



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

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Briefing

DISCUSSION MEMO

Date: June 13, 2021
To: Portland Design Commission
From: Hannah Bryant, Design / Historic Review Team
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Re: Pedestrian Design Guide
Briefing Memo – July 1, 2021

This memo is regarding the upcoming Briefing on July 1, 2021 for the PBOT Pedestrian Design Guide. The following supporting documents are available as follows:

- Memo from Michelle Marx (PBOT)
- Maps of Historic & Conservation Districts, showing how and where new standards will apply
- Summary notes from Historic Landmarks Commission Briefing, dated 12/28/20
- Summary notes from Design Commission Briefing, dated 1/28/21
- Existing Pedestrian Design Guide from 1998 (<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/article/437808>)
- Ped PDX (<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/72504>)

I. OVERVIEW

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is updating the existing Pedestrian Design Guide to determine design standards that will achieve the goals of the PedPDX 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).

We held a first briefing with the Design Commission on 1/28/21. The summary notes from that discussion are attached.

BDS Staff have worked closely with PBOT on this project and appreciate PBOT's collaboration and consideration. We have narrowed our areas of discrepancy to just a few points, listed below.

II. RECOMMENDED BRIEFING DISCUSSION TOPICS

The PedPDX plan and the existing Pedestrian Guide both focus on a wider sidewalk corridor to enhance the efficiency of walking as a transportation mode. Sidewalk widths vary throughout the

city based on current Transportation System Plan (TSP) classifications. The new PedPDX sidewalk corridor widths result in additional street frontage dedications (giving up land adjacent to the street frontage) for many sites along commercial corridors. For the purposes of this second briefing, we are focusing on draft language for how the proposed language responds to adjacent historic resources (Landmarks and Contributing Resources). At this time, PBOT has not chosen to preserve the street wall of entire blocks in Districts, but only properties below a certain threshold (<100') that are adjacent to a Landmark or Contributing Resource.

For the purposes of preparing for this discussion, Staff encourages focusing on the maps provided, and especially on the following:

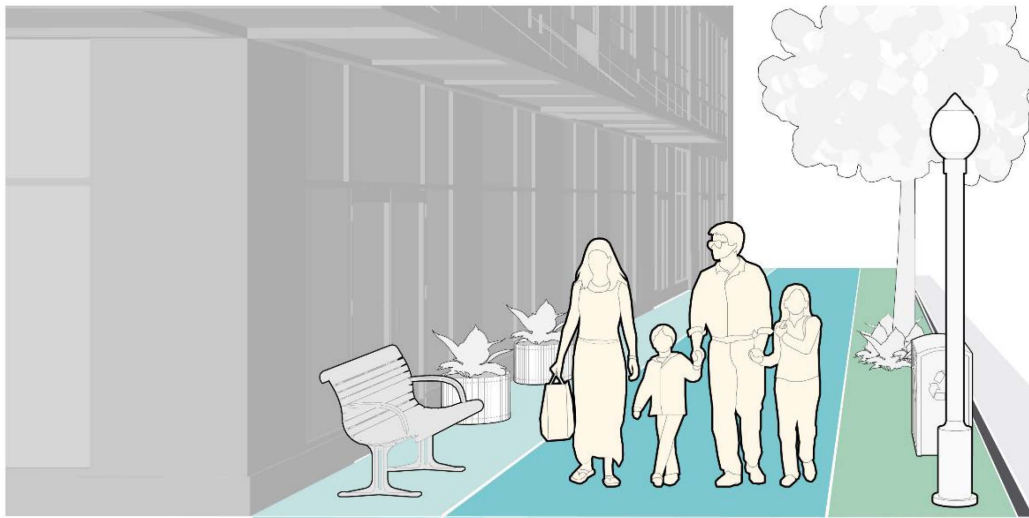
- Primary Commercial Streets – Since the PedPDX plan primarily increases dedications on commercial corridors, please focus your attention to the commercial ‘main streets’ in each of the mapped historic resource overlay zones (*i.e. NW 23rd Ave, NW 21st Ave., NW 13th Ave, NW 4th Ave., Grand Avenue, N. Denver, N. Mississippi Ave., N. Killingsworth Ave., N. Russell Street, etc.*)
- Required Dedications – Streets shown with dashed lines and red lines will trigger the greatest dedications. (*Examples include: NW Burnside & NW 23rd Ave., a single site on NW 13th Ave., most of NW 4th Ave., SE Grand Ave., Mississippi Ave.*) If a site shown as white or dark blue comes in for redevelopment, it will trigger a dedication that will set the street wall back an additional amount behind the existing street walls (if they are built to the street lot line). If the continuity of the street wall is important to defining a Historic District, please come with suggestions for how to amend the proposed draft language to achieve this.
- 99' or less site width – PBOT proposes that any site that is longer than 99' shall automatically have the full dedication prescribed in by the PedPDX guide. This number will still capture a half block site, which is typically 100' long. If the Commission's goal is to ensure that a half-block site adjacent to a contributing resource does not trigger a dedication, then a higher (100' or more) site width threshold may be necessary.
- Building Wall Step Backs – The current draft language proposes that a new development abutting a contributing resource may only match the street wall of its adjacent contributing resource for 25' before stepping back to accommodate the full dedication required by PedPDX. While this ensures that the new development can be designed with a contextual response to the existing resources (*i.e. datum lines, fenestration patterns, etc.*), it does not achieve a continuous street wall. This step back requirement applies to new development on sites with 99' or less frontage in historic zones and with 50' or less of frontage in design zones, when adjacent to a historic resource.
- Urban Repair – Many of our Conservation Districts are Albina neighborhoods that have been subject to redlining, discriminatory lending, targeted for Urban Renewal projects, and up zoned without consideration for the resulting displacement. In many cases, past policies have led to vacant sites and disrepair of buildings that led to designation of a non-contributing status. Further, historic resource inventories and designations have neglected to consider the cultural significance of many buildings. Staff encourages consideration of how this project may work toward reducing the damage to neighborhoods caused through past racist planning policies. *Please see the following article for more consideration of these issues:* https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2019-12/bleeding-albina_-_a-history-of-community-disinvestment-1940-2000.pdf

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