

September 23, 2015 Rainier Valley North South Neighborhood Greenway Open House #2

Meeting Summary

Seattle Department of Transportation

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Overview

On September 23, 2015 the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) hosted Open House #2 at the Hillman City Collaboratory from 6 to 7:30 PM. A presentation was held at 6:30 PM followed by a Questions and Answers session.

Community members were notified via a mailer sent to 6,371 residences and businesses surrounding the project limits. The mailing of these fliers was divided into three geographic areas, North, Mid and South. Pertinent information was translated into 9 different languages and each section of the fliers highlighted the different improvements being proposed in each area. The North section stretched from S Judkins St just north of I-90 down to S Charleston St. The Mid section stretched from S Charlestown St to S Willow St. The South section stretched from S Willow St to S Henderson St. The meeting was also listed on the city's calendar of events. The mailer was divided per zone as follows:

- North - 2387 Mailers
- Mid - 2971 Mailers
- South - 1013 Mailers

Approximately 30 people attended the Open House. Comments along with technical analysis will be considered in finalizing the most promising route and recommended traffic safety improvements.

Meeting Demographics

An Inclusion Sign-in Sheet was used to help measure how inclusive SDOT's outreach for the Open House was. The zip codes represented were 98118, 98144, and 98108. The results are highlighted below:

- 37% of attendees (11 people) signed the voluntary Inclusion Sign-in Sheet

Of those that signed the Inclusion Sign-in Sheet:

- 82% white race
- 18% mixed race

- 100% speak English

- 45% female
- 55% male

- 18% rent their homes
- 82% own their homes

- 9% from zip code 98108
- 18% from zip code 98144
- 73% from zip code 98118

- 27% 30-39 years old
- 9% 40-49 years old
- 18% 50-59 years old
- 46% 60-69 years old

Appendix A: Raw Data

Below are the questions and comments discussed at the open house:

- Speed humps on Orcas or Rainier?
- No sidewalk at Renton, needs traffic calming
- Finley and 42nd, there are no sidewalks
- Orcas crossing, 50/50 people run it, hard to see and 42nd /Orcas, it's dangerous. Parking and grade on weekends, makes it worse. What about a 4-way stop?
- People run 4-way stop at Genesee. Speed concerns with kids crossing. Cut through traffic at 38th and south of Genesee
- Diverters or partial closures on Greenways?
- No parking enforcement at intersections
- Where do bikers go when there's parking on both sides?
- How many neighbors does it take for traffic diverters?
- 37th Ave S north of Genesee to go straight up to S Andover St between 37th and 38th is very steep
- Grades at 38th south of Alaska
- Talk to Parks about allowing bikers in park off Alaska
- Circle at 38th and Alaska, people don't drive it correctly
- Construction zone
- Include lighting on 28th between Holgate and Massachusetts
- What is the lighting plan?
- 28th Ave and I-90 trail?
- 100 space parking garage proposed at 38th and Alaska where post office is and it exits onto 38th
- 28th and Massachusetts is treated as arterial to the West
- Stop sign facing 39th and Graham, people do not stop in school zone
 - Possible location for a camera signal to slow speeds

Comment Sheet Summary

The following includes information gathered from the 4 comment sheets turned in at the open house:

Del Johnson Email: johnosndel@comcast.net 206-612-1845 98118

I live at 4417 38th Ave S. since the road diet on Rainier Ave S by the library and PCC was installed, there has been an increase in traffic on my street. Along with more cars, many of the people are driving way above the speed limit. I'm interested in getting more information on neighborhood traffic calming. I would like SDOT to study the number of cars which cut through my street. My neighbors are interested in any ideas which would make my street safer too. Please send me any information which I will share with my neighbors on my street, thanks.

Mary Gutierrez Email: norwesgard@earthlink.net 206-380-1930 98118

Continue greenway on 37th Ave S. north of Genesee all the way to Andover traffic circle, then jog west on S Andover St.

