Neighbourhood Greenways: Invisible Infrastructure for Walking and Cycling

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Summary
Some of the best walking and cycling routes in the world have few conventional pedestrian and cycle facilities. Neighbourhood greenways (aka “bicycle boulevards”) are a form of street treatment where simple measures such as lower speeds, traffic restraints, wayfinding and crossing treatments are used to create an environment that is friendly for walking and cycling. They are particularly useful for connecting people to community facilities such as schools, parks, shops and other key destinations in a neighbourhood and beyond.

Neighbourhood greenways (NGs) are a popular tool in North America (e.g. Portland and Vancouver) but have yet to catch on here in New Zealand, despite many similarities in street environment. This poster outlines what kind of features typically make up NGs and how they combine to make walk/cycle-friendly streetscapes, using examples from North America. A case study for how similar treatments could be applied in rebuilt Christchurch is also shown.

Neighbourhood Greenway (NG) treatment in eastern Christchurch, plus examples of typical treatments.

Street entrance or exit restrictions, allowing only one-way access to motor vehicles whilst providing two-way cyclist (and pedestrian) access.

Centre-flow bike lanes, to allow cyclists to travel against the flow of an otherwise one-way street.

Short sections of cycle lane or pathway may be used to provide a designated connection along a NG route (perhaps where a short length of busier road is joined, or at an offset intersection).

Worcester St - possible Neighbourhood Greenway route

Map of Christchurch

Linwood Greenway
Linwood North Sch 1 min 1 min
Torilose Street 8 min 3 min
Avon Park 11 min 4 min
Linwood North Shops 3 min 1 min
Woodham Park 6 min 2 min
St Pauls School 11 min 3 min
Bronley Park 8 min 2 min
Drury Rd

Special cycle route symbols on street (“sharrows”) to indicate general cycling use of the traffic lanes.

Benefits of Neighbourhood Greenways
- Reduced through traffic (but probably not less "foot traffic") = safer, quieter, and more pleasant environment
- Possible reduction in crime, based on more active street life
- Improved ability to cross major roads while walking or cycling
- Potential to enhance neighbourhood appearance and to increase green space through kerbs, islands
- Potential to increase property values through improved safety and liveability.
- More confidence in allowing families to safely and conveniently walk and cycle in their neighbourhood.

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Acknowledgements:
The author would like to acknowledge the University of Canterbury for their support of previous visits to North America to investigate sustainable transport options and for the time to prepare this paper and poster. Background map images courtesy of Google Inc. Cyclist logo courtesy of Cycling Auckland.

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Changing the priority of STOP or GIVE-WAY controlled intersections, so that the NG route has priority (NB. generally requires additional measures along the route to discourage motor traffic from also using the route).

Small roundabouts at intersections and central mid-block islands to slow motor traffic along a route.