Utrecht Traffic Garden in Holland is a scaled model designed to allow children to practice essential road safety skills.

Seattle Children’s Safety Garden at Genesee Park
Seattle Children's Safety Garden

Proposal Submitted to Seattle Parks Opportunity Fund by: Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

Project Cost: $1.5 million development cost
Proposed Location: Genesee Park in Columbia City is proposed. Exact location tbd. 4316 South Genesee Street

Brief Project Description: Please give a brief description of the project in 100 words or less: Develop a streetscape in miniature, in Genesee Park or a location tbd by Parks, to teach children the rules of the road. A consortium of Bike Works, Feet First, Schools, SDOT, WSDOT, SPD, Parks, and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways will provide programming in the garden to teach middle school-aged students as they take turns as cyclists, pedestrians and car drivers, learning how to take other types of street users into consideration. Hands-on experience is proven to give children skills and confidence to get around the city under their own power as soon as their early teens. A design example http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0yzZLVsTCE

Project Narrative: Learning to ride a bicycle to school is not just a matter of going to the park with a parent, getting a push, and falling down a bunch of times until you can pedal on your own. Likewise, road safety is so much more than “look both ways before you cross the street.”

A Safety Garden or Traffic Garden is a park in which children can learn the rules of the road. Safety Gardens are frequently created as an attraction within a larger park. In other cases, they are single-use parks and often small in scale. They can be found in urban as well as rural areas.

In Safety Gardens, children of a minimum age (usually around 10-12 years old) use bicycles or pedal-powered cars to navigate the streets and learn to operate in various roles according to traffic laws. Typically, Safety Gardens are scaled-down versions of real street networks, with the lane and street-width proportional to the smaller vehicles. Often they include operating traffic signals and during busy times with school groups are staffed with traffic police or safety experts from an organization such as Feet First or Bike Works.

The main intention of a Safety Garden is to improve awareness of traffic safety among school-aged children. Children gain hands-on experience crossing streets and practice bicycle or other pedestrian safety challenges, and practice seeing the road as a “driver” in a highly controlled environment devoid of actual motor vehicles.

Safety Gardens exist throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. In communities with Safety Gardens, school curriculum often includes regular field trips (see www.streetfilms.org/self-reliance-grows-in-the-utrecht-traffic-garden/).

Safety Gardens are frequently created as an attraction within a larger park. Placing a Safety Garden in Genesee Park will activate the park, create a stronger sense of community within the Rainier Valley, revitalize the Rainier Community Center with
programming opportunities, and provide a needed service for the entire Seattle community.

**Will Seattle get a Children’s Safety Garden? Partnership Opportunities** Seattle Neighborhood Greenways has been in discussion with a number of partners including Bike Works, Seattle Parks Foundation, Seattle Parks, Washington DOT, and Seattle Department of Transportation about this idea.

**Seattle Children’s Safety Garden needs to be a cooperative effort to succeed.**

- Possible funding partnerships include Auto Clubs, Seattle Children’s Hospital, National Institute of Health, Seattle Parks Foundation, WashDOT, Seattle Parks Opportunity Fund
- Many Public Agencies need to be engaged in a Safety Garden idea including Seattle Mayor’s Office, Seattle Parks, Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle City Council Transportation Committee, Seattle Police Department, WashDOT
- NGOs are needed to make a great Safety Garden include Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Rainier Valley Greenways.
- Because of the proposed location in Genesee Park, and because Bike Works currently teaches youth road safety classes, this nearby non-profit road safety organization can serve a key role in programming. Cascade Bicycle Club, Bicycle Alliance of Washington, Feet First and other experts in youth road safety instruction can and should be involved in fundraising and program management as well.
- Safety Garden Users. Children need Safety Garden programs. Seattle Public Schools is a key partner, as are the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools and Archdiocese of Seattle Catholic Schools.

The following organizations have expressed interest in partnering on the development of a Seattle Children's Safety Garden

- Bike Works (neighborhood based): Programming
- Cascade Bike Club: Programming/Funding
- CM Sally Bagshaw
- Feet First: Programming
- National Parks Service: Rivers & Trails
- Mayor's Office: Seattle Safety Action Plan
- Rainier Valley Greenways/Seattle Neighborhood Greenways: Program management
- Seattle Department of Transportation: In-kind materials / Funding
- Seattle Parks Foundation: Funding
- Seattle Police Department: Programming
- Seattle Public Schools: Program Support
- WashDOT: Funding

Seattle Neighborhood Greenways is under the fiscal umbrella of
Seattle Parks Foundation
www.SeattleGreenways.org
Teachers & parents are trained to mentor children as they take on roles as drivers, pedestrians, and bicycle riders.

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Traffic Garden Utrecht, Holland

Verkehrsgarten Winterthur, Switzerland

Ashville, NY
Chautauqua Children’s Safety Education Village

Kew Traffic School in Boroondara, Victoria

Successful models around the world of Children’s Traffic Safety Gardens where children learn essential and lifelong safety skills.

Seattle Children’s Safety Garden at Genessee Park
Two suggested locations for a Children’s Traffic Safety Garden to allow School bus drop-off & access to Rainer Community Center.

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