



## Neighborhood Greenways Frequently Asked Questions

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## GENERAL / BACKGROUND

### What is a neighborhood greenway?

Neighborhood greenways are routes on residential streets that are optimized for safer bicycle and pedestrian travel for all ages and abilities. They are designed for lower vehicle speeds and volumes. Greenways can provide access to schools, trails, parks, transit and neighborhood businesses. Watch a short film about [neighborhood greenways](#).

Neighborhood greenways meet the following goals:

- Reduce vehicle cut-through traffic – For example, median islands can be installed to keep drivers from trying to avoid main streets and cutting through on neighborhood streets.
- Provide safer bicycling and pedestrian connections – Pavement markings not only direct bicyclists along the greenway, but alert drivers to expect people bicycling. Improved crossings and curb ramps make walking easier and safer.
- Prioritize for non-motorized travel – Stop signs can be installed for drivers crossing greenways at residential intersections.
- Help people across our busier streets - Improved crossings at main streets help people walking and bicycling to cross more easily, for example flashing beacons can announce to drivers someone is crossing.
- Guide people along the route and help get them where they are going - Markings on the pavement and new signs let people know where the greenways is going and what's nearby.
- Provide more "eyes on the street" – Greenways encourage local residents to walk and ride a bike. Having more people on the street helps to make them safer.

### Why is the city proposing neighborhood greenways?

SDOT's mission is to deliver a safe, reliable, efficient and socially equitable transportation system that enhances Seattle's environment and economic vitality. Neighborhood Greenways are once piece of the system. Neighborhood Greenways provide comfortable and attractive places to walk, ride a bike, skate and run for people of all ages and abilities. Neighborhood Greenways connect you to parks, schools and local shops.

### What makes a good greenway?

The most important component of a good greenway is how comfortable, safe and accessible the street is for people who walk or bike along greenways. Greenways should be designed for all ages and abilities, so those from eight to eighty will be comfortable.

Neighborhood greenway streets should have relatively low traffic speeds and volumes. Typically neighborhood greenways have fewer than 1,000 cars per day and speed limits of 25 miles per hour. They should be relatively flat and comfortable to walk or ride a bike on (no small feat in a city like Seattle). Greenways should provide attractive connections between neighborhoods and to destinations such as schools, parks, transit, business districts and multiuse trails.

### How will neighborhood greenways change the streets?

The changes made to transform residential streets into neighborhood greenways vary from one greenway to another. There are common elements along greenways including directional signs, neighborhood greenway signs and pavement markings to alert drivers. There may be traffic calming elements such as traffic circles and speed humps. At busy intersecting streets, there may be improved

crossings with crosswalks and curb ramps. Additionally, stop signs controlling the residential (non-arterial) streets crossing greenways provide priority for the users of greenways. When the route crosses a busy (arterial) street, a median may be installed with gaps to allow people who walk or ride bikes to continue through on greenways, while restricting some turning movements to reduce traffic on greenways. Additionally, traffic signals may be upgraded and landscape improved by adding street trees or cleaning up traffic circles.

Local access to homes along Neighborhood Greenways is always preserved and there are usually minimal, if any changes to on-street parking.

### **Do Neighborhood Greenways include Roadside Raingardens?**

SDOT is working closely with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to identify opportunities for collaboration on future greenways. [Click here](#) for more information about SPU's Green Stormwater Programs.

## **BIKING**

### **How will bicycle traffic be prioritized along greenways?**

The city can install new stop signs on all the side streets or residential streets that intersect greenways so drivers will have to stop before turning onto or crossing greenways. These stop signs give people who walk and bike along greenways priority to travel unimpeded, making the route more attractive.

### **Will pavement conditions improve?**

SDOT staff evaluates the pavement condition of the streets and sidewalks along greenways. Locations with severe pavement flaws will be patched with asphalt as an immediate improvement. Additional funding would be needed for more extensive pavement repairs.

### **Why is the city using sharrows (bicycle pavement markers) on greenways?**

Sharrows, or shared lane markings, are bicycle symbols that are placed in the roadway lane indicating that motorists should expect to see and share the lane with bicycles.

What a motorist should know:

- Only overtake a person riding a bike at a safe speed and only if there is a safe passing distance of at least three feet.
- Driving over bicycle pavement markings is okay.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Watch for pedestrians and bicyclists.

What a bicyclist should know:

- Follow sharrow to stay on the greenway.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Yield to pedestrians and motorists who have the right-of-way.
- Move through intersections cautiously.

