

# Frequently Asked Questions: Proposed Cycle Track on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St between Sand Point Way and the Burke Gilman Trail



This set of frequently asked questions (FAQ) addresses all the questions we have received after our initial outreach for a family-friendly non-motorized connection on NE 65<sup>th</sup> between the Burke Gilman Trail and Sand Point Way. If you have additional questions or comments, please see the contact information at the end of this document. For a description of the project, visit <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ne65th.htm>.

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## Project Overview Questions

### What is the purpose of the project?

- The project's purpose is to provide a family-friendly connection between the Burke Gilman Trail and Magnuson Park that serves people of all ages and abilities who ride bicycles. To make this connection today, people on bicycles must either ride in the street, which is not comfortable for all types of riders, or on the sidewalk, which affects pedestrians.

This project will connect to an upcoming project within Magnuson Park to create a continuous non-motorized off-street connection all the way from the Burke Gilman Trail to Lake Washington. As Magnuson Park has redeveloped over the last five years, the Parks Department has regularly received requests for comfortable, safe, family-friendly connections between the Burke Gilman Trail and Magnuson Park.

### What is SDOT proposing?

- SDOT is proposing a separated, two-way cycle track on the south side of NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street between the Burke Gilman trail and Sand Point Way. Click here to see the project schematics.  
<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ne65th.htm>.

## What is a separated cycle track?

- A cycle track is an exclusive bike facility that combines the user experience of a separated path with the on-street infrastructure of a conventional bike lane. A cycle track is physically separated from motor vehicle traffic and distinct from the sidewalk.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1: Two-way cycle track in Vancouver, Canada<sup>2</sup>

## How do cycle tracks improve safety?

- Cycle tracks dedicate and protect space for bicyclists to create a safer and more comfortable space. They greatly reduce the risk and fear of collisions with vehicles.

“Compared with bicycling on a reference street...these cycle tracks had a 28% lower injury rate.” Lusk, A., Furth, P., Morency, P., Miranda-Moreno, L., Willett, W., Dennerlein, J. (2010). Risk of injury for bicycling on cycle tracks versus in the street. Injury Prevention.

“Cyclists feel most secure on roads with cycle tracks and most at risk on roads with mixed traffic.” Jensen, S. U., Rosenkilde, C., and Jensen, N. (2007). Road safety and perceived risk of cycle facilities in Copenhagen. Copenhagen: Trafitec Research Center.

- Cycle tracks reduce the risk of ‘dooring’ (being hit by an opening car door) compared to a bike lane, and eliminate the risk of a doored bicyclist being run over by a motor vehicle.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Association of City Transportation Officials, <http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/cycle-tracks/>

<sup>2</sup> City of Vancouver, <https://vancouver.ca/engsvcs/transport/cycling/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/cycle-tracks/two-way-cycle-tracks/>

- Pedestrian safety and comfort is improved by providing a separate facility for people who ride bikes so they don't ride on the sidewalk.

### **Are two-way cycle tracks safe for people on bikes? Do they encourage “wrong-way” riding?**

- People learning to ride bicycles are taught to ride on the right side of the road, *unless otherwise directed*. Providing a physically separated space for biking provides the safest option for people on bikes. The proposed westbound cycle track lane ends at a low curb barrier, directing people on bikes to the trail or to the right side of the road at the existing crosswalk.

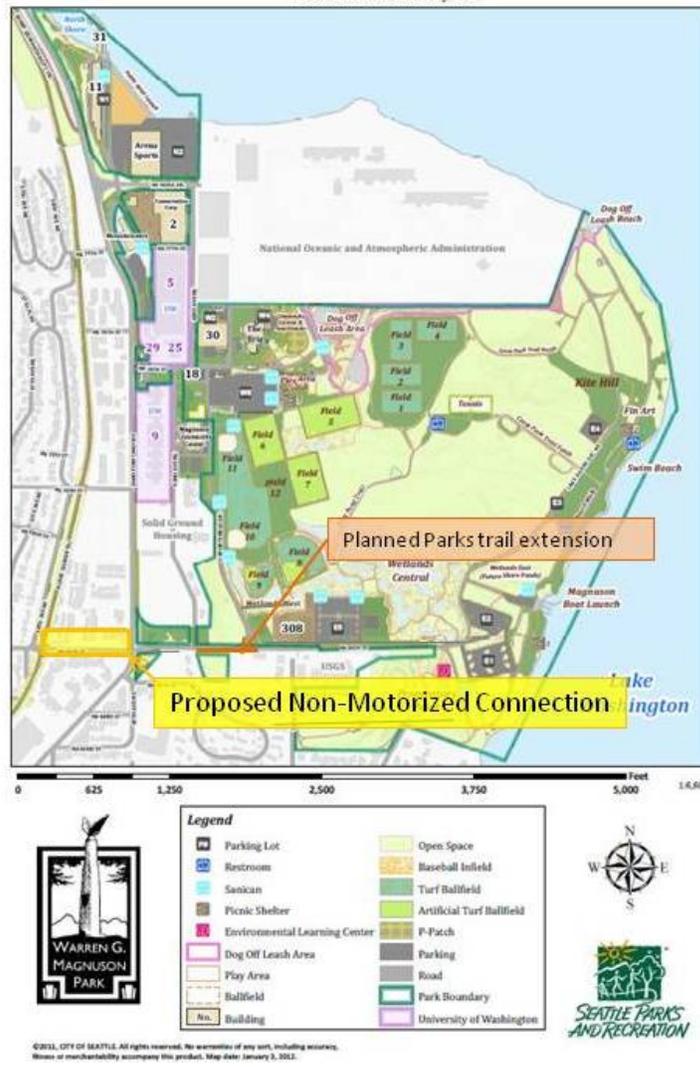
### **Why is SDOT proposing a cycle track instead of other bicycle treatments?**

