

Georgetown to South Park Connection

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Commissioners Present

Justin Clark, Acting Chair
Kim Baker
Elizabeth Conner
Azzurra Cox
Mark Johnson
Vinita Sidhu
Elaine Wine

Commissioners Excused

Amalia Leighton

Non-Voting Commissioners Present

Adam Amrhein
Jill Crary

Project Description & Background

The Georgetown to South Park Connection project is a shared-use path for cyclists and pedestrians between Georgetown and South Park Communities. The project builds upon work developed by the Georgetown and South Park communities, who have advocated for a bicycle and pedestrian connection. The connection was also identified as an important project in several of the City's mobility and planning documents including the Georgetown Mobility Study, which identified the project as having a high opportunity to achieve access, mobility, equity, health, and safety outcomes. In 2018 funding was allocated by City Council to develop a conceptual design study to assess feasibility and to study potential alignments to provide connections between the two neighborhoods. In November 2020, the City Council approved \$5.2 million to fund the design and construction of the project.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the Georgetown to South Park Connection project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design phase (30% design) for the project. Following the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the Georgetown to South Park Connection project with several recommendations. The project will be reviewed again at the schematic design phase (60% design).

Recusals and Disclosures

Amalia Leighton, recused herself as her employer is working on the project.

April 15, 2021

9:00 - 10:30 am

Project Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous ReviewsNone**Presenters**

Hallie O'Brien

SDOT

Tonnie Roberts

SDOT

Gabriel Seo

SDOT

Attendees

Cayce James

OPCD

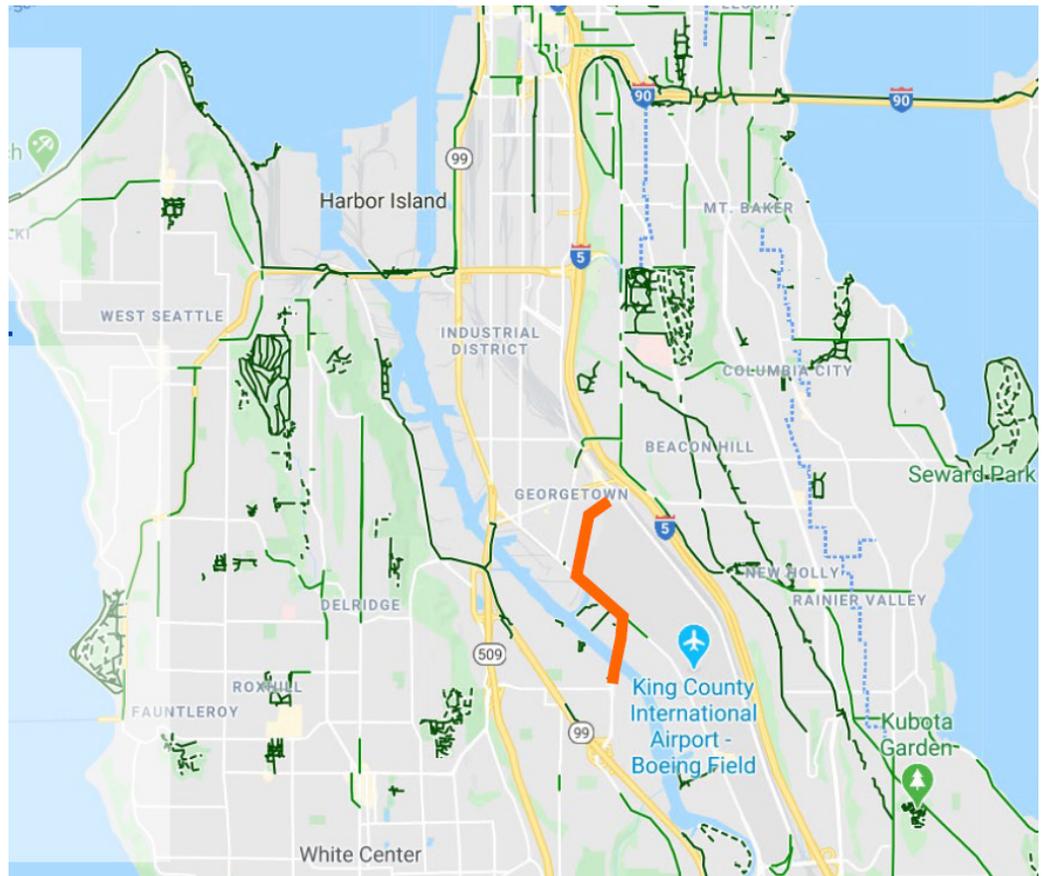


Figure 1: Project location (Orange)

Summary of Presentation

Hallie O'Brien, Tonnie Roberts, and Gabriel Seo, of SDOT, presented the concept design for the Georgetown to South Park Connection project. The team provided information on the historical and current neighborhood context as well as a history of the project proposal (See figures 1). The team then discussed project goals, ongoing community outreach, and the development of project alternatives. Through ongoing community outreach and collaboration with City departments, the team selected a preferred project route that connects the Georgetown and South Park neighborhoods.

