



35 Ways to Safer Neighborhood Streets

A Neighborhood Enhancement and Traffic Calming Primer
with special illustrations by the children at McCarver Elementary School



TACOMA DESIGN
COLLABORATIVE



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Introduction

We use our neighborhood streets every day. They allow us to move through our city, connecting our homes to our schools, stores, and the places that we work and play. How we design them has a huge impact on their safety, as well as the quality of the neighborhoods we live in. This booklet contains thirty-five tried and true ways to make residential streets safer for residential needs while enabling our communities to grow. Improving traffic safety and the environment around the streets helps our neighborhoods to thrive and encourages more walking and biking where we live. The improvements in this booklet include changes big and small. Many involve changes to the physical street that would be built by city agencies, but other ideas you can do on your own right now to start making a difference.

This booklet was also created in collaboration with the students at McCarver Elementary School. Students participated in visioning exercise to explore what safer streets in their neighborhood could look like. They were asked what type of street they wanted to see near their school and drew pictures of their ideal street. Many of the pictures included illustrations of real engineering solutions, which are included throughout this booklet.

Thank you McCarver Elementary School!

Project Background

The City of Tacoma is working with residents, businesses, and property owners to prepare a Subarea Plan and companion Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Martin Luther King Jr. district ("MLK"). The completed plan and EIS are intended to encourage economic revitalization, neighborhood investment, and a higher quality of life in the MLK District, located in Tacoma's Hilltop neighborhood. During the public outreach process, transportation and healthy streetscapes were identified as a significant community need. As a result, a key part of the vision for the MLK District in the future is that the area should be well connected with the rest of Tacoma, accessible regardless of mode of travel, and a mixed-use center that enables walking and biking for everyday trips.

This booklet was created to show different tools that are available for achieving that vision, as well as highlight some of the current projects in Tacoma that are making our neighborhoods even more vibrant and livable places. There are four sections, which include everything from small ideas that you can do yourself to big changes that can be accomplished with partnerships between your community and the City. All of the tools outlined in this booklet have been tested in cities around the country and are part of a "toolkit" of options available to planners, community members, and traffic engineers. If you have a problem on your street, or simply want to make your block a safer and more beautiful place, this booklet will have ideas for you. By working with your neighbors and the City of Tacoma, you can be part of creating a safer, healthier neighborhood.

New Directions in Neighborhood Transportation

Over the past few decades, many people have started to reevaluate the purpose and quality of the streets in their neighborhoods. In many cases, existing neighborhood streets prioritize automobile traffic to the detriment of all other users. Increasingly, there has been a movement to create streets that enable more transportation choices and a better balance between the needs of automobiles and the needs of people and the neighborhood. Two concepts that have emerged as leading best practices to restore balance on residential streets are "**Complete Streets**" and "**Neighborhood Greenways**".



Complete Streets

“Complete Streets” is based on a simple idea: Streets should serve all users. The complete street approach can be applied to streets in cities and rural areas alike. Greenways are an example of complete street approach for urban residential streets.

A basic complete street project might include better sidewalks, easier street crossings, and better bike facilities. These before/after images (right) are from a complete street project along Alaska Street in Tacoma. The lack of sidewalks and bicycle facilities made this street only comfortable for cars to use, but the new streetscape includes something for everyone.





In neighborhood commercial centers, complete streets can create public places that add value to the neighboring businesses and homes. Bainbridge Island recently renewed their downtown with a complete street makeover that created an even more inviting place to walk and shop. In Tacoma, the City has an award winning complete street policy, which has been implemented on several streets, including North 26th, St. Helens, and Alaska. The photos on this page are from those projects.

http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/CompleteStreets/Res_CS_Final.pdf
http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/CompleteStreets/MUC_CS_Final.pdf



Neighborhood Greenways

Neighborhood Greenways are neighborhood streets with low traffic volumes where improvements make cycling and walking safer for people of all ages and abilities. Greenways include improvements on the street and to the streetscape around it. Greenways are designed to create routes that are safe and attractive for beginning cyclists and families, in addition to other users. As a result of their ability to accommodate people with a wider range of mobility needs, neighborhood greenways are increasingly being incorporated in new bicycle and pedestrian master plans for cities across the United States.



Neighborhood Greenways are relatively inexpensive to build and maintain. In most cases, greenway designs involve traffic calming measures, intersection treatments at arterial crossings for pedestrians and bikes, and small grants to help homeowners plant trees or make other improvements along the street. By focusing on residential streets, neighborhood greenways can in some cases be created with only minimal changes, such as changing the orientation of stop signs along the route. Smart and effective planning from the community and on the part of city engineers can greatly reduce the cost of greenway projects.

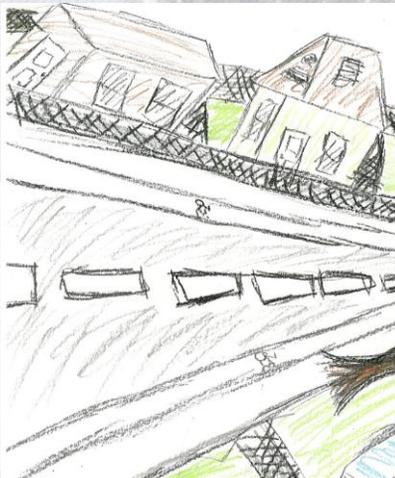
In Seattle and Portland, another key aspect of neighborhood greenways is extensive public input and community leadership. Community members contribute their knowledge and insight into which streets are the best and easiest routes through their own neighborhoods. In Portland, greenways are built on a two year cycle, with a full year of public input and design revisions before plans are finalized and built during the following year. After the plans have been vetted by the public, city engineers are able to deliver a final plan that best reflects the needs identified by the community itself.

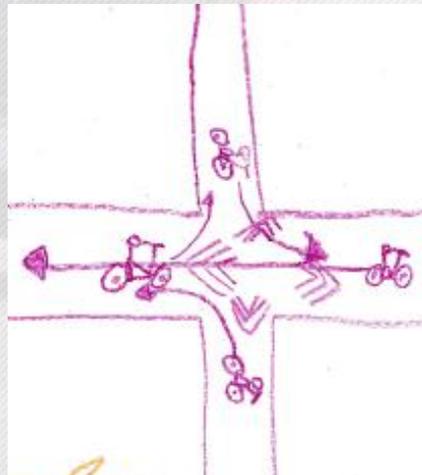
For more information on best practices for greenway design, please see the National Association of City Transportation Officials website at <http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/bicycle-boulevards/>



Part 1: On the Streets

In the US, 30% of all the land in our cities is commonly devoted to roadway. How we design our streets directly affects the attractiveness and safety of our neighborhoods. Good streets are essential to making it possible to enjoy our city on foot, by bike, by bus, or by car. This section focuses on changes to the roadway itself that promote healthier and safer neighborhoods.





Sharrows

Sharrows are symbols comprised of a bike with chevrons painted in the street that provide visual cues to drivers that they are on a road often used by cyclists.

In addition to reminding drivers to share the road, sharrows are aligned so that they guide cyclists out of the "door zone", where a door from a parked car might hit them if opened.

