sources, the City will move toward implementing projects. One of the first steps in project scoping is conducting a field review to inform the appropriate design of the new sidewalk. It's during this phase of preliminary engineering when adjustments to roadway geometry and topography are made to accommodate the safety, access, and mobility of all users.

In following up on SAC inquiries about the presence and absence of street lights, here are some key points about street lighting and the Street Light Master Plan:

1. Street lights are certainly important to pedestrian safety. There is an elevated risk for collisions in dark conditions without adequate street lights.
2. The absence/inadequacy of streetlights at a location does not necessarily mean a sidewalk should be installed or prioritized to compensate for it. It simply means we need to install street lights.
3. The City is just starting a Street Light Master Plan to prioritize new street light installations, which will utilize some of the same criteria in the Sidewalk Prioritization Scorecard.
4. Some public information should be available in early April and when the City hosts an open house in late spring/early summer. Efforts should be wrapped up by the end of 2018.
5. Information from the master plan will help inform where the City prioritizes street light installations, and will provide Council with better information about overall need for funding based on analysis which has not been done previously.
6. Currently, the City is funded for 10 new street lights a year. At a draft level, the overall high priority need is estimated to be 450 street lights on arterial roads (this figure doesn't include lighting needs on local streets).

Presentation: PROS Plan (Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan)

Betsy Robertson (Chair of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services / Tree Board) on the PROS Plan (Parks, Recreation, and Outdoor Space Plan) and Eric Friedli (Parks Director) spoke with the SAC regarding the

City's current needs in addressing parks. Betsy voiced the importance of starting a dialogue with various constituent bases in order to work together as everyone benefits when our goals complement each other.

The process for the PROS Plan, a guiding document that will get reworked every 6 years, began in December 2015. The PROS Plan, which centers on a theme of Securing Our Foundation and Shaping Our Future, was adopted by Council in July 2017. The process worked to capture the ideas of a diverse community, engaging with residents for over 18 months, and the PROS Plan is a culmination of community ideas. In order to move the community vision and themes forward, the result was a set of eleven strategic plans or action initiatives. Some of those eleven initiatives include themes of:

- a. Building a community and aquatic center.
- b. Opportunities for connecting with nature.
- c. Support all ages and a diverse community.
- d. More public art.
- e. More park land.
- f. Maintain and enhance our urban forests.
- g. Walkability in and around our parks.

In July 2018, staff will have further materials illustrating the concepts and visualization of parks. At this time, the City will advertise for a Citizen Advisory Committee. This team of residents will assist staff in an implementation plan, reviewing costs and looking at funding options.

It would appear that there are intersecting points where both sidewalks and parks come together. Walkability and safe access are important to both groups. Big dreams come with big price tags, and to avoid voter fatigue, finding areas to work together would benefit both concerns. Even though the groups may not have competing interests, they will likely be competing for some of the same dollars, so working together may be a key.

Question: The SAC has identified trees as a big issue for maintaining sidewalks. Does Parks still want to increase the City's tree canopy?

Answer: Community feedback has been strong in maintaining/increasing tree canopy. Moving forward, all departments will be strategic in how trees are utilized in public space. The goal would be to add more canopy where the City can, but recognizing the right tree in the right place and working with departments to remove trees causing sidewalk issues.

Question: With the competition for dollars, timing will be a big issue. When does Parks plan to go to Council with a funding request?

Answer: To date, the PROS Plan has been an 18-month process in developing a set of eleven action initiatives. The Plan includes some preliminary budget ideas. The community/ aquatic center (estimated \$75 million price tag) has been identified as a project to go before voters by 2020, with an opening date of 2022. This is aggressive. There will also be other ballot measures that could be on the same ballot.

In 2014, the City hired a consultant to assess the pool. It was determined it was near the end of its operational life. The consultant provided estimated costs to keep the pool operational until 2022, and operational for an additional 15-20 years. With figures, City Council appropriated \$750,000 to hopefully last until 2022. The repairs have been completed, but there is no guarantee how long the pool will last.

The pool is on school district owned land as is the Spartan Gym. This land is near the future 185th Street light rail station which has been up-zoned. There is a real possibility that the school district will take advantage of redeveloping the property. So The City needs to find a new facility. Criteria has been developed for a new location, but a site has not yet been identified. Ideally, a central location would be

good, somewhere between 165th and 190th Streets and near the Aurora Corridor. The City has been looking into how large this facility should be to accommodate a pool, gym, recreational space, community rooms, senior space, etc. The facility is estimated around \$75 million for property acquisition and construction.