37th Ave S is a shortcut from Genesee to the Safeway store. Traffic calming from Genesee to Dakota won't be as effective if they don't affect the entire stretch of 37th Ave S to Andover St instead of going onto Courtland Place behind Darigold.

Anne Porter Email: annesiemion@yahoo.com 98144

Please address safety of greenway crossing at 28th S and Massachusetts due to speeds/volume of traffic on Massachusetts.

Connie Cox Email: cb_cox@hotmail.com 98118

I live on the NW corner of 42nd and Orcas.

Concerns:

1. Please only put curb bulbs on Orcas, do not put on 42nd
2. Consider reduction/conducting the poll clutter – especially when adding the bike push button. Way to cluttered already and sight lines are bad.
3. Most people are not using the crosswalk activating light – education needed – especially St Edward's Church
4. Parking enforcement – St Edwards congregation are horrid/illegal parkers – they park past stop signs – into sidewalks, block driveways – many many years. Need education and enforcement. It's very unsafe for pedestrians and bikers.
5. Please don't schedule meetings at the same date/time as standing meetings like the SEDC.

Seattle Bike Blog Article Comments

The following summary includes comments posted on the Seattle Bike Blog article posted on 09/23/2015 about the open house:

16 Responses to Check out Rainier Valley north-south greenway details tonight

Tonya says:

September 23, 2015 at 1:46 pm

Super exciting but I am guessing that you called out that downtown Columbia City section because the hill on 38th between Alaska and Angeline is NUTTY. I wish I could go to the meeting tonight!

Reply

Tonya says:

September 23, 2015 at 1:54 pm

To be clear, I did email adan.carrillo@seattle.gov with my concerns/suggestions as the city site suggests!

Reply

Talis Abolinsq says:

September 23, 2015 at 1:46 pm

Thanks for your excellent work on these important issues. How can we coordinate this effort with Accessible Mount Baker (SDOT) and the related plans to complete a bicycle friendly Town Center with safe east / west connections between Mount Baker Boulevard and Cheasty Boulevard? This is the original Olmsted Parkway design that is important to connect adjacent Beacon Hill and the Mount Baker neighborhood with the new transit oriented development. Your safe routes to schools (blue lines) should also connect across the intersection of Rainier and MLK to Cheasty and Beacon Hill, where a significant number of students, pedestrians and bicyclists enter into the Town Center. Thanks!

Reply

jonglix says:

September 23, 2015 at 2:01 pm

I agree that the hill on 38th south of Alaska is best avoided. Way too steep for all ages and abilities. Better to cross Rainier on Alaska then come up through the park next to the library.

S College St between 28th and 29th is also pretty steep but probably better than any alternative residential street. Hopefully the 4 lane section of MLK will get a road diet soon to provide a flatter alternative for cyclists who don't want to drag themselves up and over Mt Baker Ridge.

Reply

Tom Fucoloro says:

September 23, 2015 at 2:07 pm

Yes. Bike lanes on MLK connecting to Mt Baker Blvd would be a great way to get from the I-90 Trail to the neighborhood greenway route. You should email that suggestion or say it at the open house.

Unfortunately, until the Accessible Mt Baker project gets going, the pinch point there at MLK/Rainier/Mt Baker Blvd is going to be difficult. But this should be part of the discussion, too.

Reply

Tonya says:

September 23, 2015 at 2:33 pm

Jonglix, that's close to what I suggested to the contact at the city, too, except I suggested turning south at 35th Ave S. The park might be better for greenway purposes, while 35th might be better for commuter-type purposes. Great minds!

Reply

RDPence says:

September 23, 2015 at 4:17 pm

I remain skeptical about the utility of such greenways that meander through neighborhoods on local access streets. Do they get much daily ridership? Enough to justify their cost? Or are they there for "Sunday riders" to use for bicycling enjoyment? My sense is that far more SE Seattle riders want to be on Rainier Ave., and the money would be better spent there.

Reply

(Another) Tom says:

September 24, 2015 at 10:01 am

Did you read the article?

“...That’s why, even though this project is very exciting, it is in no way an alternative to safe and inviting bike lanes on Rainier Ave. Rainier follows a direct geographic valley through SE Seattle, making it by far the best and really only option for an easy, high quality bike route.”