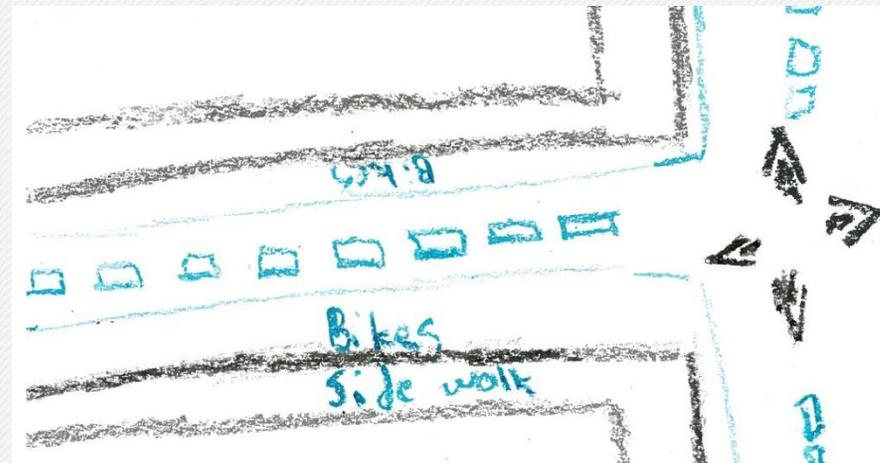
At complex intersections, sharrows can also help guide cyclists safely across a confusing area (for example, where there are streetcar rails). In some cities, "**sharrow flowers**" (right top/bottom) are used on residential streets to show when two bike friendly routes cross.

Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are lanes that have been specifically marked for use by cyclists. This provides a more protected environment and a clear demarcation of space on the street for driver and cyclist alike. Bike lanes are usually included on arterials.

Buffered bike lanes provide for one additional level of protection by adding an additional space between the lane for automobiles and the bike lane.

There are also **contraflow bike lanes** that go against traffic, usually on one-way streets for a short distance, such as on St. Helens Ave. in Downtown Tacoma (upper right). These lanes create shorter connections for bikers.

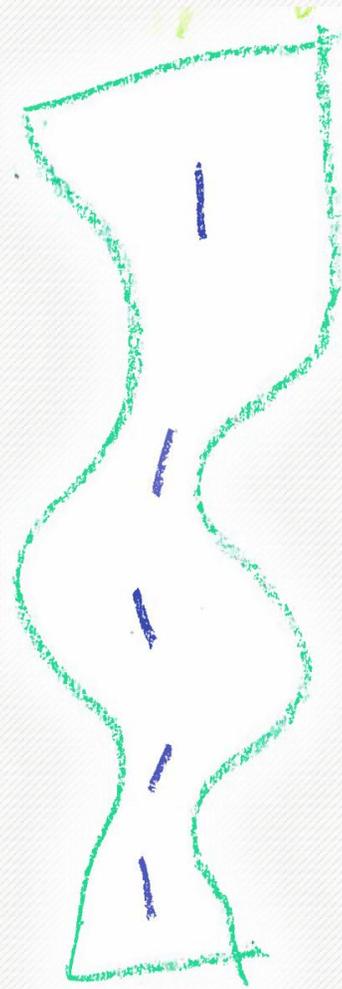




Cycletracks

Cycletracks are one step above buffered bike lanes. They provide a protected space for cyclists, usually by adding a substantial barrier. The barrier can be a landscaped median, as seen to the left, or any other physical barrier. Some cities have chosen to use parked cars as a barrier by placing the cycletrack between the curb and a parking lane. Cycletracks can be bidirectional or unidirectional.

While cycletracks provide a protected and comfortable space for cyclists, drivers and cyclists need to be cautious at intersections and driveways where collisions can occur and visibility may be reduced because of the placement of the cycletrack.



Chicanes

Chicanes create curves on a straight road. By disrupting a straight path, cars must slow down to safely navigate the street. Chicanes can also create planting areas for trees or rain gardens, depending on the design.

Chicanes can be added to many streets, but may not be appropriate in all cases. Neighbors may not agree where the best place to add the chicane is on the street and some streets are important to emergency responders.





Neckdowns

Neckdowns are additions to the street that create a narrow section of road. Street width is linked to traffic speed: The wider the street the more comfortable a driver feels at higher speeds, and the faster they will tend to drive. Neckdowns are often attractive because they can be created in a number of different ways. Adding **rain gardens**, **curb extensions**, bus stops, or parklets that extend into the street can all create this effect. By narrowing part of the road, drivers naturally slow down to safely pass through the narrow section. Neckdowns can also be used to change how fast people turn around corners at intersections (see **Curb Radii Reduction**). This is especially important when a neighborhood street connects to a busy arterial.

Diverter

Diverter are changes to the street network that force drivers to turn at certain intersections. In addition to causing a driver to slow to make the turn, diverters more importantly reduce the number of drivers seeking to cut through the neighborhood to bypass arterial traffic. Cut through traffic often travels at higher speeds than regular neighborhood traffic. Modern diverters allow non-motorized traffic to pass through with cut outs for cyclists. Most diverters are permanent concrete additions at an intersection.



Cul-de-Sacs

Cul-de-sacs are most often associated with suburban developments, but sometimes cities create cul-de-sacs by blocking off a street mid-block with a barrier similar to a diverter. The barrier can be a park, a planted strip, or anything that the community would like to place there to prevent cars from passing through. At the intersection of South 19th and L Street in Tacoma, a street was recently turned into a cul-de-sac by closing one end to traffic (right). Cul-de-sacs can create spaces that are used almost exclusively for the neighbors who live on the street, but may not be appropriate in many cases.



Textured/Colored Roadways

Changing the color or texture of a roadway is an effective way to make drivers more alert and aware of where they are driving in order to prevent accidents. Any change in the driving environment helps focus drivers. Textured pavement creates an unusual noise when driven over and colored roadways provide a visual cue that drivers should be more aware of their surroundings. In other contexts where transit, drivers, bikes, and pedestrians mix, textured/colored roadways show which parts of the road are meant for different uses, as below.

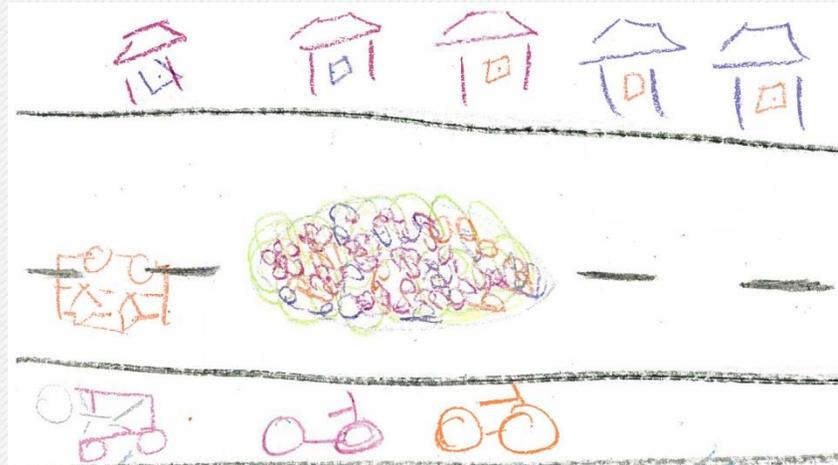
Rumble strips are a quick and inexpensive way to provide some of the benefits of a full textured roadway without the cost of repaving the entire road. Rumble strips are a series of small bumps or grooves in the road that provide audible feedback to the driver that there is something ahead of them



Refuge Islands

A refuge island is a partial median that provides a protected space half way across the street for pedestrians and cyclists. This allows people to break down a street crossing into two separate, shorter phases.