In addition to a community/aquatic center, other initiatives may be addressed in the near future. There could be an opportunity to expand some park land, addressing parks that were not included in the prior Parks levy. Thirteen parks have been identified for this list. A concept design program with some general decisions around parks and costs should be available in July 2018. Implementing these master park plans is currently estimated at around \$25 - \$30 million.

Land acquisition for new parks would likely be further in the future. With projected City growth through 2035, it would require 95 acres of additional parks and open spaces to maintain the current ratio of acres per population. This is not feasible, so it will be critical to look at various open space options.

When the citizen committee starts meeting in Fall 2018, they will need to address many questions including if \$75 million is the right facility for the City, does the City move forward to go after funding for up to thirteen additional master park plan implementations, and what is the timing/approach for additional park land? Current funding comes from various sources, including development which pays into a Parks fund. The committee will need to identify methods of securing sustainable funding, through different approaches, some that will require voter approval. There is also a countywide initiative for parks and open space that voters will be seeing on an upcoming ballot.

Question: Open spaces for the enjoyment of the public comes in many types, so why the dichotomy of looking at parks and sidewalks separately when sidewalks could be thought of as parks? Especially if there is competition of tax payer dollars. Back in November, the SAC ended up not recommending an additional VLF to start funding sidewalk repair in hopes of coming up with a comprehensive plan that did not take too many bites out of the apple. In planning for the future, are sidewalks and parks really from two separate legacies and/or is there a reason that they should be kept completely separate?

Answer: Transportation and park agencies are beginning to think differently and are showing an awareness and willingness for cross-conversations. Trees are an obvious intersection of ideas. May extend pocket park concept to incorporate midblock cut-outs with benches along sidewalks. These smaller gathering places may add significant costs to sidewalk projects.

Comment: Can include rooftops with rain gardens. Just needs to be sold to citizens that something may not be just a sidewalk, but a park facility. Bring smaller parks to people and piece them together.

Question: For community projects, can sidewalks around the parks be included as part of the park network?

Answer: Part of the question to be answered may be whether it is harder to sell one big project or two separate ones?

Question/Comment: Is the Interurban Trail transportation or open space? We should look for the connectivity in building systems, moving people from one facility to the next. It is important to maintain what we have and maybe look at sidewalks as open spaces as they make it possible to access parks.

Answer: In public surveys for the PROS Plan, the highest rated activity that people wanted in parks is facilities for walking. Sidewalks provide a controlled environment for exercise and fresh air.

Question: Is going to the public in 2020 for a community and aquatic center for \$75 million set?

Answer: It is up to Council. From Parks perspective, Parks is ready whenever as the preliminary work has been completed. Currently the City Manager's schedule shows going to the voters possibly in 2019 or 2020. Having an identified location for a future pool would be helpful to have before going to voters.

Marcia offered Bell Street in Seattle as a great example of how sidewalks can be incorporated as open space that draw people.

Presentation: Existing Sidewalk Prioritization

Tricia Juhnke (City Engineer) re-capped information on the ADA Transition Plan and presented on draft existing sidewalk prioritization which follows a discussion on new sidewalk prioritization criteria and scorecard from the previous meeting. The City is required to develop an ADA Transition Plan to make facilities and programs accessible to all users.

Question: What is a program?

Answer: These would include such things as recreation programs (Park Dept.) or coming to City Hall for a Council Meeting. Access places like parks and City facilities and even the City's website must all be a part of the plan.

The schedule for the ADA Transition Plan began before the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan and will end after the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan is finished. With different schedules, it has been a challenge to try to align elements of the two projects.

The field crews assessing / measuring current conditions finished ahead of schedule, and the project team is just now starting to evaluate the results. Scoring is preliminary and SAC input is appreciated.

With existing sidewalks assessment, the focus is on barriers. The City's draft criteria has two components: Barrier Condition Rating (BCR) and Accessibility Demand Rating (ADR). FHWA (Federal Highways Administration) provides some guidance for prioritization, but the City creates its own system of scoring. The total prioritization score = BCR*ADR

The BCR has a rating of 0 – 500 in 100 increments with 0 being compliant followed by increasing levels of severity of non-compliant elements up to 500 which is unpassable (for many users).

