

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
City Council
Mobility & Infrastructure Committee

6:30 PM
March 10, 2026

MINUTES

Council Chambers, 135 E.
Sunset Way, Issaquah WA

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Committee Members:
Russell Joe, Chair
Paul Adair

Administration/Staff:
Andrea Lehner, Deputy City Administrator
T. Cassidy Mueller, Deputy City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Joe called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE

No members of the public spoke.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a) Minutes of October 14, 2025. There being no changes, the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

AGENDA ITEMS

- a) **COM 0110 - Street Standards - Landscaping Update**
Presented by:
John Mortenson, Transportation Engineering Manager

No public comment was provided.

The Committee recommended placing the item on Consent at the March 30, 2026 City Council meeting to adopt the proposed revisions to the Street Standards and IMC Chapter 18.606, Landscaping.

Other Committee comments included:

- Support for the proposed amendments.
- Discussion regarding options available to the City in developing sidewalks or making frontage improvements in neighborhoods.

ANNOUNCEMENTS - NONE

No announcements were made.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 PM.

T. Cassidy Mueller, Deputy City Clerk



Staff Report

COM # 0211 – Street Standards – Frontage Improvements for Public Utility Projects

Meeting Date May 12, 2026
Department PW - Public Works
Staff Lead Jim Jacobe, Senior Transportation Engineer

Attachments

- A. Street Standards
- B. Overhead Lines Map

Direction Needed from Committee

The Administration seeks the Committee's policy input on a possible revision to the Street Standards regarding frontage improvement requirements related to drinking water, sanitary sewer, and storm drainage development and redevelopment projects.

Recommendation

The Administration recommends the Committee support adopting a revision to the Street Standards allowing the City Engineer to exempt water, sewer, and storm development and redevelopment projects from certain frontage improvements in locations when specific conditions are met.

Background

The [City of Issaquah Street Standards](#) are adopted by reference by [Issaquah Municipal Code 12.04.010](#). The City Council last adopted the Street Standards at the Regular Council meeting on [March 30, 2026 \(AB 9099\)](#). The Street Standards provide guidance for design and construction of municipal streets, private streets, and public and private parking lots within the City of Issaquah. The Administration is seeking guidance on the street frontage improvement requirements in the Street Standards due to concerns raised when Sammamish Plateau Water planned to add Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) treatment to an existing drinking water facility on 1st Ave NE just north of I-90. The location of this project is an industrial and commercial street with limited pedestrian traffic, and 1st Ave NE dead ends a couple of blocks south of this site near the City of Issaquah Public Works facility. Existing sidewalks on this street are also very limited with just one short stretch across from the project site currently having any sidewalk, and two short unconnected stretches of sidewalk are currently planned north and south of the project site. The remainder of the street has no sidewalks currently and is unlikely to be redeveloped in the near future. The adjacent properties are existing industrial or

commercial properties; the site directly to the north is Lakeside sand and gravel quarry, and the site directly to the south is an existing construction business.

Development

Issaquah’s Street Standards defines Development as “the uses to which the land that is the subject of a discretionary action by the City of Issaquah shall be placed, the building to be constructed and all alterations of the land and construction incident thereof.” [Issaquah Municipal Code 18.102.080](#) defines Development as “the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, expansion, reduction, demolition, or exterior alteration of a building or structure; any use, or change in use, of a building or structure; any human-caused change to land whether at, above, or below ground or water level; and any use, or change in use, of land whether at, above, or below ground or water level. Development includes, but is not limited to, any activity that requires a permit or approval under this Code; [IMC Title 16](#), Buildings and Construction; and [IMC Title 13](#), Public Services.” Generally speaking, any construction or alteration of a property that requires a permit or approval is considered a development or redevelopment. Under current Street Standards and Issaquah Municipal Code definitions, the addition of a PFAS treatment facility to the existing Sammamish Plateau Water facility on 1st Ave NE qualifies as development, or redevelopment, of the site.