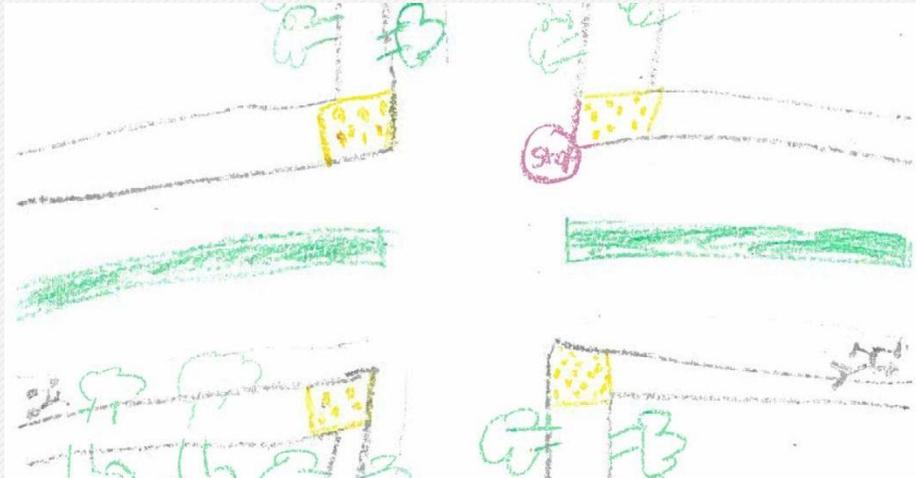
This is especially important for the young and the elderly. Young children do not have the same capabilities to keep track of moving vehicles from multiple directions and a refuge island allows them to focus solely on one direction at a time as they cross the street. Older members of our community and people with mobility challenges also benefit from a place to pause. Pictured to the right is a refuge island outside of McCarver Elementary.



Medians

Medians are a physical barrier that separates the different directions of travel. They reduce the incidence of head-on collisions and can create a space for plants to grow. Medians can be used to prevent left-turns where turning traffic causes problems, such as collisions or delays. Medians are also often designed to provide the same benefits as **Refuge Islands**. Planted medians can increase the number of trees in a neighborhood and create a more attractive street. On wider street, adding medians can provide similar benefits to a **neckdown** by creating the perception that lanes are narrower than they are.

Below right: A new median being built on North 26th Street in Tacoma as part of a complete street project.

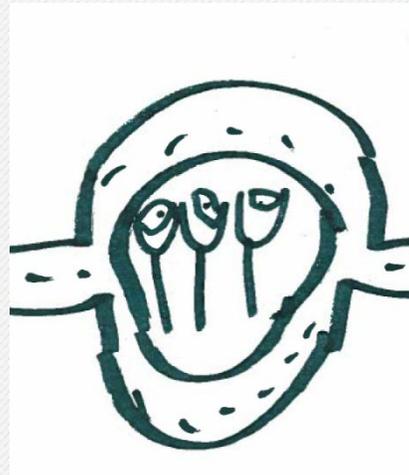
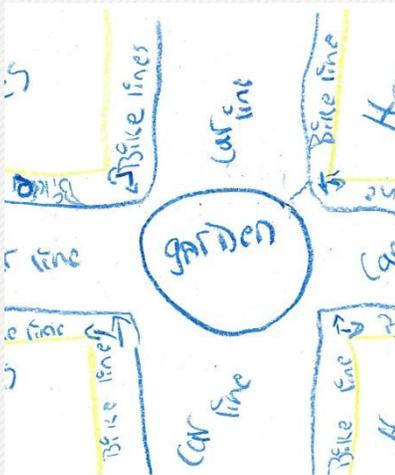






Traffic Circles/ Roundabouts

Traffic circles are round islands found at intersections. They are often planted with shrubs or trees and serve two purposes: They cause drivers to slow down at intersections and help reduce accidents. The benefit is mainly at the intersection, which means that they are best used in combination with speed humps.



At larger intersections, roundabouts are an option. Roundabouts allow traffic to move efficiently and safely through an intersection without a signal. While they take up a larger physical footprint, roundabouts offer advantages in safety and traffic flow.

Speed Humps & Speed Cushions

Modern speed humps are not like the speed bumps that you find in parking lots. Those types of bumps are uncomfortable to drive over at any speed and would not be appropriate on a residential street. Speed humps, on the other hand, are designed to allow cars and other traffic to pass over them at residential speeds (25 miles per hour or less) without significant discomfort. The difference is in the length and curve of speed humps, which are designed to provide a smoother bump. Good speed humps do not get in the way of residential traffic and, when designed correctly, are one of the most effective ways to maintain residential speeds on neighborhood streets.

In addition to speed humps, there are also speed cushions and speed tables. Speed cushions are divided into smaller sections and spaced to allow for emergencies vehicles and buses to pass unobstructed (right bottom). Speed tables have a flat top and are longer on the street than humps or cushions. Speed tables are often combined with crosswalks to create **raised crosswalks**.





Woonerf

A woonerf is a street where pedestrians, cyclists, and cars cooperate together to create a safe place. The term was coined by the Dutch and translated means, "living street". A woonerf is a shared space that is friendly towards all types of transportation. Pedestrians and cyclists have priority on a woonerf, but cars are not prohibited from entering, using, and parking on the street.

