



Introduction

The 1999 Delridge Neighborhood Plan recommends concentrated development at key “nodes” along Delridge Way SW. This type of development is intended to limit commercial sprawl and to foster distinct communities. One of these nodes, the Brandon Node at the intersection of SW Brandon Street and Delridge Way SW, is the primary focus of the urban design section of this report. The Delridge Library and Neighborhood Service Center are the cornerstones of the Brandon Node. Additionally, the Node supports a number of other community services and there is a significant amount of new development occurring in proximity to the intersection. However, there are few retail stores and walk-in businesses that might attract passing drivers, increase pedestrian activity, and help the Brandon Node meet its full potential as a compact neighborhood center.

Despite the lack of retail services, there have been recent developments and increasing activity in the neighborhood. In addition to new housing construction, a new mental health services building is near completion and the upcoming Puget Boulevard Commons and rejuvenated P-Patch are certain to provide more neighborhood energy and interest. At the same time, Longfellow Creek and the Legacy Trail continue to see improvements and gain popularity. Delridge’s relatively large supply of developable land means that in a short time – if not already - local demand should be able to sustain a recognizable neighborhood center.

The Brandon Node and surrounding neighborhood is evolving. As growth and change occur in the neighborhood it is important to address how urban design and strategic physical improvements can help establish a sense of place and provide a neighborhood identity in the Brandon Node. This Urban Design section is divided into five parts. Parts one through four provide specific suggestions for how elements of the Node can be improved in a manner that creates a neighborhood identity and facilitates increased community activity. Part five integrates the previous four parts to provide a complete picture of how physical improvements to the Node and surrounding streets can better serve the needs of the Delridge community.

Part 1: The Art Loop @ Brandon

The Art Loop @ Brandon strives to build identity at the Brandon Node through a symbolic loop of community-based art and the development of key gateways. This concept highlights the importance of reusing local materials for retaining the “authenticity” of Delridge and providing visual interest.

Part 2: Sharing Delridge Way

Sharing Delridge Way provides recommendations on how to encourage the transformation of the neighborhood's primary corridor, Delridge Way SW, into a shared space that accommodates traffic while encouraging pedestrian activity. This part considers various street design improvements, their costs, and feasibility in Delridge.

Part 3: The East-West Connection

The East-West Connection considers design elements that invite people, particularly pedestrians and cyclists, from Delridge Way into the neighborhood, Longfellow Creek, and other destinations.

Part 4: Wayfinding

Wayfinding provides a look at how people from inside and outside the neighborhood know where they are and how they move around, as well as suggests priorities for wayfinding improvements that emphasize community involvement.

Part 5: Seeing the Present & Future

Seeing the Present & Future offers digital models of the neighborhood that integrate many of the suggestions discussed in the previous four parts. Plus, Part Five provides a vision of what the neighborhood could look like with continued development and construction according to current zoning and other scenarios.

2. The Loop @ Brandon

2.1 Current Conditions & Issues

Having recently absorbed a dramatic amount of residential growth – which is expected only to continue - Delridge and the Brandon Node are faced with an increasing number of new residents and a significantly altered landscape. In addition, there are several physical aspects of the neighborhood that present obstacles towards building a shared sense of identity and social ties within the area:

- Delridge Way SW is a heavily trafficked arterial that bisects the community
- A lack of commercial activity limits public gathering places and casual interaction
- Steep slopes and sensitive natural areas tend to separate neighbors from each other
- The name Delridge is a somewhat recent concept for a community that has historically been composed of several smaller neighborhoods
- The school at the Louisa Boren building changes every few years and most students do not live in the area

These internal divisions or disconnections within Delridge can be problematic for several reasons. Without a common understanding or mutual respect for what Delridge means to one another, it will be difficult to evaluate the rapid changes that are taking place. Particularly with the potential for rising housing costs displacing residents and businesses, perception is also very important. Long-time residents may feel threatened if the neighborhood characteristics they value are disappearing and the faces they see are unfamiliar. Alternatively, these residents may welcome the increased patronage, safety, or park enhancements sparked by a more active neighborhood.

A loop would collect and connect to nearby trails, helping to organize the network and invite detours into the Brandon Node

Despite some obstacles the area around the Brandon Node has many great qualities that make it a unique and attractive neighborhood center:

- It is a uniquely diverse community with strong working class roots
- It paradoxically balances an urban, blue-color history with an almost rural charm
- The access to, and the amount and quality of trails and greenspace are impressive even by Seattle standards

Building community and identity at the Node should focus on the area's existing strengths

and seek to unify and heal divisions. Working with a diverse set of people during a period of great transition, an effective design strategy must therefore be inclusive, versatile, and have an element of timelessness. And as we begin to realize a true place at the intersection of SW Brandon Street and Delridge Way SW, it would also be quite helpful to replace the dubious plannerspeak of “node” and turn it into something more comfortable and usable on the ground.

2.2 A Community-Based Art and Pedestrian Loop

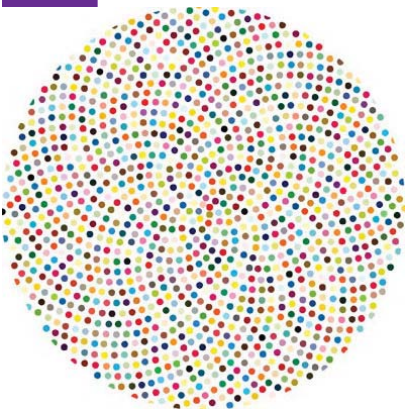
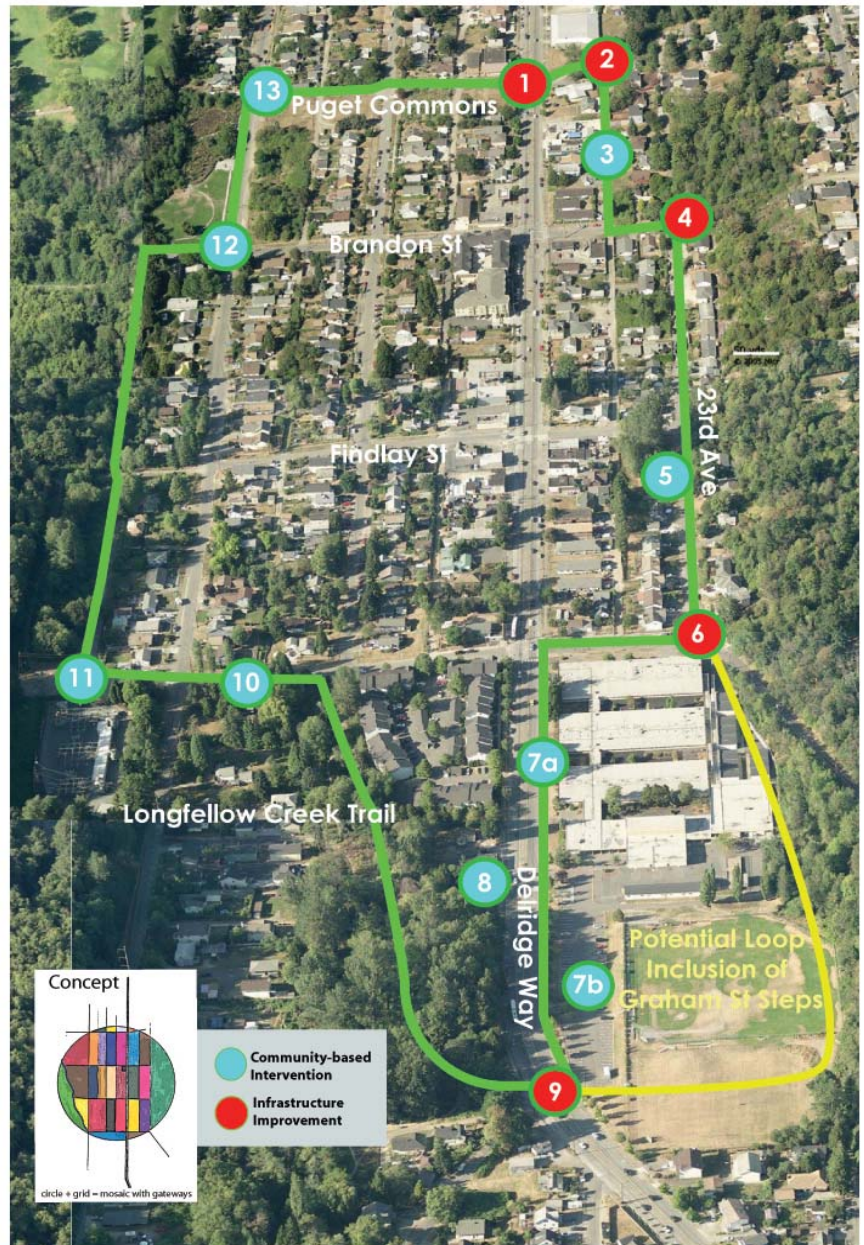


Figure 5.1: Successful urban design concepts often reflect the character and desires of a community and help to organize activity within it.

