

**Wallingford Neighborhood Greenway****Frequently Asked Questions****February 6, 2012**

*These frequently asked questions and answers include some of the common questions SDOT received from the community during the project's design phase, and also respond to more specific questions raised at the community meeting and during the public comment period.*

**Why make changes on these streets? What is a neighborhood greenway?**

Neighborhood Greenways are routes on non-arterial streets that are appropriate for safe, family-friendly bicycle and pedestrian travel, and are usually designed for reduced vehicle speeds and volumes. The greenway provides access to schools, parks, businesses and low-stress, family-friendly streets.

**What is the greenway route?**

Your neighbors requested a neighborhood greenway route that provides an east-west bicycling and walking alternative to N 45<sup>th</sup> St, and provides walking and bicycling connections between Stone Way (and eventually, Aurora Ave., to the west) and the Latona/Thackeray bicycle routes on the east). After analysis of the pros and cons of each of the possible routes, SDOT and the community stakeholders group selected a route that travels from Stone Way N along N 43<sup>rd</sup> St to Burke Ave N, along Burke Ave N from N 43<sup>rd</sup> St to N 44<sup>th</sup> St, and along N 44<sup>th</sup> St from Burke Ave N to Latona Ave N. There is more information on the route selection process later in this FAQ.

**What are the goals for the greenway and what changes are being made to meet those goals?**

Your neighbors requested that the neighborhood greenway meet the following goals:

- **Reduce vehicle cut-through traffic** – Since the proposed greenway route has relatively low traffic volumes, specific measures to reduce automobile traffic are not needed. SDOT considered a median island to restrict turns at Stone Way N and N 43<sup>rd</sup> St and reduce automobile traffic at the west end of the project. However, after input from area residents and businesses, and reconsideration of the proposal's traffic impacts, the median island has been eliminated from consideration. Instead, smaller pedestrian/bicycle refuge islands that allow full use of the intersection by automobiles will be installed.
- **Provide safer bicycling and pedestrian connections** - Pavement markings (sharrows) alert people driving to expect people bicycling; improved crossings and curb ramps make pedestrian mobility easier and safer.
- **Reduce auto speeds** – The existing traffic circles help slow automobile traffic on greenways. Documented traffic speeds on the greenway route are very low.
- **Help people across our busier streets** - Improved crossings at main streets help people walking and bicycling cross more easily.
- **Guide people on the route and help get them where they are going** - Markings on the pavement and signage let you know where the greenway goes and what's nearby, like parks and business districts.
- **Provide more "eyes on the street"** - More people out on the street bicycling and walking leads to safer streets!

### What is a sharrow?

A sharrow, or shared lane marking, is a bicycle symbol that is placed in the roadway lane indicating that motorists should expect to see and share the lane with bicycles.

What a motorist should know:

- Expect to see and share the roadway with bicyclists.
- Follow the rules of the road.

What a bicyclist should know:

- Use the sharrow to find your way along the greenway.
- Use the sharrow to guide where you ride in the roadway.

### How will sharrows be used along greenway?

1. Entering the greenway: When entering a greenway from an arterial street you will see a modified sharrow marking with chevrons offset indicating both directions of travel.
2. Along the greenway: As you are traveling along the greenway, sharrows will be placed at non-arterial intersections to let motorists know that they should expect to see bicyclists traveling along this route and to help guide bicyclists along the route.
3. When the greenway turns: Sharrows will be placed to guide you around the traffic circle, and there will be a confirming sharrow indicating where to exit the intersection and continue along the greenway. There will also be greenway signs directing you to turn.

## TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

### What is the volume of traffic on N/NE 44<sup>th</sup> Street & N 43<sup>rd</sup> Street?

#### Why was this route chosen?

All the routes that we looked at would make a good neighborhood greenway given their low traffic volumes and speeds. The NE/N 44<sup>th</sup> St / N 43<sup>rd</sup> St route made the best proposed neighborhood greenway of the possible routes since it provided good connections to destinations within the neighborhood, the grades on this route were not as steep as other potential routes, and each non-arterial intersection except for the two “T” intersections has a traffic circle which provides an added traffic calming benefit. The traffic volume on the route is less than 500 vehicles per day.