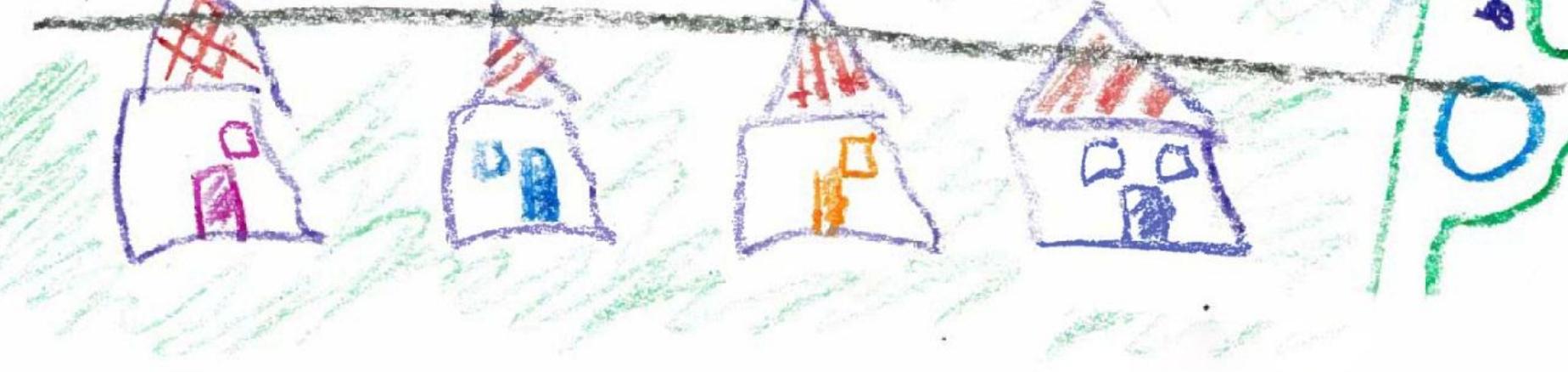
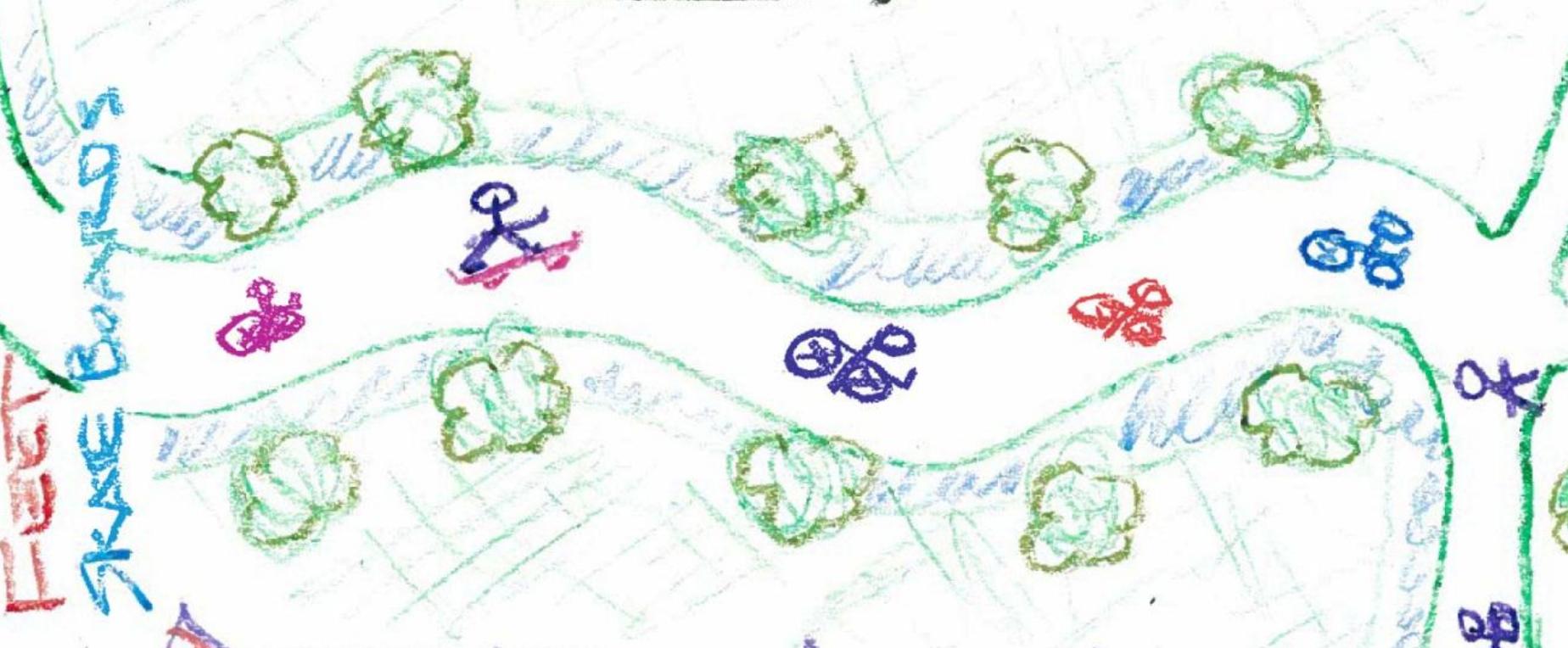
An example of an unofficial woonerf in the Pacific Northwest would be **the Pike Place Market**. Pedestrians and cars both use the street freely, but both work together to create a safe place for one another.

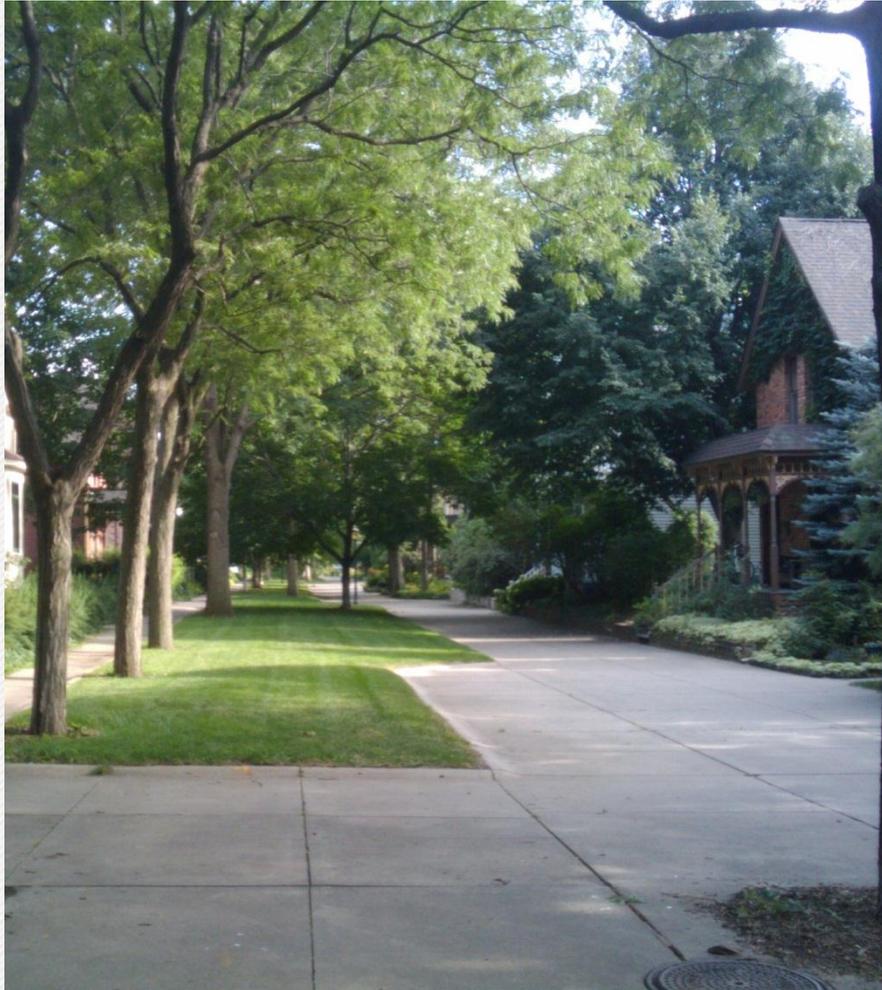
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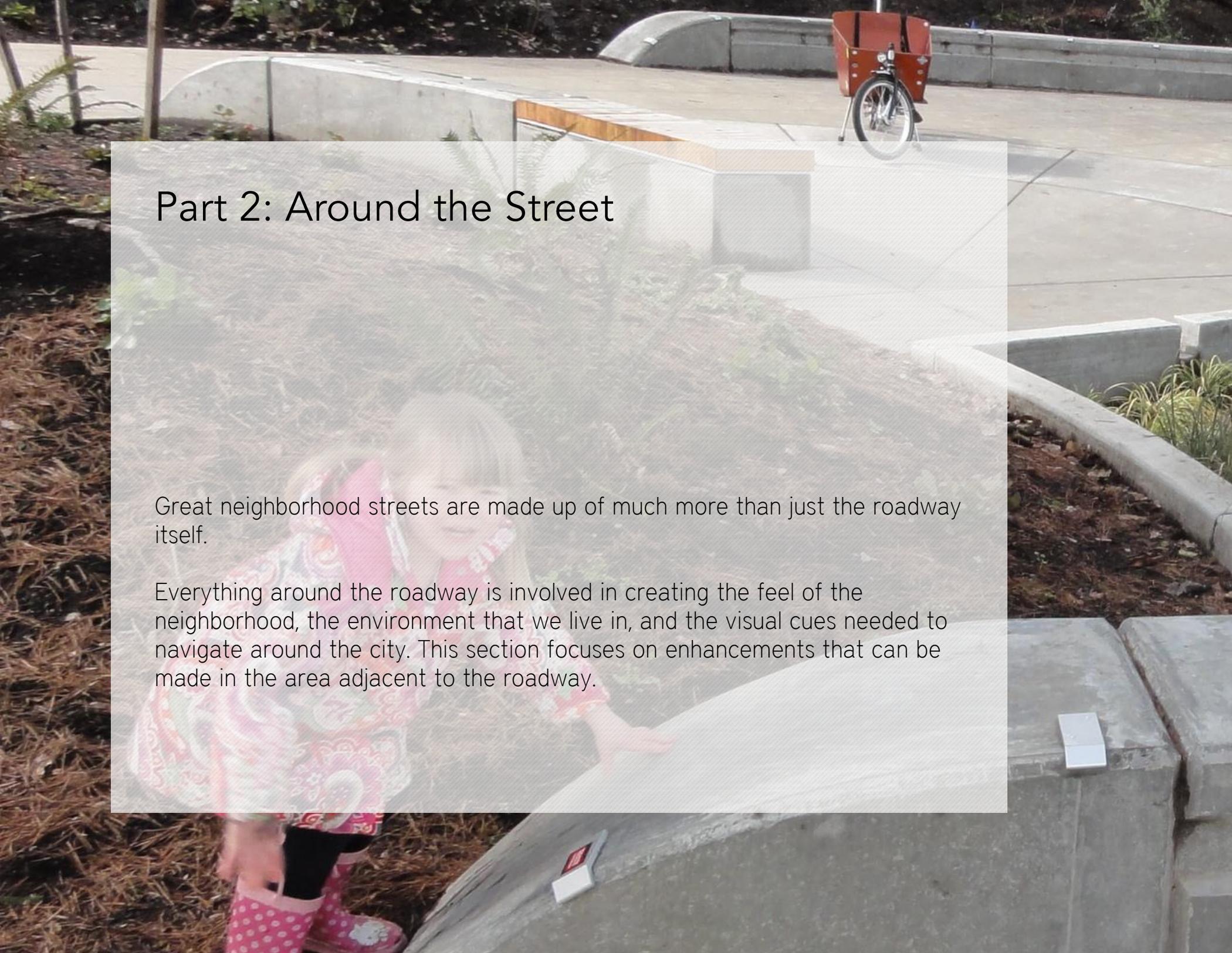
TAKE BODYS