- SDOT recognizes that families with children and others who ride bikes on the Burke Gillman Trail and want to go to Magnuson Park may not be comfortable riding on arterial streets. A two-way separated cycle track provides a higher level of safety and comfort than other treatments (such as bicycle lanes or in-lane riding) particularly with regards to risks from vehicles and “dooring” (being hit by an opening car door). Cycle tracks have been implemented successfully at other locations in Seattle and throughout the world, including Portland, OR; Chicago, IL; Washington D.C.; New York, NY, and Vancouver, Canada. Two-way cycle tracks are supported by the National Association of City Transportation Officials, the League of American Bicyclists, and the Cascade Bicycle Club.

### **Why is a project being proposed on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St rather than other locations?**

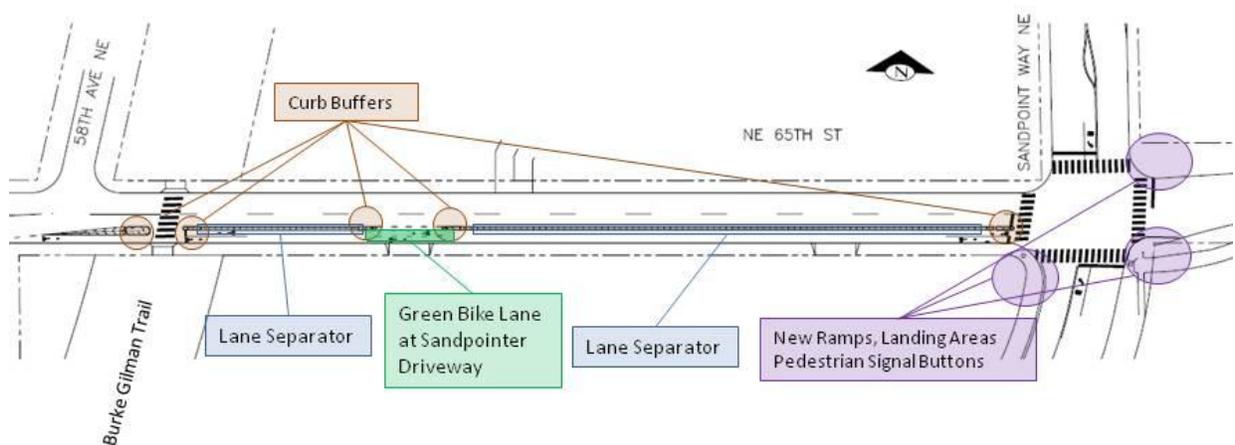
- SDOT considered alternative locations, including NE 70<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 77<sup>th</sup> Streets. The NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street location is preferred due to its alignment with the park's south entrance and the existing wide asphalt path connection to the park. At NE 65<sup>th</sup> St there is an existing traffic signal, there is only one driveway on the south side of the street, and there is low daily parking utilization. In contrast, both NE 70<sup>th</sup> and NE 77<sup>th</sup> streets have steeper grades, “T”-intersections at Sand Point Way which do not provide direct access to the park for people on bikes, and narrower widths (which would likely require more parking removal). Additionally, NE 77<sup>th</sup> does not offer a signalized crossing or a sidewalk for pedestrians and would likely require new retaining walls on the east side of Sand Point, which would make this location prohibitively expensive.
- Locating the project on NE 65<sup>th</sup> also leverages several upcoming investments, including:
  - Upgrades to the curb ramp and sidewalk areas at three corners of the NE 65<sup>th</sup> St and Sand Point Way intersection to provide better conditions for people with strollers, wheelchairs, and other mobility challenges.
  - An extension of the asphalt pathway on NE 65<sup>th</sup> between 62<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE and Sportscenter Drive, which will allow uninterrupted off-street access to the water front and Lake Shore Promenade non-motorized path.
  - New potential non-motorized trails in conjunction with SR 520 mitigation work.

## Warren G. Magnuson Park 7400 Sand Point Way NE



### What would the project look like?

- The project would install a two-way cycle track along the south side of NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street. The cycle track would be ten feet wide and would be separated from vehicle traffic by a sturdy metal barrier. At the cycle track entrances and at the one driveway approach, separation would be provided by 6-inch high concrete curb buffers and paint. A diagram is shown below.
- The project also includes pedestrian improvements at the intersection of NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street and Sand Point Way NE, which are being coordinated with Seattle Public Utilities and the Seattle Parks Department. These improvements include new curb ramps for people with strollers, wheelchairs, and other mobility challenges; a curb extension on the east side of the intersection to shorten the crossing distance of NE 65<sup>th</sup>, better aligned crosswalks; larger waiting areas; improved drainage; and improved location of pedestrian signal call buttons.



