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| <b>SDOT</b>   | <b>SDOT Director's Rule 2-07</b>                                  |  |  |
| <b>DPD</b>  | <b>DPD Director's Rule 11-2007</b>                                |  |  |
| <b>Applicant:</b><br><br>CITY OF SEATTLE<br><br>Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)<br>Department of Planning and Development (DPD) | <b>Page</b><br><br>1 of 7   | <b>Supersedes:</b><br><br>DCLU DR 11-93<br>SED DR 93-4 |  |
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|   | <b>Type of Rule:</b><br><br>Procedure and Review Criteria         |  |  |
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|   | Grace Crunican, SDOT Director                                     |  |  |
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|   | Diane Sugimura, DPD Director                                      |  |  |

## Background

A Green Street is a street right-of-way that, through a variety of design and operational treatments, gives priority to pedestrian circulation and open space over other transportation uses. The treatments may include sidewalk widening, landscaping, traffic calming, and other pedestrian-oriented features. The purpose of a Green Street is to enhance and expand public open space, and to reinforce desired land use and transportation patterns on appropriate City street rights-of-way.

The original designation and mapping of Green Streets was established in the City of Seattle 1985 Land Use and Transportation Plan for Downtown Seattle. Additional Green Streets were designated in the Northgate Area

Comprehensive Plan (City of Seattle, 1993) and in a number of Neighborhood Plans affecting areas throughout Seattle. Today, policy guidance for Green Streets is directed by the Department of Transportation (SDOT) and the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual (ROWIM), in conjunction with Seattle's Comprehensive Plan. The ROWIM defines a number of Street Types, including Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets, which help to form and inform policies related to the City's street system (refer to ROWIM Chapter 4 Design Criteria, [Section 4.2 Street Classifications and Street Types](#)). The information in the ROWIM provides guidance to an applicant who wishes to develop their project along a Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street, including the planning and design process, the City approval process for Green Street and Neighborhood Green Street designs, and some information on construction and maintenance of street features. There is also information regarding the process and criteria for designating new Green Streets or Neighborhood Green Streets within Seattle.

While the goals and concepts have remained largely unchanged, the Green Street and Neighborhood Green Street classifications in the ROWIM are a refinement of earlier Green Street concepts. By incorporating past design and implementation experiences, the current chapter in the ROWIM on Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets represents the most up-to-date information on their development and implementation.

## **Rule**

This Directors' Rule updates Directors' Rule DCLU 11-93 and SED 93-4, which created the Green Street permit approval process and design guidelines. This Rule is meant to facilitate consistency with the standards and guidelines set forth in the Right-of-Way Improvements Manual (ROWIM), established in 2005 by Director's Rule SDOT Rule 2-05 / DPD Rule 22-2005.

The ROWIM can be found online at [http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/\\_rowmanual](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/_rowmanual).

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## **1. Green Street Types**

There are two types of Green Streets:

1. Green Streets located in Downtown Seattle and defined and mapped in the Land Use Code; and
2. Neighborhood Green Streets that are designated through neighborhood plans or other City adoption processes (e.g., City Council Ordinance or Director's Rule).

The City's original Green Streets policy offered a developer bonus in exchange for construction of an approved Green Street streetscape, and the bonus was limited to Downtown Seattle, consisting of the Belltown, Denny Triangle, Urban Core, Denny Triangle, Pioneer Square, and International District. Subsequently, the City has allowed Green Streets to be designated in Neighborhood Plans outside of Downtown Seattle, where no funding incentive exists. These are referred to as Neighborhood Green Streets. A more complete description of each policy intent and purpose for each Green Street type follows:

