

Sidewalk Advisory Committee

Meeting #11 Summary

April 26, 2018, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Shoreline City Hall – Council Chambers

Meeting Purpose

Sidewalk Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting 11 was held on April 26, 2018. The overall scope of work for the SAC focuses on analyzing how to prioritize and fund pedestrian needs for repair of existing sidewalks and installation of new sidewalks including alternative treatments. Items this meeting:

1. Debrief of April 23 Council meeting.
2. Development of SAC Final Recommendations Memo including final feedback on the prioritization scorecard/plan and funding, and discussions on additions to the plan, plan implementation, sidewalk treatments, performance measures, and communications.

Introduction / Housekeeping

Marcia Wagoner welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda and upcoming dates:

- This is the second to last meeting. Last meeting is May 10.
- Council will be presented with a Vehicle License Fee ordinance at the May 14 Council meeting.
- Nora will be visiting the Meridian Park neighborhood in the near future.
- Council is currently scheduled to approve the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan with SAC recommendations at the June 4 Council meeting.
- June 7 is the State of the City Breakfast. All SAC members are invited. Must RSVP in advance – email address is listed on the Important Upcoming Dates sheet.

Council Meeting Debrief

Nora presented highlights of the April 23 Council meeting discussion of sidewalks. There were three main take-aways:

1. The Council honored the work of the SAC in building the priority scorecard and resulting maps. There were a few “what if” questions or “did you consider...,” but there was no guidance to start any of the process over.
2. The Council held a discussion on interest in funding existing sidewalk repair with a Vehicle License Fee (VLF) increase as recommended by staff. Last fall staff had presented this recommendation and at that time, Council followed the SAC recommendation to wait until further in this process. Although the Council was still split on continuing to wait or taking the steps to act now, staff was asked to bring back an ordinance for the VLF at the May 14 meeting and a vote will be taken.
3. There seemed to be an interest in funding existing sidewalk improvements as a priority, with a possible interest in going to the voters with a Sales and Use tax for funding both new sidewalk and some additional for repairs. Staff was asked to proceed along the lines of a possible measure on the ballot this fall.

Overall, Councilmembers seemed happy that there was forward movement. There was no support in a property tax this year to give some relief to residents. There seemed to be consistent support of a 0.2% Sales and Use Tax increase rather than just a 0.1% increase. The VLF vote on May 14 could still go either way as it still seems to be a one vote difference that has gone back and forth.

COMMENT: Wonder if the current emphasis for VLF and Sales & Use Tax is because they have become more palatable when compared to a property tax that all are against at this time.

One Councilmember had fears of being voted out at their next election based on support for any increases, such as a councilmanic VLF that could be objected to if imposed without discussion. Staff discussed with SAC that this did not seem to be apparent the last time VLF was imposed. There is an inherent risk with a councilmanic decision. Staff could have asked Council for a voter approved VLF but did not want to mix two funding sources (second being Sales and use Tax) going out to voters at the same time.

COMMENT: The SAC subcommittee video was very compelling to Council. Their discussion following the video captured their understanding of how bad the state of affairs is and may be the reason for their action.

COMMENTS: it was pleasant to observe how cordial the councilmembers were to each other during the discussion, even when disagreeing. The mayor was also skillful and carefully able to move the discussion to find common ground.

Development of SAC Final Recommendations Memo

Nora will be drafting a memo to Council with SAC recommendations. The Prioritization Scorecard and Plan and the Funding pieces have been drafted from comments at prior meetings. The Prioritization Scorecard was presented to Council at the April 23 meeting (presented as bullet points, will be more prose in the final memo). Nora also presented the Council with important SAC recommendations and initial comments on funding, quick wins, communications, and treatments which can be viewed online under that [Council meeting](#).

Question: With VLF capable of bringing in the least amount of funding between funding sources looked at and Sales & Use Tax bringing in the second lowest amount, for significant impact on repairs and building new sidewalks, the City would need a bigger source. Was there any sense from Council on taking steps to raise enough money to make significant advances? Combine a measure with Parks? It does not seem that VLF and Sales & Use Tax will be allocating enough money to get done what the SAC recommends needs to be accomplished.