“Neighborhood Greenways and protected bike lanes are not an either/or situation. We need both because they serve different functions. They complement each other, but too often people latch onto one at the expense of the other.”

As to the cost I would imagine this is relatively low-cost for a big improvement in safety and functionality for those who live and learn in Rainier Valley neighborhoods.

Reply

Josh says:

September 24, 2015 at 12:12 pm

Counter data elsewhere in Seattle say neighborhood greenways have driven bigger increases in cycling than cycle tracks.

<http://www.seattlebikeblog.com/2014/07/23/do-neighborhood-greenways-increase-cycling-oh-yes/>

Reply

Clark in Vancouver says:

September 24, 2015 at 3:59 pm

Well, compare the cost of adding a few signs and diverters with the cost of a rural access road that tax payers pay for but that only serves a couple of households.

Reply

Andres Salomon says:

September 23, 2015 at 4:21 pm

As Tom mentioned, wayfinding will be super important. I have commended SDOT in the past for their combination of signs and sharrows for wayfinding; especially at intersections. The sharrows at intersections are obvious, and point the way exactly when you’re wondering which way to go.

<https://twitter.com/NEGreenways/status/519539753121640449>

Let’s hope SDOT sticks with that technique. There have been some staff changes, so we may need to remind them of why it’s important.

Reply

Andres Salomon says:

September 23, 2015 at 4:22 pm

Another example: <https://twitter.com/NEGreenways/status/519540315355484160>

Reply

Gary says:

September 24, 2015 at 10:43 am

I used to ride up from Renton to the I-90 trail and this looks like a nice alternative to Rainer Ave, Seward Park, and Lake Washington Blvd. But I agree with the other comments, way finding on this greenway is going to be key. I often wondered if there as a lower traffic neighborhood route alternative but never explored it. Also knowing which streets dump you at the bottom of a nasty hill is also key. As my route was as flat as possible following the lake.

Reply

Neel Blair says:

September 24, 2015 at 11:06 pm

The only route that avoids all hills is Rainier Ave S. Other than that, there are much better alternatives to this route. This was option 3 of 3 presented over a year ago. Options 1 and 2 were both more directionally sound, and had the same number/severity of hills.

This route sacrifices everything to keep east of Rainier – it snakes all over the place, will be confusing to ride through C-City, turns away from key amenities like light rail. Poor choice. Most people going north-south will ignore it.

Reply

Neel Blair says:

September 24, 2015 at 11:02 pm

I live and bike in this neighborhood and have for 8 years. I bike downtown, to stores like Lowe's or Safeway or the new PCC. This route is TERRIBLE. Truly awful. SIX 90-degree turns to go the 4 blocks of the Columbia City Business District? Who's going to feel that's a good, convenient riding/walking route? Coming from the south, the first turn is halfway down a hill and is more than 90 degrees. Do we imagine that people will NOT glide down a perfectly good hill onto 35th Ave S, and instead turn right-left-right-left-left-right to get as far as S Alaska? Cyclists will not use the route. Once you're on Renton Ave, continuing to 35th Ave S, the Letitia S is the best way north. That's what all the cyclists I see are doing,

it's already a signed bike route, and there's zero incentive to follow this tortured route across Rainier there.

The route turns away from ~800 units of new housing in developments that have fewer parking spots than units (Mt. Zion property at ~500 units + large developments at MLK and S Alaska at ~100 units each). This is presumably a Greenway's target audience. The route turns away from the Light Rail stop to go on a fantastic weaving journey East, then north, then back west. Then proceeds for nearly 2 miles without ever staying on one street for 3 or more blocks. People will lose the route.

When you go north 2 blocks then jog half a block west to continue north, I don't understand how the "stop signs at all crossing streets" will work. Will there be 2 stops 1/2 block apart in order for cars to cross the greenway? Seems like a recipe for Cali-stops and accidents, not to mention frustration.