### What are the reported speeds for N/NE 44<sup>th</sup> Street and N 43<sup>rd</sup> Street?

The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed (which is the speed at which 85 percent of traffic is traveling at or below and is the most commonly used measure of speed compliance) along the proposed neighborhood greenway route is 20.6 mph. This is a low speed in comparison with other similar residential streets, and indicates that additional speed reduction measures are not necessary.

### What is the collision history? What pedestrian and bicycle collisions have occurred on the corridor?

This is the 3 year collision history from 2008 – 2010.

<u>Type of Collision</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Injury Collision</u>
Right Angle*	4	3
Parked Vehicle	8	0
Rear-End	1	0
Pedestrian	1	1
Other	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>

\*2 right angle accidents were at Corliss Ave N & N 44<sup>th</sup> St prior to the traffic circle being constructed in 2009.

**Did SDOT assess the pavement conditions along the route to provide bike facilities that can safely be utilized?**

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

**Did SDOT consider impacts to truck traffic and deliveries?**

Yes. Deliveries and truck traffic will still be able to access the area as usual. SDOT considered installing a median island at Stone Way N and N 43<sup>rd</sup> St that would have restricted vehicle turns; however, this feature has been eliminated from further consideration.

**TRAFFIC CONTROL**

**What will SDOT do to guard against cut through traffic onto other residential streets? Will this increase the auto-cut through traffic to other streets?**

N 44<sup>th</sup> Street already has existing traffic circles along the neighborhood greenway route. As SDOT is not proposing additional traffic circles it is not anticipated that vehicle volumes will change.

**Will the proposed changes make it harder to enter and exit side streets?**

No. Visibility will be increased along the corridor with additional parking restrictions. It's important that intersections be free of parked cars to ensure good visibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

**How will the project impact emergency vehicles?**

The proposed changes will not affect emergency vehicle access.

**Can the neighborhood paint the top portions of the concrete on the traffic circles?**

No. SDOT no longer paints the concrete on new traffic circles, or maintains paint on existing traffic circles. SDOT uses only the reflective sign in the middle of the circle to alert motorists. Paint markings of any kind constitute an official traffic marking, and under state law, residents can't install or maintain such markings.

**Why isn't there a 20 MPH speed limit along Wallingford Ave N at N 43<sup>rd</sup> St for the school crosswalk? Can one be installed?**

Our current policy is to install 20 mph speed zones for school crosswalks that are within 300 feet of the school property. This crosswalk is approximately 500 feet from the school property (as the crow flies). For that reason, we would not install the 20 mph speed zone at this location at this time.

**The north side of N 43<sup>rd</sup> Street between Wallingford Ave N and Woodlawn Ave N and many of the north/south Avenues have parking restricted on one side of the street; can this parking be restored?**

SDOT has evaluated the current design and operations of the streets. For example, one location had the parking restricted for the operation of school buses, which is no longer needed. SDOT will let the residents know on these streets of the possible parking restoration and take comments before making any changes.

**Why are you installing parking restrictions on all corners of the intersections?**

No parking signs are being installed near the intersections along the greenway to help reinforce the restriction that already exists under state law (RCW 46.61.570) and the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 11.72.080) both of which prohibit parking in an intersection or within 20 feet of a legal crosswalk. Please note that legal crosswalks exist at all legs of all intersections, regardless of whether or not they are marked. The signs will not change, or expand, the prohibited parking area. It's important that intersections be free of parked cars to ensure good visibility for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists, and to ensure that motorists are able to maneuver through the intersection without hitting parked vehicles (If you noticed in the collision history above, 8 out of the 16 reported collisions were parked vehicles.)

