

Dear PSC-

A new City program should be created to allow for a new type of structure, an Accessory Commercial Unit, on properties adjacent to Neighborhood Greenways. (or perhaps at certain nodes along Neighborhood Greenways):

Such a structure would otherwise follow the guidelines in the Accessory Residential Unit program, except that it could have a zero setback from the sidewalk line, and it would allow for commercial rather than residential uses.

If a free-standing building two stories in height, the upper story could be either residential or commercial, as long as the building footprint was in total no more than 1,000 square feet and the height no more than 25 feet.

New structures could also be built as attachments to existing homes, under regulations similar to those for attached ADUs, except allowing for extensions from the structure to project forward up to the front sidewalk line.

Such a program would support goals related to the 20-minute neighborhood and Vision Zero, allowing for bicyclists and pedestrians to access some appropriate neighborhood retail and commercial services within the low-stress context of Neighborhood Greenways.

Thus, I recommend a new study to recommend a new policy for eventual inclusion into the Comp Plan and the Zoning Code:

**Accessory Commercial Units, Especially on Neighborhood Greenways.** Encourage the development of Accessory Commercial Units, especially on Neighborhood Greenways, to promote neighborhood-scale retail and other appropriate commercial uses on corridors not traditionally known as retail destinations.

**Concern:** Currently, no change in zoning is proposed along most of the neighborhood greenways. However, with bicycle traffic shunted off of many of the City's traditional retail corridors due to a lack of sufficient bicycle infrastructure, this leads to a situation where bicycle traffic is not as exposed to the same opportunities to engage in commerce that they would if all commercial corridors had sufficient bicycle infrastructure.

One solution would be for neighborhood greenways to be rezoned, in all or at specified nodes, to allow for the new development of neighborhood-scale commercial space.

The focus would be to liberalize the zoning along neighborhood greenways to allow limited commercial uses along these bike and pedestrian corridors. Since it seems to be difficult for the City to support human-centered bicycle oriented city-scape along many major commercial corridors (SE/NE 28th Ave, Alberta Street, NE 21st & 23rd, etc.), the neighborhood greenways could evolve to become more mixed-use corridors.

Many neighborhood greenway corridors are existing residential streets, so there may be

some resistance to the insertion of commercial uses. These could be addressed through performance standards to address potential noise or light conflicts, while allowing a greater diversity of uses along the neighborhood greenways.

Given that these are neighborhood “greenways,” the insertion of commercial uses could be conditioned on owners adding green infrastructure improvements to the greenway, specifically improvements that would increase the shaded area provided by the tree canopy (street trees, traffic diverters, and landscaping) and add to the community space dedicated to pedestrians.

One possible way to begin to allow for retail and other commercial uses on neighborhood greenways, would be to create a new Accessory Commercial Unit (ACU) program that would only apply to an overlay zone extending to those properties that front on a Neighborhood Greenway (or within nodes on same). This program would allow for new structures, fronted on the sidewalk line but otherwise modeled on the requirements of the Accessory Dwelling Unit program. Such structures could potentially include a ground-floor Accessory Commercial Unit, with an Accessory Residential Unit above it (if built as a free-standing structure), where local conditions would allow for the construction of such a structure. Such structures should be allowed to have a zero setback from the sidewalk line, or to be set back slightly from the sidewalk, but include an expansion of the sidewalk to allow for greater sidewalk width. They should also be allowed to participate in the Street Seats program; and to assist with (or fund) the construction of new traffic diverter facilities on neighborhood greenways.

**Recommendation:** Create a new policy to allow for Accessory Commercial Units (ACUs) or Accessory Mixed Use Units (AMUUs) on properties adjacent to Neighborhood Greenways. Such units should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, diminutive in scale (should not overpower neighboring properties in scale), and should be accompanied by the installation of additional green features to increase the shaded area provided by the tree canopy.

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Sincerely yours,  
~Garlynn

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