

# Rainier Vista Traffic Calming

S Columbian Way/S Oregon St between S Alaska St and Rainier Ave S

## Applicant Problem

S Columbian Way/S Oregon St is a two-way divided boulevard that cuts through the Rainier Vista neighborhood and then continues, east, as a two-way residential street to Rainier Ave S.

Drivers speed through Rainier Vista on Columbian/Oregon as a quick shortcut to bypass traffic lights on nearby arterials, cutting through the neighborhood at high speed. They regularly use the 2-block east/westbound stretch (from Columbian/Alaska to Columbian/MLK, which is a minor arterial) as an alternative to waiting for the S Alaska St/MLK light and often exceed the speed limit to “make the light” at Columbian/MLK. The previous 10 years of traffic data show that 70 reported collisions have occurred along the Columbian/Alaska to Columbian/MLK stretch and in the Columbian/MLK intersection, where 34 people were injured and 1 was seriously hurt.

## PROJECT TYPE

Traffic Calming

## APPROXIMATE LENGTH

400 lf

## COST ESTIMATE

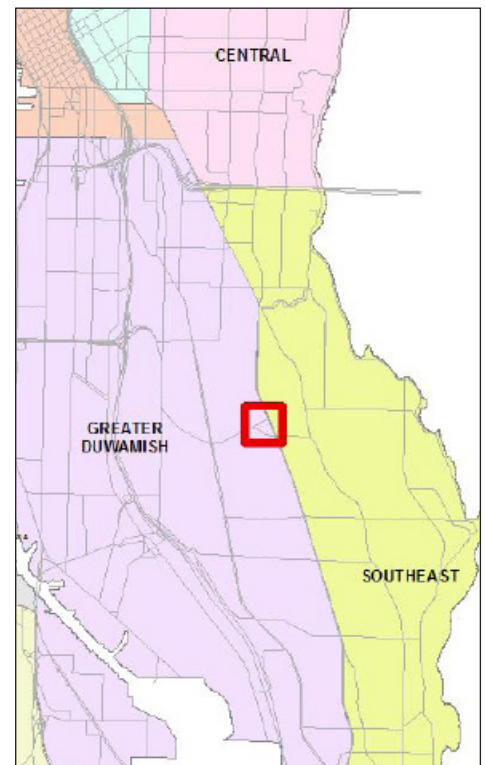
\$452,000



*Looking NW from the SE side of the intersection of 28th Ave S and S Columbian Way*



*Looking NE from the SW corner of the intersection of 29th Ave S and S Columbian Way*



In addition, drivers often do not slow down as they continue eastbound on Oregon (which, at the intersection of MLK and continues east, is a residential street). Collision/injury data from SDOT illustrates that for a mile in either direction of the MLK/Columbian/Oregon intersection, this is easily the most dangerous street for people to walk in Rainier Vista (<http://imgur.com/EUGcWn.jpg>). Please note that the data reflects only reported information; unreported data is unknown but a frequent topic of discussion amongst residents and visitors.

Another area of concern is the intersection at S Oregon St and 33rd Ave S. This intersection has issues that make it particularly dangerous: 1) 33rd Ave is an offset intersection with limited visibility making turning onto or crossing Oregon St difficult and 2) Oregon Street descends to a steep grade very quickly east of 33rd Ave. It is impossible to see cars driving up Oregon from the east to the west when either turning onto Oregon or for pedestrians walking across Oregon.

All of this creates an unsafe environment for kids and adults alike who wish to access the myriad of social services and after-school programs, get to and wait at the school bus stops, or even simply walk through the neighborhood (historical data on injuries of people walking--road users who are most vulnerable to serious injury/death--may be found here: <http://imgur.com/BJ2aUeO.jpg>). Cars pose a threat to pedestrians and other cars because they can cause damage and/or injury if they do not follow traffic laws or are unable to react to environmental factors in time.

Data from a recent speed study we conducted over a 33-hour span at the intersection of 29th/Columbian show that eastbound traffic has an 85th percentile speed that regularly exceeds 30 mph as well as high-end speeding regularly hitting 40 mph (<http://i.imgur.com/SQXwnxJ.jpg>). As SDOT has repeatedly said, a person hit at 30 mph has a 50% chance of being killed while a person hit at 40 mph has a 90% chance of being killed. We wish to eliminate the risk of this happening before another traffic incident occurs.