Powerful in its simplicity yet with multiple meanings, developing a defined circle – or LOOP – of points of interest in the neighborhood provides an opportunity to build identity and community in Delridge:

- A loop would collect and connect to nearby trails, helping to organize the network and invite detours into the Brandon area
- Spatially, many of the current points of interest and opportunity areas are either centered at the intersection of Brandon and Delridge Way (the library complex) or are scattered at the area’s edges (the Puget Commons, Legacy Trail, Boren School, and potential Brandon hillclimb and Puget Trail connection). The geometry of the circle would focus attention simultaneously at these places.
- Integrating the Loop concept with the linear street and alley network produces a series of gateways. What were once linear experiences of undefined lengths become distinct sensations of entering and exiting, of being ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ a place.
- The circle is inclusive: it represents wholeness, unity, peacefulness; it is edgeless
- The circle is versatile: as a point it is concentrated, individual; as a circle it groups whatever is within its perimeter; it has many meanings to many cultures and is present everywhere
- The circle is timeless: old as the sun and the moon, it alludes to the natural cycle of the seasons and is a reminder that all things are constantly in a process of change and regeneration.



- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Puget Blvd Gateway 2. Puget Trail connection 3. Art in the alley 4. Brandon St. Hillclimb 5. Public utilities substation and 'mini-park' 6. Croft Place Gateway 7. Boren/Cleveland mural potential | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Remove dangerous structure/trash;enliven trail connection to Longfellow Creek 9. Graham St Gateway and trail connection 10. Vacant home/SPU property and art potential 11. Public utilities substation - art potential 12. Brandon St. traffic circle 13. 26th Ave Gateway/Legacy Trail/Puget Blvd |
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Figure 5.2: The Loop @ Brandon. Approximately 3 miles in circumference, the pedestrian-oriented Loop is a framework for community-building interventions and a catalyst for improving the pedestrian experience.

2.3 Art

Along the Loop a set of interventions should be used to help articulate its perimeter, undertake small- and large-scale improvements, and foster neighborhood interaction and inclusion.



Figure 5.3: Mosaics and other community-based art projects can be affixed to walls or inlaid in the ground. Here we see a wall mosaic in West Seattle and a street mosaic project connecting two business districts in New Zealand.

One of the most popular and successful means of enhancing blighted or ‘dead’ spaces in a community is by employing grassroots art – especially murals. In searching for a good example, Delridge does not need to look very far: In the late 1980’s, West Seattle painted 11 historical murals near California Ave as a means of “lending grace” and building local image. Dozens of communities from Philadelphia and San Francisco to smaller dusty Western towns have become known for their murals, which often utilize

youth and community participation to describe local histories, celebrate self-expression, and promote the arts. Two related building/art forms – mosaics and tiling – are also fun and relatively easy creations, and their varied colors and composition work well to represent diversity and stimulate visual interest.

With the recent opening and instant popularity of the Youngstown/Cooper Cultural Center, and with the Louisa Boren School and South Seattle Community College close at hand, the resources and talent surely exist to develop a coordinated program for



Figure 5.4: A mural in West Seattle depicting the business district at the Junction in 1918.

an Art Loop @ Brandon. Integrated with the existing pieces along the Longfellow Creek Legacy Trail, art or creative intervention at key spaces within the Loop would serve to build a localized and meaningful sense of place and provide manageable community-building projects.

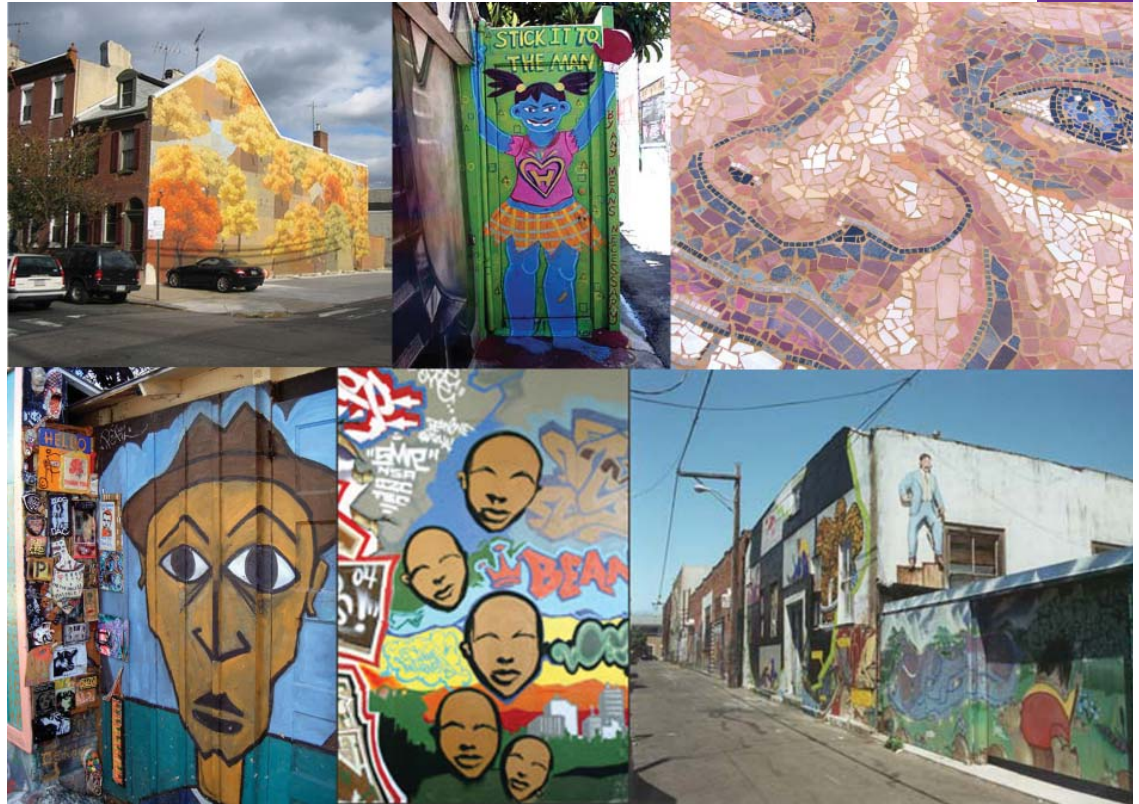


Figure 5.5:
Murals in Philadelphia and San Francisco have been particularly successful as a neighborhood identity and cultural/historical retention strategy. Such highly visible and inexpensive improvements are often helpful forums for marginalized groups (such as minorities and students).

2.4 Materials Matter

In the comprehensive and sustainable approach to redeveloping the nearby High Point housing community, developers carefully salvaged pieces of the housing stock they were replacing. In addition to reducing the amount of new materials used in the process (and thus the overall environmental footprint), as well as providing a physical link to the past, the process yielded economic benefits – the old-growth wood beams they recovered would have been unthinkable expensive to purchase today. With a similar approach to sustainability and a vast need to preserve its historic elements, Delridge should borrow and expand upon the efforts of its neighbors on the hill.

An ever-growing body of literature concerned with community-based planning and preservation has focused on how and if collective memories of neighborhoods are physically represented and displayed. This is especially important for a neighborhood experiencing rapid development and demographic change. This body of work is focused on the notion that a memory and all its associations are made more vivid, its substance presumed to be more valuable and respected, if it has a spatial quality – an attached physical experience. It is part of the rationale that led to preserving many details of the Youngstown/Cooper School after redevelopment, and it could be used in combination with the Art Loop, environmental policy goals, and concerns over gentrification to place a premium on preserving the authentic “fabric” and local materials of Delridge.



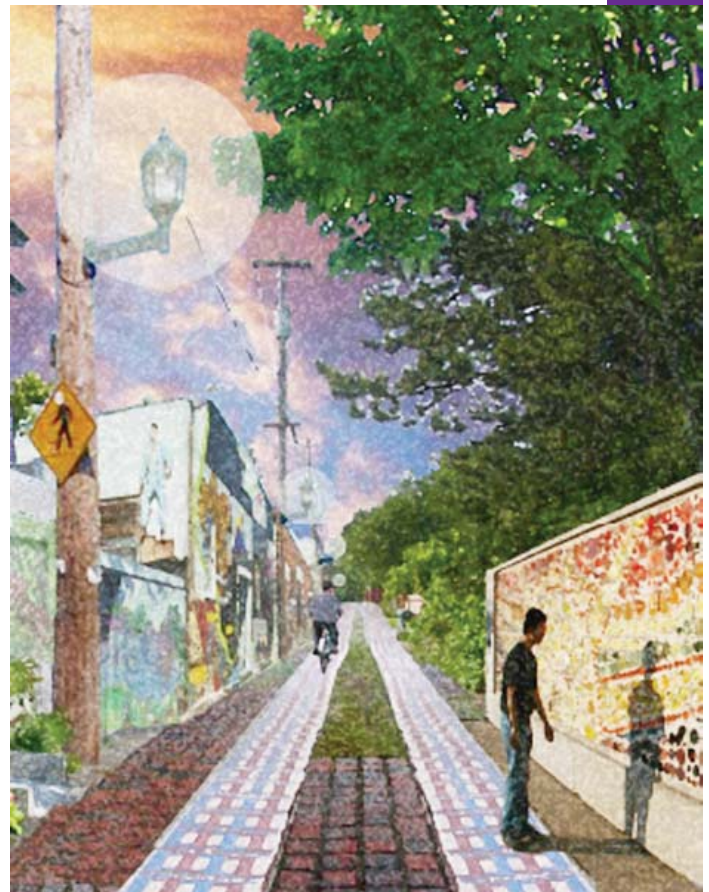
Figure 5.6:

A fence in the Central District near 23rd Ave E. reminds passersby of its many layers of history and adds local authenticity. Another wall near Capitol Hill “just seems to fit” as it reflects the local cobblestone streets and hilly terrain.