Street Vacations

The most dramatic way to create a space that is safe from traffic is known as a permanent street vacation. In a street vacation, a segment of the street is closed and converted into a common area. Street vacations do not occur often, but there are examples where communities have been revitalized by taking space reserved for passing traffic and giving it to the community. One of the most famous examples of this comes from Minneapolis, where a two block stretch of Milwaukee Avenue was converted into a commons in the 1970s. The creation of the park was an important factor in creating the strong sense of community and that drives the neighborhood's high status today.



Part 2: Around the Street

Great neighborhood streets are made up of much more than just the roadway itself.

Everything around the roadway is involved in creating the feel of the neighborhood, the environment that we live in, and the visual cues needed to navigate around the city. This section focuses on enhancements that can be made in the area adjacent to the roadway.

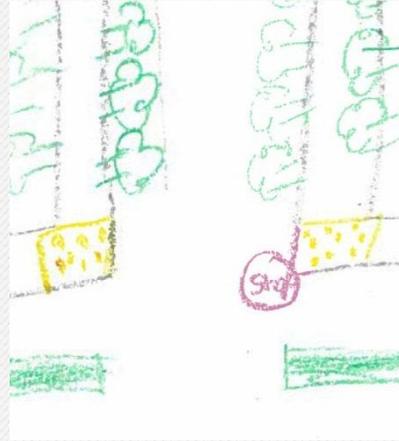


Rain Gardens

Rain gardens can be incorporated when improvements are made to the streetscape. These gardens serve a special purpose: They actually form part of the storm water management system. Rain gardens create a natural space that soaks in rain water and releases excess water slowly into the storm drains.

This helps filter the water so that it is cleaner going into the system and reduces flooding by limiting the flow of water that goes into the system. Rain gardens have been gaining popularity across the country because they are a cost effective way to strengthen a storm water system without building expensive new facilities.





Curb Ramps

Wheelchair ramps have evolved significantly over the past two decades. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that new or significantly upgraded sidewalks be built to accommodate all of our citizens. Adding curb ramps enables people with limited mobility to enjoy their neighborhood independently. Cyclists and parents with strollers also benefit.

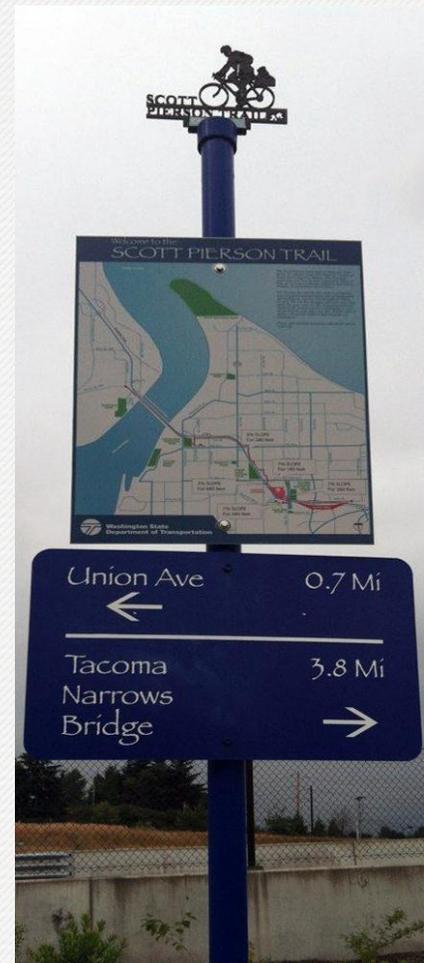


There are specific requirements for the ramp, which includes the width, slope, maneuvering area, and texture, in addition to other factors. New curb ramps are often easy to identify thanks to the brightly colored textured patches on the ramp itself.

Wayfinding/Destination Signs

Knowing where to go is important, especially when you are walking or on a bike. Wayfinding and destination signs help people navigate their city without a car, and help people understand the best routes through their neighborhood. Wayfinding signs along the route can give important information about how far it is to the next landmark or instructions on where to turn to follow a complicated route. The purpose of a wayfinding sign is to make community infrastructure, such as greenways and bike boulevards, more visible to new users who are unfamiliar with where a route leads or the path that the route takes through the community. Wayfinding/destination signs are generally green for bike and pedestrian routes.