This project is spearheaded by the New Rainier Vista Traffic Safety Committee (Adam Dodge: [dodge.an.adam@gmail.com](mailto:dodge.an.adam@gmail.com), Larry Goetz: [lagoetz@gmail.com](mailto:lagoetz@gmail.com), Emilie Szeto: [emilieszeto@gmail.com](mailto:emilieszeto@gmail.com)). The committee, its stakeholders, local residents and business owners identify safety issues in the neighborhood and

proactively work to implement effective solutions. We organically recruited over 140 signatures from individuals (with contact info) specifically interested in seeing traffic changes along Columbian Way/Oregon St. and are happy to provide copies of this petition.

The Committee has been collaborating with the New Rainier Vista Homeowner's Association board (President Robert Gandy: [gandyr@gmail.com](mailto:gandyr@gmail.com)), HOA management company Emerald Management & Consulting (POC Jean Norberg: [jean.norberg@emerald-mc.com](mailto:jean.norberg@emerald-mc.com)), and Seattle Housing Authority Community Builder Jeniffer Calleja ([jeniffer.calleja@seattlehousing.org](mailto:jeniffer.calleja@seattlehousing.org)), who represents the 1,305 low-income residents in Rainier Vista, including 647 kids. All are on board with our ideas and in favor of safety changes. The NRV HOA board has furnished a letter of support, which we are happy to supply. We also have the support of local services and businesses (Neighborhood House, Refugee Women's Alliance, Providence ElderCare, Mary's Place, Boys & Girls Club).

## Applicant Solution

We would like the classified "minor arterial" section of Columbian (from Alaska/Columbian to Columbian/MLK) downgraded to "residential" street status, as well as signs indicating this ("local access only" and 25MPH signs). Also, we want a combination of calming devices implemented that will deter drivers from using Columbian/Oregon as a quick thoroughfare, encourage them to mindfully drive through the area at a slow, safe speed, and provide more cues to drivers that pedestrians have the right-of-way. Such devices include raised crosswalks, pedestrian refuge islands, reduced corner radii, and/or reduced crosswalk distances.

- Speed humps will force drivers to reduce their speed, regardless of traffic conditions or time of day
- Raised crosswalks encourage pedestrians to use them instead of jaywalking and increase their visible presence to drivers
- Smaller children are often less visible to drivers, and refuge islands will make their presence more apparent; also, people with physical limitations will have a less stressful option for crossing the street
- Reduced corner radii increase driver and pedestrian sight distances and shorten pedestrian crossing distances
- Reduced crosswalk distances will encourage pedestrians to use the crosswalks instead of meandering through the medians or avoiding street crossing altogether
- Red "do not park" paint on the curbs of the Oregon/Renton intersection

- A four-way stop at Oregon/33rd will greatly improve the safety at this split intersection. It will also reduce the likelihood of eastbound drivers colliding with vehicles exiting Lexington Pl S, due to reduced speeds.
- Between S Genesee St and S Oregon St, speed humps on the downgrade section of 33rd Ave S (heading south until the street hits Oregon) will slow drivers and prepare them for an inevitable turn at the split intersection
- Signs indicating “blind spot ahead” on both sides of east/west intersection of Oregon/33rd Ave S will warn drivers of the need to take caution (due to Oregon’s downgrade just east of the 33rd Ave S intersection)

Ideally, having all of these options in place will force drivers to be more cognizant of their surroundings and adjust their speed accordingly. Also, pedestrians and bicyclists will have safety measures in place that allow them to access Columbian/Oregon and the surrounding area with more ease and comfort. A conceptual vision of some of these treatments on this street can be found here: <http://i.imgur.com/HmUgCSb.jpg>.



# Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Review

## Project Description

S Columbian Way between S Alaska St and MLK Way S is classified as a minor arterial and has 2 thru lanes with on-street parking on both sides of the street. The 2 thru lanes are separated by a vegetated median from S Alaska St east to Renton Ave S. There are stop signs controlling traffic on 29th Ave S with a marked crosswalk on the northeast side of the intersection.

The proposed improvement includes the construction of raised crosswalks on the east and west legs of the intersection of S Columbian Way and 29th Ave S and the east leg of the intersection of S Columbian Way and 28th Ave S. Traffic calming, an all-way stop, and additional signage was evaluated on S Oregon St east of MLK Jr Way S, but no changes are recommended at this time.

## Constructability

- Raised crosswalks will provide an above-grade crossing of the street and will impact adjacent gutter drainage
- The Seattle Fire Department will need to review any raised crosswalk designs

## Impacts

- Drainage adjustments needed at raised crosswalk locations

## Benefits

- Traffic calming
- Increased pedestrian crossing visibility

