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**WSDOT Regional Headquarters Remodel Project
Frequently Asked Questions**

www.shorelinewa.gov/wsdotproject

Updated 10/28/2020

- 1. What is the current status of this project?**
 - Revisions for the site development permit DEV19-2366 were submitted on October 19, 2020. We are still awaiting revisions for ROW19-2371.
 - A revised arborist report was **not** included in this latest submittal. The 7/7/2020 arborist report (link below) is the latest we have on file. We expect a revised arborist report to be included with revisions for ROW19-2371.
 - The statuses of each permit for this project are currently as follows:
 - **DEV19-2366:** Under Review
 - **COM19-2367:** Permit Issued
 - **COM19-2368:** Plans Approved, Permit Not Yet Issued
 - **ROW19-2371:** Under Review, Awaiting Revisions from Applicant
 - See the links below to access the following items:
 - [ROW19-2371 Plans \(submitted 6/23/20\)](#)
 - [Arborist report provided by WSDOT \(dated 7/7/20\)](#)
 - [Latest comment letter from the City \(dated 9/9/20\)](#)
 - **None of the frontage improvements have been formally approved at this time. Discussions are ongoing for alternative frontage designs that meet City/State/Federal requirements while retaining as many trees as possible.**
 - For an overview of the alternative frontage designs being discussed currently, see questions #11 and #12 below.

2. What is happening at the WSDOT Regional Headquarters Building (15700 Dayton Ave N)?

- WSDOT is proposing a complete remodel of their existing regional headquarters (RHQ) building, making room for the Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) to move offices into the building. In addition to the remodel, they are also proposing construction of an annex/garage, which will primarily be used to store DOE fleet vehicles. They will also be re-stripping and re-landscaping some of the parking areas on site.

3. Does this remodel project trigger frontage improvements?

- Yes, a remodel construction project of this size requires that the street frontages along the property be improved. This means that WSDOT is required to install/repave travel lanes, curbs, sidewalks, etc. that front their property.

4. Why are frontage improvements required for this project?

- Under the Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) Chapter 20.70.320, frontage improvements are triggered in a number of instances. For this project, the requirements are triggered by the project valuation (or how much WSDOT is paying for the remodel) exceeding 50% of the current value of the existing structures on property.

5. What are the standard required frontage improvements?

- Along Dayton Ave N, the following improvements are required: Street pavement widening for on-street parking and bus stops;
 - New curbs/gutters;
 - 5-foot-wide amenity zone (typically a landscaping strip containing various utilities, mailboxes, etc.); and
- 8-foot-wide sidewalk Along N 155th St, the following improvements are required:
 - Street pavement widening for vehicular travel;
 - New curbs/gutters;
 - 5-foot-wide amenity zone; and
 - 8-foot-wide sidewalk
- Along N 160th St, the following improvements are required:
 - New curbs/gutters;
 - 5-foot-wide amenity zone; and
 - 8-foot-wide sidewalk.

6. How does the City determine what improvements are required?

- These are set by the City's [Engineering Development Manual \(EDM\)](#) and [Transportation Master Plan](#) and are based on the long-term needs of the City's transportation infrastructure.

7. Why are trees going to be removed along the street frontages?

- Some of the soil along the street frontage may need to be moved around to flatten the ground for the frontage improvements. This, along with the installation of new pavement/sidewalks, may impact some trees.

8. Which/how many trees need to be removed?

- The [most recent arborist report \(dated 7/7/20\)](#), discusses the tree impacts based on the latest design proposal from WSDOT. In the report, there are 3 categories of trees:
 - *Retained*: Trees are not impacted by construction at all, or impacts are minimal and unlikely to affect tree health.
 - *Impacted*: There may be construction impacts that could affect the health of the tree. Specific construction measures to ensure survival of the trees should be followed. See Appendix C of the arborist report for these recommendations.
 - *Removal Recommended*: Impacts to the trees are significant and unavoidable. Retention of these trees is not recommended by the arborist.

9. Who decides which trees will need to be removed?

- Working with their arborist, the WSDOT design team will determine which trees can and cannot be retained.
- The City's role is to ensure the plans submitted by WSDOT are meeting codes and standards. If tree removals are proposed by WSDOT, they need to comply with the following:
 - Regulations for on-site trees are found in the Shoreline Municipal Code (SMC) [Chapter 20.50, Subchapter 5](#).
 - Regulations for right-of-way trees are found in [SMC Chapter 12.30](#).

10. How is the City working with WSDOT to save more trees?

- The City has allowed many other projects to deviate their required frontage improvements to protect trees where possible, and we are exploring the same options for the WSDOT project. Some methods that could be employed to reduce tree impacts include:
 - Removing the required parking lane;
 - "Swapping" the location of the sidewalk and amenity zone, meaning the sidewalk will be abutting the curb;
 - In this case, vegetation within the amenity zone would not be disturbed.
 - Reducing the width of the sidewalk in certain locations to stay away from tree trunks and root zones;
 - Meandering the sidewalk around trees and root zones;
 - Paving the sidewalk with permeable materials, allowing water to flow directly to the soil underneath (and to the roots within the soil);
 - Raising the grade/elevation of the sidewalk to reduce the need of digging into root zones.

- Additionally, there are requirements for replacement trees both on-site and in the right-of-way. Depending on the size of the trees to be removed, they will need to be replaced with 1 to 3 smaller trees (1.5-inch caliper if planting deciduous trees, and at least 6 feet tall if planting conifers). If the number of required replacement trees cannot fit within the right-of-way, WSDOT will need to pay a fee-in-lieu for each required tree that will not be planted. The funds from this fee will be used to plant new trees elsewhere in the City.