Answer: Nora pointed out that she was glad the SAC recommendation includes property tax. The mayor acknowledged that relying on grants will not get the City to where it needs to be. Nora could not say what the Council will do. The Parks PROS Plan (or at least parts of it) is scheduled to go to voters in 2019. The SAC's recommendation about combining sidewalks with this measure has not yet been earnestly discussed in any detail. This will be included as part of the SAC recommendations.

Additions to the Plan

At the two public open houses and follow-up on-line surveys, residents were asked if there were areas currently not a part of the Pedestrian Sidewalk System (both built and un-built as identified in the 2011 Transportation Master Plan) that should be considered for addition to the system and why. Nora presented three maps for study: 1) the draft prioritization plan re-prioritized with current criteria; 2) survey responses indicating suggested areas by frequency of response; and 3) these suggested areas with the current prioritization criteria applied. The SAC members reviewed in groups and provided the following feedback:

- There are a few areas where a grid or cluster of sidewalks ended up being submitted for consideration. None of these ranked “high” when the criteria was applied. Where several streets are indicated in close proximity, should a point be given or one of the streets be added to benefit the area or should all be ignored?
- Could look at any sets of parallel streets or clusters and reach out to that neighborhood to discuss a preferred street that may improve the grid and connectivity.
- The volume of streets indicated seems high – may be based on perception from one’s own neighborhood interaction.
- There are several considerations that parallel a busier street that already has sidewalk. This may indicate people wanting to walk on lower volume roads that are not arterials?
- Less sympathetic to a request if an accessible parallel street already has sidewalk.
- Directly west of Echo Lake that likely scored higher due to density and/bus proximity. 205th area also mentioned – lacking sidewalk in area? Linden from 195th – 200th two school bus stops.
- What happened to the Town Center plan? Midvale isn’t on the 2011 Ped plan. Did the Interurban Trail take the place of sidewalks so that they were not included in the Plan? There is still lots of pedestrian traffic on Midvale. Neither 178th, 180th, or 183rd are in the pedestrian plan and yet they are near the Town Center.
- Staff should look at Town Center Plan.
- Neighborhood associations could send out emails to take a survey, for instance regarding what street gets sidewalk to Paramount School Park?
- Should aim at completing first new sidewalk projects to add approximately every 5 blocks. Should not have to walk more than 1/8 of a mile off sidewalk.
- Based on survey comments, only 6 areas ranked high, and all of these are within a block of existing sidewalk (or sidewalk in the existing plan).
- North of 195th, since Linden ranked “high” and Greenwood and Dayton ranked “low” on existing plan, maybe swap Linden for Dayton in the Plan.
- Staff should first look closely at any proposed additions that scored high before adding any. Do they connect? Make sense with overall goals?
- Staff should look more closely at segments that scored high by frequency, but low on priority. If a lot of people are calling out a specific area, it is worth looking at, e.g. NW 190th Street.
- If only one person called out an area and it ranked high, is it added? The process is trying to get away from a complaint based approach. Should review what is driving the high score and see if it makes sense for the overall Plan.
- Maybe another online survey to further clarify needs.
- The 24th/15th area is surprisingly high. May want to check scoring...Safety/Equity points?
- 175th extension may be good idea.
- Look at topography.

- Look to see if there is no other adjoining street to access a bus stop.

