SIDEWALKS FOR WEST CROWN HILL

WESTCROWNHILL@GMAIL.COM

December 1, 2009

Ballard District Council
c/o Rob Mattson
City of Seattle District Coordinator
Ballard Neighborhood Service Center
5604 22nd Ave NW
Seattle, WA 98117

Dear Ballard District Council,

This letter has been prepared by Sidewalks for West Crown Hill to announce its intention to put forth a proposal for the City of Seattle's Bridging the Gap/Neighborhood Street Fund for consideration during its 2010 funding cycle.

This proposal will outline the importance of funding sidewalks/walkways in the neighborhood located west of 15th Ave NW, north of NW 85th St, east of 20th Ave NW and south of NW 90th St. We will demonstrate why sidewalks/walkways would create safer routes for residents to walk to schools, transit stops and businesses located in the heart of Crown Hill.

Sincerely,

Deborah Jaquith
Project Manager
Sidewalks for West Crown Hill

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Goal

To receive funding from the Bridging the Gap Fund/Neighborhood Street Fund to build new sidewalks/walkways as well as connect/upgrade pre-existing sidewalks/walkways, curbs, gutters and improve drainage in West Crown Hill, the neighborhood located west of 15th Ave NW, north of NW 85th St, east of 20th Ave NW and south of NW 90th St.

Priorities

While sidewalks/walkways for the entire neighborhood would be preferable, our top priority is to receive funding from the Bridging the Gap Fund/Neighborhood Street Fund to create a safe pedestrian throughway on 18th Ave NW from NW 85th St to NW 90th St (where Soundview playfield and Whitman Middle School are located). Also, to build a safe pedestrian throughway on NW 87th St from 20th Ave NW to 15th Ave NW for pedestrians to walk to local businesses and bus stops at NW 90th, NW 87th and NW 85th streets.

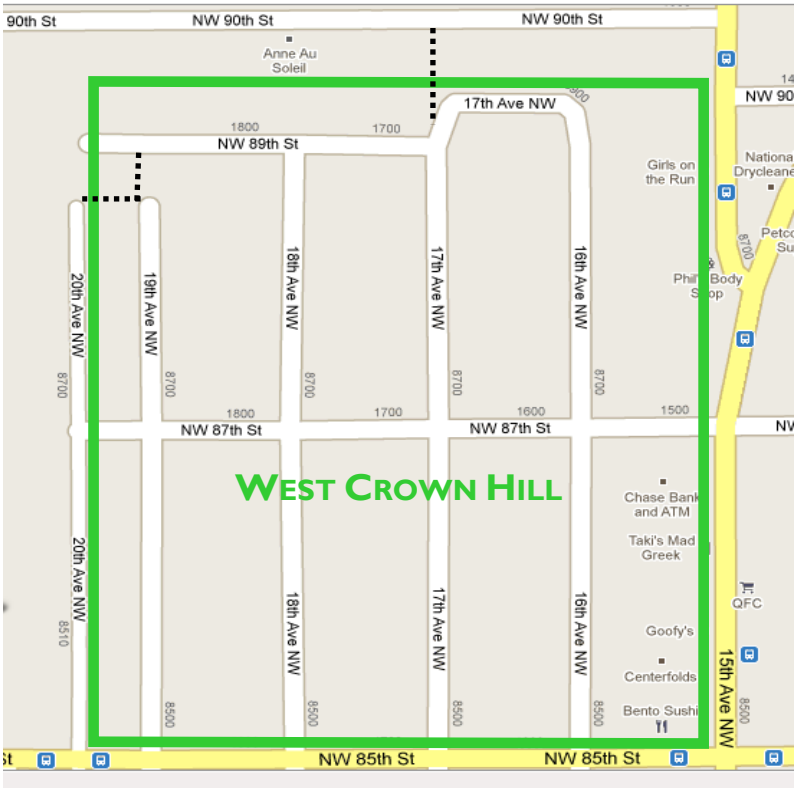
Objectives

- Improve the safety of pedestrians when walking to schools, bus stops and businesses from West Crown Hill
- Update the neighborhood's drainage infrastructure
- Enhance the neighborhood's visual appearance

Proposal

To build new and/or connect/upgrade existing sidewalks/walkways, curbs, gutters and improve drainage in the West Crown Hill neighborhood. These improvements would be a sound investment to improve the walkability and safety for West Crown Hill residents—in turn, creating a more pedestrian friendly Seattle. As a more affordable option, this community would be open to a curb and gutter option with asphalt walkway.

