

Section 1: Questions for March 22

SDOT Vision

We share a common goal with SDOT of reducing single-occupancy vehicle traffic over the coming years. With roughly half of all personal trips being less than three miles long, walking and bicycling clearly have the potential to play a much greater role in Seattle. Although a laudable first step, the implementation to date of our 2006 Bike Master Plan has not shifted more than a tiny fraction of our trips to walking and bicycling. What new steps will SDOT take to make active transportation the practical and desirable choice for personal transportation? How confident should we feel that these steps will succeed where the 2006 BMP did not, and why?

Traffic control policy/engineering

Neighborhood Greenways are a new facility type for SDOT, combining transportation with the creation of a new type of public space. Successful Greenways also require delivering on experiential qualities of comfort and safety for a user group of “willing but wary” bicycle riders and people “8 to 80” who walk that SDOT has not historically focused on. Many of our organizers are concerned that delivering on these qualities of comfort and safety for this new user group will require re-evaluating established SDOT street design practices, particularly around traffic calming and controlling intersections. We hope pilot models of effective Greenways will be constructed in 2012 to inspire community confidence for future Greenway development. How does SDOT plan to adapt its existing practices to deliver on (and measure its success in delivering on) these new facility types? Would SDOT reconsider specific street design practices if they were found to preclude successful implementation of Greenways?

Public engagement

Neighborhood Greenways can pose an unfamiliar and even worrying idea for Seattle residents, conjuring up fears of unwanted change imposed upon their neighborhoods. SDOT’s 2012 pilot projects will be the vehicle that first introduces Greenways to many people new to the idea of Greenways in our communities. As organizers, we have presented the vision of Greenways to hundreds of Seattle residents. While we often see hesitation and even hostility upfront, we typically see widespread enthusiasm once the vision is more fully understood. How will SDOT’s community outreach plan proactively cultivate community buy-in and support for these 2012 Greenways, and avert community backlash in our first year of construction?

As Neighborhood Greenways exist to serve a more inclusive and untapped user group that does not currently bicycle (let alone participate actively in bicycle advocacy or civic committees such as SBAB), how will SDOT’s outreach process represent the needs and values of this new and unfamiliar audience during the Bicycle Master Plan update?

Money and Partnerships

Because Greenways also encompass public safety and public greenspace elements, they offer SDOT opportunities to tap into new funding sources and new partnerships. Portland, for example, is using Traffic Enforcement and public health funds to help pay for Greenway development. What plans does SDOT have to build our own set of supplementary funding opportunities to pay for Greenways?

There are many low-cost alternatives to make streets safer -- some residential streets without sidewalks could be turned into woonerfs and provide safe and accessible public space to all, curb ramps do not always need to be built to a standard that costs up to \$40,000 per intersection, cycletrack construction in many cities is a 10th the cost of Seattle’s, and greenways themselves are often a lowest cost alternative. As taxpayers and active citizens we want safety improvements that are innovative yet cost-effective. Can you tell us some out of the box thinking you’ve been doing about to maintain and retrofit SDOT property?

The Legacy of Greenways

Ten years from now, when people say 2012 was the year Seattle really turned a corner to become a great city, a safe, lively, equitable & accessible place, what role would you like SDOT to have played in that transformation?

Seattle Neighborhood Greenways



Section 2: Community FAQ about Greenways

In the past month Greenways organizers representing 13 groups have presented materials at scores of meetings – District Councils, Community Councils, Chamber of Commerce meetings, PTAs, ride scouting, Sustainable Community meetings, walk and talks, meet-ups, greendrinks, and networking events with a variety of other groups. While we are confident about our collective vision of a citywide network of streets that are pleasant, safe, and equitable and get people where they want to go using active transportation, we still have many questions we cannot answer. Here are some of those questions that Greenways organizers sent in that your staff may be able to find the answers to.

SDOT organization

1. What kind of dialogue has SDOT had with SPU regarding future coordination of Greenways with Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects?
2. How does SDOT anticipate the vacancy of Charles Bookman's position will impact projects? Will there be a direct replacement or will the department re-organize existing staff and resources?

Outreach

1. What is SDOT's community outreach plan for the 2012 Greenways? For 2013 Greenways?
2. What is the SDOT outreach plan for the Bicycle Master Plan update?