2.5 Key Recommendations for Building Neighborhood Identity and the Loop @ Brandon

- New development and infrastructure improvements should strive as much as possible to salvage and reuse local materials. Brick, stone, colored glass, wood beams, and detailing should be used creatively and artistically to enhance buildings and landscaping along the designated Loop.
- Seek detail, rich texture and color variation on large, visible exterior surfaces. Where appropriate, such as in the alleys and at Puget Boulevard, reused brick, slate or tile should be employed rather than asphalt. Colorful murals, mosaics, and salvaged or natural materials should be considered on large blank walls and fences, if possible.
- Focus major infrastructure improvements along Delridge Way and Brandon St, while utilizing the Loop for smaller, community-based interventions. The major exceptions are where the two meet, which should be viewed as gateways: the potential hillclimb connection on Brandon St. between 21st and 23rd, the Puget Boulevard crosswalk, and eventually the redevelopment of the Boren School property.

- Coordinate with SSCC, the Youngstown/Cooper Cultural Center, and Cleveland High School/ Louisa Boren School to provide artists and art supplies. Especially look for opportunities to include Louis Boren students – such as with a mural, wall of remembrance, or time capsule – that signifies their time in Delridge and increases ties to the neighborhood.
- Include circular elements in landscaping, architectural detail, and signage – especially along Delridge Way SW – that reinforce the image and symbolism of the Loop. Examples include circular benches that invite conversation, raised circular tree wells that provide seating, and perhaps a clock at Brandon St.



Figures 5.7 and 5.8:

An existing house and alley along the Loop at Brandon St. between Delridge Way and 23rd Ave SW. The recent housing activity and potential redevelopment sites of the area between Brandon St. and Puget Boulevard east of Delridge Way make it a relatively safe location and full of opportunity. Incorporating small improvements such as lighting, art and the reuse of materials, what is an uninviting alley becomes a vibrant display of community and a point of interest. Located at SW Brandon St between the alley and 23rd Ave, this single family house up for sale (and perhaps demolition) could provide brick and other materials to be used in the alley.

3. Sharing Delridge Way

3.1 Current Conditions and Issues

Delridge Way SW, as one of the few north/south through routes in the area, serves as a primary arterial for through traffic between the West Seattle Bridge and neighborhoods south of Delridge; the auto oriented conditions along the street reflect this. As a result, the Delridge Way SW is lost to residents of the neighborhood. Some of the physical attributes of Delridge Way SW facilitate its current function as a neighborhood divider. Traffic lanes, though only two, are wide; curb radii are large; and few traffic calming measures exist. This, of course, leads to faster speeds on Delridge Way SW, detracting from the pedestrian environment.

Upon entering the Brandon Node, the designated center of the neighborhood, the nature of the street does not vary. There are few signals to suggest to drivers that they have entered a neighborhood center. Similarly, there is no commercial activity, or obvious attractions. In lieu of this, it is not surprising that users of the road continue through the Node as they would any other section of the street, at the same speed and with the same intent to “get where they are going.”

To make matters worse for pedestrians who walk along Delridge Way SW pedestrian facilities, convenient and safe crossings and crosswalks, and lighting are either non-existent or severely lacking. These attributes are not only essential to the improvement of the pedestrian environment, but serve to signal the potential presence of pedestrians to motorists.

3.2 Recommendations for Street Design

There is a range of well-tested street design strategies that can enhance pedestrian safety and attractiveness and are acceptable for use on an arterial such as Delridge Way SW. The neighborhood plan suggests one such approach, with side bike lanes and crossing amenities, but there are more options that should be considered that allow an incremental approach. Some of them are easily and inexpensively implemented, providing immediate visual and functional improvement to the streetscape. Others are more extensive street improvements that will significantly alter traffic flow and improve the pedestrian experience along Delridge Way SW.

The remainder of this section covers the near-term and less expensive options in Part 3.3 and the more capital-intensive options in Part 3.4. This section’s long-term recommendation is to adopt either a boulevard or center median design for the portion of Delridge Way SW that passes through the Delridge Node from approximately Puget Boulevard on the north to approximately SW Juneau Street on the south. The boulevard design approach dedicates the center portion of the street to through traffic while greatly enhancing the multi-use nature

of the street on each side. The center median design adds more space for landscaping and reduces the effective width of the street.

3.3 Short-Term & Relatively Inexpensive Strategies

Marked Crosswalks and Enhancements

Marked crosswalks are used to indicate a preferred location to cross and inform motorists of the pedestrian right-of-way. Various patterns of crosswalk types are shown in Figure 5.9. In order to greatly increase the quality of an intersection crossing, they can be raised and supplemented with other measures (such as curb extensions), especially at uncontrolled intersections. Because pedestrians are sensitive to distances, marked crossings should be convenient in their separations.

Advanced Stop Lines

A painted line up to 30 feet from the crosswalk, indicating the area for drivers to stop, improves the safety and visibility of pedestrians by ensuring that motorists do not encroach into the crosswalk and do not block the view of crossing pedestrians for other lanes of travel. Using a “Stop Here For Pedestrians” sign alone can reduce conflicts between drivers and pedestrians by 60 percent and with the addition of an advanced stop line¹, conflicts have been reduced by 90 percent compared to base levels².

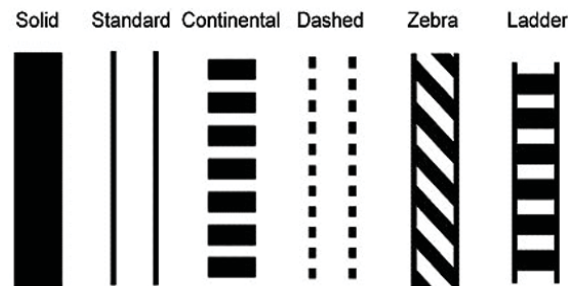


Figure 5.9: Crosswalk markings



Figure 5.10: Advanced Stop Lines

Speed-Monitoring Trailer and Police Enforcement

These devices display the speed of passing vehicles in order to increase compliance with the speed limit. This measure should not be substituted for permanent measures, such as traffic-calming treatment.

Driver/Pedestrian Education

Educate both pedestrians and drivers of current laws and the effects of their behavior in order to reduce conflicts. Campaigns targeted for specific populations—motorists, children, etc—are aimed at changing their behavior patterns and tend to be ongoing efforts aimed at long-term results.

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1 Bennett, Lee. (n.d.). Birds Eye View of UTM Campus [WWW page]. URL <http://www.utm.edu/staff/leeb/utm.htm>

2 See Van Houten, Ron and J.E. Louis Malenfant, Canadian Research on Pedestrian Safety, Report No. FHWA/RD-99/090, Federal Highway Administration, Washington, DC, 1999

Transit Stop Improvements

These improvements include: adequate signing, lighting, a shelter with seating, trash receptacles and bicycle parking. See figures 5.11 and 5.12. With the Transit Now! ballot initiative in November of 2006 and the success of route consolidation into the Route 120, there may be a possibility to get King County Metro to install shelters at main stops that do not currently have them: Southbound on Delridge Way SW at Brandon St and Southbound on Delridge Way SW at Graham St.



Figure 5.11: Bus Shelter. *Making Streets that Work*, City of Seattle, 1996.

Roadway Lighting Improvements

This measure can increase pedestrian comfort, safety, and security. Further, it can add to the ambiance of a street.

Street Furniture

Street furniture, such as benches, murals in bus shelters, and water fountains can enhance the quality of walking environments, though an unobstructed path for pedestrian travel should remain after installation.

Landscaping:

Landscaping situated between traffic and pedestrians can improve pedestrian comfort by increasing lateral separation and absorbing some of the sound created by moving traffic, thereby reducing the visual width of the roadway (and reducing vehicle speeds). Funding for landscaping in the right-of-way is often surprisingly easy to come by. For example, there are tree funds from the City of Seattle and “Wild Places in City Spaces” from King County. In addition, the monies are flexible. The initial investment is paid by the neighborhood, business groups, or municipalities while homeowners associations, neighborhood residents, or businesses agree to provide maintenance.

Right-Turn-on-Red Restrictions

Restricting right-turn-on-red movements protects pedestrians from motorists only looking for traffic approaching from their left and unaware of potential pedestrians approaching from their right; motorists who pull into the crosswalk to wait for a gap in traffic and block pedestrian crossing; and motorists who do not stop at all. A side effect is that there may be higher right-turn-on-green conflicts when turning motorists and crossing pedestrians begin their movements at the same time—leading pedestrian interval or exclusive pedestrian signals (explained below) can address this issue.

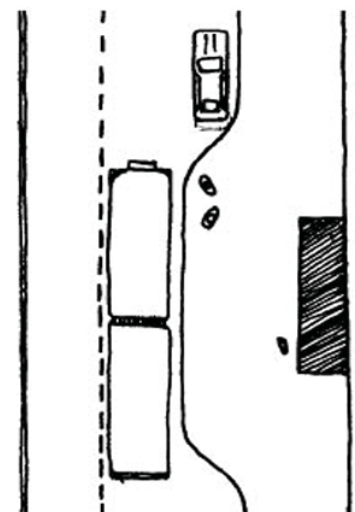


Figure 5.12: Bus bulb.