Street Frontage Improvements

Issaquah’s Street Standards/Requirements [Section G](#) states that “street frontage improvements are required for all new developments and redevelopment including any development that is a conversion of use from residential to non-residential except any development of four dwelling units or less on an existing lot. Such improvements may include, but not be limited to, curb and gutter; sidewalk, street storm drainage; street illumination system; traffic signal modification, relocation or installation; utility relocation and undergrounding; street trees; landscaping and irrigation, bike facilities and street widening all per these Standards.” The Sammamish Plateau Water PFAS project is not a development of four dwelling units or less on an existing lot and therefore Street Standards require street frontage improvements for this project including but not limited to sidewalk and undergrounding of utilities.

Short Plat Exemption

Street Standards Section G exempts developments of four dwelling units or less on an existing lot from street frontage improvements but only provides one other exemption. The City Engineer may waive most street frontage improvements, except utility undergrounding, if a short plat meets the following conditions:

- adjacent street frontage improvements are unlikely to be installed in the future,
- the City has no documented street plan for the subject street,
- and the private parking lot area meets structural requirements in the Street Standards for emergency access and public safety.

No other exceptions for street frontage improvements are provided under current Street Standards other than those described above.

Utility Undergrounding

Issaquah’s Comprehensive Plan goal, [U Policy E1](#), on utilities specifies electrical power lines are required to be undergrounded where feasible and encourages conversion of existing overhead systems. Underground utilities are known to enhance overall safety, efficiency, and foster more disaster and climate resilience compared to overhead utilities. Similarly, Comprehensive Plan goal, [U Policy E6](#), states that “new or expanded sites for public facilities, utilities, and infrastructure in a manner that ensures disaster and climate resiliency and public service recovery.” The City’s Comprehensive Plan clearly indicates utility undergrounding is a policy goal and this is also reflected in the Street Standards. Street Standards Section G gives an exemption to street frontage improvements for short plats, but this exemption specifically excludes utility undergrounding.

As a result of the “bomb cyclone” windstorm of November 2024, many Issaquah residents endured days or weeks without electric power. This extreme weather event was a stark reminder of the resiliency benefits of moving critical utility infrastructure underground where it is less likely to be damaged by storm or other environmental factors. Downed power lines also present a severe safety hazard to people and animals in the vicinity. Such safety hazards can be avoided if electric power lines are placed underground.

Sidewalks

Issaquah’s Street Standards/Requirements [Section I](#) regarding sidewalks states that, where required by the City Engineer and/or the City’s Comprehensive Plan, sidewalks shall be provided. Pedestrian Sidewalks and Walkways shall meet the latest ADA Guidelines, and be characterized and located as follows:

1. Both sides of Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial and Collector Arterial streets.
2. On both sides of all Local streets providing route continuity to other streets, parks, schools or other pedestrian generators.
3. Both sides of dead-end streets, except in the cul-de-sacs or hammerhead turn-arounds. In these circumstances, installed sidewalks and walkways may be at the property line nearest the street/cul-de-sac transitions.
4. Where subdivision design includes an internal sidewalk or walkway system consistent with the requirements of Part VI Development Standards in IMC 18, Required Development and Design Standards and/or IMC 18.340 Subdivisions, the City Engineer may waive a requirement for a pedestrian sidewalk or walkway adjacent to the street if it is determined that the nearest internal sidewalk or walkway provides reasonably similar pedestrian safety, access, and mobility.
5. Exceptions.
 - a. Pedestrian sidewalks and walkways will be reviewed for feasibility to be constructed on streets less than one hundred fifty feet (150’) in length.

Street Standards Section I exceptions listed above do not provide any exemptions to street frontage improvements that would apply on a mostly industrial/commercial street with very limited existing sidewalks and limited pedestrian traffic.

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Issaquah's [Mobility Action Plan](#) Policy MAP-4.1 ([T Policy D1](#)) states "where feasible and practical, a connected and complete pedestrian network shall be provided to meet potential pedestrian demand, based on context and nearby amenities as defined in four tiers."

Sidewalk Tiers

Tier 1: Provide an enhanced pedestrian facility on both sides of street on arterials and collectors in the following neighborhoods: Central Issaquah, Olde Town, Issaquah Highlands.

