

Seattle Department of Transportation
Proposed Delridge/Highland Park Neighborhood Greenway
Questions and Answers

Rev. July 8, 2013

The city is seeking input on where to construct a neighborhood greenway in the Delridge/Highland Park neighborhood with the ultimate goal of creating a greenway network. Initial review of data and visits to the neighborhood have suggested several streets that may be appropriate, including portions of 21st Avenue SW, 10th Avenue SW, 12th Avenue SW, and 17th Avenue SW. Over the next few months staff will meet with community members to discuss the best route, what type of traffic calming improvements might be useful and develop a design.

1. Why is SDOT proposing this project?

In Seattle, we want people of all abilities – from our 5-year old kids to our 80-year old grandparents – to be comfortable moving about the city, whether on foot, by bike, riding transit, or driving a car. By offering people more choices, we can decrease the demand on our streets and reduce our impact on the environment. In doing so, we can build a network that supports healthy and sustainable communities, keeps more money in people’s pockets, increases economic competitiveness, and adds to the character of our great city.

Neighborhood Greenways are one piece of the puzzle. They are streets that already have low volumes of auto traffic and low speeds, and where things like directional signs, speed humps and crossing improvements at busy intersections can be added to make them even safer and more comfortable.

To learn more about Seattle’s polices, actions and measures of success read our [Transportation Action Agenda](#).

2. How can I get involved and participate in the development of this project?

SDOT works to actively involve residents and the broader community from the start in neighborhood greenway projects. We host two open houses. The initial open house is an opportunity for all residents and businesses to participate and provide input about the challenges they face when traveling around the neighborhood, where auto use is low and where they want to walk or ride a bike more. Feedback helps shape the design proposal that will be shared at a second open house.

3. Will the project add a bike lane and take away on-street parking?

Bike lanes are not a part of neighborhood greenways. A greenway route in the Delridge/Highland Park neighborhood would function just like the street currently does—a street where people driving

and riding a bike share the same road; as well as people walking. Changes would include signs and bicycle pavement markings on the street that indicate the street is a designated greenway route. On-street parking stays the same. However, stop signs could be added to the streets crossing the greenway route. As at all stop signs in Seattle, to ensure pedestrian and stop sign visibility, there would be no parking within 30 feet of the sign.

Natural drainage solutions are also being considered along the possible greenway routes. Natural drainage projects in the public right-of-way are likely to affect some on-street parking. Seattle Public Utilities knows that parking and access from the street to the sidewalk is very important to residents and carefully considers and addresses the impacts on every block where a project would be built. Resident's feedback about concerns regarding on-street parking is one of the pieces of input that help determine where to place natural drainage projects. After blocks are selected and conceptual design begins, impacts to parking for each block will be better understood and that information will be shared with you. There are also opportunities to be involved in the design to make choices that minimize parking impacts.

4. What is the repaving project on Delridge Way SW all about? And how can I find out more about it?

The southern portion of Delridge Way SW is an important arterial in West Seattle that has deteriorated over time and needs significant repair. The \$6.7M construction cost is being paid primarily with funds from the "Bridging the Gap" transportation levy passed by Seattle voters in November 2006. Construction includes rebuilding about one and a half miles of Delridge Way SW between SW Orchard and Roxbury streets; and installing new storm water detention capacity beneath Delridge between SW Orchard and Henderson streets. Crews are also upgrading and building new curb ramps along the road to meet accessibility standards. During the week of July 8, road striping will take place in Phase 3 of the Delridge project, between SW Thistle and SW Holden streets, weather permitting. On July 8 the contractor also plans to move into Phase 4 of the Delridge Paving Project (SW Holden to SW Orchard streets) with completion expected in early September, weather permitting.

5. Will speed humps get in the way of school buses?

We work with the school district to ensure that speed humps are constructed to allow bus access. They have been installed successfully in front of schools and along bus routes in other locations. Speed humps are designed to allow large vehicles to move across them safely.

