

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What is a cycle track?**

A cycle track is a protected bicycle lane that is physically separated from vehicles and delineated in some fashion from people walking.

### **Q: Where is the Westlake Cycle Track going to be?**

Within the publicly-owned 150' wide right-of-way along Westlake Avenue North, between Lake Union Park and the Ship Canal Trail south of the Aurora Bridge overpass.

### **Q: How did the City select the Westlake corridor for a cycle track?**

Interest in improving bicycling conditions along the Westlake corridor has been apparent since at least 2007, when it was one of the top corridors requested during outreach for Bicycle Master Plan (BMP). Improving Westlake was included in the 2007 BMP and re-affirmed in the 2013 plan. In addition, the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board identified improvements to the Westlake corridor on their list of "Top 15" bicycle project priorities.

### **Q: Why is a cycle track in the Westlake right-of-way needed?**

A cycle track is needed to improve safety for all users in an area of increasing demand. Currently the Westlake corridor has pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles sharing a narrow and undefined space. A protected bicycle lane along the Westlake corridor will provide a flat, low-stress route for bicyclists not as comfortable riding adjacent to high speed traffic.

### **Q: What are the project's goals?**

The Westlake Cycle Track's overarching goal is to improve safety for all modes of travel in the right-of-way. The complete list of project goals includes:

- Safety: Improve safety for bicycle riders, for pedestrians and for motor vehicles.
- Connectivity: Create a high-quality bicycle connection between South Lake Union, Westlake and the Ship Canal Trail.
- Equity: Improve opportunities for bicycle riders of all ages and abilities.
- Livability: Support the Westlake, South Lake Union and NW Seattle communities by creating a welcoming environment for business, recreation and transit.
- Ridership Increase amount and mode share of bicycle riding on Westlake for commuters, residents, workers, and tourists.

### **Q: What are the project's design objectives?**

They design objectives are:

- To reduce bicycle collisions by providing distinct pathways for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists.
- To provide safe access to businesses, including convenient parking.
- To improve a flat, low-stress bicycle route to meet increasing demand.

**Q: What is the project's history?**

SDOT procured a grant from the Puget Sound Regional Council to improve safety in this corridor.

In September 2013 SDOT began to analyze existing conditions; conducting a topographical survey, collecting traffic data and studying parking utilization. SDOT held a public open house in October 2013 to gather additional information, concerns, issues, and ideas from the community. Technical memos on Design Criteria, Parking Utilization and Traffic are being prepared and will be released shortly.

**Q: What are the next steps?**

Preliminary design development will continue (aided by a Design Advisory Committee appointed by the Mayor) through the summer of 2014. SDOT anticipates beginning environmental review and final design near the end of summer 2014. Construction is expected to begin in late 2015.

**Q: Where will the cycle track be located?**

The alignment has not been determined, although it will be placed somewhere within City-owned land, called right-of-way. Along Westlake Avenue North this includes the four roadway lanes, planted medians, the parking lots to the east of the roadway and the sidewalks on either side – about 150 feet wide overall.

**Q: How will bicycle speeds be controlled?**

The design will use established methods for managing speeds, which may include path width, signalized intersections and site line management. It is the City's intention to create a safe and attractive cycle track that encourages reasonable speeds, proper yielding behavior and management of conflict points.

**Q: Why add a bicycle facility to Westlake when there is already one on Dexter?**

While the City added a buffer to Dexter Avenue North as part of the 2011 paving project, it did not provide a protected bicycle facility. Dexter Avenue North remains primarily a route for experienced cyclists comfortable with steep slopes, high speeds, riding with traffic and transit vehicles, and negotiating many driveways and intersections. A protected bicycle lane along the Westlake Corridor will provide a continuous, level connection from the Burke-Gilman and South Ship Canal Trails to the South Lake Union area, as well as serving Westlake residents, employees and visitors of all ages and abilities.

**Q: Will adding a cycle track reduce the number of parking spaces along the Westlake corridor?**

Yes. However at this point in the design process, the extent of impacts to existing parking is not yet known. As design options are developed, this information will be determined and shared.

**Q: How will SDOT share information about the design?**

SDOT will keep the public informed through the project website, email, briefings, public meetings and open houses. SDOT held an initial public open house on October 28, 2013. The open house was focused on learning about stakeholder needs and priorities to inform early design efforts. All of the materials from that meeting are available on the project website: [www.seattle.gov/transportation/wct.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/wct.htm). Two more open houses are scheduled in May and September of 2014.

**Q: How will citizens be able to comment on the design as it develops?**

The public can provide comments on released materials to the project team by email, by phone or in person at future open houses or public meetings. Please contact the project team via email [WCT@seattle.gov](mailto:WCT@seattle.gov) or through our information line at 206-909-8578.

**Q: What is the Design Advisory Committee?**

The project will have a 13-member Design Advisory Committee appointed by Mayor Murray to work with the project team throughout the design process – preliminary and final. Members, selected to represent a variety of perspectives, began meeting in March 2014 to help evaluate feasible alternatives. These individuals will also serve as liaisons between the public at large and the project team.

**Q: When is the next open house?**

An open house is tentatively planned for the third week of May. Various design options will be presented and the focus of the meeting will be to collect input from the public.

**Q: When will SDOT recommend a design?**

Not until after a smaller number of design options have been refined and presented to the public at the second open house. SDOT’s preferred alternative will be presented at a third open house currently planned for September.

**Q: Will an economic impact study be included in this project?**

No. Concerns about economic impacts are principally related to parking changes. Anticipated parking and loading zone impacts will help inform design, but there are no plans to conduct a separate economic impact study.

**Q: Will this project have an environmental review process?**

Once a design option is selected, the project will undergo environmental review. The type of environmental process needed will depend upon the design of the project, and has not been determined yet.

**Q: Will SDOT consider either an elevated bikeway or a tunnel?**

No, only feasible design alternatives are part of the study. Neither an above-grade nor a below-grade approach are viable – economically or functionally.