Tier 2: Provide standard sidewalks on both sides of the street in the following locations:

a. All streets within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of sensitive locations: schools, senior centers, public community amenities (hospitals, transit stops, and civic facilities).

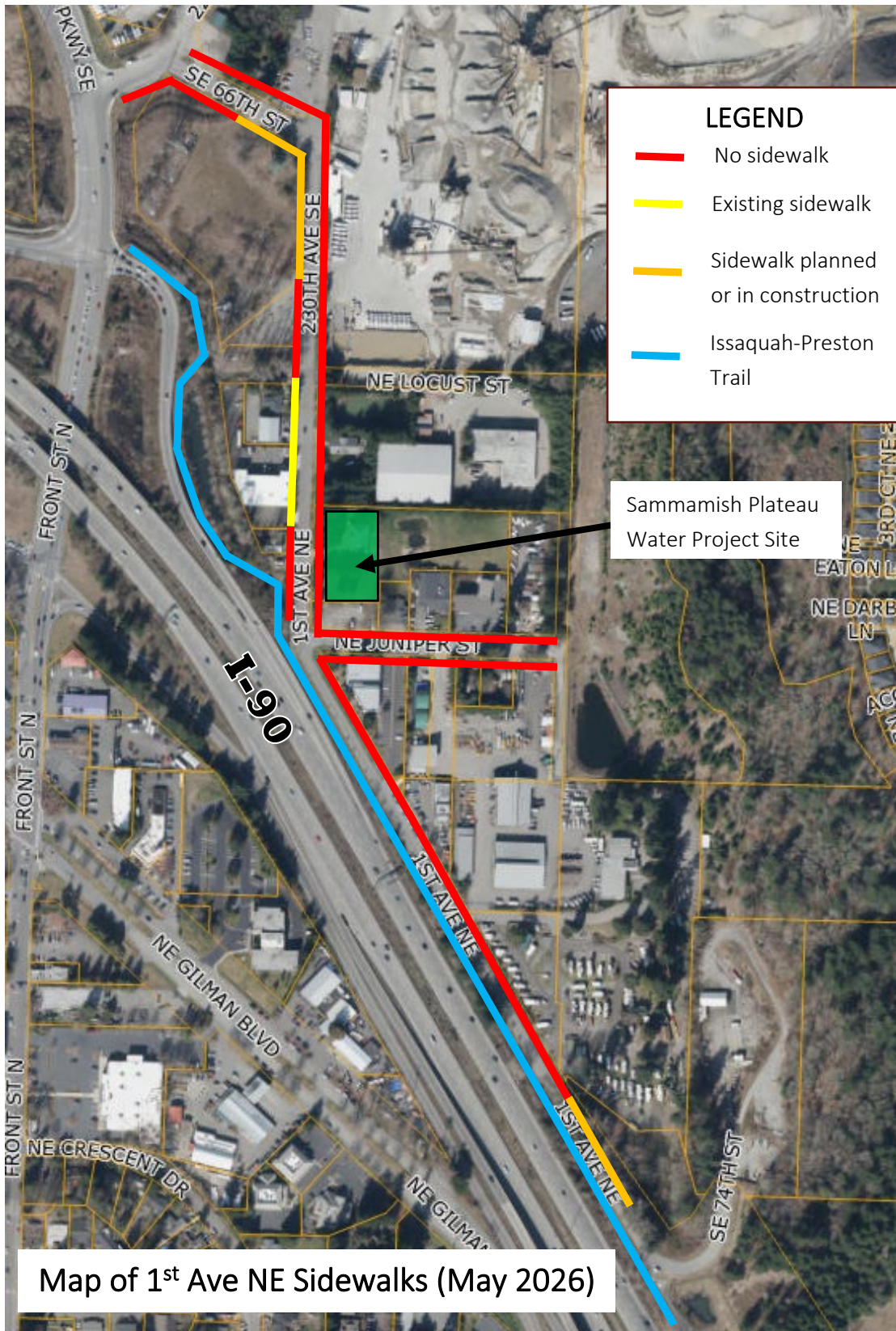
b. All local streets in the following neighborhoods: Central Issaquah, Olde Town, Issaquah Highlands.