## Green Streets: Definition and Purpose

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Definition</b>                | As defined in the <a href="#">City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element</a> , "Green Streets are designated on a number of non-arterial streets within Downtown Seattle. Landscaping, historic character elements, traffic calming, and other unique features distinguish Green Streets from other Street Types. Green Streets are designed to emphasize pedestrian amenities and landscaping in areas that have dense, residential land uses. Each Green Street has its own unique character and design. The street right-of-way dimensions can vary significantly from street to street and from segment to segment."   |
| <b>Purpose</b>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhance pedestrian circulation and create open space opportunities in medium to high density residential areas lacking adequate public open space.</li><li>• Create a vibrant pedestrian environment in the street right-of-way that attracts pedestrians.</li><li>• Strengthen connections between residential enclaves and other Downtown amenities by improving the streetscape for pedestrians, bicycles and transit patrons.</li><li>• Support economic activity in Downtown neighborhoods by creating an attractive and welcoming "front door" for pedestrians.</li><li>• Maximize opportunities for trees and other landscaping to create a high quality open space.</li></ul> |
| <b>Location</b>                  | Designated streets in Downtown Seattle (refer to <a href="#">Green Street Locations Map</a> [  1 MB]).   |
| <b>Typical Adjacent Land Use</b> | Residential or mixed use.   |
| <b>Street Classification</b>     | Non-arterial.   |
| <b>Authority</b>                 | Designated by City Council Ordinance and adopted and mapped in the Land Use Code (SMC 23.49).   |
| <b>Implementation</b>            | The design and construction of Green Street improvements is funded by developers in exchange for increased floor-area-ratio (FAR) or other land use code departures, as specified in <a href="#">Seattle's Land Use Code (SMC 23.49.013)</a> .  |

## Neighborhood Green Streets

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Definition</b> | As defined in the <a href="#">City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element</a> , Neighborhood Green Streets may be on any non-arterial street outside of Downtown Seattle. Similar to Green Streets, Neighborhood Green Streets emphasize pedestrian amenities, landscaping, historic character elements, traffic calming, and other unique features. Neighborhood Green Streets were designated in Seattle's neighborhood plans. |
| <b>Purpose</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflect a local community's desire to target specific streetscapes for a pedestrian or open space enhancement.</li><li>• Enhance the pedestrian environment and attract pedestrians.</li></ul>   |

- Create open space opportunities in residential neighborhoods.
- Retain unique street features (e.g., brick paving, mature landscaping that is adjacent to the roadway, curbless streets).

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Location</b>                  | Designated streets in neighborhoods outside of Downtown Seattle (refer to <a href="#">Neighborhood Green Street Locations in North Seattle</a> [521 kb] and <a href="#">Neighborhood Green Street Locations in South Seattle</a> [521 kb]).  |
| <b>Typical Adjacent Land Use</b> | Residential or mixed use that includes residential uses.   |
| <b>Street Classification</b>     | Non-arterial.  |
| <b>Authority</b>                 | Various. Neighborhood Green Streets are typically recommended in Neighborhood Plans or other transportation plans, and may subsequently be adopted into the Land Use Code through City Council Ordinance, designated by joint DPD/SDOT Director's Rule, or included in a city recognized sub-area transportation plan.   |
| <b>Implementation</b>            | Neighborhood Green Streets do not have a dedicated funding mechanism in most cases. Funding to design and build Neighborhood Green Streets may come from a Local Improvement District, <a href="#">Neighborhood Matching Funds</a> , partnerships with other agencies (e.g., transit agencies), through private development or as part of a Seattle Public Utilities <a href="#">Natural Drainage Systems</a> Project. |

## **2. Green Street Locations**

There are 17 adopted Green Streets in Downtown Seattle (refer to [Green Street Locations Map](#) [1 MB]). With the exception of Harbor Steps (University St. between 1st Ave. and Western Avenue) all of the Green Streets allow motorized vehicular traffic.

There are 15 adopted Neighborhood Green Streets (refer to [Neighborhood Green Street Locations in North Seattle](#) [521 kb] and [Neighborhood Green Street Locations in South Seattle](#) [521 kb]). Another 41 Neighborhood Green Streets have been recommended in neighborhood plans in various neighborhoods, but have not yet been formally adopted and are indicated as either "neighborhood plan recommended" or "tentative" in the figures.

- **Neighborhood Plan recommended:** defined in one of Seattle's 37 adopted neighborhood plans as a Green Street improvement.
- **Tentative:** described in an [adopted neighborhood plan](#) as a street that should have some kind of pedestrian or open space improvement, but were not formally called Green Streets.