#### **How many parking spaces will be impacted?**

As a result of enforcing parking restriction at the intersections, 61 parking spaces will be lost where vehicles currently park. Unfortunately, many of those cars are parked in areas that are prohibited by state law. However, we recognize that there is a high demand for parking in this neighborhood so we looked for opportunities to add parking. With this project we can add 70 new parking spaces on adjacent side streets. This is a net gain of 9 parking spaces in the immediate neighborhood.

#### **Why isn't the city installing stop signs on all the intersecting streets along the greenway?**

Seattle, like many other jurisdictions, does not routinely provide stop or yield signs at non-arterial street intersections. We follow federal guidelines, which rely on such factors as collision frequency and relative traffic volumes on the intersecting streets, in deciding whether or not new stop signs are appropriate. We don't install stop signs purely for the purpose of speed control. Our experience has shown that stop signs installed at unwarranted locations have a low compliance rate, with many motorists failing to make a complete stop or ignoring the signs altogether. After evaluating these intersections in accordance with the federal guidelines, these intersections would not warrant yield or stop sign installations. In addition, the traffic circles provide a similar function to stop or yield signs, in that they require all vehicles to slow down and yield the right of way to vehicles that are in the intersection. Seattle does not install stop signs at traffic circles, as this could confuse drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists about who has the right-of-way.

#### **Why isn't the city installing speed humps along the greenway route?**

Speed humps are installed as a traffic calming measure to reduce vehicle speeds when there is a documented condition of drivers traveling at excessive speeds. As noted above, the proposed greenway route currently does not have a speeding concern. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed along this route is 20.6 mph.

#### **What is happening at the intersection of Stone Way and N 43<sup>rd</sup> St? Can a traffic signal be installed?**

A median island and turn restrictions are no longer proposed at the intersection. However, SDOT will install new marked crosswalk across Stone Way, special bicycle markings on the pavement, and added signs to alert motorists of crossing bicycles and pedestrians. A traffic signal is not being installed.

#### **Why did SDOT revise the median island proposed at Stone Way and N 43<sup>rd</sup> Street?**

The revised design provides pedestrians and bicyclists with a significant safety improvement. Left turn movements will be taken more slowly and with more awareness of crossing pedestrians and bicyclists. The islands on the approaches to the crosswalks allow pedestrians and bicyclists the opportunity to cross half the roadway, with a stopping area. This generally results in very good compliance with motorists stopping from the other direction because the pedestrians and bicyclists are very visible.

We did hear pushback with the original design (with some people suggesting a traffic signal – which would have drawn more traffic to the greenway route) with the new development of 90 units on the corner with driveway access only on N 43<sup>rd</sup> St and residents having to re-route to other residential streets. The alternate routes were on narrow streets that we would have had to improve for the diverted traffic with parking restrictions at the intersections.

Consistent with many of the streets in this neighborhood, the traffic speeds and volumes on N 43<sup>rd</sup> St, are below the thresholds for neighborhood greenways, so diversion of the left turning traffic is not critical to the success of the greenway. Finally, we also heard some questioning of the N 43<sup>rd</sup> Street route for bicyclists due to the grade. In the end, the improvement of the full median did not outweigh the impacts to the surrounding neighborhood due to the diversion.

**I'd like traffic circles or I have concerns with traffic speeds on other streets in the project area. What can I do?**

SDOT's website at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/neighborhoodtraffic.htm> contains information about our traffic calming program. You can also email us at [neighborhood.traffic@seattle.gov](mailto:neighborhood.traffic@seattle.gov), or call 206-684-0353 for assistance.

**PEDESTRIANS & BICYCLISTS**

**If the goals of this project are to make it easier for walking and biking along the corridor, why is the city not installing new curb ramps at all the intersections?**

To improve pedestrian and vehicles visibility, SDOT is adding no parking signs near the intersections (this reinforces the parking restriction at every intersection that exists under state law) and we're also installing a new marked crosswalk on Stone Way at N. 43<sup>rd</sup> St. Unfortunately, adding new curb ramps at every intersection is outside the scope and budget for this project.

