

9.17.15

We are pleased to see that Spokane is working on adopting a Pedestrian Master Plan. Following are a few comments for your consideration:

- Having moved to Spokane just 5 years ago, we have been impressed that Spokane has a very active downtown core. Safe and comfortable pedestrian access, including the numerous skywalks, are an important component of making the downtown a place that residents and visitors want to be in all types of weather throughout the year. The city should congratulate itself for maintaining a viable downtown.
- We live in a South Hill neighborhood just a couple of blocks from Manito Park. We have found that pedestrian access from this entire area to the downtown is very limited, to the point that it discourages walking. The sidewalks to go up and down the hill along Lincoln/Monroe and Bernard/Stevens/Washington are very narrow, with no buffer between walkers and high volumes of traffic. When snow falls, these walkways are covered with mounds of slippery snow and ice plowed off of the roadway. The draft master plan mentions the existence of the Tiger Trail. However, that trail is hazardous even when it is clear and dry unless one is wearing sturdy shoes with great traction.
- We are active walkers, and we like to get out to walk in all directions from our home. We find that many sidewalks are broken and have serious trip hazards. We also find that many homeowners have allowed vegetation to obstruct passage to a great degree. Correcting this encroachment would make walking through Spokane's neighborhoods much more inviting and pleasurable. Would we be correct in assuming that homeowners in Spokane have a responsibility to keep sidewalks clear for pedestrians? If so, it would be helpful if the Master Plan was explicit in stating this, and that the city would follow up with enforcing this requirement.
- Regarding the recommendation for the city to require that homeowners keep sidewalks clear for pedestrians, one possible way to approach this would be for the city to notify homeowners of this requirement with a notice that is sent out with utility bills. A further possibility is for the city to implement a program in which teams of seasonal employees (young adults of high school or college age) could trim back encroaching vegetation on properties where the homeowner has not done it themselves after being notified of the need to remedy a problem. The city could recover costs for this work by billing the homeowner an appropriate amount.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Regards,

Andrew & Diane DeMott