1. ADR is another numerical scoring based on certain demographics (employment / residential densities) and proximity to various facilities / pedestrian trip generators.
2. Although there are some similarities in developing prioritization criteria, there are some challenges in tying existing and new sidewalk criteria as they have different purposes. Existing sidewalk is all about removing barriers as these risks require repair. New sidewalk is optional and does not have to be built, but when it is, it is built to ADA compliance.
3. The BCR table is broken into attributes that contribute to the score. Attributes fall under Groups A-F with A being compliant and F unpassable (for many users). This table is also used to count the number of barriers.
4. A heat map showing areas of high to low ADR indicates the area near Costco had the highest rating, likely picking up points for being close to bus routes, transit center, park, school, City Hall, as well as density points, etc. In addition to the Aurora Corridor, a few other areas that showed more elevated numbers included an area in the NW (near library, Syre School), North City, and near Goodwill (on 145th Street).

All the criteria from the field measurements are put into the rating prioritization criteria. Tricia used three sample sites and illustrated how the rating system worked. For example, a BCR of “502” would mean that it was in Group F (unpassable) and had 2 barriers. For this exercise, ADRs were estimated. Samples showed that a site with lower BCR rate but high ADR could score higher than a site with a higher BCR score. The SAC was reminded that these scores did not necessarily indicate that an entire length of sidewalk must be removed, often it may be replacing strategic panels, grinding, etc.

In addition to the condition of existing sidewalk, the City is also analyzing crossings, pedestrian signals, curb ramps, and driveways. There will be an outreach process for various component of the ADA Plan.

Question: Does the City have flexibility with the rating system:

Answer: Yes. The rating system is preliminary and was proposed by the consultant. Each jurisdiction can decide how they will rank and move forward in making all facilities ADA compliant.

For the group exercise, Tricia asked the SAC members to review and provide feedback on the methodology of the two part scoring system, the criteria for BCR and ADR and sample site scoring, and to provide information (mark on maps) on any known routes for disabled users.

Group Exercise: Examine Existing Sidewalk Prioritization Materials

The SAC broke out into smaller discussion groups to review existing sidewalk prioritization materials which included a discussion on known routes for disabled users, feedback on the BCR (Barrier Condition Rating), concerns on the methodology behind the prioritization data, and review of some sample sites with scores. The small groups then reported back:

1. It would be helpful to include some streets on the west side as well for samples to review.
2. Consider whether the ADR points for transit and schools should be higher and in turn possibly reduce the age element. Is age needed? It carries a high point value.
3. The BCR contains a lot of data. The methodology seems to make sense, but the group did not feel qualified to make specific recommendations.
4. The sample exercises for 155th St and 165th St appear appropriately rated as both streets are currently in bad condition.
5. Concern that the ADR hot spot on 10th Ave NE is being generated from a Park-n-Ride on 10th Ave. Park-n-Rides don't serve pedestrians, rather they serve auto drivers. Should look into the data and remove any Park-n-Rides.
6. Wonder why there wasn't more of a hot spot around the Shoreline Library on 175th St and 5th Ave? Check the ADR data for government facilities to see if libraries are included.
7. Did not see an assessment category for steep slopes adjacent to existing sidewalks. This is the case of the sample site on 155th St along Parkwood Elementary.
8. On the sample site along 165th St right before Ridgecrest Elementary, the north side of the street ranked lower than the south side. Wonder if the reason for the lower score was because there was no assessment category for the combination of a steep slope with a tight turn (almost 45 degrees)? While this is a relatively new sidewalk installation, the sidewalk makes a sudden turn to navigate around a row of on-street parallel parking. The combination of the tight turn with a steep longitudinal and steep cross slope is an obstacle. Please do a follow up field check.
9. Should combinations of certain barriers or a certain threshold of numerous barriers raise the assigned group/category or rating? How can multiple barriers be captured in the prioritization? If there are 3 Group D barriers does it get bumped up to the same level as a Group F? Work at a way to properly score areas with multiple barriers in any given group as opposed to just one in the group.