11. Which of the alternative frontage designs are being used?

- The frontage design is still being worked out by the WSDOT design team, their consulting arborist, and the City, but there are a couple proposals that are being examined:
 - The latest designs for the frontage improvements, submitted by WSDOT on 6/23/20, show an elevated walkway between the two driveway entrances to the site along Dayton Ave N.
 - WSDOT is also examining the possibility of installing their required frontage improvements for N 155th St. along the **south** side of the street, the opposite side from their site. The City is open to this, provided the proper agreements and documentation are secured between WSDOT, the City, and any affected property owners.
- After reviewing different proposals along N 160th St., the City and WSDOT both agreed that the standard frontage improvements for this street would be best for that particular corridor (see question #12 for more information).

12. Why aren't alternative frontage designs being used on N 160th St?

- WSDOT and the City looked into alternative designs on N 160th St. None of the options examined saved the trees while also providing the desired level of access and mobility for people walking, biking, and driving down N 160th St.
 - The roadway width is the narrowest that it can be to support the current and future traffic volumes on N 160th St.
 - The City wants a buffer between people walking on the sidewalk and the travel lanes. We looked at narrowing that buffer from 5' to 2' but were only able to potentially save a few small or Ivy-wrapped trees, and even those were not guaranteed to survive.
 - A boardwalk option, like what is used along Dayton Ave N would not save trees along this stretch. Any widening of the sidewalk requires earthwork on the hill behind the sidewalk, which would most directly impact the trees.
- WSDOT's project will be adding landscaping, including new trees, to the new 5' amenity zone and on the regraded slope behind the sidewalk. Their landscape concepts show a more uniform planting of trees that should create a more consistent visual barrier in the long term between their site and the roadway.

13. Why do there need to be sidewalks on the east side of Dayton?

- Shoreline Municipal Code 20.70.320 requires the construction of frontage projects for specific types and/or sizes of projects. The WSDOT improvements trigger the requirement to install frontage improvements
- In June 2018, after a yearlong process, the City Council approved an updated the Sidewalk Prioritization Plan. Dayton Ave from 155th to 160th was identified as a high priority route.
- In November 2018, City of Shoreline residents voted to fund sidewalks at twelve high-priority locations. Dayton Ave N between N 155th St. and N 160th St. was one of these locations. Since Dayton is a bus route, sidewalks are needed on both sides of the street. For more information on the planning process that lead up to the vote you can visit the project webpage: <http://www.shorelinewa.gov/government/projects-initiatives/sidewalks-prioritization-plan>

14. Why do the sidewalks need to be 8 feet wide?

- Section 14.2 of the [Engineering Development Manual \(EDM\)](#) goes over the City's requirements for sidewalks. Sidewalks in front of multifamily residences or commercial/office sites are required to be at least eight (8) feet wide. Sidewalks without an amenity zone (landscape strip) between the sidewalk and curb are also required to be at least eight (8) feet wide, even in front of single-family residences.
- The eight-foot width allows for two-way pedestrian traffic and a space for signage, utilities, and fire hydrants when a landscape strip is not provided for those amenities.
- Narrowing the proposed boardwalk along Dayton Ave N would also not serve to save any additional trees along that street. The main impacts to the trees there are from earthwork required to transition the boardwalk down to the at-grade sidewalk. WSDOT's design team has examined many alternatives to this, but there do not appear to be feasible ways to prevent major impacts to the root systems at that location while also providing walkways (regardless of width).

15. Can a different material be used instead of concrete for the sidewalks?

- Section 14.2 of the EDM requires all sidewalks to be constructed with concrete, unless otherwise approved by the Public Works Director.
- Permeable pavement has been approved for sidewalks in other locations. It is a common tool used to keep existing trees healthy.
- Loose surfaces such as gravel are difficult to maintain in a state that meets ADA standards. The construction impacts on trees for an ADA accessible gravel path are comparable to the construction impacts of a traditional sidewalk at the same grade.

16. Who has the final say on changes to the required frontage improvements?

- The City Engineer is the official responsible for approving/denying changes to the required frontage improvements.

17. Is there a way to provide input to the City on this project?

- Yes. The City issued a Notice of Application on this project on December 9, 2019, with a public comment period ending December 27, 2019. However, the City will still accept comments on the project after the close of the comment period. The initial deadline was for comments to be sent to WSDOT.
- If you wish to provide comments, you may send an email to the project manager, Caleb Miller, at cmiller@shorelinewa.gov. You can also send written comments via standard mail to:

City of Shoreline
Attn: Caleb Miller
17500 Midvale Ave N
Shoreline, WA 98133

- Anyone who submits a comment to the City will be added as Party of Record and will be notified once a decision is made on the permits.
- There will not be a public meeting for this project. Any input should be submitted in writing using the options above.

18. When is construction expected to begin?

- Some of the interior work has already been permitted as part of a first phase of permit review. The second phase, which will include all of the site and right-of-way work, is still under review. The exact timing of construction will depend on how quickly WSDOT responds to City requests for corrections to their plans. It may be several more months before the permits are issued.

19. What are the permit numbers for this project?

- Remodel of existing building: COM19-2211 (Phase 1) and COM19-2367 (Phase 2)
- New storage facility for DOE vehicles: COM19-2368
- Site development (on-site tree removal, landscaping, parking, drainage, etc.): DEV19-2366
- Frontage improvements and right-of-way tree removal: ROW19-2371