Sharrows will be used along greenway at the following locations:

1. Entering greenways— When entering a greenway from an arterial street you will see a modified sharrow marking with chevrons indicating both directions of travel.
2. Along greenways— As you are traveling along greenways, sharrows will be placed at residential intersections to let motorists know that they should expect to see bicyclists traveling along this route and to help guide bicyclists.
3. When greenways turns— Sharrows guide bicyclists on where to turn and there will always be a confirming sharrow showing you are still going the right way. Greenway signs will also direct you to turn.

### **What is a crossbike?**

Crossbikes are similar to crosswalks, except they designate where people who ride bikes will be crossing the street. They also serve to remind drivers to expect to see bicyclists and will be accompanied by signs at the crossing and in advance of the crossing. Crossbikes are sometimes installed at arterial streets along greenways.

### **How do greenways connect with the rest of the bicycle route system?**

Neighborhood greenways provide an alternative route for bicyclists who may not want to ride on busy arterial streets. [Seattle's Bicycle Master Plan](#) is being updated and identifies a network of bicycle lanes, trails and greenways.

### **Can I still ride my bicycle on the arterial streets?**

SDOT encourages all bicyclists to exercise their own judgment regarding which roadways they feel most comfortable riding a bicycle. To accommodate bicyclists of varying comfort levels the [Seattle Bicycle Master Plan](#) recommends on- and off-arterial routes.

## **WALKING**

### **How will pedestrian traffic be prioritized along greenways?**

The city often installs new stop signs to control the intersecting non-arterial streets along greenways. These new stop signs provide people who walk and bike along greenways priority to travel unimpeded. This prioritization of non-motorized travel along greenways makes the route more attractive for people walking and biking.

### **Do greenways improve sidewalk conditions?**

SDOT has evaluated the sidewalk and pavement conditions and identified locations where spot improvements are needed. These repairs will be completed as part of the project.

### **Will there be new curb ramps or crosswalks installed along greenways?**

The American's with Disability Act (ADA) requires that any new pedestrian crossing improvement, such as a marked crosswalk, include curb ramps. Unfortunately, adding them at every intersection is cost prohibitive. Therefore, SDOT is will prioritize these improvements at arterial crossings. New marked crosswalks will, also be added at these locations. In addition, SDOT inventories the curb ramp needs along the corridor and as funding permits they may be installed over time.

SDOT primarily prioritizes new curb ramps at locations that are requested by individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities can request curb ramps by using the online form at the following website: [http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ada\\_request.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ada_request.htm)

**How will it be easier to cross busy streets along greenways?**

At the arterial crossings, improvements will be made to reinforce to motorists that they will see people who walk or ride bikes along this route. These improvements include signs identifying the street as a neighborhood greenway, advance warning signs that pedestrians and bicyclists will be crossing ahead and bicycle legends on the pavement (or crossbikes).

**WAYFINDING**

**What signs will be used to indicate greenway routes?**

The directional signs let people know where and how far the neighborhood connections are located such as the library, light rail station, schools and parks.

**Will there be special Neighborhood Greenway signs?**

Yes. SDOT installs signs along the route that let people know they are on greenways. These signs are also used on streets with bicycle facilities to let them know where to access greenways.

**TRAFFIC CALMING**

**Will there be new speed humps or traffic circles installed on greenways?**

SDOT is aware that car speeds may increase given the traffic control on the side streets. Therefore staff conducts a follow up study one year after implementation to determine if the motorists traveling along greenways have increased their speeds. If the data reveals that corrective actions are necessary, SDOT will consider installing speed humps.

**STOP SIGNS**

**Why add new stop signs at intersections?**

New stop signs can be added at streets that intersect greenways. Drivers then have to stop before turning onto or crossing greenways making it safer. These stop signs also provide people who walk and bike along greenways priority to travel unimpeded making the route more attractive.

**NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUSINESS ACCESS**

**Will delivery trucks still be able to access residents and businesses?**

Yes. Access to homes and businesses is not impacted.

**Will emergency vehicles still be able to access the neighborhood?**

The proposed changes do not negatively impact emergency vehicles. SDOT works with emergency providers prior to making street changes, like adding medians to ensure there are no conflicts.

**ECONOMIC VITALITY**

**How do neighborhoods benefit economically?**

There are economic benefits to slowing speeds, calming traffic and improving bicycle and pedestrian circulation in a business district. Residents have better access businesses by a neighborhood greenway route and feel more comfortable riding their bikes or walking to stores.