While there are officially recognized signs that transportation departments tend to use for wayfinding, some communities are experimenting with other ways of letting people know that they are on the right path. **"Toppers"** have also started to appear on new bike boulevard and trail projects as a wayfinding tool (upper right). Toppers are small signs with designs that sit on top of street signs along the bike boulevard route. In Portland, toppers are designed in partnership with the community and used in new bike boulevard projects. These small, brightly colored, and artistic signs help cyclists know when they are on a bike boulevard.



Radar Speed Signs

Radar speed signs are temporary or permanent installations that show drivers their actual speed compared to the speed limit. The signs use radar to measure the speed of cars on the road and then display that speed on a sign beside a regular speed limit sign (right). Radar speed signs lower the average speed of vehicles on a street by reminding drivers that they are speeding and that speed limits may be enforced.



Street Furniture

Street furniture is the term used for all of the amenities around the street that we use, such as chairs, benches, chessboards, water fountains, kiosks, garbage cans, bike racks, and clocks. Properly implemented, street furniture can transform an inactive space into a place where people want to be. Street furniture can provide places that serve people with mobility needs or endurance limitations. Hospital patients and the elderly can benefit from thoughtfully spaced street furniture. The ability to break a long walk into several segments allows people to feel more confident making the choice to be active. As another example, public chess tables have helped deter crime and rejuvenate parks in many cases.



Trees/Landscaping

Trees and neighborhoods go together: They create more natural, human-scale spaces; help reduce traffic speeds; create separation between cars and pedestrians that make streets comfortable to walk on; and provide seasonal variation, from flowers to fall colors. Trees help streets accommodate all users and increase the value of surrounding homes. In addition to property values, the value of neighborhood trees can also be measured in terms of storm water control and cleaner air. Trees are a community asset. Many cities, including Tacoma, are actively enhancing their urban forests.

When planting a tree, it is important to ensure that you pick the right tree for the right place. Not all tree species can withstand our periodic wind storms and the wrong tree can damage other infrastructure, such as sidewalks and underground utilities, and necessitate expensive repairs. Some types of trees are not allowed in planting strips because of their impact on safety, and planting (or removing) a tree in a planting strip requires a City permit.

Are you interested in more trees on your street? The City of Tacoma has a program for you! The TreeStreet NW program offers guidance on picking the right tree and may be able to provide financial support for the purchase of eligible trees. Please feel free to contact your local, helpful city arborist for more information at: trees@cityoftacoma.org or check out the website at:

<http://www.cityoftacoma.org/treetstreet>





Part 3: Where Streets Meet

Intersections are the most complex part of any street network. Every intersection is different because of the patterns of where people want to go and how the streets meet. Moving automobile traffic efficiently through the intersection is important, but it is also important to create a safe intersection for bikes and pedestrians. This section focuses on different features of intersections that provide that safe space.



Intersection Paintings/Street Murals

An intersection painting is a public work of art created by the community in the middle of the street. Using environmentally friendly paint and with help from the City, creating an intersection painting can be a great way to bring the community together. Intersection paintings help show people passing through that neighbors take pride in their neighborhood, and often come to be landmarks for the people that live nearby. Intersection paintings can temporarily provide some of the same benefits as more permanent features, such as traffic circles, but without the cost.

In addition to providing a sense of place, intersection paintings may lower speeds by presenting something unexpected and unusual to drivers, who then naturally reduce their speed in order to assess what they are approaching. There are many communities that have created intersection paintings, including Tacoma. The selection of the intersection is important because heavy traffic will cause the artwork to wear off quickly, but many residential streets are appropriate places for possible intersection paintings.





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Curb Extensions

Curb extensions, also known as curb bulbs or bulbouts, are found at corners and crosswalks. The curb extension minimizes the time that a pedestrian is exposed to traffic when they are crossing the street. It does this by extending the curb and sidewalk into the street, usually ending at the inner edge of the parking lane.

Curb extensions have multiple uses. They enable transit to operate more safely by preventing collisions when the bus would otherwise have to merge in and out of traffic at bus stops. They can provide spaces for **rain gardens**. Curb extensions also help maintain traffic at residential speeds by doubling as a **neckdown** treatment. In addition to shortening the crossing distance for pedestrians, they also increase the visibility of pedestrians to vehicular traffic and reduce the speed that cars take turns by **reducing the curb radius**.





Painted Crosswalks/Raised Crosswalks

Crosswalks give drivers a clear visual cue where to expect pedestrians and create safer spaces for pedestrians to cross, either at corners or mid-block. Crosswalks can be accompanied by signals, but with or without a signal a pedestrian has legal priority at a crosswalk.



Painted crosswalks are a familiar sight: Zebra stripes of white paint on the road. There are also raised crosswalks which combine the benefits of a **speed table** with the visual cues of a crosswalk. Raised crosswalks provide extra protection for pedestrians by causing drivers to slow down to go over the **speed table** (See **Speed Hump**).

Crosswalk Signals/Crosswalk Lights

Crosswalks, particularly on busier streets, are often accompanied by extra lights or signals that remind drivers to be alert for potential pedestrians. These signals come in a variety of different styles, from the basic blinking yellow light to complex pedestrian activated LED lights, such as the HAWK signal (High Intensity Activated Cross Walk) signal pictured to the right.



Pedestrian/Bicycle Only Signals

Creating a specific signal for bikes and pedestrians can be a positive addition at intersections where there are many bikes and pedestrians and it is difficult to cross. At a pedestrian or bicycle signal, bikes or pedestrians are given their own specific phase to move across the street. During this phase, all other traffic types have a red light. Some cities are experimenting with bike only signals as a way to increase safety at these intersections.





Stop Signs

Everyone is familiar with stop signs. They are one of the most basic tools available to a traffic engineer for improving safety on a street, but the placement of stop signs requires careful consideration for the conditions on each street. Where they are placed affects safety on a street and how often they are placed in an area has a direct effect on whether drivers obey the signs or not: Too many stop signs can create frustration, unnecessarily slows traffic, and create a less safe environment because drivers stop obeying the signs. Correctly used, stop signs prevent accidents by requiring drivers to stop at points where there is potential for collisions.

On bicycle boulevards and neighborhood greenways, stop signs are very important. In addition to helping cars at residential speeds, which increases safety for pedestrians, riders find it more enjoyable to bike on a route where stops are minimized (just like drivers). Starting and stopping as a cyclist takes much more physical exertion than a car and one option for creating an enjoyable, safe route along a street is to turn the stop signs so that they face away from the neighborhood greenway. All traffic approaching the greenway must stop, but cyclists enjoy being able to continue along the greenway without stop signs. This approach only creates a safe and low stress environment on a greenway if it is done in conjunction with other traffic calming treatments, such as speed humps to maintain residential speeds.

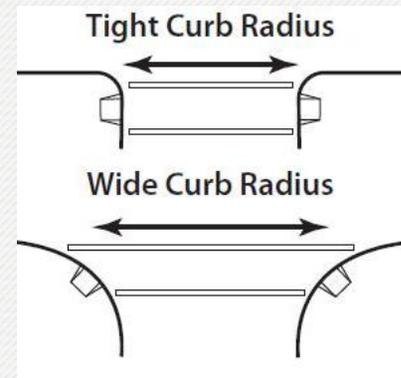
Intersection Sight Distance Improvements

Intersection sight distance is how far you can see in either direction at an intersection. Longer sight distances mean that cars, pedestrians, and bikes can see each other from longer distances, which helps avoid injuries and collisions. Sight distance can be affected by the grade of the road: Always be careful on the steep streets of Tacoma! Curb extensions also increase sight distances for pedestrians and drivers. Thoughtfully selecting appropriate plants for corners and actively maintaining them is also important to ensuring reasonable sight distance. To the right is an example of poor sight distance caused by inappropriately placed plants.



