



Frequently Asked Questions About Traffic Diversion

What is the 1,000 vehicles per day/50 cars in peak hour and direction related to?

As part of its assessment of Neighborhood Greenways, PBOT identified a set of traffic volumes as measurements of success. 1,000 auto trips per day and/or 50 cars in peak hour and direction was established as the ideal goal for the number of cars daily using a street that families would be encouraged to use by bike. The 1,000 auto trips per day/50 cars per hour standard is about the same as cyclists being passed by a car less than once a minute.

When an existing or proposed greenway route has a car volume below 1,000 vehicles per day or 50 cars in peak hour and direction, no diversion of auto traffic will be proposed. When a proposed greenway route has more than 1,500 auto trips per day or 75 cars in peak hour and direction, diversion may be considered. If auto volumes on a proposed greenway exceed 2,000 per day or 100 cars in peak hour and direction, diversion of auto traffic shall be considered.

Will my side street see more traffic because of the project?

Many greenways are traditional through streets in a neighborhood, even though their designation is the same as the other nearby streets. The reasons one street is used more than others often involves fewer stop signs along that path, or the presence of signals at crossings of higher order roadways, both of which attract users.

Diversion on a greenway redistributes local traffic amongst the local streets so all the local streets in a neighborhood share the load more evenly, and it is expected that the total volume of through traffic in a neighborhood will go down after diversion is implemented.

Diversion along a greenway is expected to move traffic to other nearby streets. Since diversion on neighborhood greenways was adopted as part of the Neighborhood Greenways Assessment Report, a maximum threshold was established for side streets near the greenway to reduce the impact to adjacent residents.

Since 1,000 car trips per day/50 cars in peak hour and direction was the chosen ideal volume for bike use, this number is also used as the permitted maximum volume on any adjacent side street as a result of a project. This is not an increase of 1,000 cars per day, but a total post-project volume. So, if a street only has 300 current daily trips, it could see another 700. But if a street already has 800 daily trips, the available space is only 200 more daily trips. PBOT uses pre-project counts to help decide where to place diversion, preferring to place it where there is more capacity to absorb diverted drivers.

What happens if my side street ends up with more than 1,000 daily trips after the project?

PBOT takes numerous counts away from the project street to gauge the effects of the project on the nearby local streets. If a side street has a post project volume above 1,000 daily trips/50 cars in peak hour and direction, and it did not have a pre-project volume problem, PBOT will do follow-up counts to confirm the change is not random, and propose mitigation should a problem remain. The most common mitigation is adjustment of stop signs, traffic calming on the secondary street, diversion on a secondary street and modification of the primary greenway project.

How would diverter success be evaluated?

Speed and volume counts are being collected adjacent to and surrounding the proposed diverter locations. These counts are the baseline for comparing to new speed and volume counts that would be taken six months after a diverter is installed.

Success would be evaluated on the following:

1. Did diversion reduce car volumes to acceptable levels? An acceptable level means that car volumes are below 1,500 vehicles per day, with less than 75 vehicles per hour in the peak hour and peak direction. This level comes from Portland's Neighborhood Greenways Assessment Report, which set guidelines for the city's neighborhood greenways:

- Greenways should be designed, built and maintained for an average of 1,000 vehicles a day, or 50 vehicles per hour in the peak direction.
- While not ideal, a greenway can operate with an average of 1,500 vehicles per day or 75 vehicles per hour in the peak hour.
- Greenways should be improved or maintained to not exceed an average of 2,000 vehicles a day or 100 vehicles per hour in the peak travel direction.

If the diverter does not result in acceptable volume reductions, then additional or alternative diversion may be necessary.

2. Did traffic diversion create unacceptable conditions on nearby streets? Portland's Neighborhood Greenways Assessment Report also set guidelines for local service streets near neighborhood greenway traffic calming efforts. As a result of a traffic calming project on a neighborhood greenway, traffic volumes on adjacent local service streets should not exceed 1,000 cars per day or 50 cars per hour during peak demand. If a side street has post-project vehicle volumes above 1,000 daily trips or 50 cars per hour during peak demand, and it did not have a pre-project volume problem, we will do follow-up counts to confirm the change is not random and propose mitigation.

Common mitigation is adjustment of stop signs, traffic calming on the secondary street, diversion on a secondary street or modification of the primary greenway project.

Previous examples of mitigation in Portland:

- Stop signs reoriented on SE Ash at 13th, 15th, and 18th and on SE Pine at 15th, 16th and 18th south of the diagonal diverter at SE 15th and Ankeny to create a stop plan and reduce incentive to cut through the neighborhood (SE Ankeny Neighborhood Greenway).
- Speed bumps installed on SE Woodward between SE 26th and Caesar Chavez Blvd. south of the diverter at 32nd and Clinton to discourage non-local traffic use and reduce speeds (Clinton Neighborhood Greenway).
- A second diverter installed on N Mississippi at Holman to reduce diversion from Michigan at Rosa Parks Way median barrier (Michigan Ave. Neighborhood Greenway).