### Who requested the project?

- The Parks Department has been receiving a significant volume of requests for comfortable, family-friendly connections between the Burke Gilman Trail and Magnuson Park for the past five years, particularly in light of the park’s recent redevelopment.
- The project developed from collaboration between the Seattle Parks Department, Seattle Public Utilities, and SDOT.

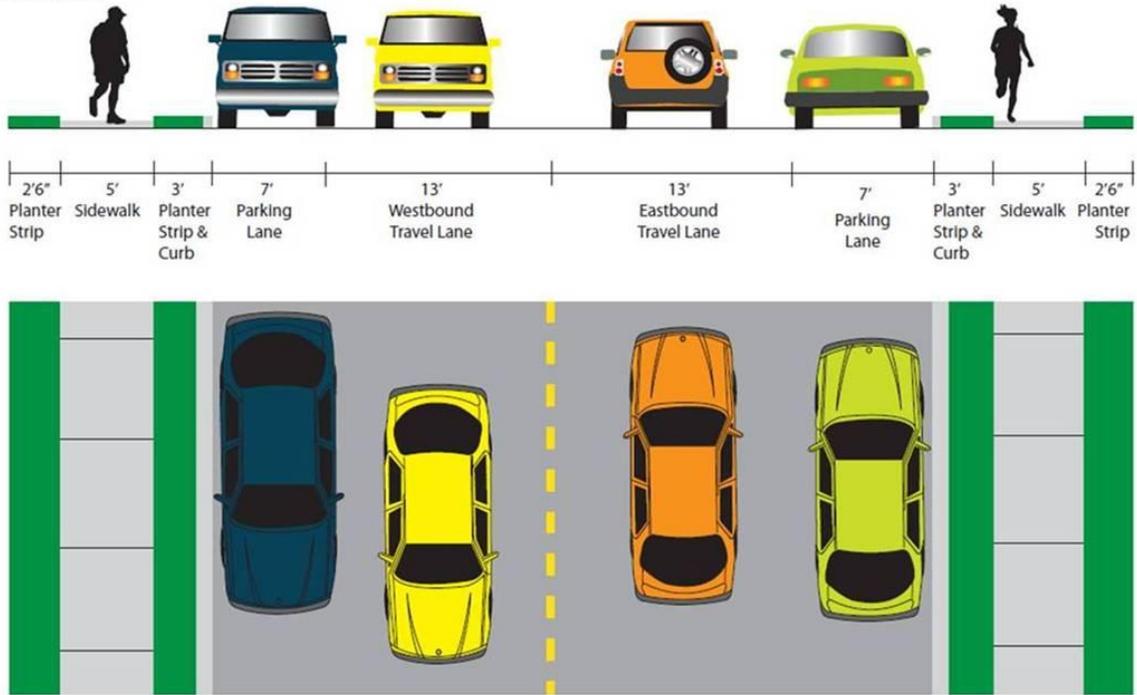
### Traffic & Access Questions

#### How would this affect the travel lanes?

- Motor vehicle lanes would be realigned to create one standard 10-foot eastbound lane, and one standard 17-foot westbound/parking lane. These widths are standard for minor arterials like NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street; for example, 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NW from NW Market to Leary Way NW and northbound 5<sup>th</sup> Ave NE from Banner Way NE to NE 85<sup>th</sup> Street both have standard 10-foot travel lanes and 7-foot parking areas. In comparison, typical highway lanes are 12 feet wide, narrower than the current lane widths on NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street.
- The cycle track would be as wide as two bike lanes placed side-by-side, or as wide as much of the Burke Gilman Trail. The new cross sections are shown below.