Traffic Signals and Timing Signals for Pedestrians

A variety of enhancements to traffic signals that can benefit pedestrians and bicyclists are available including: automatic pedestrian detectors, signals placed so that waiting motorists can not anticipate the green light, and installing countdown signals. Detectors (shown in Figure 5.14)³ can increase signal compliance and reduce pedestrian conflicts with motor vehicles. They can also be used to extend the crossing time for slower pedestrians.

Countdown signals provide pedestrians with information about the amount of time remaining in a crossing interval and have been associated with fewer pedestrians remaining in the crosswalk when conflicting traffic receives a green signal⁴. Reducing cycle lengths and increasing walk intervals provide improved street crossing situations for pedestrians by decreasing wait times and providing ample time to cross an intersection. Exclusive signals, which stop traffic in all directions, have been shown to reduce pedestrian crashes by 50 percent⁵ though often result in a longer wait time and, as a result, increase the likelihood of signal noncompliance⁶. Leading Pedestrian Interval signal timing gives an advance walk signal before motorists get a green light. This allows pedestrians to begin their crossing before motorists begin to turn, thus, increasing yield rates exhibited by motorists and reducing conflicts for pedestrians⁷.



Figure 5.13: Curbside Plantings

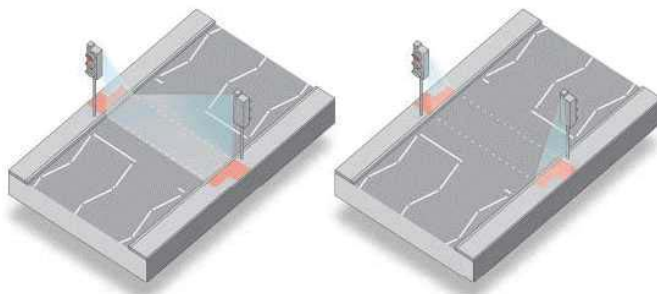


Figure 5.14: Pedestrian Detector

Bicycle Lanes

Used to indicate exclusive space for bicycle travel and providing separation between bicyclists and passing motorists, bicycle lanes can also benefit pedestrians by slowing turning motorists and adding lateral separation between traffic lanes and the sidewalk. However, bike lanes may adversely affect motorist behavior by increasing the effective

3 UK Department of Transport. (n.d.). The installation of Puffin pedestrian crossings. URL http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/page/dft_roads_504745-01.hcsp

4 San Francisco Pedestrian Countdown Signals: Preliminary Evaluation Summary.(9/13/2001) A Report Prepared by DKS Associates for the San Francisco Department of Parking and Traffic.

5 Zegeer, C.V., K.S. Opiela, and M.J. Cynecki. (1983) Pedestrian Signalization Alternatives, Report No. FHWA/RD-83-102, Federal Highway Safety Administration, Washington, DC.

6 Van Houten, Ron et al. (1997) Field Evaluation of a Leading Pedestrian Interval Signal Phase at Three Urban Intersections, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Arlington, VA.

7 Van Houten, Ron et al.. (1998) Use of Animation in LED Pedestrian Signals to Improve Pedestrian Safety, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Arlington, VA.

street width if they are unused. These facilities have been shown to be enhanced in Portland, Oregon by using colored pavement (blue or red surfaces in most cases) ⁸. Depending on whether space is available and sufficient connections from the roadway exist, a multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists to share, separated from motor vehicle traffic, can be provided instead.



Figure 5.15: Example of Bike Lanes

Curb Radius Reduction

Large trucks, especially emergency vehicles, and buses have been the culprits in designing wide turning radii. Though these vehicles should be accommodated, the extent to which it has been done may be excessive. Tightening a wide curb radius reduces turning speeds and shortens crossing distances for pedestrians (Figure 5.16).

Curb Extensions

This measure extends the sidewalk into the parking lane in order to reduce the street width. The measure improves pedestrian crossings by reducing the crossing distance, improving the ability of pedestrians and motorists to see each other, and reducing the time that pedestrians are exposed to traffic. Further, motorists are prevented from parking in or too close to an intersection and blocking the curb ramp and/or crosswalk.

Gateways

This measure involves placing a set of physical landmarks along a roadway that indicate an entrance into a lower speed center. This can include a combination of street narrowing, medians, signing, archways, roundabouts, or other features sending a clear message to motorists that they have reached a specific place and must reduce speeds. Speeds may increase shortly after passing through the gateway area and, thus, traffic-calming measures may need to be used in conjunction with gateway indicators.

Paving Treatments

Special paving materials can enhance the function and look of a street; both in the road and on the sidewalk. However, some of these materials may be unfriendly to bicyclists, pedestri-

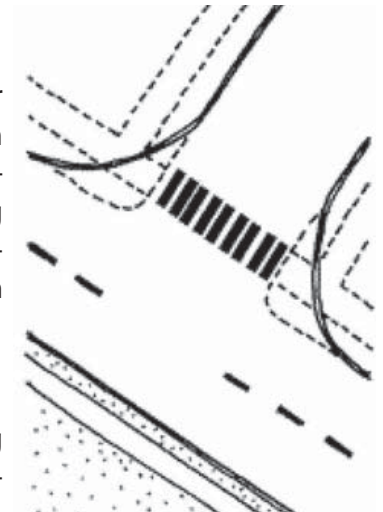


Figure 5.16: Curb Radius Reduction

⁸ Hunter, William W, David L. Harkey, J. Richard Stewart. Review of Portland's Blue Bike Lanes: Improved Safety Through Enhanced Visibility. University of North Carolina Hwy Safety Research Center.

ans, and wheelchair users and a potential tripping hazard. Instead, the pedestrian walkway material should be firm, planar, and slip-resistant. This can be simply and cheaply done with modified concrete: stamped concrete or concrete pavers. As mentioned earlier, colored paving can be used for bike lanes/pathways in order to enhance its function and limit the perceived roadway width.

3.4 Long Term Recommendations

Option A – Center Median Improvements

Crossing Islands

Raised islands in the center of the street at intersections or mid block locations protect crossing pedestrians from motor vehicles, allowing them to deal with one direction of traffic at a time. Installing these will help prepare motorists for a future center median and to garner the pedestrian benefit of protection from motor vehicle traffic without installing the entire median. Crossing islands have been demonstrated to significantly decrease the percentage of pedestrian crashes thanks to reduced conflicts, reduced vehicle speeds approaching the island, greater attention to the existence of a pedestrian crossing, and reduced exposure time for pedestrians⁹.

This measure can supplement marked crosswalks at uncontrolled locations and should be considered in pair for such intersections in the Node. Further, adding curb extensions to the set of measures can result in a highly improved pedestrian crossing.

Diverter

Diverter islands in an intersection hinder certain turning movements, in this case left-turns off of Delridge Way SW. These would be installed to prepare motorists to not have a left-turn option from Delridge Way SW when more restrictive treatments come in at later date. Easy access for pedestrians and bicyclists should be incorporated.

Raised Medians

Raised barriers in the roadway serve as a refuge for crossing pedestrians—allowing them to deal with one direction of traffic at a time—and space for more landscaping. However, the benefits to pedestrians are forgone when a turning pocket for motorists is provided at intersections since the refuge is removed where the bulk of pedestrians will be crossing. Further, this

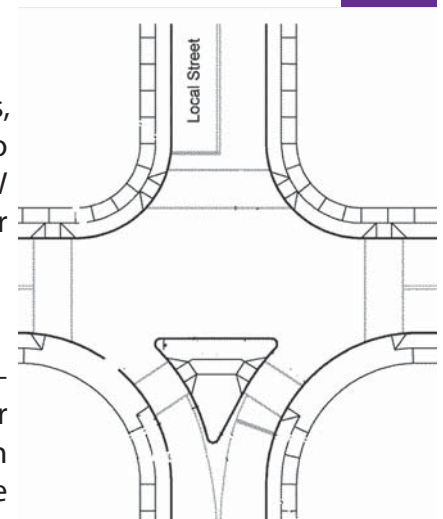


Figure 5.17: Diverter

⁹ Zegeer, C.V., J. Stuart, and H. Huang,. (1999) Safety Effects of Marked vs. Unmarked Crosswalks at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations, Federal Highway Administration, Washington, DC.



Figure 5.18: Before and after center median treatments on Delridge Way (& Brandon Street) looking south



Figure 5.19: Before and after center median treatments on Brandon Street (& Delridge Way) looking west



measure may increase traffic speeds by decreasing the perceived friction of the roadway and may inhibit emergency vehicle access. Lastly, a center median takes up valuable right-of-way space that can be used for wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or landscaping buffer strips.

Intersection Median Barriers

This measure is a raised median extending through the intersection, preventing cross-street through and left turning movements from the main street. This serves the purpose of preventing left/U-turns from blocking through traffic while not providing a turn-lane pocket in the center median, retaining the benefit of medians for crossing pedestrians. However, pedestrians and bicyclist benefit only if cuts are incorporated. Vehicle entry into and out of neighborhoods is restricted, greatly reducing cut-through traffic but inhibiting residents from easily reaching their street. Further, this can inhibit emergency vehicles from easily reaching some streets, though some designs can allow fire truck access.

