



Martin Luther King Jr Way Protected Bike Lane

Creating a new bike connection and a safer street

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

August 11, 2020 Online Drop-in Session

Community Member/Question

SDOT Answers

Joseph Roberts asked:

Safety of PBLs are often impaired by accumulated leaves and glass. Can you address your plan for PBL maintenance?

Over the last year or two we've acquired specialized equipment that can fit in the protected bike lanes and that's made sweeping and maintenance a lot easier than it has been in the past. In a couple of particular narrow areas, we might still have to get people out there to clear up by hands with brooms, but protected bike lane maintenance is definitely a priority and something that we've been improving over the last year or two.

Can you address how you will handle intersections and reduce risk of right-hook collisions with turning motor vehicles?

At some of the intersections that have a high volume of vehicles that are turning right, we will be using signal to separate people so essentially if you are traveling through the area straight on a bike you will have a separate signal phase from vehicles that would be turning right. This is at several locations; at other locations it will be through signage and using posts paint and other materials to help guide people through their turns.

Sidewalks shared between pedestrians and bikes can be uncomfortable and unsafe for both. Can you address how you will reduce conflicts on the section near Plum St? Mere paint is rarely effective. Grade separation?

Near Plum Street, pedestrians will use the existing sidewalks and people riding bikes and scooters should use the new protected bike lanes. The existing sidewalk will be grade separated from the new protected bike lane via the existing curb.

Your current designs show 5' lane widths. Will this be preserved throughout or are there pinch points where the lane will be narrower?

For now, our goal is to have it be at least five feet wide. We have no pinch point where it goes beneath five feet if something does have to get pinched I think it'll probably be on that block between S Massachusetts St and S Grand St, but right now the minimum width for the bike is five foot and in most places throughout the corridor it's either gonna be six foot or seven foot.

Would you consider grade separation between peds and bikes? It works really well on B-G by UW and works much better than paint.

We will be looking at the costs of grade separating the northbound bike lane and the pedestrian lane between S McClellan St and S Bayview St as we approach the 30% design milestone.



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Steven Feher asked:

Will the bikes stopping at MLK & Walker be set back from the cross walk? There are a large concentration of Blind and DeafBlind residents and employees of the Lighthouse that cross that intersection and need unobstructed path at the crosswalk.

Will signs be posted for cars and cyclists that there are a large concentration of Blind and DeafBlind Seattleites crossing intersections? Thank you for this! More Soon!

People in the bike lanes approaching a red light at S Walker St will be stop at a stop bar set back from the crosswalk, similar to where the stop bar in the general purpose travel lanes is today.

None are currently in the concept design, but it's certainly something we can look at as we work with the community and the design becomes more detailed.

Bob Svercl asked:

It was mentioned that concrete barriers may be used in certain segments instead of flex posts. What would this look like?

Design of the concrete barriers is yet to be determined. It could either be a poured curb which would look similar to some of the other designs that you may have seen throughout the city. It could also take the form of something that's prefabricated so think more of a jersey barrier type design and we'll hopefully be able to present what that barrier will look like at the next meeting. We definitely want to include that concreted protection at a couple key spots throughout the project area where we think additional separation is really going to help out both people driving and people using the bike lane and this and also the sidewalks next to it as well.



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Robert Getch asked:

Will the new bike lanes be safe enough for Cargo Bikes or other large family style bikes?

Our goal is that they would be. I think likely the only difficulty that would be encountered for larger bikes may be some of the bike boxes but we can take a look at that with the widths it should work with pretty much everything that people are riding around Seattle today, including some of the adaptive bicycles and tricycles that are a little bit wider than standard.

What is the age and abilities this area has been designed for usage or would be ideal?

When we work on protected bike lanes we want them to work for everyone. We want them to be in all ages and abilities facility so when we're working on the design we try and make them simple, clear and easy to understand so we hope that the protected bike lane does we are able to build it to a level that it can be considered all ages and abilities. We want people from 8 to 80 to feel comfortable using it and to understand how it works and how to use it not just biking along it but also driving next to it and walking next to it as well.