Plan Implementation

- Ask PROS Plan to look at adding sidewalk access to parks in the PROS Plan ballot initiative.
- Any sidewalks in TMP around parks should be added to PROS Plan initiative.
- Every park should have some sidewalk connections.
- If we require developers to do frontage improvements, should hold Parks to these upgrades.
- How big should the ask be for sidewalks be in the PROS Plan? Sidewalks should not be the part cut when going to voters.
- The location of the potential aquatic center may provide opportunity for sidewalk.
- When prioritizing projects, if a street scored high for one side of the road but already has standard sidewalk on the other side, maybe wait and work on a project first that doesn't have sidewalks on either side.
- When working on a project, staff probably have a good idea of where the next project will be (which should be peppered throughout the City). Put in signs promoting the upcoming projects as coming soon and provide any information on similar projects. Get people interested. Keep visible.
- Signs could go up early in the design process. Look for resident input. Hold a BBQ in the neighborhood, etc.
- Shout it loud. Celebrate improvements. Block party.
- Recruit volunteers to knock on doors to share project coming info.
- The TMP basically grids the City north/south and east/west with sidewalks about every 5 blocks. Projects should continue that grid.
- It is okay to go outside of the system with a low priority that may be a short segment that connects a much larger system.
- Reconsider bringing back the Fee In Lieu program; it could be spent on these types of connections.
- Need the ability to grant some exceptions to the current methods where there is dysfunction. (City staff stated that the City would have to revisit the legalities of Fee In Lieu. There are time and proximity requirements. The City must also be careful in not changing the standard – if sidewalk is no longer needed on a street, then the developer is no longer required to provide such – or Fee In Lieu.)
- Are there any other options for building up funds? Instead of plant a tree – donate to sidewalks.
- Option to redirect permit fees to sidewalk.
- Use Squatch, putting him out in the locations where sidewalks are coming.
- Participatory data. The SAC worked with objective data. As communication gets out and feedback comes in from residents, need a method for collecting and processing this feedback because it is also data.
- Regarding the Equity component, what about people we don't hear from? What do we know about conversations in these neighborhoods? Living room conversations?
- Look for better ways for personal connection / dialogue with community/groups.
- Police do community work (e.g. Night Out), churches may have info. Gathering places may include coffee shops, libraries.
- Have a sidebar with sidewalk info/sidewalk project info in every Currents.

Tricia Juhnke, City Engineer, shared that working with various project lists over the years, staff always asks additional questions, including:

- What looks reasonable for the available funds?
- Review scope, look at possible alternative treatment. If building sidewalk on just one side of the street, is one side better due to drainage, location of power poles?

The SAC had mentioned to look for quick wins. Nora asked what exactly their thoughts were on quick wins. Responses:

- Projects deployed/completed in relatively short time frame (less than 6 months) once funding is available.
- Project is in a very visible location.
- Choose from Shoreline's worst sidewalks.
- Give the Quick Wins project a catchy name (Like the See/Click/Fix program) – have contest and ask residents to submit names.
- Try to have funds for these specific types of projects. May work better with repairs.

Sidewalk Treatments

The following are points made during the discussion on Sidewalk Treatments:

- Rather than changing sidewalk standards to allow for other treatments, some of the other treatments should be used as interim solutions only.
- All permanent treatments should have a physical division between vehicle traffic and pedestrian traffic (e.g. green space, pinned down curb on fog line), so cars do not encroach.
- Painted treatment used exclusively does not satisfy the goal of keeping pedestrians separate. Do not default to painted treatment as a first resort.
- Lake Forest Park has had some success with paint and signage. Maybe it is looking for the right solution in the right place. If there is no sidewalk, it may be better than nothing.
- Try to find consistencies between cities so treatments are more recognizable, like green for bike lanes. (Tricia stated that there would be some consistency has the City follows MUTCD – the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- Get neighborhood input.
- Maybe the City could use signs like, “No parking – people walk here” or “Park like you walk here.”
- Aesthetics of sidewalks is also important. Painted is not aesthetic, does not buy much, and has high maintenance costs.
- No pinned down curbs.
- For transitional interim use of grade with crushed rock, use “colored gravel.” For instance on 195th Street by Einstein School (and King’s School), from 3rd Ave NW to Fremont, the south side of the street is wide but not well defined. Colored gravel would get attention of children.
- The type of sidewalk says something about a community. Standard might say prosperous, sophisticated stable community. Curb-less sidewalk with amenity zone or trail may say a suburban community that want so to maintain a parklike character. Both of these provide an aesthetic option.