## **3. Basic Design Principles**

The following design principles apply to both Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets:

- **Emphasize pedestrians and open space over other street functions.** Green Streets serve both as pedestrian gathering places, and as pedestrian corridors connecting activity areas. They are designed to provide an inviting, attractive, and safe streetscape for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit patrons. In certain cases, green streets may be designed to reduce vehicular travel speeds to the point where it

becomes reasonable for pedestrians and vehicles to "share" space in the street right-of-way. In Seattle, a well-known example of this type of "shared street" is Pike Place.

- **Design should complement and enhance adjacent land uses.** Buildings in much of Downtown Seattle are required to have pedestrian friendly features at the ground floor (e.g., transparency, weather protection, prominent entrances). Green street design should complement these features with improvements in the street right-of-way that encourage pedestrian activity.
- **Keep traffic speeds and volumes low.** Green streets are designated on non-arterial streets and are expected to have lower traffic volumes and speeds than other streets in the City. One of the key factors to making a street safe and inviting for pedestrian is maintaining slow vehicle speeds and relatively low vehicle volumes. This is why Green Streets are designated on non-arterial streets that do not, or are not anticipated to, contribute significantly to vehicle capacity in the area. Often, Green Streets are designated on non-through streets or streets that are not a key part of the street grid (e.g., dead ends and short segments of street created by the collision of street grids) Design features that tend to reduce vehicular travel speeds are good choices for Green Street designs ([Chapter 4 Design Criteria, Section 4.2 Street Classifications and Street Types](#)). If a Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street was designated on an arterial street, traffic speeds and volumes would need to support arterial operations and the mobility needs of all users and pedestrian "priority" would not be appropriate.
- **Respond to site specific conditions.** Generally, Green Streets are conceived around a unified design concept--one that reflects or embellishes the unique character of the site. Ideally, such a design concept would be applied to every block of the Green Street. Green streets offer the opportunity to reinforce unique conditions or respond to site specific opportunities (e.g., solar access, historic buildings or street features, topography, stormwater mitigation, views).

## **4. Designating New Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets**

It is possible to designate new locations for Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets. A proposal for a new designation can be made by private development proponents, community organizations. A designation request may come through SDOT, DPD, or the [Department of Neighborhoods \(DON\)](#).

The City will assess the eligibility of the proposed Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street based on the criteria defined below in Section 6.2.5a Criteria for Designating New Green Streets and 6.2.5b Criteria for Designating New Neighborhood Green Streets.

### **Criteria for Designating New Green Streets**

Designating a Green Street is a land use action that must be approved by the City through an Ordinance process. The Land Use Code (SMC reference) defines criteria for each type of land use and zoning designation to ensure that any change to land use or zoning is made according to a set of consistent criteria. The locational criteria for Green Streets are as follows:

1. Streets in medium and high-density areas where residents generally do not have access to private yards, existing open space is very limited, and land is not available for future open space development.
2. Streets within or providing connections to pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commercial areas where Green Street improvements could reinforce commercial and mixed use activity, and enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment without conflicting with the desired traffic circulation.
3. Streets at critical locations in redeveloping areas that could serve as a focus for new development and provide direction for desirable changes in land use patterns. Examples might include streets that, as Green Streets, could strengthen the residential character of areas where efforts are being made to promote residential development or stabilize an existing neighborhood.

4. Streets and street ends which provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections with neighborhood attractions, such as schools, shopping areas, public facilities, institutions and public open spaces, or streets integrated with the City's urban trail network.
5. Streets that have a special character that is of interest to pedestrians, including streets providing shoreline access, streets with special views, and streets located in areas of unique historic or architectural interest.
6. Undeveloped streets within designated open spaces where it is desirable to retain the undeveloped conditions of the surroundings.

### **Criteria for Designating New Neighborhood Green Streets**

There are no official criteria for neighborhood green streets in the Seattle Municipal Code. This chapter identifies the following as appropriate criteria for Neighborhood Green Streets.

1. Neighborhood Green Streets shall support multiple functions in the street right-of-way, especially pedestrian access and landscaping. Streets that are good candidates for traffic calming are also appropriate, as streets with slower traffic enhance conditions for pedestrians and support the Neighborhood Green Street concept.
2. Streets that are direct links to major transit facilities and light rail stations.
3. Streets and street ends which provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections with neighborhood attractions, such as schools, shopping areas, public facilities, institutions and public open spaces, or streets integrated with the City's Urban Trails Network.
4. Streets that have a special character that is of interest to pedestrians, including streets providing shoreline access, streets with special views, and streets located in areas of unique historic or architectural interest.
5. Undeveloped streets or streets that are not fully improved (e.g., sidewalk, curb and gutter) where it is desirable to retain the undeveloped conditions of the surroundings. In some cases, property access on undeveloped streets may necessitate that a minimum level of improvements be completed, but not required at the full standard.