How does SDOT determine sweeping priority for the PBL areas?

PBLs across the city are typically swept on a seasonal basis, although pandemic-related staffing shortages have delayed some of this work in 2020. Small street sweepers are used for most of the protected bike lane network, but some location in downtown are swept by hand.

What were the materials being used for the PBL protection? Plastic bollards or something else?

Plastic bollards / flexible posts will be used to separate the bike lane from general purpose lanes in most locations, but we are aiming to maximize the use of a concrete curb as separation in areas with higher speeds.

Does SDOT plan to do any outreach to help educate people about the new travel option when it opens, hopefully in coordination with Sound Transit?

Yes, we will continue to do community engagement throughout all the phases of the project and plan to have coordinated outreach with Sound Transit to educate about the new travel options coming to the neighborhood.



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Brice Maryman asked:

How will that connection between the greenway and the north end of the on-street PBLs [look]? Many riders will cut through the Thurgood Marshall parking lot. Is there a plan to add a concrete sidewalk there?

Also, can SDOT please install no parking signs at proper setbacks from S Judkins St and 26th Ave S for this dangerous, blind intersection on a SRTS?

Elizabeth de Regt asked:

I'm curious if any of the pedestrian improvements from MLK to Mt Baker Station will happen earlier than 2023? The beg button bypass during Covid has been a life changer in the area, and if even this could remain it would be a big help.

How does this project mesh with the ultimate uncrossing of Rainier and MLK?

SDOT Answers

The design for the intersection of S Judkins St and MLK Jr. Way S is still under development, but there will likely be a bicycle turn box to help cyclists use the traffic signal to turn from the northbound protected bike lane on MLK Jr. Way S to S Judkins St. An alternate route would be to use the I-90 trail to reach the Neighborhood Greenway. There are no plans to add a concrete sidewalk near Thurgood Marshall Elementary as part of this project.

This project isn't proposing any changes at this intersection, but we can pass that idea along to our Curbspace team.

The current schedule has been accelerated with these improvements beginning construction as early as fall 2021.

The Mt Baker Station Area has been the focus of several planning processes in the past 10 years in which the community has articulated a vision for a thriving, diverse, sustainable, and affordable town center. The long-term Accessible Mt. Baker vision that includes realigning both Rainier Ave S and MLK Jr. Way S remains unfunded and is not planned for implementation within the next few years. The proposed protected bike lanes on MLK Jr. Way S are one of several near-term actions to improve travel near Mt. Baker station, and do not preclude future projects.



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Adrian Down asked:

How will this project integrate with the I-90 trail? Will it be possible to easily make a left from the bike lane onto the I-90 trail?

The existing curb ramps at the MLK Jr. Way S and I-90 trail intersection will be used by bikes connecting between the new PBLs and the existing trail. People waiting for a crossing signal will continue to wait on the trail rather than a new location in the road.

What is your maintenance plan for the flexible posts that are used to delineate the PBL? Damaged posts bent over into the bike lane have become a hazard for people biking on the S Alaskan St PBL.

Flexible posts are periodically replaced at locations throughout the city, often during the winter. Damaged flexible posts that are a hazard should be reported to SDOT through Find it Fix It or 206-684-ROAD (7623). As funds and availability allow, protected bike lane buffers that use flexible posts are replaced with more durable materials.

Casey Busch asked:

Has design taken into account the amount of car wrecks in the Massachusetts area and how that might affect bikers? Is there any kind of actions that will be taken to keep bikers safe? The wrecks total cars so I don't think the pipes would protect bikers.

The concept design includes additional signal phases to improve safety for all users at S Massachusetts St and MLK Jr. Way S.



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Sarah Udelhofen asked:

Is there any possibility for the portions that have flex posts in the design to be changed to more robust/safe options (curbs)?

Flex posts are frequently run over and go missing quite fast – is SDOT looking into any alternatives to flex posts?