Option B – Boulevard Improvements

Chokers

Chokers narrow a street by widening the sidewalks or planting strips, creating a pinch point along the street. The purpose is to begin the process of and prepare road users of the upcoming roadway narrowing associated with this option. This measure can also be used at intersections, creating a gateway effect when entering a street.

Before



After

Roadway Narrowing

By narrowing travel lanes average vehicle speeds will be reduced and pedestrian safety enhanced (Figure 5.20). The excess space can be used for bicycle lanes, extending sidewalks and landscaped areas, and adding medians.

Boulevard

This is a roadway which incorporates multiple types of streets separated by medians: an arterial or collector in the center, accommodating through traffic, and a local access road on the edges, accommodating

pick-up/drop-offs and parking. Pedestrians and bicyclists benefit by having slower moving traffic next to them as opposed to fast moving through traffic. Typically this measure is used where plenty of right-of-way exists (over 120 feet). Because Delridge Way SW is only ~80 feet wide, a slight variant on the boulevard, involving a “shared” local access road, parking, and bicyclist and pedestrian realm, could be created in order to fit the roadway (see Figures 5.21 and 5.22).

Figure 5.20: Road Narrowing (www.walkinginfo.org)

Roundabouts

The larger version of the traffic circle in place on skinny residential streets, this is a circular intersection used for arterials to eliminate many conflicts, including left turns. Left turns often require separate signal timing, increasing wait times for all users or delaying traffic when waiting to make a left turn. Traffic circles the roundabout in a counterclockwise direction and turns right onto the desired street. The benefit for vehicles is they flow and merge through the roundabout from each approaching street without having to stop unless yielding to traffic already in the roundabout or crossing pedestrians. Using splitter islands at the approaches can encourage motorists to stop for pedestrians by further slowing their entrance in the

3.5 Implementation Suggestions

intersection.

Many of the potential measures mentioned in Part 3.3 can be implemented relatively easily. Examples would be getting marked crosswalks at key intersections in the node or to put in landscaping along the street with local volunteers. Initiating a Local Improvement District (LID) or Business Improvement District (BID), where local property owners tax themselves a small percent, can help to save up money for the bigger ticket items. Though funding can be obtained for such projects through sources such as private and public grants (e.g., Robert Wood Johnson Foundation), these tend to be competitive and require a lengthy application process.

The goal of the Art Loop @ Brandon, discussed in Part 2 of this urban design section is to create a sense of place and identity for the Brandon Node. The concept of a loop as a defining metaphor encourages exploration of the neighborhood via a series of gateways. The goal of Part 3 is to look in more detail at practical pedestrian safety enhancements to the existing infrastructure and make recommendations that will help residents, trail users, and visitors to feel comfortable walking and bicycling in the Brandon node area.

Creating linkages in Delridge is not only about strict pedestrian safety in the neighborhood. An effort should be made to entice visitors and residents out of their cars to enjoy Delridge's unique characteristics. Facilitating both neighborhood navigation and highlighting neighborhood attractions demands a complex combination of way-finding and pedestrian-friendly design.



Figure 5.21: Before and after boulevard treatments on Delridge Way (& Brandon Street) looking south



Figure 5.22: Before and after boulevard treatments on Brandon Street (& Delridge Way) looking west



4.1 Current Conditions and Issues

Research suggests that pedestrians walking to work or running errands find distances over about 0.25 miles (5 minutes) to be a barrier¹⁰. In Figure 5.23, the line segments represent various origin/destination points within the node in tenth of a mile segments. Based on the 0.25 mile calculation of acceptable walking distance, east of the Brandon Node, a walker could easily follow SW Brandon St up a future hill climb to 21st Ave NE. To the west and north, two trail access points and the P-Patch, and the future Puget Commons area are also a comfortable walking distance from the Node. Similarly, to the south of the Node, the Louisa Boren School is a viable destination using Delridge Way SW, and the Legacy trail entrance at SW Juneau St. is not much further.

Unlike Delridge Way SW, which is a major commuter route, the east-west connecting streets are residential in nature. In general, these residential streets are not thru streets. SW Brandon St is only a thru street to the west, whereas SW Juneau Street is only a thru street for physically able pedestrians by virtue of a stairway that links 21st Ave SW, at the top of the hill with the Brandon Node.

This route discontinuity is one component of the lack of east-west connectivity. Another factor contributing to the lack of connectivity is the incomplete sidewalk connections along existing east-west routes¹¹. Existing sidewalks and the width of the road pavement in relation to the road right of way are represented in Figure 5.24. The relationship between pavement width and right of way suggests ample opportunity to extend sidewalks or walkways to make pedestrian travel safe and inviting. There are further pedestrian issues associated with deficiencies in lighting, landscaping, curb-cuts and ramps, benches, drinking fountains, restrooms and signage, garbage receptacles, and bicycle parking and storage.

4. The East-West Pedestrian Connection

Despite the lack of thru connections, safety and pedestrian resources, each east-west street in proximity to the Brandon Node reveals a unique attribute of Delridge:

- Puget Boulevard SW is the site of the future Puget Boulevard Commons
- SW Brandon Street is the gateway to Legacy Trail
- SW Findlay Street is an access point to other trails in the neighborhood
- SW Juneau Street provides a hill climb up to the southeast ridge above Delridge

¹⁰ Moudon, et al 2006

¹¹ Moudon, et al, in a 1997 research paper on pedestrian and bicycle transportation, define pedestrian network connectivity as a combination of route directness and the completeness of pedestrian facilities along those routes.

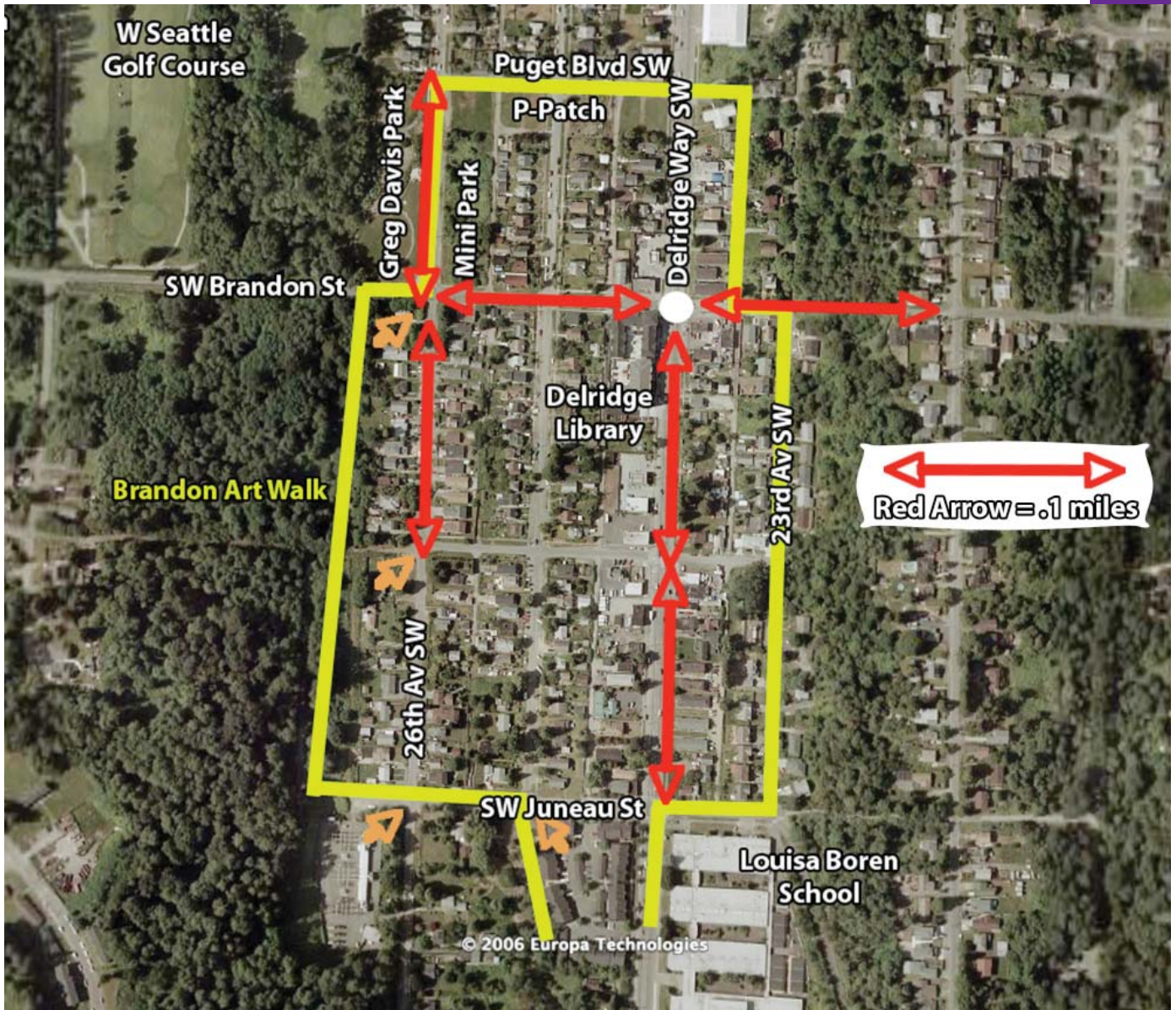


Figure 5.23: This satellite photograph of the Brandon Node shows 5-min walk segments – shows the lay of the land around a future vibrant Brandon Node, with the focus area at the intersection of SW Brandon Street and Delridge Way SW marked by a white circle within the Loop introduced earlier. Arrows show key connection points with the Legacy Trail. Source: satellite image, Google Earth.