### **5. Green Street Design, Permit and Construction Process**

Design and permit activities on designated Green Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets shall follow the following process, defined below and charted in [Green Street Design, Permit and Construction Process](#) [ 377 kb].

#### **Initial Contact**

The proponent (developer or community group representative) can start the Green Street design, permit and construction process by contacting either the [Seattle Department of Transportation \(SDOT\)](#) or [Department of Planning and Development Department \(DPD\)](#).

#### **Preparation for Street Design Concept Plan**

To assist in approval of a Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street it is necessary to prepare a Concept Plan according to the guidelines and templates in [Section 6.1 Street Design Concept Plans](#). For Downtown Green Street projects seeking an increase in FAR (Floor Area Ratio) provide FAR calculations per [Seattle Municipal Code Section 23.49.013](#).

At this point, the project proponent can decide to have the Concept Plan adopted by Joint DPD/SDOT Director's Rule or prepare the Concept Plan at a level of detail suitable for Street Improvement Permit Review. Refer to [Chapter 2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#).

### **Existing Street Design Concept Plan Review**

If an approved Concept Plan exists for the Green Street or Neighborhood Green Street, it is the responsibility of the applicant to determine if the design concept is still viable given conditions in the area or the design standards that may have changed since the approval of the original Concept Plan.

### **Permit Review and Issuance**

After incorporating comments from the City review for the Concept Plan, the Green Street proponent refines the Concept Plan to an adequate level of design to commence a [Master Use Permit \(MUP\)](#) and/or [Building Construction Permit](#) process, or if the proposal impacts the street right-of-way and not private property, the proponent will want to initiate a Street Improvement Permit process. For information about how to prepare a Street Improvement Permit, including early design guidance, plan requirements, and City of Seattle CAD standards, refer to [Section 2.4.1 Street Improvement Permits](#), in particular SDOT Client Assistance Memo (CAM) [#2200](#) and SDOT CAM [#462](#).

### **Green Street and Neighborhood Green Street Construction**

Construction of the Green Street that is part of a MUP or Building Construction Permit can commence once the DPD and SDOT reviews for the Street Improvement Permit and the MUP or Construction Permit are issued. The project is concluded by a final inspection and, where relevant, issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

For Neighborhood Green Street projects that are not part of a MUP or Construction Permit, construction can commence when the Street Improvement Permit is issued. The process is concluded with the approval of a final inspection of the work completed.

### **Maintenance**

Sidewalks with special paving treatments (such as pavers or stamped, colored concrete) add a unique design element to the streetscape and can enhance the walking experience for pedestrians. It is important to design special paving so that it retains its integrity over time. This is becoming increasingly important as the number of utility cuts on sidewalks increases to respond to the demands of higher density development. Carefully selected colors can be mismatched as the original color fades and new sections are applied. A successful design solution will address safety, access, and aesthetics.

To assure that maintenance is considered when streetscape design features are being selected, SDOT requires a maintenance agreement for all streetscape treatments that go beyond City Standards. The following sections provide an overview of what is expected of the property owner and SDOT regarding maintenance of streetscape features:

**Responsibility:** With their consent, the abutting property owners shall be responsible for the maintenance of the completed Green Street section unless there is an agreement in writing, acceptable to SDOT, which provides for an alternative maintenance and repair program. Said agreement shall be a written condition on any street use permit for a Green Street project.

**Joint agreements:** Proponents may enter into an agreement with other property owners adjacent to their Green Street section for shared maintenance responsibility.

**Maintenance, repair and replacement:** Maintenance responsibilities for Green Streets shall include on-going sweeping, debris removal, landscape maintenance, and responsibility for the repair and replacement of all auxiliary street design elements of the Green Street (i.e. fixture replacement, replacing tree grates, paver repair, replacement or repair of special amenities such as fountains, benches, and planters).