Mike Muller asked:

What was the reasoning for the north end start of the proposed protected bike lane? Why not bring it up to Jackson?

SDOT Answers

Replacing proposed flex posts with concrete curbs along more of the project area will be considered as part of this project as funding allows.

Flex posts are the preferred delineator to use in the buffer between a protected bike lane and the adjacent general purpose lane when funding does not allow for curbs or planters. Other delineators are used in special cases when a flex post isn't practical or as an artistic treatment, but flex posts have proven to have the right mix of visibility, durability, and affordability. Flexible posts are periodically replaced at locations throughout the city, often during the winter. Damaged flexible posts that are a hazard should be reported to SDOT through Find it Fix It or 206-684-ROAD (7623). As funds and availability allow, protected bike lane buffers that use flexible posts are replaced with more durable materials.

Our goal with this project was to get people to the I-90 trail and going a little bit past that to Judkins St gives people another option with which they can use to get to the Central Area Neighborhood Greenway. There are basic bike lanes on MLK Way today. They could use the maintenance and we're aware that they're not an all ages and abilities facility. Your best bet for continuing north at last for the short term would be to take the Central Area Neighborhood Greenway.



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Jeff Blair asked:

Is there any way to separate cyclists and pedestrians on the northbound stretch between McClellan and Bayview?

In that area I believe we're proposing an essentially 11 feet of space with six feet being given to people walking and walking in both directions and five feet being available for people biking northbound. We're currently planning on having a detectable warning strip as well as symbols for a person walking and in person biking to help mark out dedicated space for the two user groups. You might have seen that detectable yellow strip we're looking at a couple of locations downtown. It's present all along Westlake cycle track near South Lake Union. It's also present near the Seventh Ave protected bike lane.

Jimmy Hurd asked:

Tell us about the decision-making process. Who will make the final decision on the design?

Decision making is being made by stop for the final decisions about various project elements based on how well they function for safety, for connectivity, for feasibility and cost. We have been working with the public over the spring. We're doing a check-in now and then we're going to take what we're learning right now and then take that and use it to improve our design. We'll probably next be reaching out to the public probably in October once we've developed this a little bit further to get more comments and reactions. I believe the final sign-off would likely be made by the director of SDOT, Sam Zimbabwe. It could also be made by my supervisor, Jim Curtin, who assists us with projects that are in this phase of early design.

Based on what I heard today, the parking will be preserved on the west side of MLK. Correct?

Most parking on the west side of MLK between S Massachusetts St and S Holgate St will be preserved. A few spots will be removed near the bus stop, intersections, and driveways to provide better visibility to people driving. All parking on the east side of MLK will be removed, and some parking will be added to the block between S Holgate St and S Plum St where there currently is none.



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How many residents who live just south of Massachusetts on the west side of MLK have you spoken with? Is it possible to go door-to-door to the residents because they are the ones that are directly impacted by the project? Specifically, those residents on MLK south of Massachusetts.

Lillian Young asked:

Is it the intention to change the speed limit of MLK Way to 25mph? i.e. from (Madison) Central District thru Mt. Baker, and to Columbia City?

Can you describe a little bit more about the Bayview/MLK intersection?

SDOT Answers

Thus far, we have been communicating with folks via mailers, online materials, and signage in the community. We will continue to conduct community outreach throughout the life of the project and plan to do additional outreach to residential neighbors along the corridor.

I'm not sure about segment by segment, but I believe that at least in this area we did recently reduce the speed limit to 25 miles per hour. I think that went out March and either March or April. We've not yet done a study to see whether that is leading to changes in the speeds that driver are actually taking just because everything is kind of weird due to the pandemic and we expect there to be fewer people driving and at a higher speed but we do want to take a look and see how the speed limit change has affected drives. We also want this project to effectively change the way that the road looks and acts today but it is something that people who are driving will feel natural and comfortable traveling at 25 miles per hour as opposed to the old speed of which was averaging about 35 to 38 miles per hour.

