15th Avenue NE Reconstruction–
NE Pacific Street to NE 55th Street

Updated: August 2010

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Project Description

How will SDOT improve 15th Avenue NE?
This project will rebuild 15th Avenue NE between NE Pacific and NE 50th streets with new concrete pavement and resurface the roadway between NE 50th and NE 55th streets.

Other improvements include:

- Improved pedestrian mobility by installing new curb ramps and curb bulbs
- Improved transit safety and accessibility by widening sidewalks at bus zones (i.e. creating bus bulbs)
- Improved stormwater performance through drainage upgrades
- Improved pedestrian safety through the installation of a new marked crosswalk at NE 41st Street
- Improved traffic mobility by adding a new northbound left turn lane at NE 42nd Street
- A safer and friendlier urban environment through an upgraded street lighting system
- Flexibility for future transit improvements through new electrical infrastructure improvements

Why does 15th Avenue NE need to be reconstructed?
15th Avenue NE currently carries approximately 16,000 vehicles a day. The roadway is in poor condition due to age and use and needs to be reconstructed to maintain an efficient and safe travel corridor for vehicles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit.

Are there any areas along 15th Avenue NE that will not be repaved as a part of this project?
SDOT is not planning to repave the intersections at NE Pacific Street, NE 45th Street, and NE 50th Street since they were completed recently.

Will there be any other improvements to infrastructure as a result of this project?
Some infrastructure upgrades will be made as part of the reconstruction including redistributing street lighting on both sides of the roadway, drainage systems upgrades, new electrical infrastructure for future transit improvements, and pedestrian accessibility improvements.

Project Schedule

What is the anticipated project schedule?
The project is currently in the final design phase. SDOT will advertise the project for competitive bids from contractors in September 2010, and construction is expected to begin in January 2011.

What is the anticipated construction phasing schedule?
Construction will begin in January 2011 and will continue through October 2011. SDOT is planning to split the construction work into three phases:

- Phase 1 (January – June): NE Pacific Street to NE 45th Street
- Phase 2 (June – September): NE 45th Street to NE 50th Street
- Phase 3 (September – October): NE 50th Street to NE 55th Street

Project Funding

How is the project being funded?
The project is funded through the Bridging the Gap program. The total project is estimated to cost $10.7 million.

What is Bridging the Gap?
Bridging the Gap is the $365 million levy passed by Seattle voters in 2006. It enables much-needed work by SDOT, such as roadway paving, sidewalk development and repair, bridge maintenance, and tree pruning and planting. It also supports the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans, enhanced transit connections and large Neighborhood Street Fund Projects.

Construction Impacts

How noisy will it be during construction?
The construction work will be noisy at times. Concrete breakers will be used to remove old sections of the roadway, and truck traffic will be heavier in the area. The following restrictions will apply to the construction work per a noise variance that was issued for the project by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD):

- Weekday noise restrictions will be in place from 10 pm to 8 am
- Weekend noise restrictions will be in place from 10 pm to 9 am

Note: work can extend beyond these hours but noisier types of activities (concrete breaking) will be restricted to the hours listed above.

Will this project require weekend and/or night work?
Yes, SDOT is anticipating night and weekend work to complete this project on schedule. Specifically, work near larger intersections will require weekend work due to the overhead Metro bus trolley lines. The bulk of the weekend work is anticipated between NE Pacific Street and NE 45th Street. The trolley lines will be deactivated on the weekends, and Metro will use diesel powered buses to serve these routes during this time. Weekend and night work will be permitted from Saturday at 3 am to Monday at 3 am. Noisier types of work (i.e. concrete breaking) will be restricted to daytime hours according to the noise variance mentioned above.

Will access to residences or businesses be affected during construction?
Pedestrian access to residences and businesses will be maintained at all times during construction. Occasional pedestrian detours may be required, and pedestrians may be rerouted north or south to approach a building from a different direction. SDOT will not close more than one pedestrian crossing at any given intersection at a time.

Vehicle access to parking lots and parking garages will be affected during certain times. SDOT will communicate with properties owners, building managers, and tenants to make sure they are aware ahead of time when vehicle access to their property will be impacted.

Traffic and Parking Changes

What temporary traffic impacts are associated with construction of the project?
SDOT will maintain one lane of traffic in each direction during construction on weekdays. Weekends may include some full directional closures of the roadway. Left hand turns off of and onto 15th Avenue NE will likely be restricted at times due to changes in the roadway grade making it unsafe for drivers to cross.

What permanent traffic changes will result from the project?
As a part of the NE 45th Street Transit Improvement Project, SDOT is considering restricting left turns from northbound 15th Avenue NE to westbound NE 45th Street to transit only during the pm peak periods (3-7 pm). SDOT will add a left turn at NE 42nd Street to mitigate this change.

Will there be any impacts to parking as a result of construction?
During each construction phase, all parking and loading zones will be removed within the project corridor on 15th Avenue NE. Parking and loading zones along side streets may also be impacted, and will be removed temporarily as needed. Access to parking areas will be interrupted intermittently based upon the construction schedule.

Bicycles and Transit

Will the reconstruction work have any effect on bus schedules and bus stops?
Current bus service will be maintained along 15th Avenue NE during construction on weekdays. Transit riders should expect some delays, as 15th Avenue NE will be reduced to one lane in each direction during construction. SDOT is coordinating with King County Metro to temporarily relocate bus stops, and reroute buses on weekends during construction. Metro will communicate any stop or route changes to their customers directly. SDOT is also working with Metro to permanently consolidate bus stops along 15th Avenue NE as a part of this project.

Will there be a bike lane on NE 15th Avenue NE after the reconstruction work is complete?
SDOT is not planning to add a bike lane on 15th Avenue NE as a part of this project. SDOT adds bike lanes to streets based on the recommendations in the Seattle Bicycle Master Plan, and 15th Avenue NE was not recommended for a bike lane in the master plan. The City of Seattle's bicycle map identifies University Way NE and Brooklyn Avenue NE as north/south connector arterials for bicycles in this area.

Public Outreach

What project materials and resources will be developed and available publicly?

- Project Web site (http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/pave_15thavene.htm)
- Fact Sheet
- FAQ
- Mailings and flyers

What type of outreach will be used to inform and involve local residents and businesses affected by the project?
SDOT will conduct individual briefings to identify the operational needs of businesses and residents within the project corridor on 15th Avenue NE. The project team will use this information to help inform the construction phasing when possible.

What types of notification methods will be used during the construction phase?
During construction, notification methods will include Web site updates, construction notices, flyering, and e-mails. SDOT will inform nearby residents and businesses regularly throughout construction, and will notify the traveling public of major changes to traffic during construction.

Was there an environmental review process conducted for this project?
The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist and National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is already complete for the project. A public comment period was held in May 2010 and a determination of non-significance was made in June 2010.

Contact Information

Where can I find out more information about this project?
If you have specific questions or would like to schedule a briefing for your neighborhood or community group, please contact:

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