4.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations for creating stronger east-west connections in Delridge are based on the vision expounded in the 1999 Delridge Neighborhood Plan and comments from the March 2006 Visualize Delridge community meeting. The 1999 Delridge Neighborhood Plan outlines desired improvements for residential streets around the Brandon Node.

- Expand the road pavement and shoulders, and develop a sidewalk on one side of SW Brandon St to improve roadway operating conditions and pedestrian access.
- Extend curbs, expand sidewalks, improve crosswalks, and install furnishings, street trees, signage, and artworks to create major gateway definitions on Delridge Way SW at Puget Boulevard, SW Brandon, SW Findlay, and SW Juneau Streets.
- Develop hill climb and park improvements to improve pedestrian activity and visual amenities at SW Brandon St (west and eastbound right-of-way) and SW Juneau St (eastbound right-of-way).
- Develop street improvements that feature curb/gutter/sidewalk throughout Delridge that allow residents to walk safely and comfortably throughout the neighborhood.

Similarly, community members who attended the March 2006 Visualize Delridge community meeting offered a number of suggestions for methods of improving road connectivity and neighborhood walkability.

- Extend sidewalks.
- Increase safety by generally applying principles designed both to increase numbers of pedestrians and to control vehicle numbers and speed.
- Consider the cyclist as well as the pedestrian, and the large population of children as well as the elderly.
- Plant street trees: green the urban parts of the Legacy Trail.
- Increase trash cans to help reduce trash on the streets and on the stairs (maybe as an identity element).
- Increase connectivity with neighboring communities.

General Recommendations

An effort should be made to engage the community in developing and prioritizing design goals for pedestrian-friendly east-west connectivity. The Brandon Node identity should be maintained through consistent way-finding themes discussed in more detail later in this chapter. Street design techniques should give obvious priority to non-motorized travel. There is a subtle difference between designs that carve out a safe niche for a pedestrian in an auto-dominated world, such as on Delridge Way SW, and designs that allow autos to navigate safely in a pedestrian-dominated world. Examples of approaches include keeping east-west streets visually narrow, designing broad walkways that are at street level instead of separated by curbs, or using paving or markings to cover the full width of intersections as a clue to pedestrian right of way.

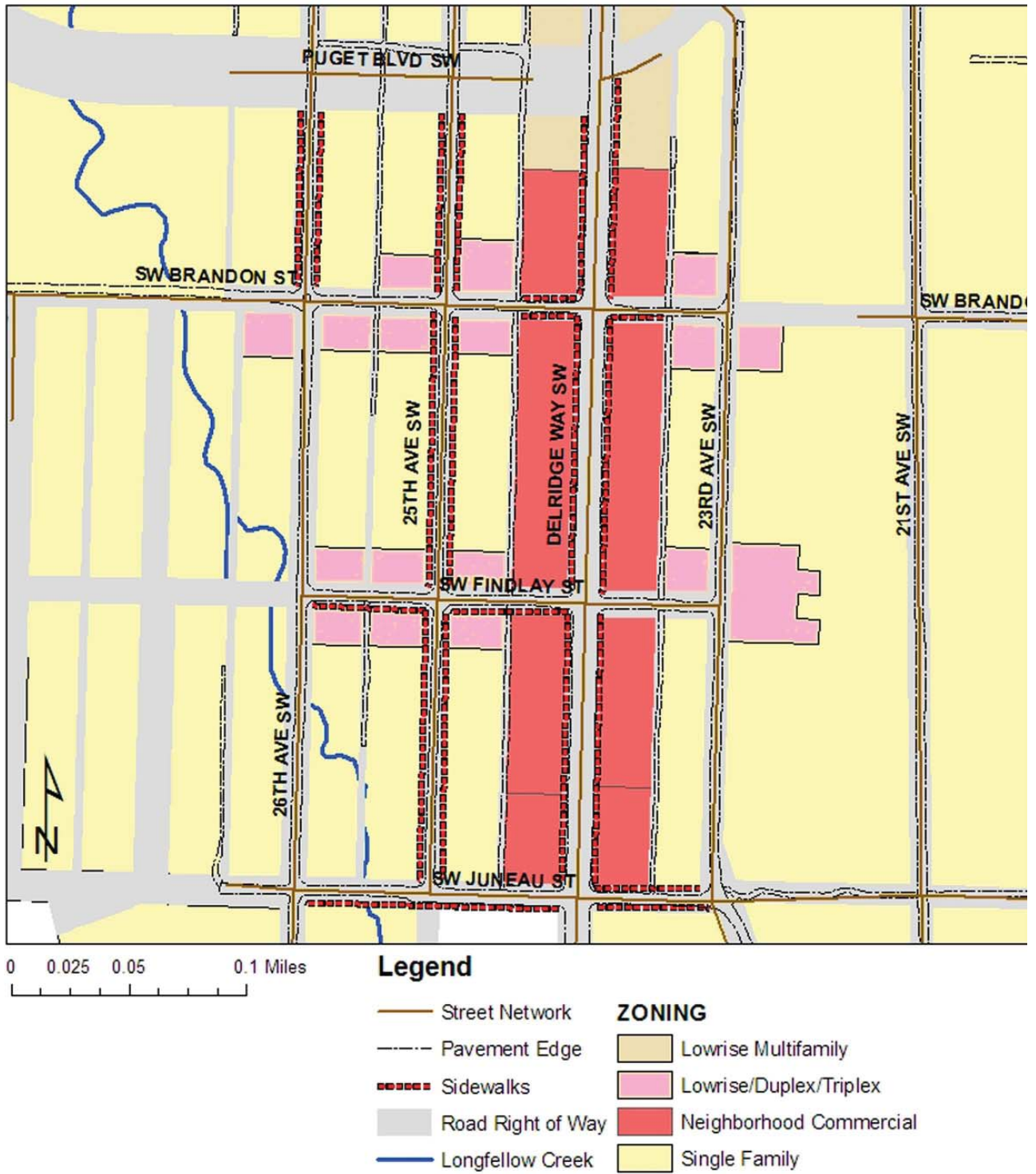


Figure 5.24:
Brandon Node area zoning and streets

Care must be taken that traffic-calming measures on Delridge Way SW do not cause traffic to spill over onto the other north-south side streets. In general, the north-south side streets in this area are effectively one-lane streets when cars are parked on both sides. This could become a safety hazard if traffic increases along these routes, but could also be capitalized on to emphasize the pedestrian priority. Street design should anticipate future use of SW Brandon Street to access points west and of SW Juneau Street to access points east as growth occurs, in order that priority uses continue to be safe and inviting for local users. The community may want to pursue designating one or more of the residential streets as a neighborhood green street in the next update to the Neighborhood Plan. This is one of eight Street Types allowed for in Seattle's Transportation Strategic Plan [SDOT 2005] that form an overlay on the official street classifications that SDOT uses to guide investments in transportation improvements. Delridge Way SW is classified as an arterial. The other Brandon Node streets are classified as residential access. The purpose of a Street Type overlay is to guide design that supports adjacent land uses. For neighborhood green streets, the emphasis is on pedestrian amenities, street trees, and landscaping. These eight types are more fully described in the SDOT Right of Way Improvement Manual, along with Seattle maps of some of the recommended and tentatively-identified neighborhood green streets.

An effective community-building project would be to map the most often used 'origin' and 'destination' routes, e.g., those that children take to school or to the bus, or that transportation walkers take to shopping or transit. Informal paths are often clues. This exercise is similar to the one undertaken for the trail network, but its purpose would be to help set priorities for needed pedestrian infrastructure.

In order to further the community's identity as a pedestrian-friendly urban node, the community should take an advocacy role for pedestrian safety by providing materials on basic pedestrian and safety laws and distribute widely in the neighborhood.

Recommended Implementation Approaches

There is actually a state definition of sidewalk: "property between the curb lines in the lateral line of a roadway and adjacent property, set aside and intended for the use of pedestrians or such portion of private property parallel and in proximity to public highway and dedicated to use by pedestrians." [RCW 46.04.540] The WSDOT Pedestrian Facilities Guidebook [WSDOT 1997] distinguishes between sidewalks, as typically constructed of concrete and raised above the level of the road surface, and walkways, as often paved and typically built over the ground surface.

Most municipalities specify sidewalks in urban areas like Delridge. Relaxed standards are recognized on designated neighborhood green streets. Sidewalks are expensive to install, and often the simple necessities of long-term scheduling mean that interim measures may be appropriate, especially along well-used routes of travel. The following table, drawn from the WSDOT Pedestrian Facilities Guidebook [WSDOT 1997], offers some idea of the breadth of options that may be considered.

There are alternatives to a cookie-cutter approach to pedestrian facilities. Innovative approaches being explored or adopted in Seattle that are applicable here include Context-Sensitive Solutions and Seattle's Street Edge Alternatives (SEA) Project.

