

Q What is the Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Project?

A The 11th Avenue NW to Ballard Locks Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Project began in 2003 with the adoption of a resolution by the Seattle City Council to extend the existing Burke-Gilman Trail across that segment. Also known as the "Missing Link," this section of the trail is vital for providing a connection between the University of Washington, the University District, and the urban centers of Fremont and Ballard. The scope of the project includes determining how the trail can be designed and built to provide for the safety and access of all users, as well as adjoining property and business owners. The trail design process, which is being led by civil engineering design firm, SvR Design Company, has taken place throughout 2007-2008.

Q How is the project funded?

A The City of Seattle is responsible for this segment of the Burke-Gilman Trail, including construction, ongoing improvements, and maintenance. The Mayor's 2009-2010 proposed budget provides enough additional funding to complete the design, purchase the necessary right-of-way, and construct the entire project from 11th Avenue NW to the Ballard Locks. The total estimated cost to complete the "Missing Link" is a little over \$14 million dollars.

Because of some funding constraints, the project is being designed and built in two segments. The first segment to be funded is along the south side of NW 45th Street and Shilshole Avenue NW from 11th Avenue NW to 17th Avenue NW and Ballard Avenue NW. The second segment is from 17th Avenue NW and Ballard Avenue NW to the Ballard Locks.

Q What stage of development is the project in?

A In February 2003, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) completed a technical design study identifying three alternatives for the "Missing Link" of the Burke-Gilman Trail between 11th Avenue NW and the Ballard Locks. After numerous public meetings and discussions with key stakeholders, a route was selected and approved by the Seattle City Council. Beginning in January 2007, design for this portion of the trail was initiated. Trail design for the 11th Avenue NW to 17th Avenue NW section is 90% complete and the 17th Avenue NW to the Ballard Locks portion is 60% complete. Environmental documentation will be completed in 2008, followed by the development of construction documents by 2009.

Q What segment of the trail is being constructed first?

A The City will construct the segment from NW 45th Street and 11th Avenue NW to 17th Avenue NW and Ballard Avenue NW first. A new signal is planned at 17th Avenue NW and Shilshole Avenue NW where the trail crosses Shilshole Avenue NW and connects to Ballard Avenue NW. This segment is scheduled to be advertised for construction in January 2009 and planned to be open to the public in late 2009.

The second segment to be completed is from 17th Avenue NW and Ballard Avenue NW to the Ballard Locks. The trail will follow Ballard Avenue NW to NW Vernon Place, return to Shilshole Avenue NW, cross Shilshole Avenue NW at a new signal, and run along the north side of the railroad tracks to the Ballard Locks. This segment is scheduled to be advertised for construction in fall of 2009. Most of the construction will occur in 2010, with the completed trail being opened to the public in late summer or early fall of 2010.

Q How long will construction last?

A It will take approximately one year to call for bids and construct each trail segment. SDOT's goal is for all construction to be completed in 2010.

Q Will parking be affected during or after construction of the Missing Link?

A SDOT plans will impact approximately 140 parking spaces that are currently within the 1.5 miles of City right-of-way and on City property from 11th Avenue NW to the Ballard Locks. At the eastern end of the project, along Shilshole Avenue NW between 15th and 14th Avenues NW, SDOT plans to add parking spaces through signage and enforcement to make more efficient use of the street area. Generally, commercial parking lots and parking structures associated with new development will offset parking loss throughout the area in the long-term.

Q How are safety concerns being addressed in Ballard's industrial zone?

A Safety is the first priority when building public transportation facilities. SDOT acknowledges that this project presents unique challenges. Signage will be placed along the trail identifying that multiuse trail users are in an industrial zone and to be aware of truck movements. Vehicular and pedestrian movements at 17th Avenue NW and Shilshole Avenue NW and NW Vernon Place and Shilshole Avenue NW will be organized with new traffic lights. Driveways are identified with a change in pavement material.

Q What will happen to driveways and loading docks that intersect the trail?

A Safe and efficient customer and freight access to businesses must be maintained. SDOT will maintain driveway access to all properties. Certain loading docks will be reconfigured in coordination with the property owners to maintain truck access to businesses. Special pavement markings and signage are tools that will be used to draw delivery truck drivers and trail users attention to these areas.

Q How does SDOT plan to handle trail usage and the existing train operation?

A Train operations are expected to continue to function much like they do today. The railroad tracks will be relocated along certain areas to minimize bike crossings and to minimize potential conflicts. The multiuse trail will cross the tracks in one location at a 90-degree angle.

Q What other traffic or roadway improvements will be done in conjunction with the trail?

A Plans are to widen the roadway along NW 45th Street from 11th Avenue NW to 15th Avenue NW. SDOT plans to add a traffic signal and left turn lane at the intersection of Shilshole Avenue NW and 17th Avenue NW to improve existing traffic conditions. A signaled crossing will also be added at the intersection of Shilshole Avenue NW and NW Vernon Place. A local access roadway from 24th Avenue NW east to the former Yankee Diner driveway is being proposed.

Q How do public comments affect the final design?

A Comments received after presentations to business and pedestrian/bicycling organizations, plus interviews with abutting land owners and businesses have influenced the design process. Comments will continue to be taken into consideration for the final design of the trail segments.

Q How can I get more project information and continue to stay involved?

A The design team is willing to talk to interested groups about project updates, design elements, or the design schedule. To learn more about the Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Project, please visit the project website at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/missinglink.htm> or email Kirk T. Jones, SDOT Project Manager, at kirkt.jones@seattle.gov.