Curb Radii Revisions

Drivers slow down to take sharper turns, which is why changing the angle of a turn by reducing the radius of the curb can help maintain safe neighborhood speeds. Intersections that have large radii allow cars to “cut the corner” and take the turn at greater speeds. When the radius is reduced, turns can no longer be taken at unsafe speeds and drivers naturally slow down for the turn. Intersections with reduced radii also have shorter crossing distances and minimize the amount of time that a pedestrian is exposed to traffic.





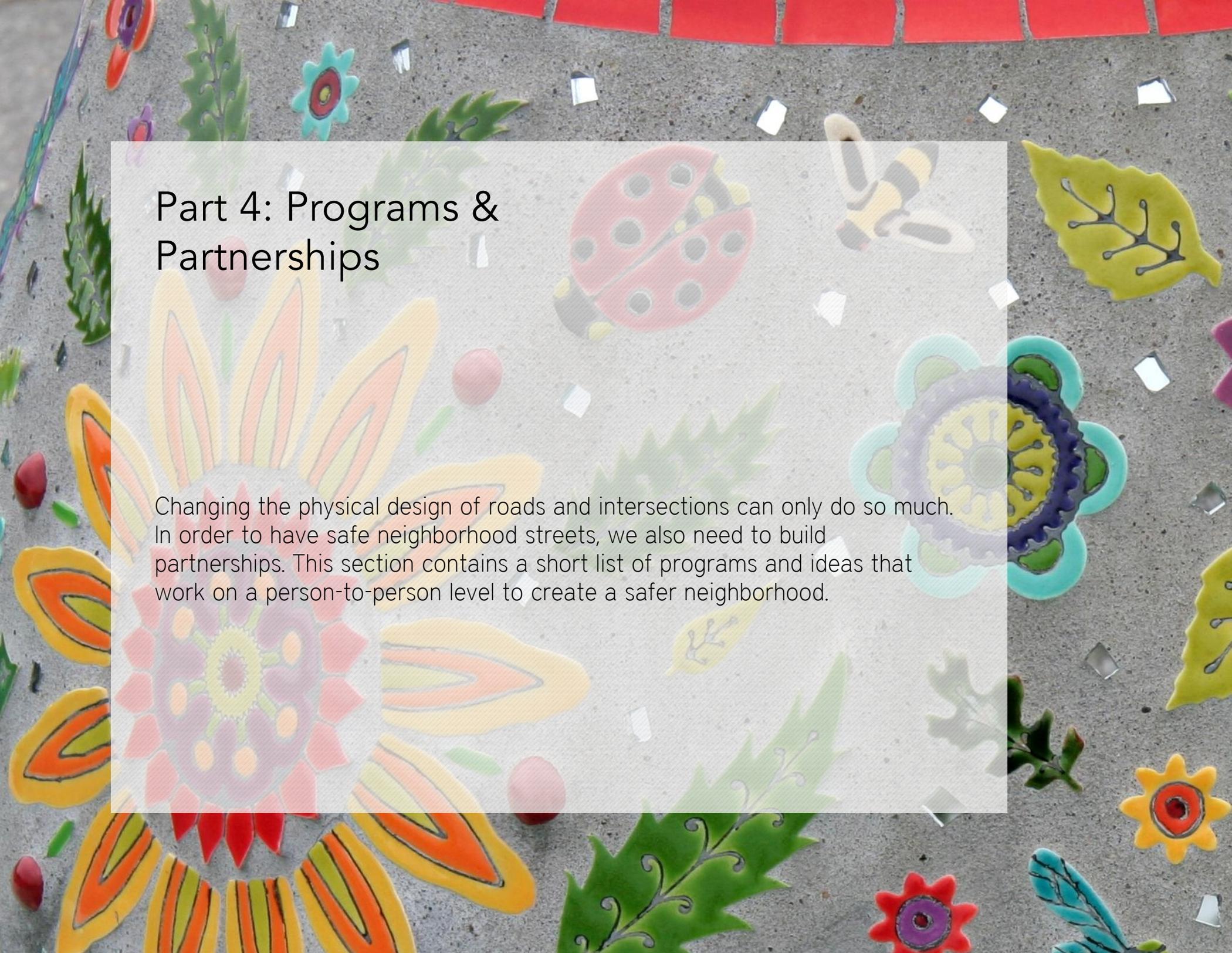
Full Traffic Signal

Traffic signals represent full control of traffic movements through an intersection. They are, when designed correctly, effective tools for reducing collisions and increasing safety at an intersection. They are versatile and provide drivers and pedestrians with a level of predictability and security. While traffic signals are often suggested for problematic intersections, they are usually not the most cost-effective option available. Other treatments and traffic controls can be equally effective and sometimes more effective.

One of the major drawbacks of building a full traffic signal is that they are very expensive. A single intersection, according to Pierce County Public Works, often costs more than \$250,000 in engineering, materials, installation, and required improvements needed to accommodate the change. Our streets are networks and a drastic change in one area (like a new signalized intersection) can have wide ranging impacts that must be accounted for and addressed.

For more information, please see:

<http://www.co.pierce.wa.us/pc/abtus/ourorg/pwu/traffic/signals.htm>



Part 4: Programs & Partnerships

Changing the physical design of roads and intersections can only do so much. In order to have safe neighborhood streets, we also need to build partnerships. This section contains a short list of programs and ideas that work on a person-to-person level to create a safer neighborhood.



Safe Routes to School

In the past half century, the number of students walking or biking to school has dropped significantly. Part of the reason for this decline is higher traffic volumes on our streets and the feeling that it is “too dangerous” for children to walk in their own neighborhood. The Safe Routes to School program helps parents, teachers, and local officials work together to create safer streets and safe routes from home to school. By working together, members of the community identify problem areas and make a plan to take action. The program is backed by the US Department of Transportation and grants are available from the Department of Transportation to support work in this area.

If you would like more information about Safe Routes to School, check with your local PTA to see if there is an active Safe Routes to School group. If not, you can find out more information about the first steps to creating a group for your school at: <http://guide.saferoutesinfo.org/steps/index.cfm>



Walking/Biking School Bus

Adult supervision is always a quick way to make sure that children stay safe on their way to school. A walking/biking school bus is one way of providing that supervision while also making walking or biking a regular part of the school experience. The walking/biking school bus is organized by parents, usually through the PTA, and creates “bus” routes in the local neighborhood. A parent volunteer acts as the “bus driver” by walking with the children to school along the route, picking up children as they go along. Parents take turns leading the children to school, and the “school bus” can either be on foot or as a biking bus.

