

Seward Neighborhood Safely Plan for People walking, People on Bikes and People in Wheelchairs

Approved by SNG April 24, 2019

BACKGROUND:

Why a walking and Bicycling plan for Seward?

Seward Neighborhood is blessed with a lot of great infrastructure for biking and walking. But there are still places where it is not safe to bike or walk. There are streets where people drive cars too fast and drivers don't yield to pedestrians; there are intersections with so many distractions that people driving cars don't notice the people walking; there are way too many crashes that injure or kill people who are walking and people who are on bikes.

The mission of Seward Neighborhood Group is to make Seward a better place to live, work, and play. Making Seward a safe place to bike and walk is critical to that mission.

Why a plan by Seward Neighborhood Group?

The City of Minneapolis is now working on a Transportation Plan that will include biking and walking; It has committed to "Vision Zero" to eliminate traffic related deaths and serious injuries; It has a "Complete Streets" policy that city streets are to be designed for people who walk, people who bike, people who use transit, people who drive cars, and the delivery of goods. With all of that, why a separate effort in Seward? Because we believe that the residents of Seward know a lot about where problems are in Seward and what some solutions may be.

How have Seward residents been involved?

This effort started when an immigrant from Ethiopia who was riding his bike was killed in a crash on 22nd Street and 26th Avenue. We have solicited ideas from residents in a number of ways:

- Solicited ideas on the Seward Neighbors' Forum email discussion list (xxxmembers) and the NextDoor service on the web (XXX members in Seward)
- Have had five meetings of the Seward Neighborhood Community Development Committee that included getting ideas and comments
- Sought comments at the Seward Neighborhood Group annual meeting
- Incorporated public input from Seward Redesign/West Bank CDC's Reconnecting Neighborhoods project. (Meetings in the Seward Towers and other neighborhood locations and community walks with translators)

What about the design professions who know about designing safe streets?

This is the first draft—it includes what Seward Neighborhood Groups believes are ideas that need to be explored. The next step will be to meet with the design professionals and leaders of the Minneapolis and Hennepin County Public Works departments, MnDOT design people, and our elected officials to refine our ideas. For the suggestions that are part of the Re-connecting neighborhoods project, representatives of MnDOT, Hennepin County Public Works and Minneapolis Public Works are members of the committee doing much of the work.

When will all of this happen?

We don't know. We do know that it won't happen unless we raise the issues. Some of it may happen quickly, some of it may have to wait for a good opportunity (for example the bike lanes on 26th Avenue had been proposed by the neighborhood long before they happened. We took advantage of a Hennepin County road project on 26th Avenue to get them painted.

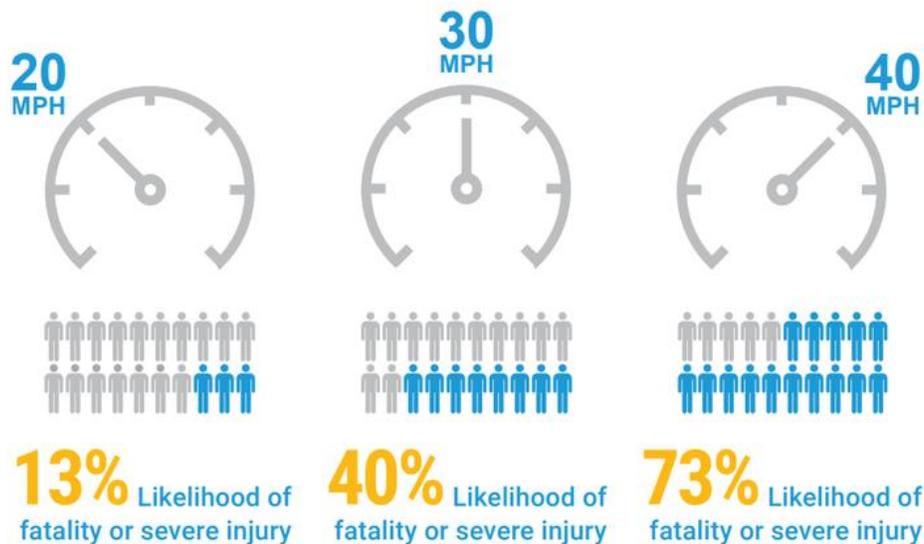
GUIDING IDEAS

There were a few guiding ideas that came out of the process of putting this together:

Reduce Speed

Motor vehicle speed makes a difference.