Context-Sensitive Solutions

Washington Department of Transportation Executive Order E 1028.00 [WSDOT 2003] establishes a new philosophy guiding the design of transportation infrastructure. Its essence is that every new project must not only be planned on its technical merits of meeting physical transportation goals, but it must also consider the "aesthetic, social, economic, and environmental values, needs, constraints and opportunities" of all stakeholders, including the community served or impacted. While it can seem initially that community goals and WSDOT design standards cannot be reconciled, several case studies provided with Context-Sensitive Solutions have demonstrated how a flexible approach can yield creative solutions that address both.

Seattle's Street Edge Alternatives (SEA) Project

This project, located in the Pipers Creek watershed in Northwest Seattle, was designed by Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to explore drainage alternatives, such as swales, that more closely mimic the natural landscape. While a technical success, the implemented techniques can be costly to maintain. However, from the perspective of residential street design in Delridge, it is interesting as a new approach to pedestrian-friendly design in areas that are sorely lacking basic pedestrian amenities. As SPU notes, they demonstrated "the design's ability to meet functional needs in a creative way," with significant deviation from standard design guidelines. As with traffic circles, however, this type of approach relies on volunteer hours from residents to maintain the extensive landscaping.

Recommended Implementation Priorities

Priority focus should be given to SW Brandon St for two reasons:

- It is the link between the Brandon Node, the Legacy Trail, and the new Puget Boulevard Commons.
- It was specifically highlighted in the 1999 Neighborhood Plan.

A second priority focus should be at Puget Boulevard, capitalizing on the Commons project. Most of the activity is occurring west of Delridge Way, but again this would be a prime opportunity to start to overcome the east-west division barriers.

Applying These Concepts—Two Illustrative Scenarios

Scenario 1: SW Brandon Street between Delridge Way and the Legacy Trail

The photos (see Figure 5.25) capture the nature of SW Brandon Street today, with abruptly ending sidewalks and a lack of a visual tie or invitation between the Legacy Trail to the west and what is envisaged to be a vibrant neighborhood center at Delridge Way.

The Neighborhood Plan and community meetings, discussed earlier, surfaced four wish list

items that are relevant for this section of SW Brandon Street: build a strong relationship between the residential neighborhoods on and adjacent to SW Brandon Street and the anticipated neighborhood commercial district; expand the road pavement and shoulders; develop street improvements that enable residents to walk safely and comfortably; and, plant street trees to green the urban parts of the Legacy Trail.

As we imagine what the street can be, we recommend the following specific priorities:

- Pursue a Neighborhood Green Street designation in the next Neighborhood Plan.
- Emphasize the pedestrian nature of the street, with pedestrian amenities, street trees, landscaping.
- Add lighting, benches, drinking fountains, signage, garbage receptacles, and bicycle parking and storage.
- Embrace relaxed standards from Delridge Way to the green space: use transitions from sidewalks to broad walkways that are at street level instead of separated by curbs.
- Calm traffic that may attempt to divert from Delridge Way: keep east-west streets visually narrow, retain the traffic circle, use paving or markings to cover the full width of intersections as a clue to pedestrian right-of-way.
- Enhance the traffic circle as a gateway to green space; lead the way with wayfinding.

It is obvious that volunteers are maintaining the landscaping in the traffic circle on SW Brandon Street. Seek additional ways to capitalize on the traffic circle as a waypoint (refer to discussion later in this chapter) to draw visitors within the street space and to the Legacy Trail.

Scenario 2: SW Brandon Street “Up the Hill”

The improvements outlined in Scenario 1 are relatively near-term priorities. Longer term, a Brandon Street hill climb would begin to knit together the now-divided east and west halves of Delridge. The photos (see Figure 5.25) capture the nature of SW Brandon Street today, with the street ending abruptly at the hill and nothing but a path worn through the bushes. This suggests people seeking links between communities will find a way.

The Neighborhood Plan and community meetings, discussed earlier, surfaced three wish list items that are relevant for this section of SW Brandon: increase connectivity with neighboring communities; develop hill climb and park improvements to improve pedestrian activity; increase trash cans to help reduce trash on the streets and on the stairs (maybe as an identity element).

As we imagine what the street can be, we recommend the following specific priorities:

- Design a hill climb that is both a transportation link and a destination.
- Provide a place to pause, catch the breath, and survey the surroundings.
- Increase safety: provide lighting, open the hill climb to the surroundings.
- Use wayfinding to invite hill climb users down into the Brandon Node.
- Mirror the existing and suggested street design from the west side of SW Brandon (prior section).

Zoning changes to allow creative terraced residential development could provide the catalyst for a design that goes beyond a utilitarian set of steps. The concept photos illustrate a bottom-of-the-hill space that is inviting for children and a stairway that is integrated seam-

lessly into the adjacent residential structures. They also illustrate a top-of-the-hill space that uses the road right-of-way. It invites hillside residents to take in the view and wander down to Delridge Way and SW Brandon for... what can you imagine?

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5. Wayfinding

5.1 Current Conditions & Issues

Wayfinding describes how people recognize their location in a place, as well as how they navigate towards their destination. Acknowledging this, the 1999 Delridge Neighborhood Plan recommends “the creation of a special series of gateway or entryway improvements into the community, as well as a pedestrian oriented environment along Delridge Way SW.” The intention of this effort is to create a sense of place in the community that alerts individuals that they are in a unique place and provides them with a means of finding their way through the neighborhood. It is important to remember that every neighborhood offers a different context for wayfinding. Something that may work in downtown Seattle may not be useful or appropriate for a more residential community like Delridge.

Part 4 provides a visual inventory of the wayfinding features around the Brandon Node. At this location there are already a variety of elements that play a part in wayfinding. Some are traditional and obvious, such as street signs, while others are more informal, like flyers on telephone poles or gas station signs that function as landmarks. In general, wayfinding in this area is aimed at two distinct groups of people: those passing by in cars and buses on Delridge Way SW and others who may be walking or biking around the neighborhood. As Delridge evolves and the Brandon Node develops into a distinct community center it will be increasingly important for residents and visitors to easily identify and locate important characteristics of the community, like Longfellow Creek’s Legacy Trail or South Seattle Com-

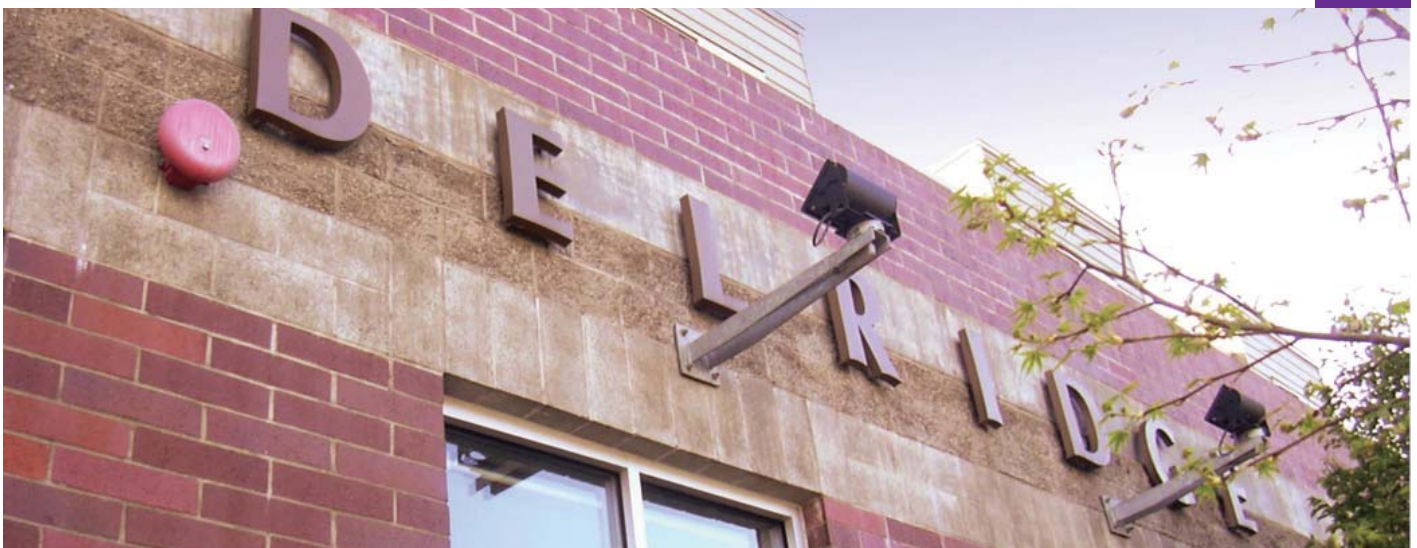


Figure 5.26: Letters on the Delridge library facade are blocked by trees for many passing motorists.

munity College.

The purpose of this section is to show not only the existing wayfinding in Delridge, but also some of the things that could be changed, improved, or added. Many are simple, such as trimming the trees that currently block the Delridge sign on the library (Figure 5.27). Others involve a little more time and money, but are still certainly achievable with some joint effort from neighbors.

5.2 Building Identifiers

In any neighborhood, buildings and their unique features are a common source of identity and a tool for navigation used by drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. Because the Delridge Library and adjacent apartment buildings are some of the newest and most prominent structures in the neighborhood they have helped to set a tone with their architectural style, building materials, and decorative features. One specific building feature that can impact neighborhood identity is the address. Figure 5.28 represents the variety of ways addresses can effectively be denoted; notice the use of local names, such as in the Long Fellow Creek apartment complex.



