

Q What is the Burke-Gilman Trail “Missing Link?”

A The “Missing Link” is a 1.5-mile stretch in the Ballard neighborhood in Northwest Seattle between two existing segments of the Burke-Gilman Trail. This gap in the trail is the last, uncompleted portion of a regional trail system that would provide an approximately 20-mile protected connection between Golden Gardens Park and Kenmore if the Missing Link is completed. The Burke-Gilman Trail currently runs 17.5 miles east from Ballard to Kenmore and approximately 1.75 miles west of Ballard to Golden Gardens Park. The Burke-Gilman Trail is one of the most heavily used pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Seattle. A map of the trail is available at www.seattle.gov/transportation/BGT_maps.htm.

Q What is the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) doing to complete the Missing Link?

A SDOT is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate a range of alternative trail alignments and designs to complete the Missing Link. This evaluation will include an analysis of a number of factors such as impacts to traffic, land use, economics, and historic and cultural resources. In 2013, agencies, local tribes and the general public were invited to submit comments on the scope of the EIS. Another official comment period will occur when SDOT releases the draft EIS in 2016. More information is available at the Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Project webpage at: www.seattle.gov/transportation/BGT_MissingLink.htm.

Q What is the timing of the Missing Link / Burke-Gilman Trail extension project?

A The project team anticipates releasing a draft EIS in early 2016 and a final EIS in late 2016. Following completion of the EIS, and before construction begins, SDOT will need to:

- determine the trail alignment
- look for and secure funding
- complete the trail design

Again, more information is available at the Burke-Gilman Trail Extension Project webpage at: www.seattle.gov/transportation/BGT_MissingLink.htm.

Q What has SDOT been doing to improve safety while the Burke-Gilman Trail EIS is underway?

A Today, Shilshole Avenue NW presents challenges for people walking, biking and driving cars or trucks. The area south of the roadway is underutilized right of way that is currently unpaved or damaged asphalt and used for unrestricted parking. There are also both abandoned and active rail spurs in the right of way to the south of the roadway. Shilshole Avenue NW lacks bike facilities, and both bicyclists and cars share the travel lanes, which makes passing difficult for motorists and bicyclists alike. The South Ballard Safety Improvements Project will repair the damaged south shoulder to help reduce conflict zones between people walking, biking and driving. It will take several years to complete the Burke-Gilman Trail EIS and move forward with construction, so SDOT is making these improvements in South Ballard while concurrently assessing opportunities for completing the Missing Link.

Q What is the scope and schedule of the South Ballard Safety Improvements Project?

A This project began in late 2013 and the first phase of improvements included:

- A two-way bike lane on NW 45th Street between 11th Avenue NW (at the Ballard Fred Meyer) and NW 46th Street (just to the west of the Ballard Bridge)
- Modifying the travel lanes on NW 45th Street between 11th Avenue NW and NW 46th Street to be one-way eastbound for motorists
- Improvements on Ballard Avenue NW at the intersections of 17th Avenue NW and NW 48th Street

Continuing in the spring of 2015, SDOT will repair the 5-foot concrete shoulder on the south side of Shilshole Avenue NW between NW 45th Street and 24th Avenue NW, as well as construct a dedicated bicycle ramp at the southeast corner of the intersection of NW Market Street and 24th Avenue NW. Additionally, SDOT will install a crosswalk at the intersection of NW 46th Street and Shilshole Avenue NW and make modifications to the recently installed two-way bike facility on NW 45th Street in response to community feedback since its installation. These modifications will include widening the bike lanes as they cross the rail tracks under the Ballard Bridge and clarifying the western entrance into the two-way bike lane.

Q What is the cost (and funding source) of the South Ballard Safety Project?

A The total cost for the South Ballard Safety Improvement Project is approximately \$1 million. It is funded by the **Bridging the Gap** transportation levy. This is a priority for SDOT given the safety concerns presented by the current conditions.

Q What will happen to the South Ballard Safety Project improvements once the Missing Link / Burke-Gilman Trail extension project is completed?

A It depends on the alignment that is chosen. SDOT will prepare an EIS that considers a range of alternatives to connect the trail through South Ballard. Depending on which alternative is chosen, some of the South Ballard Safety Project improvements could remain in place or could be replaced by a new trail design. Regardless of the trail alignment that is chosen, these near-term improvements address an immediate need to improve safety and will not preclude any future roadway and trail design.

Q What will happen to the on-street parking on the south side of Shilshole Avenue NW?

A The unrestricted parking on the south side of Shilshole Avenue NW will not be affected by the installation of this 5-foot concrete shoulder.

Q How did SDOT identify the improvements for the South Ballard Safety Project?

A Over the years, SDOT has received community feedback identifying a need for safety improvements in this area. Some of these improvements were highlighted in the South Ballard Transportation Corridor Study completed in 2002. Other improvements were identified in 2012 by SDOT staff through a field walk-through.

Q What is SDOT doing to improve NW Market Street, west of 24th Avenue NW?

- A** NW Market Street may be repaved in 2016 as part of the SDOT’s arterial repaving program. Additional bike and/or pedestrian improvements on NW Market Street may be addressed as part of that project.

Q How does this work address needs identified in the Bicycle, Freight and Pedestrian Master plans?

- A** As a safety project, the South Ballard Safety improvements contribute to improving our city’s streets for all roadway users including those who walk, bike and drive.

The **Bicycle Master Plan** calls for an off-street facility along Shilshole Avenue NW and SDOT’s Bicycle Master Plan 2017 Implementation Plan calls for a completion of the Missing Link. The South Ballard Safety improvements make near-term investments that do not preclude future planning efforts.

Shilshole Avenue NW is identified as one of Seattle’s major truck streets and the **Freight Master Plan** update is currently underway, expected to be released in 2015. Neither the two-way bike facility on NW 45th Street nor the 5-foot shoulder on Shilshole Avenue NW will interfere with the existing freight plan. The Missing Link EIS will evaluate impacts to freight routes.

The **Pedestrian Master Plan** from 2009 ranks Shilshole Avenue NW between 24th Avenue NW and 46th Avenue NW as a high priority area with opportunity for improvements ‘along the roadway.’ This classification encompasses sidewalk repair and maintenance, buffer zones, traffic calming, transit access, stairways and over/underpasses and construction zones. Shilshole Avenue NW is also identified as one with high potential demand to generate pedestrian traffic. The South Ballard Safety improvements are compatible with this plan.

Q Can I provide feedback on the Missing Link EIS or the South Ballard Safety Project?

- A** SDOT is moving forward with the South Ballard Safety improvements and welcomes feedback as the project moves into construction. You can contact the project team at **SouthBallard@seattle.gov** or at **206-615-0925**.

The Missing Link EIS solicited scoping comments in 2013 and is currently working to synthesize the feedback that was received. The project team welcomes continued feedback from the community as the project continues. An additional official comment period will occur when SDOT releases the draft EIS in 2016.