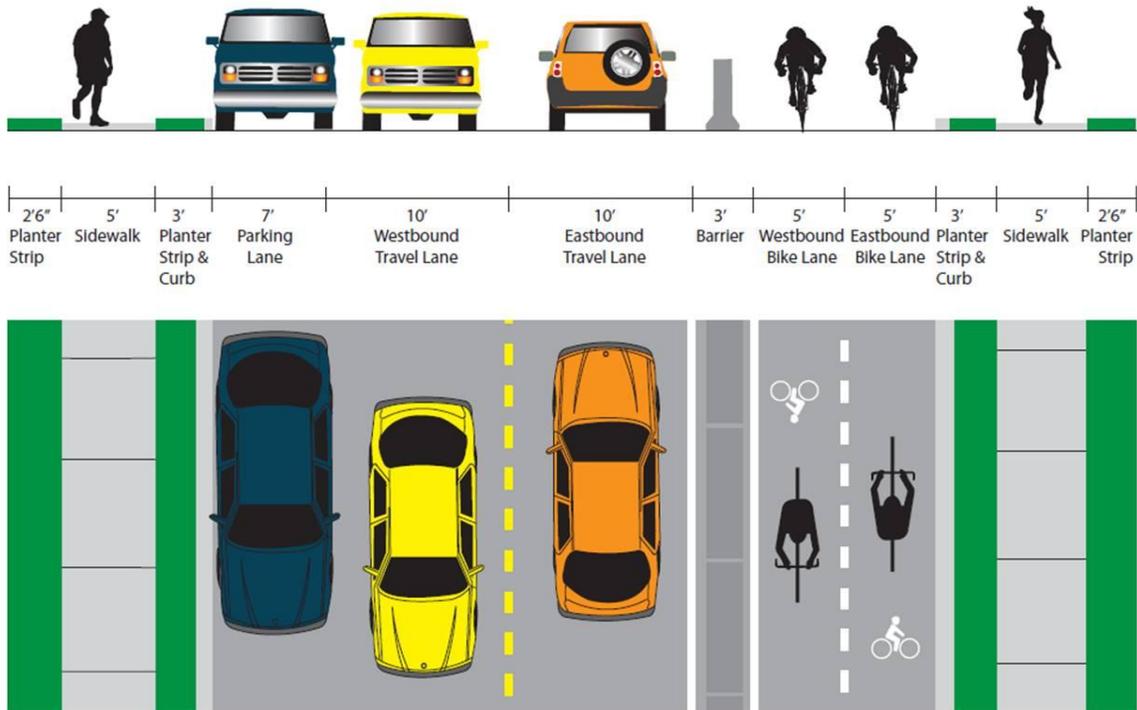
NE 65th between the Burke Gilman Trail and Sand Point Way

**EXISTING, facing east**



NE 65th between the Burke Gilman Trail and Sand Point Way

**PROPOSED, facing east**

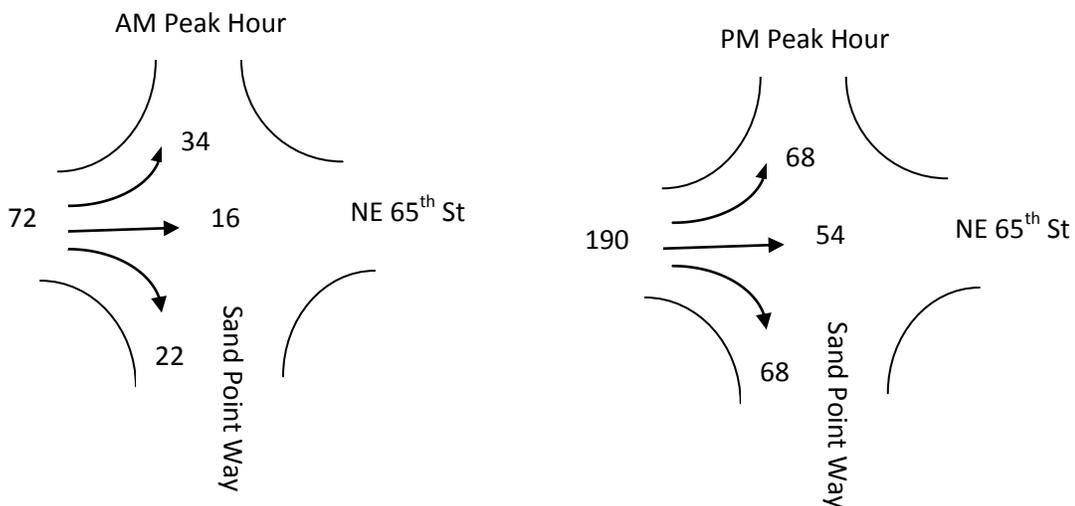


## Would this project affect emergency vehicle access?

- No, emergency vehicles will still be able to access all adjacent properties. The project is being designed with open space and low curbs at the Sandpointer Condominium complex driveway intersection to maintain access for emergency vehicles. Additionally, the Sandpointer's Sand Point Way driveway will be unaffected.

## How would this project affect the intersection of NE 65<sup>th</sup> St & Sand Point Way?

- SDOT anticipates some increase in queuing on eastbound NE 65<sup>th</sup> St because motorists waiting to make a left turn on to Sand Point Way NE or continue straight to Magnuson Park will delay motorists who currently can make a right turn on red.
- SDOT conducted a study of this intersection and found that during the busiest hour of morning use, 22 of the 72 drivers traveling east on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St made a right turn (30%), while 34 turned left (47%), and 16 continued eastbound (22%). During the busiest hour of afternoon use, 68 of the 190 drivers traveling east on NE 65<sup>th</sup> made the right turn (36%), 68 made this left turn (36%), and 54 continued eastbound (28%), as shown below.



- SDOT conducted a signal analysis and found that drivers traveling eastbound on NE 65<sup>th</sup> will experience an average additional delay of ten seconds during the busiest afternoon travel hour. Overall, drivers passing through the intersection will experience an average of 2.5 seconds of additional delay at the intersection during the busiest afternoon travel hour. During non-peak times, additional delays will be significantly lower.
- Right turns on red at the intersection would not be otherwise affected, nor would right turns from the Park Point or Sandpointer complexes' Sand Point Way driveways.
- SDOT is currently developing signage to provide direction for people on bikes at the intersection.
- SDOT confirmed that emergency vehicles and other large vehicles will still be able to make all turns at the intersection.