Figure 5.27: Various building features play a part in wayfinding, from addresses and names to artistic elements,

Because all of these building features act as wayfinding for a variety of people, they are often most effective when they are subtle yet easily recognizable. Something such as the salmon relief in Figure 5.28 may catch the eye of a pedestrian, but its size and camouflaged color may keep it unknown to someone who only ever passes it in their car.

5.3 Wayfinding along Delridge Way SW

Wayfinding along Delridge Way SW is vital because this is the main route through the neighborhood. Whether looking at official street signs or the giant letters on the Delridge Food Mart, these wayfinding devices are aimed at attracting the attention of passing vehicles. With auto-oriented wayfinding, bigger can sometimes mean better, or at least more noticeable.

Additionally, some useful information is provided directly by neighborhood residents through handmade signs and yard sales advertisements. While these may not seem like traditional wayfinding tools, signs on telephone poles and bus stops give individuals an opportunity to directly address their neighbors and visitors to the area.

While there is a multitude of informal signage in proximity to the Brandon Node, the Node lacks “official” neighborhood markings. There is no signage that concretely identifies where the Brandon Node starts or stops. Although residents may know such information intuitively, others less familiar with the areas, but wanting to take advantage of the neighborhood’s trails and open spaces would benefit from neighborhood markers.

Wayfinding on Delridge Way SW is a patchwork of signs, many of which may seem beyond the control of neighborhood residents. However, there are opportunities for effective small scale signage improvements. Potential designs for some of these improvements are represented at the end of this section (See Figure 5.31).

Longfellow Creek and the Legacy Trail are unique resources of the Delridge community. There are a variety of recently installed wayfinding tools that identify and direct people towards and along the creek and trail, ranging from an artistic metal sign and gateway to navigational posts providing distances to local landmarks.

Included in these features are a number of artistic images and symbols that serve to brand the trail as an important place in the Delridge community.

5.4 Longfellow Creek Wayfinding

Longfellow Creek signage around the Delridge Library needs better placement. Currently, many of the signs and markers shown in Figure 5.31 are not directly on Delridge Way SW, and therefore go unseen by passersby who never venture onto surrounding streets. Additional Longfellow Creek signage should be added along Delridge Way SW to notify drivers that an important neighborhood characteristic is nearby.



Figure 5.28: Wayfinding along Delridge Way includes streets signs, business signs, and even hand-made posters



Figure 5.29: Significant recent effort has been made for Longfellow Creek & Trail wayfinding. Some of it could be more effective in other locations.

Short-Term Strategies

- Provide businesses and homeowners opportunities to incorporate established motifs (salmon, flowers, etc.) and local names (Delridge, Pigeon Point, etc) using things such as window decals or address flags.
- Make the “DELRIDGE” letters on the library façade more visible by maintaining the trees in front.
- Provide neighborhood residents with an outlet for displaying local information and events (see Figure 5.31)
- Help guide library and neighborhood service center visitors to Longfellow Creek and the Legacy Trail. Consider hosting a neighborhood event to create a “Salmon Walk” by painting fish on the sidewalks along Delridge Way SW and SW Brandon Street. (see

Figure 5.32).

- Consider ways to make the metal Longfellow Creek sign more prominent, such as lighting or alternate placement.
- Create a highly visible and prominent sign along Delridge Way that announces the neighborhood (see Figure 5.33).

Figure 5.30: A community marker board could give residents a wayfinding tool that functions much like flyers on telephone poles. The location pictured here near the Library offers neighborhood surveillance to deter potential vandalism and misuse.



5.5 Recommendations

Suggested Long-Term Strategies

- Whenever possible, help ensure consistency in buildings surrounding the library, such as with color choice, and through involvement in the development process.
- Work with the City of Seattle to ensure that street and bus/transit signs are present and in good condition.
- Collaborate with current and future neighborhood businesses to keep their signs well-maintained and encourage the use of locally significant names and imagery.
- Provide destination markers along the creek and around the neighborhood that give walking times to local destinations. These types of markers could serve not only recreational walkers along the trail who might be looking for a refreshment or restroom, but also local residents who may not realize the South Seattle Community College is only a 10 minute walk away. This wayfinding consideration is important to remember if and when the neighborhood faces large-scale projects, such as stairs at SW Brandon Street or redevelopment of the Louisa Boren School site.



Figure 5.31: Other neighborhoods use sidewalk wayfinding features, such as the metal street names in downtown Seattle’s curbs. Because this type of improvement can be expensive and difficult to implement, a suggestion for Delridge is to paint a “Salmon Walk” leading from the library to the Longfellow Creek entrance on Brandon Street



Figure 5.32: Delridge can announce itself with a simple and affordable sign such as the one shown here. The placement in the Delridge Way SW median in front of the library provides high visibility, while the salmon reminds people of Longfellow Creek and the Legacy Trail.

6. Seeing the Present and Future

The images below are screen shots from a digital model representing the neighborhood surrounding the Delridge library. This model is useful for several reasons. First, it helps to understand the bigger picture by being able to visualize the neighborhood from a bird's eye perspective. Second, it offers the opportunity to tie together some of the urban design suggestions discussed in Parts 1-4 of this section. Lastly, it provides a hint at what Delridge may look like as the neighborhood grows, specifically if the area is built out to current zoning regulations.



Figure 5.33: Digital model showing the Brandon Court Apartments and Delridge Library,



Figure 5.34: Digital model showing the current view looking south on Delridge Way SW from near the library

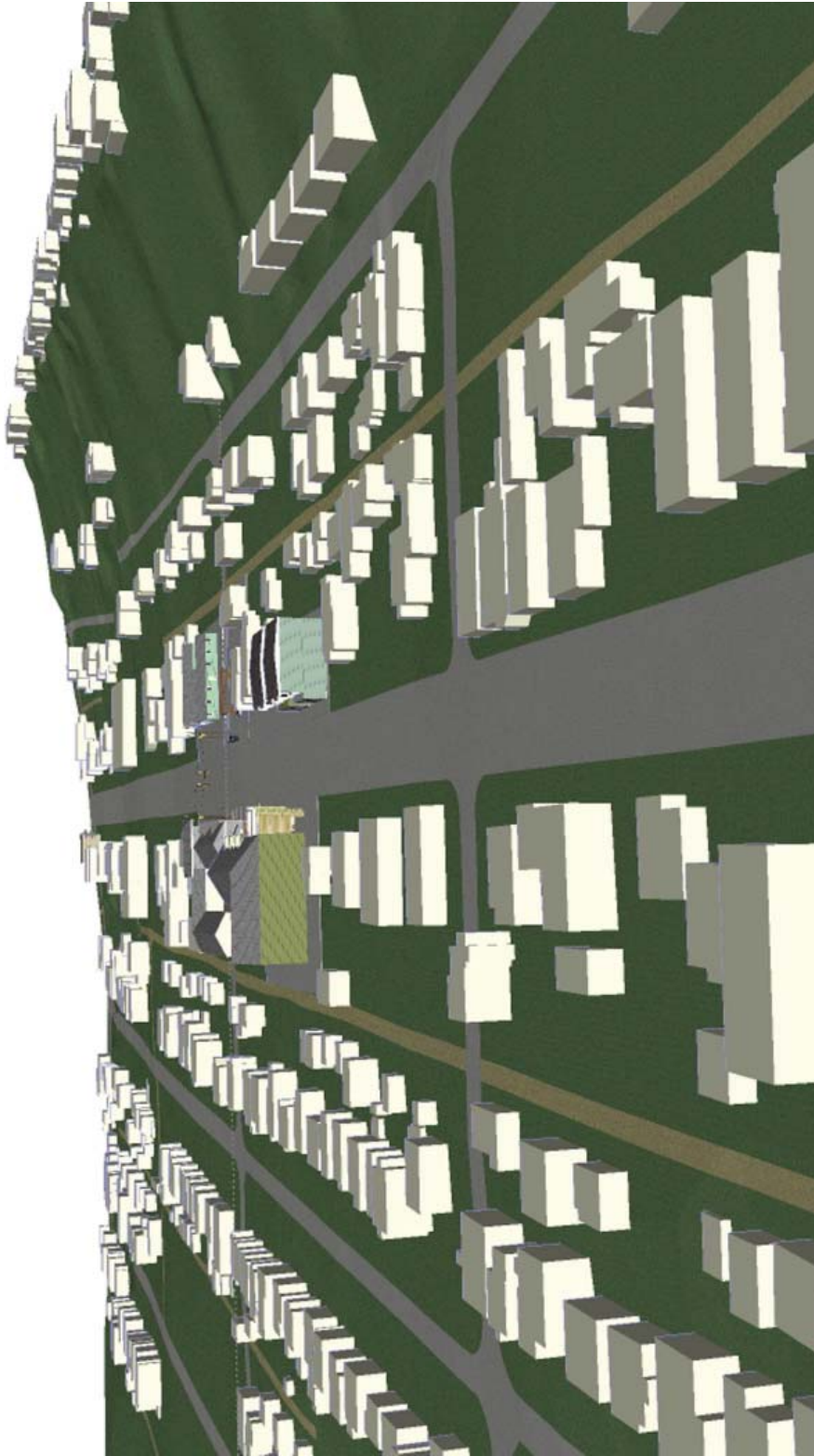


Figure 5.35: Digital model showing a bird's eye view looking north on Delridge Way SW.