- Going slower means the driver is more likely to see a person walking or a person biking.
- Going slower means that the driver has more time to stop.
- Going slower reduces injury



(From Minneapolis Vision Zero-Citation: Graphic: Denver Vision Zero Action Plan Data source: Brian C. Tefft)

Our ideas range from joining the lobbying effort to allow Minneapolis to reduce the speed limits on its streets to 25 miles per hour to changing the design of streets to encourage drivers to drive slower.

- Reduce speed limits
- Reduce vehicle lane widths on streets with striping (e.g. 26th Ave)
- Curb bump-outs at intersections, or refuge medians when possible
- Do not paint center line on streets that are primarily residential (e.g. 31st Ave, 25th St, 27th Ave etc) (or just don't repaint the center lines)
- Replace traffic signals with 4-way stops at some lower volume intersections (e.g. 25th St and 31st Ave) to deduce the race to get to the green light.

Make people walking and people on bikes more visible

In many cases, people driving will say the “just didn’t see the person walking or the person on a bike.” We’ve proposed a number of changes to help solve this problem—from eliminating distractions at some intersections to improving visibility by making physical changes to intersections. The next guiding idea is also important in this effort—making sure drivers know that it is their responsibility to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks and to share the road with people on bicycles. Finally, helping people who are walking and people on bikes understand that there are ways they can improve their visibility to drivers is important.

- Leading walk signal for all signalized intersections (especially on Franklin)
- Painted crosswalks at all intersections on major streets.
- Improve lighting at intersections
- Curb bump-outs to make crossing pedestrians more visibility on major streets.

- More protected bike facilities on the busiest roads
- “No turn on red” policy at signalized intersections
- Automatic walk signal at signalized intersections (no need to press button to get walk sign)
- Enforce parking restrictions at intersections

Get people to obey Minnesota laws about yielding to people walking and about sharing the road with people on bicycles

Minnesota law requires:

Where traffic-control signals are not in place or in operation, the driver of a vehicle shall stop to yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian crossing the roadway within a marked crosswalk or at an intersection with no marked crosswalk. The driver must remain stopped until the pedestrian has passed the lane in which the vehicle is stopped.

And

every driver of a vehicle shall exercise due care to avoid colliding with any bicycle or pedestrian upon any roadway...

(2018 Minnesota Statutes, section 169.2)

We have proposed a number of ideas to remind people of these laws.

- Add “Turning vehicles yield to pedestrians and bicycles” sign at all signaled intersections
- Center (spring loaded) yield to pedestrians in crosswalks signs
- More education for drivers and bicyclists about what the law is at corners and crosswalks
- Enforce parking restrictions at intersections (no parking 20 feet from inside edge of sidewalk)
- Police enforcement of vehicles failing to yield to pedestrians in all situations
- Better enforcement of clearing sidewalks of snow and ice and programs to help ensure corners are cleared

Improved facilities for people walking and people on bicycles.

Over the years, some great bicycle and pedestrian improvements have been made in Seward. The Midtown Greenway, the Bike Boulevards on 29th Avenue and 24th Street, the protected bike lanes on Franklin east of 29th Avenue (especially the improvements to the Franklin Avenue Mississippi River bridge), the Milwaukee Avenue Pedestrian mall have all been great improvements. A number of other improvements, while not in the “great” category have been improved safety for people walking and people biking--the bike lanes on Franklin and 26th Avenues, Some curb bump-outs on 27th Avenue, the changes to the Franklin/Cedar/Minnehaha intersections. We have proposed a number of additional improvements:

- More bump-outs at dangerous intersections to make people walking and people on the Greenway more visible
- A protected bikeway from the 20th Avenue I-94 bridge to the LRT trail on the east side of Cedar
- A number of improvements to crossings of I-94 also recommended by the Reconnecting Neighborhoods Project.
- Visibility improvements along the Greenway
- Painted crosswalks at all crosswalks of through streets
- A midblock crossing of the 25th/26th Avenue S curve for the Towers and Triangle Park.