10. As the group was marking known areas with disabled users, it was noted that just because a disabled person has not been seen using a facility does not mean that there are no such people that could benefit from improvements. They are not out there because there are currently not the right conditions for them to get around.
11. The King County Housing Authority may indicate some isolated populations. "Invisible" people who need good infrastructure to become mobile.
12. Consider adult family homes which may have a demand that is not captured.
13. The BCR uses a lot of technical terms and/or industry standards. Include a glossary. What is meant by discontinuity? PAR?
14. It is understood that the methodology is trying to develop a scale of numbers that tells a story. But arithmetic embodies the assumption that the pieces are not correlated (orthogonality), and if there is a trend, simply multiplying might skew results.
15. A numeric result invites inappropriate comparisons. There may be a problem with perception that if an area has twice the score of another area it is twice as bad which is not the case. May want to take groups of numeric ratings and assign text to tell a better story, e.g. anything 2000+ should be addressed right away; next group of ratings addressed in year X, etc.
16. The sample streets shown were somewhat in the same vicinity. Would like to see some other samples spread throughout the City, including existing sidewalk in front of the QFC on Richmond Beach Road.

Tricia wrapped up the group discussion with her appreciation for the great comments. Staff is still trying to digest this information, as it is just becoming available. The SAC was encouraged to forward any additional thoughts they have prior to the next meeting.

Additional Comments on Maps / Worksheets

1. It appears a short block can have several different ratings. How are ratings across multiple groups applied, or is each small section on one side of the street never combined with adjacent scores?
2. There seems to be no consideration for negotiating a downhill slope with turn.
3. Missing accounting for risks directly adjacent to PAR (e.g. severe drop offs at edge of sidewalk).
4. At what point might a grade >5% be considered as unpassable?
5. Group D, reword "Is sidewalk grade 5% or less? (if NO)" Just state what gets points, e.g., "Sidewalk grade is greater than 5%."
6. Slope of >5% with constrained width of <36 inches is unpassable to wheelchair but these combinations are not taken into account.
7. Define "damaged" panel in Group F.
8. Define "all elements" non-compliant.
9. Under Group D, what is "Other"? Whose definition? Ad hoc?
10. Define grade breaks (Group D).
11. Under Group C, rather than ask question. "Is utility lid slip resistant?" state "Utility lid is not slip resistant" (as this is what points will be awarded for).
12. Why does Group A have an extensive list of separate average sidewalk widths? Why not just 4.1 ft or greater?
13. In the 155th Street example near Parkwood Elementary, the side of the street with a smaller (better) score actually poses more challenges for Julie (visually-impaired).

Areas of known disabilities (and other important issues) marked on maps:

1. Crista (Fremont / N 195th vicinity)
2. Senior Apartments (Blakely?) in vicinity of Aurora and N 192nd St (east side)
3. 182nd – 185th between Linden and Aurora

4. 5th Ave NE from 165th to 175th St
5. Shoreline Library on N 175th St
6. Methadone clinic Aurora and N 167th St vicinity
7. N 160th between Greenwood and Aurora
8. King County Housing Authority N 145th St and Greenwood
9. King County Housing NE 145th St in vicinity of 12th / 15th
10. NE 145th St from a minimum of 25th Ave NE to Lake City Way
11. NE 175th St between 10 and 15 Ave NE and 15th Ave NE between NE 172nd and NE 179th St – there is also Senior Housing in this area
12. Vicinity of Perkins Way and 15th Ave NE
13. Pacific Learning Center, for children with behavior challenges - 14450 Westminster Way
14. Northwest School for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children – 15303 Westminster Way N
15. Dayton Ave from N 145th Street to several blocks north
16. N 145th St bus stop vicinity of Meridian and several blocks west
17. Aegis - 1st Ave NE, N 146th to N 148th St vicinity
18. N 155th St between Densmore and Meridian
19. NE 165th St between 9th and 10th Ave NE (between Northcrest Park and Ridgecrest Elementary)
20. Motorized chair users along 8th Ave NE between NE 180th and NE 170th Streets and east on 180th and 170th Streets several blocks
21. Include vicinities of adult care homes, licensed nursing homes, rehab facilities, senior care home
22. Firlands Way between Fremont and Aurora
23. Aurora Ave between N 164th and N 170th Streets
24. Westminster Way in vicinity of N 152nd to N 155th St
25. 15th Ave NE between NE 168th and NE 171st Streets

Next Steps

The SAC will be meeting next on Thursday, February 22. Agenda items will include:

1. Review of cost estimates for existing sidewalk repairs and expansion of the sidewalk network.
2. Return to discussion about funding scenarios.
3. Group discussion of what the SAC would like to communicate at Open House 2 which is scheduled for March 22.

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