Tier 3: Provide standard sidewalks on one side of street on arterials and collectors in neighborhoods outside the Central Issaquah, Olde Town, and Issaquah Highlands neighborhoods.

Tier 4: Lower speeds limits to 20 MPH or less OR provide a sidewalk on either side on all local streets, including commercial areas outside Central Issaquah, Olde Town, and Issaquah Highlands commercial areas.

Tier 3 and 4 streets only require sidewalk on one side of the street per the Mobility Action Plan. The Sammamish Plateau Water project on 1st Ave NE is located on a Tier 3 street and currently only has sidewalk on portions of one side of the street. Tier 3 and 4 streets explicitly exclude all streets within Central Issaquah, Olde Town, Issaquah Highlands and streets within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of sensitive locations such as schools, senior centers, and public community amenities.

Below is a map showing the existing sidewalks on 1st Ave NE as of May 2026. Locations where no sidewalks currently exist are shown in red on this mostly industrial/commercial street. The existing segment of sidewalk is shown in yellow and two segments of sidewalk that are in construction or design are shown in orange. The nearby Issaquah-Preston Trail is shown in blue and, while this is not a City-owned or maintained facility, it functions like a sidewalk on a portion of the street. The Sammamish Plateau PFAS facility location is indicated by the green box and labeled. This project location would not offer any connection to the surrounding sidewalks (existing or proposed) and is on the opposite side of the street from the Issaquah-Preston Trail.



Analysis

The proposed PFAS treatment facility on Sammamish Plateau Water's existing drinking water facility will provide public benefit by removing PFAS contamination from drinking water. The project is located on a mostly industrial/commercial street with no connecting sidewalks and limited pedestrian traffic. The properties directly to the north are owned by Lakeside sand and gravel quarry and are unlikely to be redeveloped in the near future. In this case, typical street frontage improvements like sidewalks may be of little or no benefit to the community and cost for these improvements would be passed on to rate payers. The Administration would like the Committee to consider an adjustment to the Street Standards allowing for exemption from street frontage improvements in isolated cases such as this.

The Administration recommends separating the utility undergrounding requirement from other street frontage requirements in a potential exemption, recognizing the safety, disaster resilience, and climate resilience benefits of utility undergrounding. Projects like the proposed PFAS treatment facility generally include connection to existing electric power lines, and typically these new power lines connecting to the project are placed underground. As such, we are not recommending allowing exemption to utility undergrounding, similar to the current exemption in Street Standards Section G for short plats. Therefore, we recommend this new exemption to require utility undergrounding despite other street frontage improvements being considered for exemption by the City Engineer.

The Administration recommends adding an exemption to the street frontage improvement requirements in Section G of the Issaquah Street Standards. The Administration recommends the exemption follow a similar format to the one already provided for short plats, and similarly subject to City Engineer approval. The Administration recommends the exemption only be applied to drinking water, sanitary sewer, and storm water development (or redevelopment) projects that provide public benefit and typically do not generate additional vehicle trips or pedestrian traffic. We recommend this exemption requires the following conditions to be met for any project applying for exemption from street frontage improvements:

- Project is a drinking water, sanitary sewer, or storm water utility development or redevelopment.
- Project is located on a street defined as sidewalk Tier 3 or 4 in the Mobility Action Plan.
- Project is located on a site where adjacent street frontage improvements are unlikely to be installed in the future.
- Project is located on a street where the City has no documented street plan for the subject street.

The recommended exemption would only apply for public utility projects that provide public benefit and generally do not increase vehicle or pedestrian trips. Sidewalk Tier 3 or 4 excludes all streets in Central Issaquah, Olde Town, and Issaquah Highlands neighborhoods, and excludes streets within ¼ mile of schools, senior centers, and public community amenities. These two requirements alone severely limit the number of development and redevelopment projects that could apply for this exemption. The last points about adjacent street frontage improvements being unlikely in the future is