

Neighborhood Greenway Primer

This document is intended to provide additional information and context related to the potential treatments that can be used to implement a **Neighborhood Greenway**.

A Neighborhood Greenway is a street where the safe movement of bicyclists and pedestrians is prioritized, and the fast, through movement of vehicles is minimized. This is achieved by using different treatments to slow down drivers or discourage them from using the street as a cut through. More detail about these treatments is included below.

Neighborhood greenways are designated through the master planning process in Montgomery County. Neighborhood greenways are typically applied on residential streets to provide connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians to activity centers or other transportation facilities, like trails and transit lines.

Speed treatments are one type of tool used to slow down drivers and discourage through trips. You may be familiar with some of these treatments from other contexts. Tools to slow down drivers can include speed humps and bump-outs, along with other tools.

These speed management treatments can be further broken down into a few categories:

- Vertical deflection – These are treatments that require drivers to go up and back down. *Speed humps* are the best example of this treatment. Going too fast over vertical deflection is uncomfortable for drivers and passengers and this encourages drivers to slow down. *Speed cushions* are a similar treatment, but are placed so that the wider wheel-base of an emergency vehicle allows them to avoid the vertical deflection.



speed hump



speed cushions



speed table

- Horizontal deflection – These treatments require drivers to turn their steering wheel to navigate around objects. Because they have to turn, drivers have to slow down. Examples include *chicanes*, *splitters*, and *mini-roundabouts*. Mini-roundabouts are an intersection treatment that requires drivers on the neighborhood greenway and the cross street to slow down to navigate the crossing.

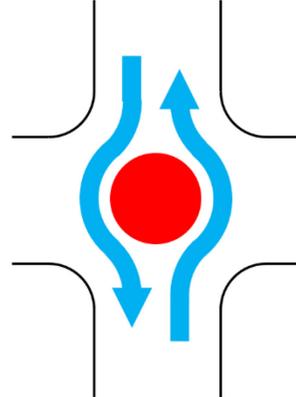
Horizontal deflection



splitter



chicane



mini-roundabout



splitter



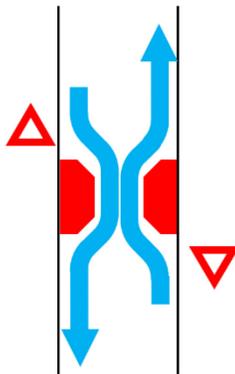
chicane



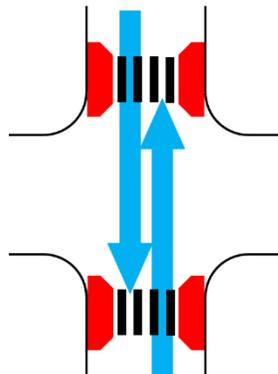
mini-roundabout

- Roadway narrowing – The final category makes the road narrower, which encourages drivers to slow down because they have less operating space and they don't want to hit obstacles on the edge of the travel lane. You may be familiar with *bump-outs*, which are a common treatment at intersections to reduce the roadway width. An example in a mid-block area is a *choker*.

Roadway narrowing



choker



bump-out



choker



bump-outs

Volume management or diversionary treatments are the other primary tool in making neighborhood greenways function. These treatments are designed to force drivers to take a different route.

Diversionary treatments (called this because they divert drivers) can either be “soft” or “hard”.

Soft treatments are regulatory only. Meaning that a sign might be posted banning turns or barring entry during certain hours. These signs can be disregarded by drivers (at the risk of getting a ticket), which is why they’re considered “soft”.

The temporary “shared street” on Grove Street implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic is another example of a soft diversionary treatment.



“soft” entry restriction



temp. shared street – “soft” diversionary treatments



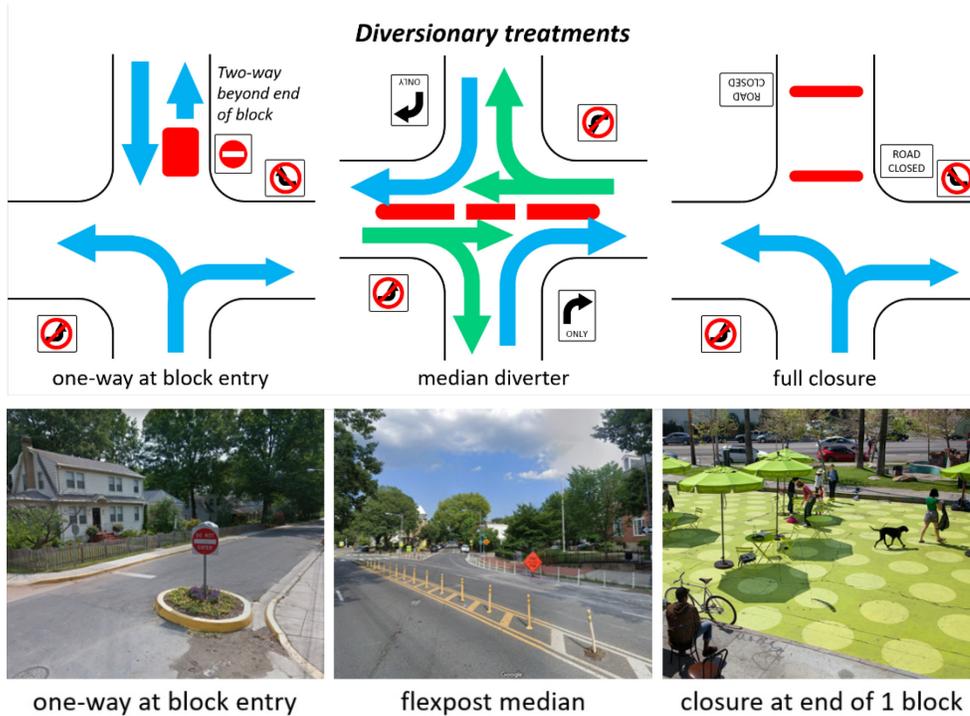
Hard treatments are physical barriers restricting access or movement. They force drivers to divert. These diverters can use concrete curbs, planters, plastic flexposts, or other similar treatments to make it impossible for drivers to continue in or turn toward a particular direction. Some of these hard treatments can be designed so that they do not impede emergency vehicle traffic, since those vehicles have a wider wheel-base.

In neighborhood greenways, cyclists are generally exempted from the diversionary treatments, either through signage indicating that they are permitted to disregard the soft treatment or by leaving an opening in the hard treatment which they can pass through. Pedestrians are always exempted.

Some examples of hard diversionary treatments include:

- An island at one end of the block prohibiting entry, but which still allows two-way traffic for the rest of the block.

- A median along a cross street that forces all traffic on the street to turn right. Left turns are prohibited from both streets.
- A full closure of a street, either at the end of a block or in the middle of the block.



A neighborhood greenway is made up of a combination of the above treatments throughout the corridor. The specific treatments selected are based on the circumstances of each block or intersection and the surrounding streets. Community preferences are also taken into account.

The goal of these treatments is to discourage through traffic through a combination of tools to reduce speed, regulations to prohibit traffic in certain situations, or volume management measures to force drivers to take a different route. The sum of these measures makes it safer for cyclists and pedestrians on the neighborhood greenway, while maintaining access for residents and emergency vehicles.