Child Safety

1. So many schools are adjacent to parks and playgrounds. When schools are adjacent to parks, could school traffic safety zoning be extended to include parks – they are often used by children and adults who walk and bike?
2. In what road configurations will SDOT consider making refuge islands large enough to accommodate families? Cargo bikes and bikes + trailers can be 9 feet long. When a typical car lane is 12 feet in length, why are the refuge islands only 6 feet wide? What are other cities doing to accommodate families who bike with trailers, or, what ideas does SDOT have to accommodate families who bike?

Arterial Crossings

1. At intersections and arterial crossings what signs will be installed to warn drivers that they are crossing a Greenway? Where will warning signs be placed? Will these signs be supported by any kind of complimentary engineering measures, such as road narrowing or speed bumps that will enhance awareness of Greenway crossings?
2. Safe crossings across narrow arterials are crucial to making Greenways viable, but in many cases streets are too narrow for traditional approaches such as refuge islands (NE 50th, NW 80th). What are SDOT's ideas for safe crossing across narrow arterials in a **cost effective** way (i.e. no traffic signal)?
3. How would SDOT recommend making safe crossings at offset intersections, such as at NW 65th St. & 6th Ave NW? Would you consider removing approximately 2 parking spots to make room for a short, protected cycle-track, as has been used to good effect in Portland?

Traffic control policy

1. What engineering techniques does SDOT use to moderate traffic speeds? Will this change with the adoption of future engineering manual updates? What are anticipated changes that benefit pedestrians and bicyclists?
2. What is the specific SDOT policy on traffic control at residential intersections (i.e. Yield, Stop, No-control)? Will this policy differ on greenways?
3. When does SDOT plan on adopting NACTO guidelines and how will this change standards for the



department as it builds pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure?

4. How is SDOT monitoring the speed of vehicles on roads crossing greenways? If the speeds are still dangerously high, will SDOT consider installing stop signs to prioritize greenways?

Maintenance

1. What is SDOT policy regarding pavement maintenance when constructing Greenways? Can you address our concern that the potential pavement maintenance costs will occur at the expense of implementing additional safety measures?
2. Many of us would prefer to see sidewalk maintenance prioritized above street surface maintenance in Greenway projects. Does SDOT plan to do sidewalk maintenance on Greenway routes? Again, our concern is that budgets could be consumed with current curb ramp standards that can cost \$40,000 per intersection. Are there more cost-effective ways to allow sidewalk access?
3. Questions about “the green in Greenways”. We are thrilled by the addition of trees in the Beacon Greenway and look forward to bioswales to narrow intersections, we are often asked about art and street furniture such as public seating along the right of way and other street elements to turn Greenways into exemplary SDOT property. What maintenance and operations issues with these park-like elements should we be aware of and what, other than visibility/safety issues would preclude their use?

Metrics of success

1. How will SDOT measure the success of greenways in Seattle? Suggestions – increases in the numbers of people walking & cycling, with particular attention to women and families. Could “perceived safety” be measured by survey or focus groups?
2. If greenways aren’t providing the expected increase in both measured and perceived safety, will SDOT modify its greenways designs? What is the time-frame to measure increased safety?
3. Will SDOT start routine counting of cyclists, both in neighborhoods and on commuter corridors? If not, how do they propose to determine the effectiveness of bicycle infrastructure?

Other Cycling infrastructure

1. Why does SDOT install frequent stop signs on bike paths, particularly at driveway crossing? SDOT has said (on its Wallingford Greenway FAQ) “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.” The same logic should apply to bike paths.
2. Does SDOT have new ideas to make it easier for cyclists to make left turns? Leaving the bike lane to merge left for a turn is very intimidating and will only be attempted by the most confident cyclists. Bike boxes work well, but there are only a few of them.
3. One of the places we feel is particularly underserved by low stress active transportation options is the mile or so adjacent to major transit hubs, particularly Sound Transit stations. Will new investments into safe routes to transit be a major focus of SDOT in the future?
4. We are concerned with difficult to interpret and incomplete signage. After making turns, we need to see some confirmation that we are actually on the correct path. We’d like more clarification of sign placement standards.

