

Date: June 29, 2022

To: City of Shoreline, Department of Public Works
Attn: Noel Hupprich, Development Review & Construction Manager
cc: City Council; Sabra Landon

From: Tree Preservation Code Team (TPCT)

Re: Proposed revision to the [Engineering Development Manual](#) for 2023

Proposed Revision to the EDM

Revise the existing regulation in the Engineering Development Manual (Section 14.2.E, Div. 2: Right-of-Way) to stipulate all “sidewalks abutting single-family residential uses shall be **5 to 7 feet wide in residential neighborhoods**”, instead of the current six (6) feet width.

Reasons for this Revision

The Tree Preservation Code Team (TPCT) submits this proposal to support the importance of reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG). On the City website page [Sidewalks FAQ](#)¹, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) is cited as a primary reference pertaining to sidewalks. In the [NACTO Annual Report 2021](#), “Letter from our Executive Director”², it reported:

“Last summer, one month after Portland, Oregon reached 115 degrees – 37 degrees above average – the United Nations confirmed what was already obvious. In stark terms, the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] outlined that climate change is now irreversible, that we must adapt to it, and that we must dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in order to avert further, unimaginable, global catastrophe.”

The City of Shoreline is a participant in the King County-Cities Climate Collaboration (K4C) and “one of [21] partners working to reduce community GHG emissions 80% by 2050.”³ In addition, the Shoreline City Council voted to join the *Race to Zero* on October 4, 2021.⁴ The Shoreline City Council and environmentalists agree that reducing GHG is important. Actions must work synergistically to accomplish this goal. TPCT specifically cites two of these components: 1) the need to reduce the amount of concrete, even pervious concrete, in hard surface use, including sidewalks, and 2) the role trees play in reducing GHG as acknowledged by scientists worldwide⁵.

1) Sidewalk Widths (NACTO research)

According to NACTO's research, "[Pedestrian Through Zone](#)" (click on "2" on "Sidewalk Zones"): "sidewalks play a vital role in city life" and states, "The *pedestrian through zone* is the primary, accessible pathway that runs parallel to the street.⁶ The *through zone* ensures that pedestrians have a safe and adequate place to walk and should be 5-7 feet wide in residential settings and 8-12 feet wide in downtown or commercial areas."

2) Less Sidewalk Concrete = Lower Temperatures

Increased temperatures are a concern for Shoreline residents. Per City of Shoreline research, "Temperatures in the Puget Sound region are projected to get warmer, with summertime daily highs around 85 F degrees by the 2050s."⁸ When you look at the "[Urban Heat Islands](#)" map presented by the City of Shoreline, illustrating hotter than average city temperatures, the red areas indicate severe heat areas. Furthermore, in [Built Environment](#) "more hard surfaces (e.g., sidewalks, roofs) absorb the sun's heat, making hot temperatures feel even hotter."⁹

3) Importance of Trees (NACTO research)

Changing the minimum sidewalk width to 5' will help preserve and protect trees, which are powerhouses in reducing GHG. Referring again to [NACTO research](#) about "Street Trees"⁷, the following pertain to the usefulness of trees:

- Street trees also have the potential to slow traffic speeds...and may increase pavement life by avoiding extreme heat.
- Street trees may be removed to satisfy sight distance or clear zone requirements only in extreme cases...
- Larger trees protect pedestrians from errant vehicles.

The Tree Preservation Code Team supports sidewalks. Given that the City refers to NACTO research, we ask that a revision be made in the Engineering Development Manual to incorporate NACTO's sidewalk width guidance of "5-7 feet wide in residential settings."

Support Criteria:

1. **This proposal is in accordance with the [Comprehensive Plan](#).**
 - Introduction, page 2: Growth Management Act: [bullet 11]: "Encourage the participation of citizens in the planning process."
 - Page 5: "Community involvement in planning and opportunities for input are vital to shaping the future, particularly at the neighborhood scale, and its decision-making processes reflect that belief."

- Framework Goal 10: “Respect neighborhood character and engage the community in decisions that affect them.”

2. This proposal will not adversely affect the public health, safety or general welfare.

By being environmentally sound, a minimum of 5-foot-wide sidewalks in residential neighborhoods enhance the public’s well-being and maintain neighborhood character. This proposal benefits the public health, safety and general welfare of Shoreline’s population.

3. This proposal is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of the City of Shoreline.

TPCT recognizes that enabling residents to walk safely on City sidewalks is an important goal and is in the best interest of all its citizens and property owners. TPCT’s recommendation to revise the EDM stated width of sidewalks does not contradict the City’s goal and is more inclusive for all the reasons stated above.

Sincerely,

Tree Preservation Code Team

Melody Fosmore

Kathleen Russell

Susanne Tsoming

Kathy Kaye

Claudia Turner

Carla Carroll (Sidewalk Committee)

Jonelle Kemmerling (Sidewalk Committee)

References:

¹ [City of Shoreline](#), Sidewalk FAQ, page 2

² [NACTO Annual Report 2021](#), page 3

³ [City of Shoreline Sustainability Report 2020](#), page 5

⁴ [Race to Zero, City of Shoreline Staff Report](#), October 4, 2021

⁵ [Letter from 134 Scientists Conserve Mature Forests and Large Trees](#), April 20, 2022
<https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/scientists-letter-conserve-mature-forests-220420.pdf>

⁶ [NACTO Urban Street Design Guide, Sidewalks](#)

⁷ [NACTO Urban Street Design Guide, Street Trees](#)

⁸ [Climate Change and the City of Shoreline](#) : heat map: scroll down to “Extreme Heat”

⁹ Climate Change and the City of Shoreline: [Built Environment Fact Sheet](#), page 2