- Pedestrians will have new curbs and ramps, shorter crossing distances of NE 65<sup>th</sup> St, more waiting area, and more accessible pedestrian signal call buttons. See below for a sketch of the new pedestrian alignment.

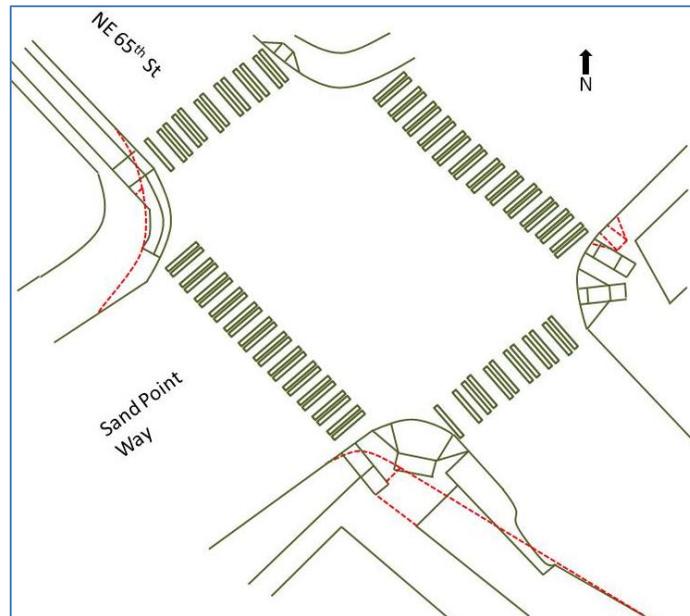


Figure 2: New pedestrian alignment is shown in green; existing alignment in dashed red.

### How would this project affect driveway access at the Sandpointer Condominium complex?

- The proposed project has been designed to preserve access and sightlines where the Sandpointer driveway enters the public right of way. Drivers will need to look both ways as they exit the driveway, as they currently do, to watch for people on the sidewalk and people on bicycles in the street. At the driveway, drivers will be reminded to watch for people on bikes through the use of a painted green area with bicycle legends on the cycle track. A diagram of this area is shown below.

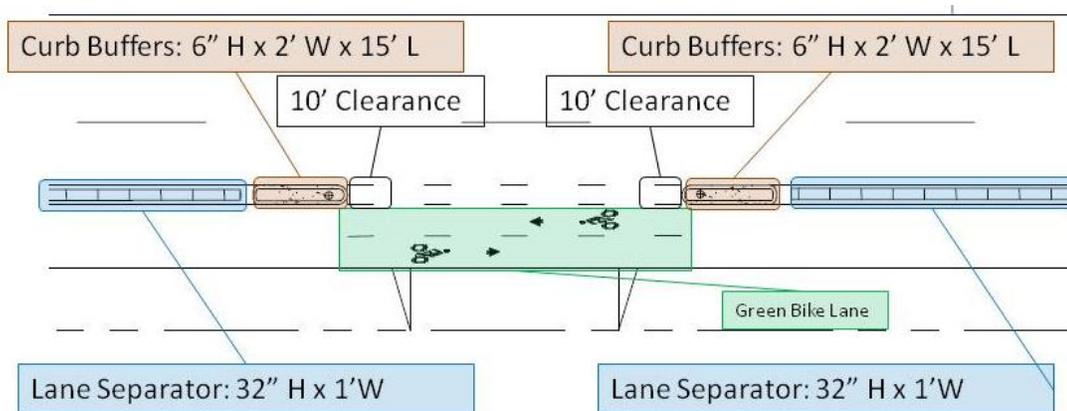


Figure 3: 40 foot opening in barrier. Access to Sandpointer driveway will NOT be affected.

- Currently, the condo's fenceline limits the line of sight for drivers checking for people riding bikes on the sidewalk. SDOT anticipates that people who normally ride bicycles on the sidewalk will choose to use the cycle track instead; this change would improve the existing conditions by increasing the sight distance and therefore the available reaction time for drivers exiting the condominium complex.



Figure 4: Sandpointer Driveway (Current)

- SDOT conducted turning analyses which indicate that standard 30 foot delivery vehicles will be able to enter and exit the Sand Pointer Driveway. See below.