6. Will you be planting any trees with the project?

The [Trees for Neighborhoods](#) program helps Seattle residents plant trees around their homes. Participants in the program receive free trees (up to 4 per household), watering bags, training on proper planting and care. Applications for the 2013 Trees for Neighborhoods program will open in

late July / early August. If you request a tree it will arrive to be planted in October and November 2013. Check this website for updated information.

7. How does this improve the pedestrian environment? Shouldn't you be constructing sidewalks?

Reducing vehicle speeds makes it safer and more comfortable for people walking even without a dedicated walkway. According to our 2007 citywide sidewalk inventory, there are more than 12,000 street segments in Seattle without a constructed sidewalk. Given available funding for sidewalk projects, which allows for approximately 10 blocks of sidewalks each year, completing the sidewalk network will be a very gradual process. Seattle's Pedestrian Master Plan includes sidewalk project prioritization criteria which we use to help make the difficult choice as to the highest priority areas for sidewalk construction. The criteria emphasize areas where there is the greatest need for pedestrian improvements, for instance, high volume streets with multiple destinations to walk to and streets with barriers in the existing sidewalk system.

8. What if I don't want a speed hump in front of my house?

SDOT makes every effort to install speed humps along property lines so that they are not directly in front of your house. A number of factors are considered when locating them such as proximity to intersections, driveways and overhead lighting (for visibility).

9. Our streets already feel safe. How would a greenway help?

There's growing evidence that residents in neighborhoods with slower streets are more likely to take ownership of those streets and in so doing increase the surveillance that is key to deterring crime. Criminals will find a fast, unpleasant street lined with garage doors an easier target than a slow, quiet street watched over by neighbors walking and biking along the street. Motorists traveling at slower speeds are more aware of their surroundings and help deter crime. Also, greenways can be especially beneficial for families, children and seniors who might find these routes more comfortable than busier nearby streets.

10. Will it be hard to see people on bikes when we use our driveways?

The good news is that as bicycling increases drivers become more accustomed to seeing them. Residents pulling out of their driveways need to pay attention and expect to see pedestrians and bicyclists, just as they currently do. Pedestrians and people riding bikes along the greenway also must pay attention, because there is always a likelihood they could encounter a vehicle pulling out of a driveway.

11. Drainage is a problem. How will this project address this issue?

SDOT is partnering with Seattle Public Utilities to study whether natural drainage systems, or rain gardens, can be installed along a neighborhood greenway. Natural drainage systems can provide additional traffic calming, beautification and can address some drainage issues.

12. How does the greenway help seniors and people with disabilities?

The main purpose of neighborhood greenways is to provide people of all ages and abilities a safe place to travel. We understand that some people have restricted mobility and are not able to walk along the greenway, but they will still experience the benefits of a quieter street.

13. What effect does a greenway have on property values and crime rates?

The value of a property is a function of many attributes including but not limited to house and lot size, age of the structure, school and tax districts, proximity to desirable and undesirable amenities, views from the property, noise and pollution levels, interest rates, month and year of sale, as well as socio-economic elements such as characteristics of neighboring structures, residents and streets. Because there are so many variables that determine the value of a given property at a given moment in time, it is challenging to make an “apples-to-apples” comparison of two streets where the only difference is the presence of a neighborhood greenway. This is particularly difficult given the relative newness of greenways (or bike boulevards as they are called in some city’s) in the United States. There is not a lot of existing data that measures all of these changes after a street becomes a greenway.

According to researchers studying the links between property values and the environmental changes that take place after a greenway is built (including decreased traffic volumes, less noise, and having more transportation choices) it appears that the overall effect is a positive one. More information on existing research is available from the Transportation Research Board.

16. We already have a lot of bike lanes, how about spending the project money to fix potholes?

Not everyone can drive and yet almost everyone pays sales taxes and property taxes. These taxes all contribute to funding transportation so it is important to deliver a safe, reliable, efficient and socially equitable transportation system that gives people travel options. One way to do that is to make walking and riding a bike more convenient. When one person chooses to walk instead of driving it means more space on the roads for those who are driving. It also means less damage to roads, reducing the need to fix potholes.

14. Will emergency vehicles still be able to access the neighborhood?

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