To find out more information and read tips on how to get started, please see:

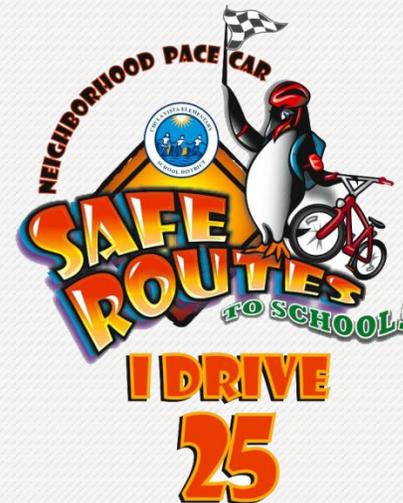
<http://www.walkingschoolbus.org/>



The "Neighborhood Pace Car" Program

Speeding cars on residential streets pose a risk to pedestrians and cyclists of all ages. The "Neighborhood Pace Car" program is something that you can do yourself on your next drive home after reading this. It is very simple: Once you are off the arterial streets, limit your speed to residential speeds (25 miles per hour or less). By doing so, you become the "pace car" for other traffic in the neighborhood. Any car or cut through traffic that would otherwise be speeding on your residential street will have to maintain residential speeds as a direct result of your action. Speed is the single biggest factor in whether a collision is lethal or not. By helping maintain residential speeds, you directly contribute to the safety of the streets in your neighborhood.

To magnify your effect, you can talk with neighbors and ask them to be "pace cars" too. The more people that participate, the greater the impact will be. Many cities have neighborhood pace car programs, including Washington DC, Salt Lake City, and Santa Cruz to name a few. Many community members use stickers like the one shown to the right to identify themselves as participants in the program.





Adopt-a-Spot

Many organizations adopt a street as a way to give back to the community. In Tacoma, you can adopt a small part of the community, like a traffic circle, a street, a field, or another public place as an individual or as a group. The City of Tacoma can help you pick your own spot and will provide materials to help you maintain and clean your neighborhood spot. Adopt-a-Spot commitments last for two years. If you would like information about adopting your own spot, please contact us at **TacomaCARES@cityoftacoma.org** or by phone at **253-591-5634**.



Neighborhood Speed Watch

You can directly contribute to safer streets in your neighborhood by taking part in the City of Tacoma's Neighborhood Speed Watch program. In partnership with the Tacoma Police Department, you can borrow a radar gun and clock vehicles in your neighborhood. The information that you gather results in warning letters being sent out to speeding drivers, and helps Tacoma Public Works identify stretches where traffic calming or extra enforcement is needed. To find out how to get started, call **253-591-5500** or email Jennifer Kammerzell at **jkammerzell@cityoftacoma.org**





A special thank you goes out to the photographers who contributed photos to this booklet, including: Greg Raisman, Richard Drdul, Michael Hicks, CarFreeDC, Payton Chung, Rich Noonan, Walk Eagle Rock, Rich & Chery, Simon, William Warby, SDOT, Tacoma City Staff, & Nicholas Richter. Images used under CC BY-SA.

Sources & More Information

This booklet draws directly on research conducted by transportation agencies around the country, including the Tacoma Complete Streets Design Guidelines, the Portland Bureau of Transportation, and the Seattle Department of Transportation. Many of the street treatments included in this booklet are also part of the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices published by the United States Department of Transportation, and/or the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.

Learn more online for free at:

<http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide>

http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/CompleteStreets/Res_CS_Final.pdf

http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/Planning/CompleteStreets/MUC_CS_Final.pdf

Planner Supplement

Involving Children and Young Adults in the Planning Process

Sutton and Kemp (2002) define place-making “as the intentional process of transforming neighborhoods.”

While child participation in this place making is not mandatory, the purpose of transforming a neighborhood through place making is to create a space that meets the needs of those who live in and use the space. Children are more likely to use public space in unexpected ways and have significantly different valuations of what makes a good place. In a planning setting, they are often able to approach a problem without preconceptions about limitations or what the “right” answer is. In order to include these perspectives into the process of place making, the best and most direct way to find out what their interests are is through direct participation of children in the decision making process, especially for spaces that are intended for their use. People of all ages should be involved because of the value of the unique knowledge, needs, desires, and interests that they possess. While the complexity of some planning processes may prove to be beyond the capabilities of a child to understand, children are more capable of understanding and participating in community discussions than many give them credit for. There are examples of children of a wide range of ages being successfully involved in master planning efforts around the world (Oestreich 2012).

Children possess useful and important knowledge that no one else in the community can provide (Chawla 2002). Taking the perspectives, hopes, and fears of children seriously in the redevelopment of our communities is crucial to the health of our cities. Woolcock and Steele (2008) argue that child friendly communities have a more sustainable balance between the physical and natural environment. If space is developed to have a positive influence on children, these spaces will have positive influences on everyone. Involving children in public participation can also be a way to reinvigorate the participation of adults in a planning process.

Active participation in the planning process and the feeling of empowerment that comes from having a voice in a decision can have life-long impacts on children and young adults. Children are stakeholders in their environment. Consequently, they should have a voice to express their preferences in how that environment is shaped. This type of collaborative decision making is the foundations of democracy. Participation in a deliberative process such as place making fosters citizenship and a better understanding of our communities. At the same time, children, like all people, are at risk of marginalization if they do not have a voice or a forum to communicate their stake in the built environment. They can be particularly vulnerable due to their lack of resources, their easily restricted autonomy, and the perception that their inclusion in the public realm is less justified. In order to engage children in the process you must engage those people and organizations that children are directly accountable to. This primarily includes schools and parents. In addition to engaging caretakers of children, young adults should be engaged directly. Young people want to be included in the work of adults but they want to be treated with respect (Gleeson and Sipe 2006). Successful solutions will be grounded in empathy, understanding, and compassion for and from all stakeholders involved.

As the collaboration at McCarver Elementary has demonstrated, there is a desire within the City of Tacoma for informed, positive, citizen participation that is representative of all perspectives. This next section is devoted to reflecting on the key takeaways from the experience of working in the elementary classroom. These takeaways are meant for practioners interested in incorporating additional voices into their planning projects.



Key Takeaways from the McCarver Experience

The charrette, as a planning tool, is particularly suited to children as it allows for engaging and developmentally appropriate expressions of their interests and desires for the urban realm. Developing appropriate lesson plans facilitates this participation.

Respect the school and classroom rules and expectations – familiarize yourself with school rules and policies before visiting. This means communicating with teachers and staff.

Be on time and prepared – schools and their classrooms run on a schedule. Be there when you say you will and be prepared.

Over plan – always have more material that you think you'll need. Discuss with the teacher beforehand. Engage the students – make sure the material you are presenting is grade appropriate and fun. Lessons that are too hard or too easy for students will leave them frustrated or bored, which will be palpable. If you're unsure about this, discuss with the teacher prior to your visit.

You are a visitor – classroom management is difficult when you do not know the kids or are familiar with their routines. The more engaged the students are, the less problems you will have.

Praise, praise, praise. Leave the classroom in the same or better mood than you arrived! Keep it as positive as possible! Students are more likely to follow directions and stay on task if they feel like you like them! Praising students and making them feel good about themselves will leave a good impression on the teacher and the kids.

Be understanding – When working with students many things can go wrong.

Flexibility is key, learning is not always scheduled.

Whenever possible, look for opportunities to give them control over an aspect of the plan. In this case, children were given the ability and freedom to imagine their ideal street and used that space to draw what mattered most to them.

Students are not trying to make you angry. If they are acting out, it may be for a number of reasons: disinterest, distraction, or misunderstanding.

Students may not be interested in each phase of design, but it's important for them to stay engaged in the process and work cooperatively with other participants.

Students are proud to have their work published and included in your plan. When possible, provide opportunities for them to share and present their work or take part in the final implementation.





Streets are for everyone.