I think the deference to quiet, residential streets is too much. Make this thing a network. Walkers and bicyclists want to get somewhere, and this is a weak backbone for what should be a heavily used walking and biking grid in SE Seattle. I think users will see that and N-S travelers will just ignore the greenway.

Reply

Fred Chamois says:

October 4, 2015 at 11:08 pm

One could quibble w/ the route, but the Greenway will be SE Seattle's first north-south infrastructure.

SE Seattle is – by far – the 'hood w/ the worst bike infrastructure in Seattle. I don't even think that assertion is debatable... is it? Currently, SE Seattle remains completely cut off – via bike – to the jobs, cultural/sports event, city gov't found downtown.

Here's what SE Seattle really needs:

1. A safe & direct route connecting the Urban Villages (Rainier Beach, Othello, Columbia City, Mt. Baker).
2. A safe and direct route from Mt. Baker (Franklin HS) to Dearborn St, via Rainier, because Dearborn connects to downtown.

The Mt. Baker to Dearborn project would open biking to 75,000 SE Seattle Residents who current have virtually none. It would do more to expand biking in Seattle than any other planned project in the entire city. And it would certainly be less expensive than fixing Westlake, or the Ballard Bridge, or The Gap or Montlake.

Look at the stats – SE Seattle is the poorest, most diverse, least-well served region of the city. And so it is too with bike infrastructure. It could all be fixed with some concrete pylons and 2,000 gallons of green paint. I'm not holding my breath.

***Comments made on blog as of 10/16/2015**

Correspondence Received via Emails

The following includes information gathered from 3 emails received after the comment period ended:

From: Rebecca Deehr [mailto:rebecca.deehr@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2015 12:46 PM
To: Carrillo, Adan
Subject: Rainier Valley greenway comment

Hello,

I see that comments on the greenway were due (for this phase) earlier in October, but I still had one comment about the route.

I live on 46th Ave S (the current bike route), and based on my local knowledge would recommend that the route be changed from 45th Ave S between Webster and Holden to 46th Ave S, for the following reasons:

- 46th is the current bike route
- Changing to 46th would result in fewer jogs
- 45th is currently a mishmash of puddles and erratic parking/right of way situations, and is lacking in any sidewalks (resulting in a less friendly pedestrian environment)
- 46th has sidewalks on one or both sides for the street and already has at least one traffic calming device on the street

Thank you for taking my comments,

Rebecca Deehr
206.390.9199
7641 46th Ave S,
Seattle, WA 98118

From: Jess [mailto:jesseleewilliams@hotmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, October 17, 2015 2:50 PM
To: Carrillo, Adan
Subject: Rainier North South Greenway

Mr. Carrillo,

I support the proposed route for the Rainier Valley North-South Greenway, and I also very strongly support the Safe Routes to School spur on 46th Ave S. We are looking forward to more safe transportation options in the Rainier Valley!

Jesse Williams
4530 S Kenny ST
Seattle, WA 98118

Rainier Valley North South Neighborhood Greenway
September 23, 2015 Open House # 2
Comment Summary

From: adfujimoto [mailto:adfujimoto@comcast.net]
Sent: Saturday, October 10, 2015 9:14 AM
To: Carrillo, Adan
Subject: Rainier N-S Greenways

Hello,

I wanted to submit comments on the Greenways plans in the area north of Genesee. We support the development of the greenway through the neighborhood and look forward to seeing additional elements go into place.

In the alignment along from Courtland to 36th and Walden, we would strongly recommend traffic calming elements be evaluated / installed on York Rd. The drop in grade where York intersects with 36th creates safety concerns due to the high speeds of vehicles coming north on the road.

We and our neighbors have personally experienced speeding vehicles along this road, with our car totaled, people driving over curbs and landscaping, multiple parked cars hit.

37th S also sees considerable cut through traffic and some consideration to slow traffic in the vicinity of 37th and Court, 37th and York and/or 37th and Lander may be helpful to slow vehicle speeds in the area.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if we can assist or provide additional information.

Sincerely,

David Fujimoto
3623 York Rd S
206-890-1613