The proposed design includes 3 trail segments - Georgetown, E Marginal Way S, and South Park Bridge trail segments. Each segment includes a protected 10-12 foot wide multi-use pathway with a vegetated buffer and street trees. The trail will also provide a connection through the Flume property, which was previously reviewed and approved by the Seattle Design Commission in September 2020. The Flume property will include a wide multi-use pathway, open space, off-leash area, and amenities such as lighting, bike racks, and seating. The South Park Bridge segment will provide a wide multi-use pathway as well as protected one-way bicycle lanes leading to the north bridge approach and will connect to an existing sidewalk that extends across the bridge and into the South Park Neighborhood (See figures 2-6 for more detail)

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

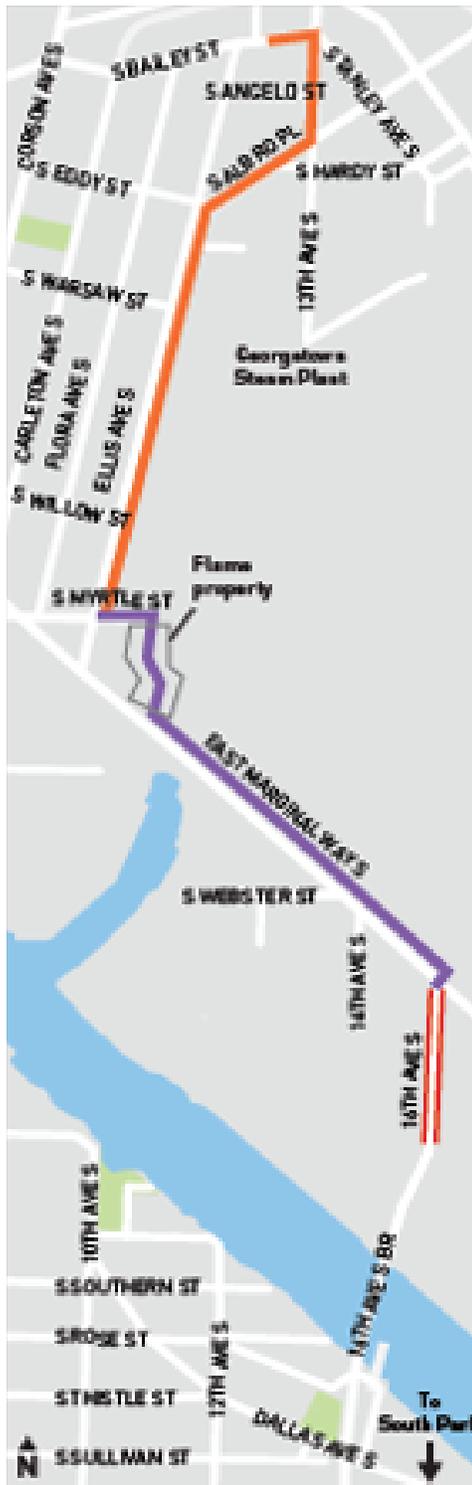


Figure 2: Preferred trail alignment

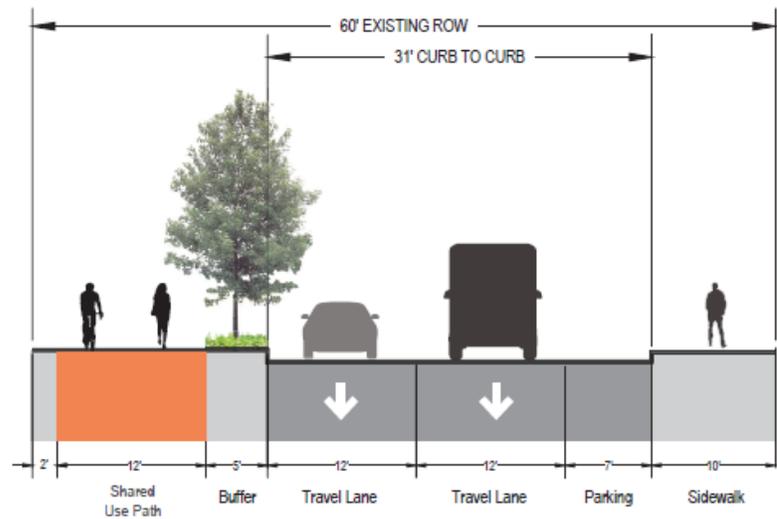


Figure 3: Proposed design for Georgetown Segment

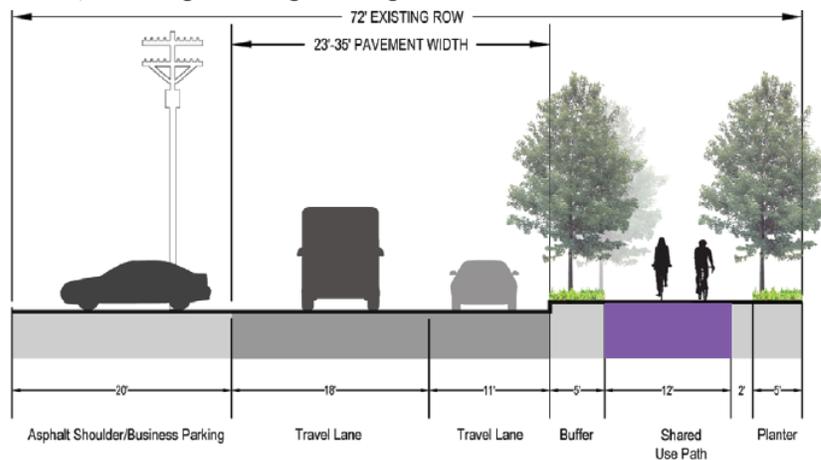


Figure 4: Proposed design for E Marginal S Segment along Myrtle St

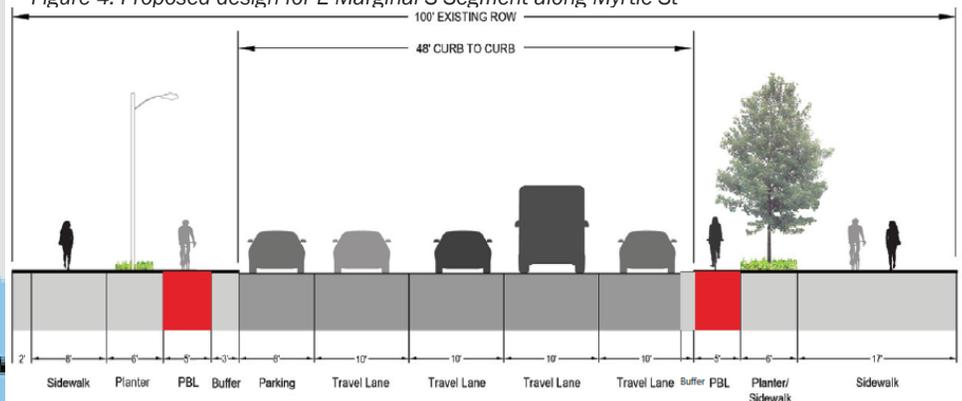