SDOT 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)

**For pedestrians and bicyclists, how will the project make it easier to cross the arterials along the greenway?**

At the arterial crossings Latona Ave NE, Thackeray Pl NE, and Wallingford Ave N improvements will be made to re-enforce to motorists that they will see bicyclists and pedestrians 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. At Stone Way N at N 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, SDOT will improve the crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists by installing two marked crosswalks and signage for pedestrians and by improving visibility with parking restrictions at intersection approaches

**How does the neighborhood greenway connect with the rest of the bicycle route system?**

This neighborhood greenway provides an alternative route for bicyclists who may not want to ride on N/NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street. This route connects to the bicycle facilities on Stone Way N, Thackeray Pl NE and Latona Ave NE. This is the first phase of this neighborhood greenway project; we will be working on further expansion to take it east across I-5 into the University District and to extend it across Aurora Ave N using the stairway at N 41<sup>st</sup> Street to access the Fremont Neighborhood.

### **What guides the city's bike and pedestrian improvements?**

The City of Seattle adopted a Complete Streets Policy by resolution in 2007. The guiding principle of Complete Streets policy "is to design, operate and maintain Seattle's streets to promote safe and convenient access and travel for all users --- pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and people of all abilities, as well as freight and motor vehicle drivers". In addition the policy states that the " Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will implement Complete Streets policy by designing, operating and maintaining the transportation network to improve travel conditions for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit and freight in a manner consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community".

### **I prefer to ride my bike on N/NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street. Why offer a route right off the arterial street?**

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.

### **N 43rd Street is too steep for bicyclists, why not put on a street that isn't so steep?**

All the potential routes we looked at for the Wallingford Neighborhood Greenway had challenges with the hills at different locations. The hills along the proposed route were as steep as the other potential routes that we looked at. There are going to be challenges in the city of Seattle with hills; and there may be some locations that a cyclist may have to get off of their bike and walk.

### **Why was this route chosen?**

SDOT, along with our community stakeholders group, looked at numerous alternative greenway routes, from N 42<sup>nd</sup> St through N 46<sup>th</sup> St, with consideration of factors such as vehicle speeds and volumes, the street grades, the collision history, and the route's connectivity with existing and future bicycle routes. Many of the routes were strong candidates. For example, all the streets have very low documented vehicle speeds, and low traffic volumes. Overall, each of the streets have relatively gentle grades, although each of the alternatives do have short hilly sections. The N 43<sup>rd</sup>/44<sup>th</sup> route was chosen in large part due to it's proximity and connectivity to the N 45<sup>th</sup> St corridor, and its traffic calming features.

## **PROJECT FUNDING**

### **How is this project funded?**

The community applied for and successfully competed for funding through the city's Neighborhood Project Fund. This city-administered program funds community's transportation and parks priorities.

### **How much will the project cost to install?**

- \$17,000 for pavement repair
- \$45,000 for installation of new paint and legends
- \$9,000 for route signs
- \$15,000 for pedestrian refuge construction
- \$3,000 for new landscaping needs in existing traffic circles

## **Implementation Timeline**

*February 2012:* Project Update to Community  
*Spring 2012:* Project construction

### **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

#### **What outreach did SDOT conduct for the Open House?**

Here is the list of outreach tools we utilized to announce the open house and solicit feedback:

- Open House flyer for the over 2,000 properties and businesses located along corridor.
- Fliers distributed to the Dept. of Neighborhood (DON) coordinators for distribution.
- E-mail notice sent to neighborhood organizations (community and business groups, affinity groups, etc.)
- Web site
- Community open house held on December 8, 2011
- Comments taken until December 22, 2011.

#### **Wallingford has many small businesses. What will the economic impacts be to the business district with the changes?**

There are economic benefits to slowing speeds, calming traffic, and improving bicycle and pedestrian circulation in a business district. Pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to better access businesses by a neighborhood greenway route designated especially for them.

**Project contact:** [walkandbike@seattle.gov](mailto:walkandbike@seattle.gov)

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/wallingfordgreenway.htm>