



**City of
Portland, Oregon**
Bureau of Development Services
FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

Dan Ryan, Commissioner
Rebecca Esau, Director
Phone: (503) 823-7300
Fax: (503) 823-6983
TTY: (503) 823-6868
www.portland.gov/bds

Briefing

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: April 4, 2022
To: Portland Landmarks Commission
From: Hannah Bryant, Design / Historic Review Team
(503) 865-6520, hannah.bryant@portlandoregon.gov
Re: Pedestrian Design Guide
Briefing Memo – April 11, 2022

This memo is regarding the upcoming Briefing on April 11, 2022, for the PBOT Pedestrian Design Guide's Draft Administrative Rule regarding alternative sidewalk width requirements for the Historic Resource Overlay Zone. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Draft Administrative Rule proposed to accompany the Pedestrian Guide and to provide alternative sidewalk width requirements for Historic Resource Overlay Zones (See Section III below)
- Existing Pedestrian Design Guide from 1998 (<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/article/437808>)
- PedPDX (<https://www.portland.gov/transportation/planning/pedestrian-design-guide-update#toc-updated-pedestrian-design-guide-now-available>)

I. OVERVIEW

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is updating the existing 1998 Pedestrian Design Guide to determine design standards that will achieve the goals of the PedPDX Plan, Portland's citywide pedestrian master plan. The Pedestrian Design Guide will update sidewalk width requirements for each of the three zones of the sidewalk: furnishing zone (street trees, transit shelters, utilities, newspaper boxes and garbage receptacles, bike parking), pedestrian through zone (unimpeded path for pedestrians to move), and building frontage zone (café seating, planters and other private elements related to adjacent ground level commercial).

To ensure the restoration and preservation of continuous building lines on commercial corridors in Historic Resource Overlay Zones, PBOT and BDS have drafted a proposal that allows for reduced sidewalk widths on these corridors in exchange for requiring all frontage zone activities (such as café seating) to be located in the street parking zone.

This is the third briefing with the Historic Landmarks Commission. Previous briefings were held on 12/7/20 and 6/28/21. Additionally, we held meetings with a small group from this commission and the Design Commission to edit and review the draft Administrative Rule.

II. RECOMMENDED BRIEFING DISCUSSION TOPICS

The draft administrative rule will soon be published, beginning a thirty-day public comment period. Subsequent to this comment period, a final draft will be packaged for adoption by City Council. BDS staff have provided some comments to PBOT in advance of this meeting that are not yet incorporated into the draft included in Section III (below).

BDS staff are supportive and appreciative of the intent of the draft administrative rule to provide additional flexibility to ensure the coherency of character-defining historic corridors. Our focus at this stage is on clarifying the language to ensure the timelines and review processes align with developer's entitlement processes and land use review timelines.

At this briefing, staff will present suggested edits to this draft administrative rule. We invite your additional comments and suggestions on the language during the briefing. We also will request that the Historic Landmarks Commission write a letter with comments or feedback for PBOT during the public review period.

III. DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE LANGUAGE FOR REVIEW

TRN-XX.XX – Sidewalk Corridor Widths within Historic Resource Overlay Zones

Joint Administrative Rule Adopted by Bureau of Transportation, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, and Bureau of Development Services (Pursuant to PCC 3.12.010).

I. **Exceptions to Portland Pedestrian Design Guide, Table B-3 Sidewalk Corridor Widths**

1. For Civic and Neighborhood Main Streets located within a Historic Resource Overlay Zone, sidewalk corridors may be a minimum of 12 feet wide (in accordance with sidewalk corridor requirements for "Neighborhood Corridors") rather than 15 feet wide as prescribed by table B-3 to assist in the preservation of Historic building façade lines.
2. Sidewalks narrower than 12 feet may be approved along Civic and Neighborhood Main Streets located within a Historic Resource Overlay Zone through a Public Works Alternative Review process when Historic Landmarks Commission confirms that there is an existing Historic building façade line to preserve.
3. Where a sidewalk corridor less than 12 feet is approved along a Main Street within a Historic Resource Overlay Zone, all right-of-way encroachments and street activation activities approved and permitted by PBOT must occur fully outside of the Pedestrian Through Zone (e.g., within the curb/parking zone).
4. Civic and Neighborhood Main Streets located within Design Overlays are subject to the provisions of the Pedestrian Design Guide Table B-3 sidewalk corridor width requirements.

II. **Background**

The Portland Pedestrian Design Guide serves as the City's primary guidance on how sidewalks should be built throughout Portland to ensure they are context-appropriate and accessible to people of all ages and abilities. It establishes the City's sidewalk design criteria,

including requirements for minimum sidewalk widths, street tree space requirements, street corners, and crossings, among others.

Table B-3 of the Pedestrian Design Guide sets the minimum required widths for sidewalk corridors overall and for each zone of the sidewalk corridor, based upon the roadway's Street Design Classification. Section B.1.3.4 provides certain limited exceptions to the sidewalk widths prescribed in Table B-3, including for Main Streets within Historic Resource Overlay Zones.

Within Historic Resource Overlay Zones, there are sometimes instances in which the requirement to construct a wider sidewalk with development may conflict with established building façade lines that contribute to the coherency of a Historic/Conservation District. A historic or conservation district is not merely a collection of individually significant historic resources, rather the district is the resource. It is notable for its coherency and integrity, and that has been determined worthy of preservation. To respect and complement the district, new development should seek to blend in with the existing fabric.

PBOT briefed both the Design Commission and Historic Landmarks Commission on the updated Pedestrian Design Guide twice in 2021, at which time both commissions concurred that their primary concern is protecting the consistent street walls on the linear commercial corridors ("Main Streets") within Historic and Conservation Districts. Both commissions expressed that a consistent street wall on these linear commercial corridors within Historic Resource Overlay Zones is its primary character-defining element and that new development should not introduce a staggered street wall in this context.

This Administrative Rule was developed in collaboration with Design and Historic Landmarks commissioners appointed to a joint subcommittee to work with PBOT to develop an approach to sidewalk setback requirements within Historic Resource Overlay Zones in October 2021.

Attachments:

Maps of Historic Resource Overlay Zones

Diagrams of Sidewalk Zones

Anatomy of a Sidewalk



Street Design Classification	Frontage Zone <i>minimum width</i>	Pedestrian Zone <i>minimum width</i>	Landscape/Furniture Zone <i>minimum width</i>	Total <i>minimum width</i>
Civic Main Street	2.5'	8'	4'	15'
Neighborhood Main Street	2.5'	8'	4'	15'
Civic Corridor	0.5'	6'	5'	12'
Neighborhood Corridor	1.5'	6'	4'	12'
Community Corridor	1.5'	6'	4'	12'
Regional Corridor	0.5'	6'	5'	12'
Industrial Road	0.5'	6'	5'	12'
Local Street	0.5'	6'	4'	11'

6" Curb