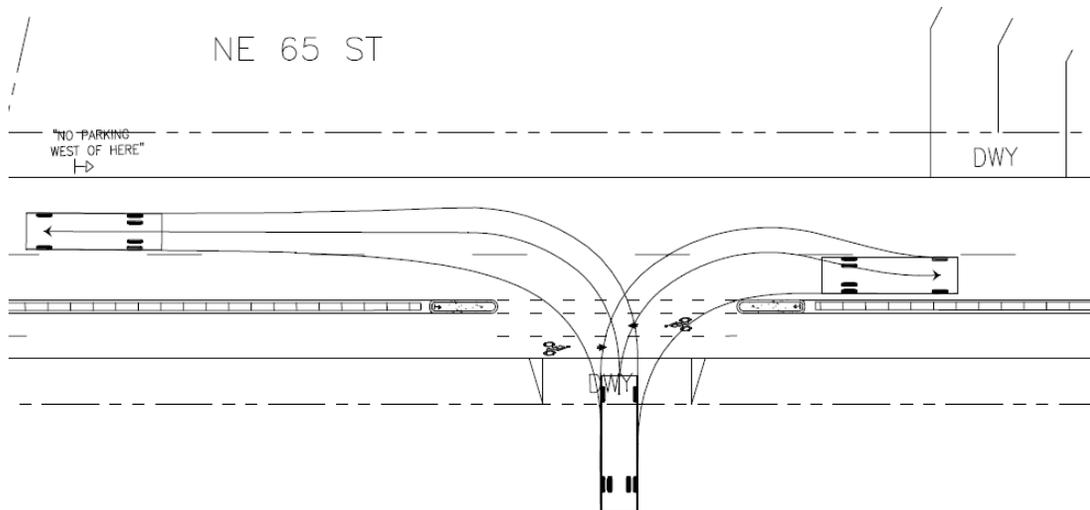


Figure 5: Turning movements for 30-foot vehicle

- SDOT will continue to monitor the performance where the condo driveway enters the public right of way and will make alterations if necessary.

### Will the new lanes be blocked by the bus layover area?

- No. Metro is eliminating the bus layover on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St at the end of September, 2012. This will help southbound drivers make right turns on to NE 65<sup>th</sup> after the new lane markings have been

implemented. Use of the bus zone will be limited to Metro’s night & weekend routing for Route #30.

### How many drivers use NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street?

- SDOT conducted vehicle speed and volume studies from 4/9/12 to 4/16/12.
  - Eastbound – Average daily traffic was 1,789 cars. Drivers show a tendency to travel faster than the posted 30 mph speed limit; the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed (the speed that most people are driving) was 33.4 mph.
  - Westbound – Average daily traffic was 2,000 cars. Drivers show a tendency to travel faster than the posted 30 mph speed limit; the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed (the speed that most people are driving) was 33.7 mph.

### Will the lane changes affect the travel speeds on NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street?

- Yes, SDOT expects higher compliance with the existing 30 mph speed limit.

### What would the barrier look like?

- The barrier used to separate the cycle track from the vehicle travel lane is one foot wide and 32 inches tall, with “feet” that extend six inches in either direction, and is made out of steel (see below). The barrier is designed with sightlines in mind – at 32 inches tall it is lower than the driver’s eye level in passenger cars (41 inches). The barrier has spaces at regular intervals to maintain current storm water flow.



Figure 6: Barrier for cycle track separation

### Is the lane separator the appropriate height?

- The barrier used to separate the cycle track from the vehicle travel lanes is 32 inches high. Drivers will be able to see over the top of the barrier, as the driver’s eye level of a passenger car is typically 42 inches from the ground. The barrier is therefore high enough to provide a level of comfort for people of all ages and abilities, but low enough to preserve sightlines. The closest cycle track lane to the lane separator is the slower, uphill lane, making it unlikely that a fast-moving cyclist will vault over the barrier.

## Will the lane changes divert traffic on to non-arterial streets or NE 70<sup>th</sup> Street?

- It is unlikely that non-arterial streets or NE 70<sup>th</sup> will see an increase in traffic; SDOT signal analysis shows very little increase in delay at the intersection of NE 65<sup>th</sup> & Sand Point Way; lanes will be standard widths; local streets south of NE 65<sup>th</sup> have few connections to arterials; and the total volume of traffic on NE 65<sup>th</sup> is relatively low.

## Parking Questions

### How will this affect parking?

- The project would consolidate parking to the north side of NE 65th St by eliminating parking on the south side of the street. SDOT conducted a parking study from 7/11/12-7/15/12 at various times of the day and night, and never counted more than five of the approximately 44 spaces in use (11%). Removing 23 of these spaces should not significantly impact parking under normal circumstances. During periods of unusually high demand, such as during Magnusson Park events or functions held at the adjacent condominium complexes, drivers may need to travel further west on NE 65th St to find parking. Both nearby condominium complexes provide onsite parking for their residents and a small amount of guest parking.
- The consolidated parking may be offset by a long-term increase in bicycle use for commute and recreational trips to the park. The Parks Department would actively promote the new connection to the Magnuson Park professional and residential tenants.

### Will this project affect the number of people who park cars on NE 65<sup>th</sup> while riding on the Burke Gilman Trail?

- SDOT does not anticipate any change in the number of people who park on NE 65<sup>th</sup> and ride on the trail. Improving facilities that lead away from the trail increases the likelihood that riders will feel comfortable parking farther away from the trail entrance.

## Bicycle questions

### How many people ride bicycles on 65<sup>th</sup>?

- SDOT conducted a weekday morning count and found twenty people riding bicycles on NE 65<sup>th</sup> during the morning peak hour and twenty-seven during the afternoon peak hour. This count did not include weekend ridership.

