



TO: Monica Martinez Simmons, City Clerk
FROM: Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent
DATE: November 3, 2021
Topic: Amendment of Supplemental Use Guidelines at Green Lake Park

WHEREAS, as the City of Seattle continues responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the rise of new variants, Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) remains focused on ensuring safe access to outdoor space; and

WHEREAS, limiting the uses of the Green Lake inner loop path to pedestrians only creates more space for path users and the ability to social distance given the high use on the trail; and

WHEREAS the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is working to study the feasibility of a full outer Green Lake biking and walking loop, building off the recently completed [Green Lake and Wallingford Multimodal Paving Project](#); and

WHEREAS the completion of this project would significantly reduce the crowding on the inner loop due to competing uses including bicycles and other wheeled uses; and

WHEREAS pursuant to the procedure set forth in SMC 3.02.030 section C, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners held a public hearing on October 28, 2021 affording all interested persons an opportunity to present data, views, or arguments in regard to this proposed action; and

WHEREAS pursuant to the procedure set forth in SMC 3.02.030 section A, notice for that public hearing was posted in the Daily Journal of Commerce and on Seattle Parks and Recreation’s website on September 28, 2021, exceeding the requirement of posting notice 10 days prior to the public hearing and 14 days prior to this action; NOW, THEREFORE,

Pursuant to the authority under SMC 18.12.040 sections B and G, I, Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, do hereby amend SPR Policy 060-P 7.13.1.1 – Supplemental Use Guidelines for Green Lake Park ([Clerk File 321447](#)) Green Lake Courtesy Code (Appendix 8.1, referenced in Section 4.3.5) to restrict all bicycles and other wheeled uses from the Green Lake Park inner loop. This restriction does not apply to a person with a disability who uses wheeled equipment or the use of strollers.

This use change will remain in effect until such time as the Superintendent deems it appropriate to take further action.


[Jesus Aguirre \(Nov 4, 2021 08:46 PDT\)](#)
Signature

11/04/2021
Date



Memo

Date: September 19, 2022
To: Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners
From: Todd Burley, Strategic Advisor and Michele Finnegan, Deputy Superintendent of Policy
Subject: Green Lake Inner Loop Public Hearing and Discussion

Background

For two years, SPR has had an interim policy in place restricting all wheeled users (except the use of strollers and ADA devices) from the Green Lake Inner Loop. In July 2022, SPR and SDOT presented an update on the outer loop project and heard from the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners their thoughts on the future of the Inner Loop. The public showed much interest on this subject, and we heard a strong interest from the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners to move forward with finalizing a permanent policy now rather than wait until 2023 when Outer Loop is in use.

Input

SPR has received much input since 2020 from the public on whether to keep the wheels restriction in place or remove it and return to the previous guidelines. Some input came via an online survey SDOT conducted regarding the Outer Loop, which included questions about the Inner Loop (shared with the BPRC previously). Additional input came from BPRC public comment, via emails to SPR and SDOT, and from phone calls to SPR. Following the discussion at the July 2022 BPRC meeting, staff conducted six Listening Sessions in September 2022 to hear from three user groups – pedestrians, small wheels, and bicycles. Following a Seattle Times article on the Green Lake Outer Loop and additional advocacy from Cascade Bicycle Club, nearly 200 additional emails were received as well.

In these listening sessions, a wide range of opinions were shared, with strong feelings from all perspectives. It was reiterated that the Green Lake Inner Loop is a highly valued and very popular recreational amenity for Seattle, and all users want the path to work well. The broadest support was to return to the guidelines from before the pandemic (allowing all non-motorized uses) and to invest more in clear signs and pavement markings to educate users as to how to respectfully share the path. The experience of most users was that there were few conflicts and people generally get along with a shared use path, but that there is room for improvement to ensure everyone follows the Code of Conduct.

While SPR has not found any evidence to the contrary of the overall feedback we have received, pedestrians were disproportionately unrepresented in our feedback and most pedestrians we heard from support a continued restriction of wheels on the path. Many wheeled users supported limited restrictions of wheels on the path, such as certain days or times, but not a complete ban.

Options

Option 1: Wheels Allowed (historic guidelines)

Based on the history of shared use on the Inner Loop, one option would be a return to the historic Supplemental Use Guidelines for Green Lake, including the restoration of wheeled users to the Green Lake Inner Loop. A possible addition to this option would be to lower the speed limit to 5 mph to emphasize the slower nature of this trail while still allowing the broadest types of users. The expectation here would be that fast cyclists would use the new bike amenities provided by SDOT outside the park, thus reducing some conflicts on the Inner Loop. Following this return to pre-pandemic regulations for the use of the path, SPR

would explore how to improve signage along the Inner Loop to support increased adherence to the Courtesy Code.

NOTE on Children on Wheels: SPR received broad feedback from the public about importance of the Inner Loop for children to safely learn to ride bikes and skate. SPR explored ways to allow only children on bikes on the path, but in the end determined such a rule would be difficult to describe and enforce.

Option 2: No Wheels (continuation of temporary use restrictions)

The past two years have provided a sense of what the Inner Loop would be like if only pedestrians (with strollers allowed) and wheeled uses for ADA access were allowed. Many runners and walkers appreciated the sense of safety without the concern of conflicts with wheeled users. As Seattle's population increases, SPR expects greater use of this popular trail, and thus this could be an ideal moment to retain the pedestrian-only path, ensuring safe and enjoyable use for the largest user group. If this approach is recommended for the use of the path, SPR would explore how to improve signage along the Inner Loop to support increased adherence to an updated Courtesy Code.

Other Considerations

- **Small Wheels:** Rollerbladers and other small-wheeled users were a vocal constituency advocating for a return to the allowance of all wheeled users to the Inner Loop. This path is a great option for their recreational activity and other nearby alternatives are not adequate according to their accounts. By and large most of these users are seen as respectful of the Courtesy Codes, but many pedestrians have also stated how some rollerbladers weave in and out of other users quite fast. Speed limits and existing regulations (along with improved signage) could reduce conflicts by ensuring small wheels stay in the wheeled lane and do not go too fast.
- **Users with Disabilities:** The disabilities community has mentioned that some Courtesy Code guidelines, such as *signal when passing*, do not work well for all and they would feel safer without wheels on the path. They have also stated that often people in the community do not understand that their devices, including various forms of wheelchairs, are allowed on the path.
- **Seniors:** Many seniors have stated the importance of the Inner Loop for safe bike riding options. A limitation to children-only bike use would exclude them and reduce their options for safe recreational opportunities. Green Lake has been an important asset for them to maintain healthy lifestyles.
- **Weekend Limitation:** Many users have recognized the difference in path use between the weekdays and weekends, with much greater use on Saturday and Sunday. A possibility would be to limit wheeled uses on the weekends but allow them during the week. Clear communication on this could be difficult.

Next Steps

At this point there is no strong data or analytical evidence to drive policy direction. SPR believes either of the options mentioned above could work. It is also possible and understandable to either make a policy determination immediately or wait until the Outer Loop is complete.

If the BPRC recommends allowing non-motorized wheeled users on the Inner Loop, in response to concerns of crowding and conflicts, the BPRC could consider recommending a lowered speed limit.¹

Following a BPRC recommendation and Superintendent decision, SPR Policy staff will work with the SPR Communications Team to identify ways to educate users on the use guidelines and the Courtesy Code.

¹ Motorized vehicles (including e-bikes, e-scooters, etc.) are not allowed on the path per Park Code, as the Green Lake Inner Loop is not defined as a Multi-Use Trail.