

Frequently Asked Questions

Residents and Businesses

What are Summer Streets?

What about people living in the area, how will they get to and from their homes?

What if there is an emergency?

What was the process for deciding where to hold the car free events?

How did you choose the dates?

How are you handling impacts to businesses?

Can businesses serve food and alcohol outside?

If the streets are open, can I block my sidewalk?

Can I serve food or cook outside of my establishment?

Can I serve outside of my establishment?

What if people drive to the event?

Where do I park my bicycle once I get to the event?

Will buses be rerouted during the events?

Will there be toilets?

How are you funding these events?

How do the events that Parks and Recreation are hosting fit into these Car Free Days?

What if other communities want to have a Car Free Day this summer?

Q. What are Summer Streets?

A. These events illustrate how livable a city is when people drive less, are an opportunity for affordable, healthy outings in city neighborhoods and encourage neighbors to shop at local businesses.

Q. What about people living in the area, how will they get to and from their homes?

A. Events should not prevent access to your homes, although your route may be altered during this time. Thank you in advance for your patience.

Q. What if there is an emergency?

A. Special events are required to leave a 20 foot lane for emergency vehicles and residents/business owners that experience emergencies. Activities will be programmed to allow this movement if needed (volunteers and police officers will be available to help vehicles move safely through).

Q. What was the process for deciding to hold Summer Streets?

A. Last year the city tested the events to see if the communities enjoyed them. As a result, the city received numerous requests to combine Summer Streets with other activities occurring in their neighborhoods.

We are also working with all city departments including fire, police, parks and external organizations like Metro.

Q. How did you choose the dates?

A. We identified summer dates without a large number of city events already scheduled (festivals, athletic races, etc.) and through requests from the community. Please email the city with suggestions for next year: SummerStreets@Seattle.gov.

Q. How are you handling impacts on businesses?

A. We anticipate the events will attract large numbers of people. We are partnering with the business community and are encouraging participants to support local shops and restaurants. This is a great way to promote a business by participating with activities such as street sales and cooking classes held outside.

Q. Can businesses serve food and alcohol outside?

A. No special permits are needed to use the sidewalk, or street space. However, if you interested in serving alcohol or food please observe WA State Alcohol Beverage and King County Board of Health codes and obtain necessary permits and contact the Fire Marshal's Office if you plan on using tents or propane.

Q. If the streets are open, can I block my sidewalk?

A. While we encourage creative use of both sidewalks and streets, sidewalk clearance for wheelchair access (at least four feet) **should be maintained at all times**. Those wishing to set up tables on the sidewalk should use the “planting strip”—the four to six foot section closest to the curb.

Q. What if people drive to the event?

A. These events allow residents to walk out their door and experience their street in a different way. Should someone not living in the area wish to come, we are working with Cascade Bicycle Club to get volunteers to lead bicycle rides to the events, promoting the use of buses and the Water Taxi and encouraging walking whenever possible.

Q. Will buses be rerouted during the events?

A. In some cases buses are being rerouted during the events. The bus is still a great way to get to Summer Streets and get you around the event to your final destination.

Q. Will there be toilets?

A. Toilets will be placed along routes that do not have public toilet facilities.

Q. How are you funding events?

A. We are working with our partners to find sponsorships and in-kind donations.

Q. How do the events that Parks and Recreation are hosting fit into Summer Streets?

The events take advantage of non-motorized roads in parks such as: Volunteer Park, Seward Park, Lake Washington Boulevard, Interlaken, Magnuson Lakefront Promenade, Arboretum upper road and Discovery Park old roads.

Q. What if other communities want to Celebrate Summer Streets?

A. We encourage all neighborhoods to have their own car free days. Host a Block Party (www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_blockparty.htm), or Special Event (www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_special.htm) in your neighborhood.