- Use the parking pressure (scarcity) in a neighborhood as one guideline (i.e. if little parking, separate pedestrians to avoid encroachment).
- Review what the parking impact would be for the chosen treatment.
- If there is a parking shortage, curb/gutter allows parking. LID does not.
- Do not spend money on treatments that cannot be used by pedestrians with wheels or canes. Uneven ground would be challenging to these users. Unless very well compacted and maintained, crushed rock would not work.
- Are sidewalk alternatives allowed under ADA? Answer: It is unclear if any of the alternatives looked at are ADA compliant –have to look into this further. The City would want to build to meet ADA requirements otherwise as soon as the project is finished, it would go on the “needs to meet ADA standards” project list.
- There are many places throughout the City where a gravel treatment would be a significant improvement to what is there now and serve many people. It is not ideal, does not make it the best option for some people, but improves safety for a lot. Should alternatives be considered for this reason?
- Tana quoted from Star Trek’s Captain Picard and stated, “The needs of the many outweigh the needs of a few.” It may be understandable that an interim sidewalk treatment makes sense.
- Consider using finer gravel with correct gradation to meet ADA compliance and a better chance at accessibility for all.
- Sand would not be a good alternative.
- Gravel is better than dirt which is in many places. It is a difficult choice. Merit on both sides.
- For final, permanent sidewalk the two choices should be standard sidewalk with curb and gutter or curbless with amenity zone separation. Crushed rock may provide the best interim/temporary solution in some areas.

Performance Measured

The Council asked how success would be monitored. Following are a few suggestions by SAC members:

- Have to determine what is important. Data-driven metrics does not give a complete story.
- Success may be in the number of high priority projects completed.
- Citizen sidewalk survey – ask if they have noticed where the new sidewalk is.
- Have pre and post sidewalk project surveys. On scale of 1-10, how safe do you feel walking? How often do you walk to certain places (like library, market, etc.)? Have a measure for connectivity. See how the answers change 6 months after completion of a project.
- Before a project, collect information and get individual’s contact information so follow-up survey can be with the same base.
- Measure behavior change directly to local resident to the project.
- Every neighborhood gets sidewalks. Reporting by neighborhood on implemented project(s).
- Adherence of actual to estimated costs.
- Define outcomes in advance for each criteria, then define how to measure them (e.g. lower auto trips). Know desired outcomes then design measures.
- Consider the best tools, benchmarks vs positive improvements. Could come up with a scale for meeting success. But what if a measure falls just short? Is there no success?
- A metric for the overall health/operation of the entire system may be better.
- Build in process improvements.

- Never let Council lose sight that there are more than just high priority projects. Still more to come.
- As the sidewalk system is built out, maintenance and repair will eventually go up. Track this change. VLF is sustainable but not enough.
- There are (and will be) disappointed people because “their” sidewalk was not ranked higher. Educational pieces should be ongoing. Make sure the data is understood. Make people aware that selecting projects is more complicated and involved than just using this one tool.
- Have an FAQ describing the fuller picture of how the project selection process may work. The what and why of choices made.

Next Steps

Nora will be summarizing the SAC input prior to the final SAC meeting on May 10. Nora will put the recommendations together as a memo and send out just prior to the next meeting.

The first part of the final meeting on May 10 will be to make sure that the memo captured the SAC recommendations correctly. Any agreed upon changes will be made directly to the document. The SAC members will be asked to sign a “poster” that will be made a part of the memo and final report. There may be one last photo session.

Tricia informed the SAC that the consultant for the ADA Transition Plan is actively evaluating that plan’s set of criteria and resulting prioritization. A first run is expected to be completed the 3rd week of June. Since the SAC was presented information on the ADA Transition Plan, saw some initial criteria being developed, and have an overall interest in the City’s sidewalk network, Tricia invited SAC members to participate by reviewing the results and helping staff analyze. These would be a handful of meetings. Dates will be verified as information becomes available.