

Q What is the Burke Gilman Trail Extension Project?

A The 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 from 11th Avenue NW to the Ballard Locks. 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, will take 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. Funding for project design comes through a federal grant and the City’s Bridging-the-Gap funds. SDOT currently has \$2 million dollars to fund the design work. The City will continue to seek grants and other funding sources to cover the construction expenses of this important regional amenity. The estimated cost of the entire “Missing Link” trail including design and construction is \$11 million dollars.

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. Preliminary design is almost complete and environmental documentation will be completed in early 2008, followed by the development of construction documents.

Q What segment of the trail is being constructed first?

A The City is currently focusing on securing the funding for the construction of the first segment from NW 45th Street and 11th Avenue NW to 17th Avenue NW and Ballard Avenue NW.

Q How long will construction last?

A Once construction funds become available, it will take approximately one year to call for bids and construct the trail. SDOT’s goal is for construction to take place in 2008-2009.

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

A SDOT plans to remove approximately 150 parking spaces that are currently within the 1.5 miles of City right-of-way from 11th Avenue NW to the Ballard Locks. To mitigate parking impacts, SDOT plans to add parking spaces through signage and enforcement to make more efficient use of the street area. Surface parking lots and parking structures associated with new development should also help to offset parking loss 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 offers unique challenges. SDOT along with a team of experts has looked at design alternatives to help inform trail users, cyclists, and industrial operations of how to safely cross driveways or enter and exit properties.

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. Current loading docks make it difficult for the multi-use trail to function safely. Designers are looking at how loading docks can be reconfigured and marked to provide safe coexistence of trail users and trucks. Special pavement markings and signage are tools that will likely be used to draw 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 it does today. Efforts will be made to encourage crossing railroad tracks at as close to a 90-degree angle as possible, in order to minimize possible accidents.

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. At the intersection of Shilshole Avenue NW and 17th Avenue NW, it is proposed to add a traffic signal and left turn lane to improve existing traffic conditions.

Q How do public comments affect the final design?

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

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/ballardcorridor.htm> or email Kirk T. Jones, SDOT Project Manager, at kirk.t.jones@seattle.gov.