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From: [Kathleen Russell](#)

Sent: Thursday, March 17, 2022 11:37:53 AM

To: [City Council](#)

Subject: [EXTERNAL] The Cedars at 5th Ave NE - new sidewalk project

Sensitivity: Normal

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To: Shoreline City Council

Re: 5th Ave NE new sidewalk design

As we understand, the design budget of \$560,000 of the total budget of \$4,370,565 has been spent¹. Save Shoreline Trees asks everyone involved to reconsider the new sidewalk design on 5th Ave NE in consideration of the Western red cedar #114 and Western red cedar #117. Apparently it is going to take action by Council to save these trees.

The Council agenda for March 21, 2022 includes the [Staff presentation](#), item 8(b), reviewing the 5th Ave NE new sidewalk design. Staff has communicated to Council and the community that initially 90 trees would be removed from 5th Ave NE to accommodate the design and now 23 trees will be removed, so in essence "staff have saved almost 70 trees"². This brings up the question regarding the initial design specifications for this new sidewalk program and future new sidewalk designs. If the guideline is to design a sidewalk installation that retains all of the trees in excellent, good and fair condition, or even excellent and good condition³, then the sidewalk design for 5th Ave NE would be different. If there are not initial specifications protecting the mature trees at the beginning of the design then we end up in this continuing conflict between maintaining established trees and sidewalk installations. We all agree sidewalks are necessary but the established trees in Shoreline are already providing benefits.

Additionally, there is currently a 6' wide sidewalk at the top of the grade on the west side of 5th Ave NE that starts at N 175th and continues a quarter way to NE Serpentine Pl. If this existing 6' wide sidewalk, with curb, is maintained it will retain three of the trees⁴ scheduled for removal and eliminate the need for new concrete along that stretch (trees #101, #102, #103).

There are continuing community concerns about the Western red cedars, the 46" dbh cedar and companion 36" dbh cedar, both 100' tall, 80+ years. Per the Staff report "After these modifications, the large Western Red Cedar at NE 178th Street (which seem to be trees of interest to members of the community) are situated such that their removal is necessary."⁵ These trees are of interest to a larger community as even the project arborist comments about the Western red cedar #114: "Given the size of this tree and the ecological importance of mature trees, efforts should be made to retain it."⁶

Once again, the trees are "situated in the wrong place" as a developer in Parkwood stated – we hear this all the time. *The trees that have been here for 80 years, are in the wrong place.*

Staff confirms on page 4: "Staff will review the proposed tree removal in the field after the project improvements are "staked" by a surveyor and evaluate opportunities to preserve trees before they are removed."⁷ We agree it will take extra effort by arborists and planners to save the Cedars at 178th but can this really be accomplished at the time of "staking" the project? The design and installation cost of this new sidewalk along 5th Ave NE is \$4,343,165. Certainly within this budget there is a solution to save the Cedars.

Notes

Comment by a NW arborist to Save Shoreline Trees: "Often tree roots under compacted asphalt do not thrive so the Western red cedars are surviving from roots to the west, north and south." Also, Tree #114, the 46" dbh Cedar, and companion Cedar #117 can be retained if the installation design is shifted 6' to the east, see Boni Biery's email to Council dated March 7, 2022.

¹ [Agenda Item 8\(b\)](#), March 21, 2022, page 2

² [Agenda Item 8\(b\)](#), March 21, 2022, page 4

³ [The Watershed Company](#), Arborist Report, 7/7/20, Definitions: "excellent, good, fair, poor, severe, dead" pages 3-4.

⁴ [The Watershed Company](#), Arborist Report, 7/7/20, tree inventory (after page 19): tree #101 “fair”; tree #102 “fair”, tree #103 “good”.

⁵ [Agenda Item 8\(b\)](#), March 21, 2022, page 4

⁶ [The Watershed Company](#), Arborist Report, 7/7/20, page 7

⁷ [Agenda Item 8\(b\)](#), March 21, 2022, page 4

Submitted by Kathleen Russell
Save Shoreline Trees/Communications
March 17, 2022