### Do people ride bicycles in Magnuson Park?

- Yes, families with children regularly ride in the park, and the Magnuson Park Administration encourages this activity. For more information, visit <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/magnuson/bike.htm>. People on bikes can ride the Waterfront Promenade Trail loop without sharing space with cars, and can ride the other low-volume paved trails throughout the park. Upcoming paths developed through the SR 520 mitigation project may yield even more places for people to ride on bikes.

### **Will people bicycle on the cycle track or on the sidewalk?**

- Due to the sidewalk's narrow 5-foot width, and the cycle track's physical barrier next to the traffic lane, SDOT anticipates that most people on bikes will use the cycle track.

### **Will the cycle track serve commuters or recreational cyclists?**

- The cycle track is designed around the needs of families with children and other people who are less comfortable biking with cars, but will likely be used by commuters as well. The Parks Department will actively promote the connection to the many organizations that are based in Magnuson Park, such as NOAA, UW, and USGS.

### **What affect will the cycle track have on the speed and number of people on bikes on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St?**

- SDOT does not project an increase in the speed of people on bikes as a result of the project. An increase in families riding with children would decrease the average biking speed. SDOT anticipates that both commute and weekend ridership will gradually rise over time.

### **Will this project affect the interactions of people driving on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St and people on bikes who cross NE 65<sup>th</sup> St on the Burke Gilman Trail?**

- SDOT does not anticipate any changes to rider or driver behavior at the trail intersection as a result of the project, except that it may make drivers more aware of the presence of the trail.

## **Pedestrian Questions**

### **How will this project affect pedestrians?**

- SDOT anticipates that this project will improve conditions for pedestrians by encouraging cautious riders to use the cycle track rather than the sidewalk. The pedestrian improvements to the intersection on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St and Sand Point Way will shorten the crossing distance of NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street, and make it easier for people with strollers, wheelchairs, or other mobility challenges to cross the street and access the park safely.
- See below for a sketch of the new pedestrian alignment.

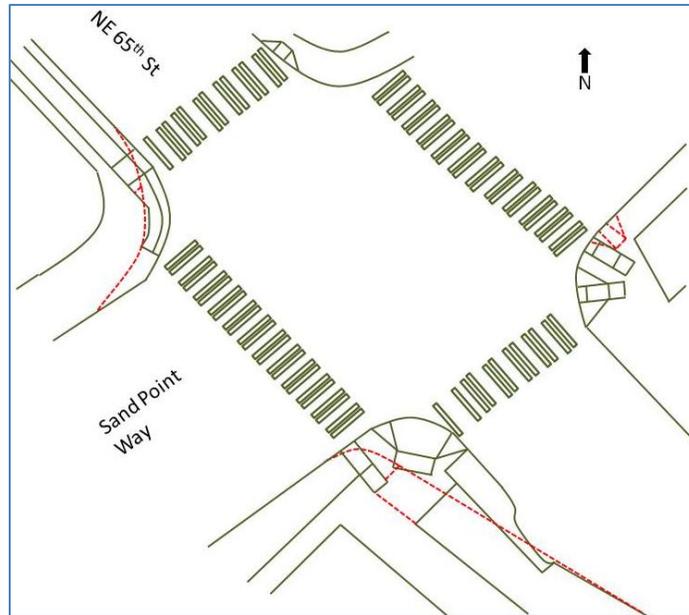


Figure 7: New pedestrian alignment is shown in solid green; existing alignment in dashed red.

## Funding & Scheduling Questions

### How much will the project cost?

- The pedestrian intersection improvements and cycle track would be completed using an estimated \$80,000 of Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) funding. This would leverage the \$35,000 of BMP funding that SDOT recently used to repair the pavement surface on the south side of NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. Seattle Public Utilities is providing additional funding for improvements to the NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street & Sand Point Way intersection.

### How does the cost compare with other transportation projects?

- This project was designed to maximize the efficiency of public transportation dollars by reusing a lane separator no longer needed by another project. Approximately seven hundred feet of lane separation will be achieved while constructing only 30 feet of new curb barriers.
- SDOT spends a small percentage of its budget on bicycle-specific projects; for example, in 2010, approximately two percent of SDOT's budget was dedicated to bicycle-specific projects. Bicycle and pedestrian projects can be accomplished at much lower costs than vehicular projects.

### Could the funding be used for pavement surface improvements or sidewalks along Sand Point Way?

- No. Although the project will benefit pedestrians as well people on bicycles, it is funded exclusively through the Bicycle Master Plan budget.
- We know there is great interest in more sidewalks on Sand Point Way and through the Bridging the Gap levy, progress has been made on building sidewalks along Sand Point Way including these projects:

- Sand Point Way NE between 40<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and 41<sup>st</sup> Ave NE (2007)
- Sand Point Way NE between 47<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 50<sup>th</sup> St (2010)
- Sand Point Way NE between NE 66<sup>th</sup> St to NE 70<sup>th</sup> St (2010)
- Sand Point Way NE from NE 80<sup>th</sup> St to the Burke Gilman Trail Spur (2010)

### **When would the project be built?**

- Installation of the cycle track is currently planned for Fall, 2012. Next steps for the cycle track are:
  - SDOT will gather additional input from the greater community at the Open House on September 17<sup>th</sup>, and will continue to review comments received by phone and e-mail.
  - SDOT will review the comments and conduct an additional review of engineering decisions
  - SDOT will then make a final determination on the project scope and design and send this information to all who have participated in the process or contacted us about the project.
- Pedestrian intersection improvements will be scheduled in conjunction with upcoming improvements within the Park.