While sidewalks/walkways surround West Crown Hill, the neighborhood itself is an isolated island that is unwelcoming to pedestrians. We would like to formally state our desire to make this neighborhood more pedestrian friendly for its residents and people passing through.



"Develop a public-private partnership program to build out porous pavement sidewalks and raingardens to fulfill the city's promise to bring sidewalks to all neighborhoods."—*Newly-elected City of Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn's green jobs position paper*

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West Crown Hill is a neighborhood that is changing. Homeownership by young families is on the rise, with more than 30 new homeowners moving in to the affordable (by Seattle/Ballard standards) area in the last three years. On the 8700 block of 18th Ave NW alone, there are 13 children under the age of five—meaning the school-age population that will attend North Beach Elementary and Whitman Middle School will grow as well. Both schools are within walking distance and we need to provide our children with safe walking routes to these schools in the near future.

In 2012, Bus Rapid Transit (AKA "RapidRide") will come to Ballard and a major stop will be at 15th Ave NW and NW 85th St. As new school boundaries are now finalized, residents north of 85th will be sending their children to Ingraham High School—a trip that will require students to walk through our neighborhood to board the rt. 75 bus to get to a high school that is more than 4 miles away.

Poor water drainage is visible throughout the neighborhood. For example, after large rains, flooding occurs at the intersection of 17th Ave NW and NW 87th St making it impossible to traverse the intersection safely.

West Crown Hill has several "sidewalks to nowhere." Ineffective sidewalks/walkways built by homeowners that start at one end of their property line and end at the other. Connecting these sidewalks/walkways would make them actually useful as opposed to just being visual oddities.

Creating safe paths for children and bus riders and connecting sidewalks/walkways that are already in existence will benefit West Crown Hill for years to come.

"A key to making the needed pedestrian improvements for the future will be to develop a long-range source for funding sidewalks, and include that in a future transportation levy or other new funding mechanism. ...Sidewalks should be a crucial part of this. Priorities must be for Urban Villages, arterials, and walking routes to school."—*Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin, http://www.seattle.gov/council/Conlin/miw/2003/miw_1003.htm#peds*

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Meeting funding criteria
When implementing the New Sidewalk Construction Prioritization Criteria Scoring Guide, the West Crown Hill area meets the following criteria:

1. Street Type and Land Use: A local connector in an urban village, 15 points
2. Pedestrian Generators: Near a school (Whitman Middle School), high capacity transit (BRT in 2012), transit (bus stops on 15th Ave NW), park (Soundview Playfield), 24 points
3. Target User Population: Section 8 housing is located on NW 89th St, 5 points
4. Missing Link/Extension of Network: Connecting bus stops on 15th Ave NW and NW 85th St and connecting Soundview Playfield and Whitman Middle School on NW 90th St, 5 points

TOTAL: 49 points

According to the Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan's Vibrancy Map, the West Crown Hill area/Crown Hill Urban Village is recorded as having the highest possible potential pedestrian demand with a local park, middle school, grocery store, restaurants and local bus stops all within walking distance.

A sampling survey of residents on 8700 block of 18th Ave NW taken in fall 2009 revealed the following statistics:

- Nearly 60 percent of households walk to the bus stop at 15th Ave NW and NW 85th
- All respondents, 100 percent, walk either several times a week or several times a month to the stores in the Crown Hill Urban Village at 15th Ave NW and NW 85th St
- 92 percent of households would walk to the stores in the Crown Hill Urban Village more often if there were sidewalks/walkways in the neighborhood
- There are currently 13 children under the age of five on the 8700 block of 18th Ave NW

Also in fall 2009, members of Sidewalks for West Crown Hill canvassed the neighborhood and received 41 petition signatures in support of sidewalks/walkways being built in West Crown Hill. See attachment for signatures.

Please note: The West Crown Hill area, as defined in this proposal, was not included in the Walkable Crown Hill plan.

"Being able to walk down your street safely is a right, not a luxury. The city must make sidewalks a real priority—not simply something to talk about at election time. Before we embark on massive transportation projects such as building a multi billion dollar tunnel, we need to have a financing plan in place to ensure that all city residents will have sidewalks."—Newly-elected Seattle City Council Member Mike O'Brien, The Stranger, November 2009

Cost

1. Traditional curb and gutter with concrete sidewalk: est. $80,000 per block/per side.
2. Curb and gutter with asphalt walkway: est. $25,000-40,000 per block.

Please note: Costs estimates are from comparable projects in the Walkable Crown Hill proposal.