Figure 5: Proposed design for South Park Bridge Segment

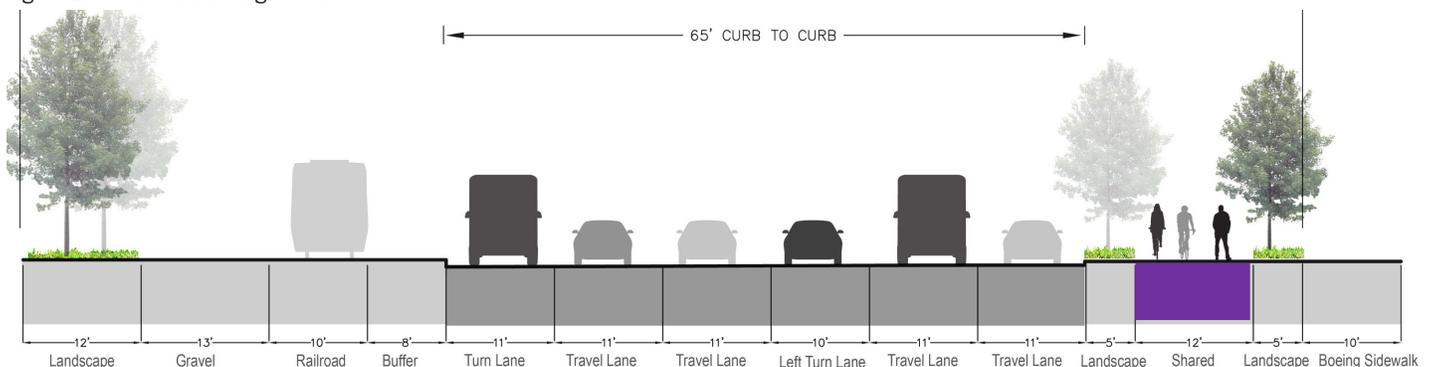


Figure 6: Proposed design for E Marginal Way S Segment along E Marginal Way S

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Materials
- Circulation & Connectivity
- Engagement & Equity
- Project coordination

Materials

The SDC appreciated the project team's use of diagrams to explain existing and proposed conditions along each trail segment. Commissioners also appreciated type, size, and location of each trail segment and how each is designed to fit within the local context. The Commission recommended the project team provide additional information on planting and pathway materials and to better understand how these materials will contribute to wayfinding, signage, gateway elements, site furniture, bicycle racks, and water fountains, towards the goal of enhancing the user experience and increasing the sense of personal safety along the trail. Commissioners appreciated the level of detail provided in the design for the FLUME site, which was previously reviewed and approved by the Commission, and encouraged the project team to provide similar details for other trail segments.