### **Maintenance & Utilities Questions**

#### **Will this project require more street lighting?**

- No. There are six streetlights along the route of the project. Additionally, SDOT anticipates that most new riders will be riding during the day.

#### **Will this project affect trash pick-up?**

- SDOT does not foresee any impacts to curbside pick-up. Pick-up would likely be accomplished with an in-lane pickup; Sandpointer residents would leave cans on the curb as they currently do.

#### **What effect will the cycle track have on drainage?**

- The cycle track shouldn't create problems with puddles, as the barrier has opening at regular intervals to prevent alterations to the existing drainage. Drainage should actually improve at the intersection of Sand Point Way and NE 65th, as SPU is implementing stormwater improvements at the SW corner along with the pedestrian improvements.

#### **How will the cycle track be maintained; won't leaves and debris collect in the cycle track?**

- SDOT facilities with similar lane separators have not experienced problems with leaf or trash accumulation. If issues arise, SDOT will consider solutions, including additional street sweeping services.
- The Cascade Bicycle Club has agreed to adopt the cycle track for the first year of its implementation to closely monitor its maintenance needs.

## Policy Questions

### How does this reflect Seattle policies?

- The Magnuson Park Strategic Plan, currently in development, includes enhancing multi-modal connectivity within the park and to the surrounding community as a high priority.
- The current Seattle Bicycle Master Plan calls for increased connections between the Burke Gilman Trail and the NE Seattle neighborhoods. The Bicycle Master Plan also calls for an increase in both commute and non-commute facilities. Outreach for the 2012 Seattle Bicycle Master Plan update has identified safety, separated facilities for all ages and abilities, and connections to popular destinations as key desires from Seattle community members.
- The Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan calls for planning, designing, and building complete streets that accommodate all modes of travel.
- The Seattle Comprehensive Plan calls on the City to:
  - Manage the street system safely and efficiently for all modes and users and seek to balance limited street capacity among competing uses
  - Promote safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the transportation system
  - Allocate street space among various uses (e.g., traffic, transit, trucks, carpools, bicycles, parking, and pedestrians) according to Complete Streets principles
  - Provide, support, and promote programs and strategies aimed at reducing the number of car trips and miles driven (for work and non-work purposes) to increase the efficiency of the transportation system, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
  - Increase walking and bicycling to help achieve City transportation, environmental, community and public health goals
  - Create and enhance safe, accessible, attractive and convenient street and trail networks that are desirable for walking and bicycling
  - Provide and maintain a direct and comprehensive bicycle network connecting urban centers, urban villages and other key locations. Provide continuous bicycle facilities and work to eliminate system gaps
  - Promote energy-efficient transportation.
- The Seattle Parks Foundation's Band of Green report calls for improved connections to parks from the regional trail network, specifically identifying Magnuson Park as a priority and connection types that "provide a sense of security for those we might describe as 'willing but worried,' a demographic that includes children, older adults and inexperienced riders."

## Outreach & Next Steps Questions

### What is SDOT's outreach plan? How is SDOT gathering feedback?

- To date, SDOT has:
  - contacted adjacent property owner's property managers for feedback
  - met with adjacent condominium board members for feedback

- presented the plans to the Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board for feedback
- met with the Parks Department for feedback and to coordinate the project with planned Parks improvements.
- shared plans and met on-site with the Cascade Bicycle Club
- shared plans with the Seattle Parks Foundation.
- SDOT is planning to:
  - Meet with the Magnuson Park Advisory Committee
  - Hold an open house in the Garden Room in the Brig at Magnuson Park on September 17<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. SDOT will mail nearby community members and other stakeholders, and email community members who have previously submitted questions or comments, with information about the open house. Open house details can also be found here: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ne65th.htm>.

### **How will SDOT decide whether to move forward?**

- SDOT will gather additional input from the greater community at the Open House on September 17<sup>th</sup>, and will continue to review comments submitted by phone and by e-mail.
- SDOT will review the comments and conduct an additional review of engineering decisions.
- SDOT will then make a final determination on the project scope and design and send this information to all who have participated in the process.

### **How will the project be evaluated?**

- SDOT will evaluate the project in one year to ensure that it is working as planned. At that time SDOT will examine signal function, arterial volume, and feedback from people who use the road to walk, drive, and bike. SDOT will also make adjustments sooner if there are unforeseen issues.

### **Where can I share my questions or comments?**

- Please send questions or feedback to the SDOT project manager, John Vander Sluis, at [walkandbike@seattle.gov](mailto:walkandbike@seattle.gov), or call (206) 684-7583, or join us at the open house on September 17<sup>th</sup> at Magnuson Park. Open house details can be found here: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ne65th.htm>.