SPECIFIC IDEAS

Key: (RCN) = recommended by Redesign's I-94 Reconnecting Neighborhoods project; (Planned) = already planned by Mpls or Henn Cty; (Previous)= Previously requested by SNG

Franklin Avenue

- Leading walk signal for all crosswalks with signals on Franklin
- Enforce parking restrictions at intersections (no parking 20 feet from inside edge of sidewalk)
- Add "Turning vehicles yield to pedestrians and bicycles" sign at all signaled intersections
- Center (spring loaded) yield to pedestrians in crosswalks signs
- Add concrete curb islands (like 11th Avenue between the River Road and 2nd Street) to the protected portion of the Franklin bike lanes.

Franklin/Cedar/Minnehaha & Franklin

- Longer left turn signals for vehicles
- Enforcement of vehicles turning w/o arrows that don't stop for oncoming traffic or yield to bikes and pedestrians
- Bike and pedestrian paths from the intersection to the LRT station (not having to walk through AIOIC parking lot.)

20th Ave to 23rd Avenue & Franklin

- Add painted crosswalks at some or all intersections
- Improve lighting at intersections

24th Avenue & Franklin

- Crosswalks, warning sign (Planned)
- Warning flasher (tentative) (Planned)

26th Avenue & Franklin

- Add leading left turn arrow for 26th Avenue cars turning onto Franklin. Have red left turn arrow after the leading arrow (RCN)
- Have only one southbound lane on 26th north of Franklin allowed to go straight (RCN)
- Curb bump-out where possible (RCN)
- Parking allowed on west side of 26th south of Franklin at 5 Square building (RCN)
- Shifting the turn lanes on Franklin at this intersection, so that left-turning cars can see oncoming traffic and see their turn more clearly
- Changed phasing of the traffic signal (for both Franklin and 26th Avenues): Protected left turn arrow >> All red >> Walk signal >> 5 second delay >> Green with flashing yellow left (or red left turn arrow)
- Automatic walk signal without need to push the "beg button"

27th Avenue & Franklin

- Curb bump-outs wherever possible to reduce turning speed and improve pedestrian visibility

29th and Riverside Avenues & Franklin

- Use curb bump-out to reduce speed of cars turning from Franklin to Riverside
- Maybe use the "Protected Intersection" model for a curb bump-out on the North-East corner

Sebury & Franklin

- Add curb bump-out to make the turn more right-angle, to reduce turning speed and improve

- Add “turning vehicles yield to Pedestrians and Bicycles” sign

Cedar Avenue

- Protected Bike path from University of MN on east side of 20th Avenue (Planned)
- Protected bike path through Franklin/Cedar Minnehaha Intersection on east side of Cedar to LRT trail (Previous)

Hiawatha LRT Trail

- Improve crossing of LRT trail and 26th Street (planned)

I-94 (All included in Redesign I-94 Reconnecting Neighborhoods)

- New pedestrian bridge of I-94 that is at least 20 feet wide, is ADA compliant
- When Riverside and 25th Avenue bridges over I-94 are rebuilt:
 - Wider sidewalks with separate bike lanes separated from vehicles with a concrete barrier (like on Franklin/Mississippi bridge)
 - Larger “landing areas” at ends of bridges--with curb bump-outs
 - ADA compliant curb ramps
- If Riverside and 25th Avenue bridges are not rebuilt in the very near future
 - Add curb bump-outs added at both ends of both bridges
 - ADA compliant curb ramps
 - Stripped southbound traffic lane with bike lane on 25th Avenue bridge
- Protected two-way bike lane on east side of 20th Avenue bridge and 20th Avenue to Franklin. (Planned)
- Change alignment of I 94 on ramp at Cedar Avenue underpass to improve pedestrian visibility
- Major changes to improve pedestrian safety and experience using the Cedar Avenue underpass.