Commissioners then discussed issues about specific design elements. Commissioners expressed concern with the design of areas located below the street tree canopy along the trail and encouraged the team to consider ways to expand the pathway beneath the tree canopy, such as by using flex pave material or unit pavers, to provide additional space for trail users. The commission then encouraged the team to consider ways to provide additional buffers between the trail and adjacent vehicle traffic to increase perceived safety and to mitigate negative impacts, such as noise, created by the trail's proximity to the adjacent street. While this recommendation was made for the entire project, commissioners specifically asked the team to address design and mitigation efforts along E Marginal Way.

Circulation and connectivity

The SDC commended the project team for providing a connection between the Georgetown and South Park neighborhoods. Commissioners did express concern with the terminus of the southern portion of the trail, which ends on the northern edge of the South Park Bridge. The Commission recommended the project team explore opportunities to extend the trail across the South Park Bridge and to provide a connection to community spaces such as the South Park Plaza and Green River Trail. Commissioners also encouraged the project team to consider smaller design interventions, such as signalization, to improve the connection to the South Park neighborhood. The Commission then encouraged the team to provide additional information about how the trail will connect to both business districts. The SDC recognized the opportunity for creating spaces along the trail and recommended the project team maximize opportunities along the trail and trail head and to think about where to provide open spaces and viewpoints, such as adjacent to the King County Airport & Boeing Field. The Commission also appreciated that the project team is coordinating with Seattle's Office of Arts and Culture, and strongly encouraged the team continue to explore ways to provide artistic elements along the trail.

The Commission then discussed issues about the design of specific areas along the trail. Commissioners stressed the importance of providing safe crossings and transitions at vehicular intersections and driveways. The Commission strongly recommended the team provide additional design details, plans, and section diagrams to show how the trail will connect with roads, intersection, and driveways along the trail route and encouraged the team to think about transitions between the trail and roadway as well as other details such as crosswalk widths and signalization. Commissioners then encouraged the team to provide a diagram that shows the intersection crossings and driveways long the entire length of the project.

The SDC also discussed potential conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians while using the trail. The Commission recommended the team consider measures to ensure the trail is safe to use for all ages and abilities, such as by different paving patterns or materials. Commissioners then encouraged the team to provide additional information about who is expected to use the trail.

Engagement and equity

The SDC recommended the project team provide additional information on community outreach. Commissioners requested information on who is participating in outreach as well as the process for providing input. The Commission also strongly encouraged the team to discuss how they are engaging with marginalized communities in both neighborhoods and how ongoing outreach is influencing the design proposal.

Project coordination

The SDC commended the project team for their leadership as well as continued coordination with other City departments, agencies, and organizations. Specifically, the Commission commended the coordination that allowed for the project to receive full funding and support. The Commission strongly recommended that interdepartmental and interagency coordination continue as the project develops. Commissioners also recommended that SDOT continue to serve as the project lead, specifically in advocating for the community as the design continues to develop.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the concept design for the Georgetown to South Park Connection project. The Commission appreciated the project team's commitment to address the community's long-term goal to have a safe non-motorized connection, recognizing the challenges of providing a safe route within the project area. Commissioners also commended the project team for their commitment to continue planning and designing the project, especially during the period when funding had not been secured. The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the concept design for the Georgetown to South Park Connection project with the following recommendations:

1. Continue to refine how materials and wayfinding elements – lighting, pathway materials, etc. – will affect the experience for pedestrians and cyclists and to better understand how these elements will function at intersections with vehicular traffic.
2. Explore providing art elements, such as sculptures, and noise mitigation along the stretch of East Marginal Way S
3. Continue to refine safety measures along the trail for all users through assessing potential conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians and utilizing measures such as paving patterns or different materials to reduce potential conflicts.
4. Show how cyclist and pedestrian users will interact with vehicles at intersections and vehicle access drives; Provide information on how drivers will be aware of the pathway.
5. Explore opportunities to provide a connection south of the South Park Bridge with specific focus given to the southern approach to the bridge; consider expanding the project scope to include a connection to South Park Plaza and the Green River Trail to leverage investments to provide an improved access point for South Park residents
6. Maximize creating spaces along the trail, including the provision of open spaces and viewpoints at specific locations along the trail and trail head.
7. Continue interdepartmental coordination with SPU, City Light and other City departments as the project develops
8. SDOT continue to serve as the project lead, specifically in advocating for the community as the design continues to develop