22nd Street from Hiawatha LRT trail to 23rd Avenue

22nd Street and Minnehaha Avenue 2

- Curb bump-outs on east side to prevent parking at crosswalk
- Stop signs on Minnehaha Avenue
- Permanent signs on Minnehaha directing northbound traffic to Cedar (Previous)

21st, 22nd and 23rd Avenues at 22nd Street

- Turn stop signs to force avenues to stop at these tee intersections (like at 27th Street and 29th Avenue (Previous)
- At 22nd and 21st Avenue, Curb bump-outs on west side to prevent parking at crosswalk.
- Permanently reroute 21st Avenue to make a 90 degree intersection with Minnehaha Avenue (Previous)

22nd Street between 21st Ave and Hiawatha LRT trail

- Wider path and curb ramps through Normanna Triangle for bikes and peds (Previous)
- Wider combined bike/ped path south of 22nd Street between Minnehaha and Hiawatha LRT trail

26th Avenue

- See Franklin Avenue section for 26th and Franklin Intersection
- Remove center yellow stripe

25th/26th Avenue “S” curve.

- Single lane southbound traffic on 25th/26th Avenue “S” curve with buffered or protected bike lane (Two lanes with right lane right turn only at Franklin) (RCN)
- Pedestrian crossing with wider median “safe refuge” curb--cuts, and flashing warning light at mid-block from Seward Towers West to Triangle Park (RCN)

22nd Street and 26th Avenue

- Curb bump-outs to reduce wide turns and improve pedestrian and bike visibility (including into 22nd Street) (temporary or permanent).
- Painted crosswalks

24nd Street and 26th Avenue

- Curb bump-outs to improve pedestrian and bike visibility (including into 24nd Street) (temporary or permanent)
- Painted crosswalks

25th and 26th Streets at 26th Avenue

- Replace traffic signals with four-way stop signs
- Curb bumpouts

27th Avenue

- See Franklin Avenue section for 27th and Franklin Intersection
- Remove center yellow stripe

22nd Street and 27th Avenue

- More curb bump-outs (including into 22nd Street)
- Painted crosswalks

24nd Street and 27th Avenue

- More curb bump-outs (including into 24th Street)
- Painted crosswalks

29th Avenue

- No parking from Franklin to the alley just south of Franklin to improve visibility
- Traffic diverter at either 22nd Street or 24th Street to reduce traffic using 29th Avenue as route between Franklin and 25th or 26th Avenues. (previous)

26th Street at 29th Avenue

- Signs warning drivers to watch for pedestrians and bicycles at stop signs

31st Avenue at 25th Street

- Replace traffic light with 4-way stop sign
- Remove center yellow stripe
- Some way to slow traffic down on 31st Avenue, especially at 26th Street

West River Parkway

- Painted crosswalks on West River Parkway at all intersections
- Stop signs at 24th Street and West River Parkway
- Add stop signs at each street that intersects West River Parkway to make it a slower route and less inviting as a commuter route (e.g. ramps to Lake Street, 4th Avenue by the University, 32nd and 26th Streets)
- Pilot for one summer of closing the River Parkways to cars on weekends

Greenway

26th Avenue at Greenway

- Stop sign on 26th Avenue (Previous)
- Curb bump-outs at Greenway
- Remove one section of fence on each side of 26th Avenue to improve visibility (Previous)

27th Avenue at Greenway

- Stop sign on 27th Avenue (Previous)
- Curb bump-outs at Greenway
- Remove one section of fence on each side of 26th Avenue to improve visibility (Previous)

30th Avenue at Greenway

- Stop signs on 30th at Greenway
- Consider closing 30th Avenue at Greenway to motorized traffic

Education/Enforcement

Crosswalks

- Temporary signs “do you know pedestrians have the right-of-way here” at problem crossings.
- Temporary signs “Turning vehicles must yield to pedestrians and bicycles” at problem intersections
- Police enforcement of pedestrian right-of-way at problem crossings
- Enforcement of pedestrians and bicyclists not obeying signals at traffic light intersections
- Program to make sure corners are clear of snow and ice in winters, especially for people in wheelchairs
- Enforce no right turn on red
- Enforce no parking within 20 feet of corners
- Temporary signs “The law says, no parking within 20 feet of a corner”

General

- Better enforcement of clearing sidewalks of snow and ice (planned)
- Have city responsible for clearing ice and snow on major streets in the neighborhood.
- Enforce no parking or stopping in bike lanes
- “I pledge to come to a full stop at all stop signs” campaign in Seward
- Support law requiring hands free use of phone only
- Get police to enforce no texting while driving
- Support Minneapolis Government efforts to allow it to set local speed limit at 25 MPM
- Enforce 25 MPH speed limit on River Parkway
- Reduce semi-truck parking in Seward