At the Bayview and MLK intersection, probably the biggest change that we are proposing is adding a new southern leg to that crosswalk. Right now, there's a leg on the north side, there's a leg on the west side, but there's no crosswalk on the south side because there's no sidewalk. If we are able to fill that gap as part of the project then we'd be introducing that new crosswalk leg which included new pedestrian signal and also new programs to help people get to the existing sidewalk and also the new multi-use path.



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Mark Foltz asked:

What is the possibility of an AAA connection to Jefferson Park?

This project will not directly connect to Jefferson Park on Beacon Hill. Another SDOT project prioritized after citywide community outreach in 2019 is the Beacon Hill Bike Route project, which is aiming to build an all ages and abilities connection between the I-90 trail and Beacon Hill. Once the Beacon Hill Bike Route and the MLK Jr. Way S Protected Bike Lanes are constructed, an AAA route would be possible between Mt. Baker and Jefferson Park via the I-90 trail.

The I-90 trail needs improved signage to direct people to various connections (Judkins Park, MLK, Beacon Hill Greenway, Central Area Greenway). Who is responsible for wayfinding and can you work with them to make improvements?

Typically, SDOT updates bicycle wayfinding signs near projects to help guide users to and from the new or improved facility. In this case we will likely need to work with our partners at WSDOT and Seattle Parks and Recreation to update signage along the I-90 trail.

Dave Slager asked:

Will the MLK/Rainier intersection have full protection for bike lanes, and full curb ramps and protected signal phases for bikes and peds?

The MLK and Rainier intersection we're still working on that design, but we are including many of the what are called the Accessible Mt Baker near-term festering improvements those were identified last winter as part of a public process so that will include a new crosswalk on the southern leg of the Rainier and MLK intersection as well as curb ramps and other improvements.



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Brie Gyncild asked:

Are bike signals planned in the corridor?

And, though this isn't about a bike signal, when I wait in the left turn lane on Bayview to turn onto MLK, the sensor doesn't pick up my bike. Can we get that fixed soon? (Separate from the PBL project)

Bicycle signal heads will be used at several locations.

The project will upgrade detection at several signals, but in the meantime, we can pass that on to our signal team to see if sensitivity at that location can be increased.

Claire Taylor asked:

Is there any plan to improve connections between the neighborhood greenway up the hill from MLK?

Can you talk about how you will protect bikes on the sharp u-turn from northbound MLK to Bayview?

Currently there are no improvements planned for Judkins St just west of the intersection with MLK Jr. Way S, small improvements may be added later in the design process.

Northbound allocated to Bayview I believe that is the location where we're proposing the concrete barrier we look at the way that vehicles are making that turn and that's definitely one of the areas where we want to have concrete between the different user groups.



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Emily Davis asked:

I hope you can go over how this can connect to Mt Baker and Beacon Hill Greenways. Very excited to see this project as it partially closes a gap in pedestrian/bike friendly infrastructure between the aforementioned greenways and those north of I-90.

Do you know what year construction is expected to happen?

SDOT Answers

The beacon hill greenway from here probably your best bet would be to take the proposed MLK Way protected bike lane up to the I-90 path and then cut west and that provides a pretty direct connection. To the Beacon Hill Greenway as for Mount Baker today what you could do is you could take Mt Baker Boulevard to the intersection of MLK and Rainier and then get on the protected bike lane at that point. In the future we're looking at what we have and extension to the Mt Baker Greenway that's pretty much wrapped up with design that we should be building over the next couple of years and that would provide a much more direct connection either at the I-90 trail or at S Massachusetts Street.

Our goal for this project has been to have it ready by the time that the Judkins Park Station opens, which is in 2023. Now that we are starting to get the design developed, we can begin to work on the schedule. Right now, we're thinking that we can begin construction as early as next year with the goal of having construction done by 2022. From what I've heard, Sound Transits whole Eastlink project or at least Judkins Park Station is either on schedule or ahead of schedule. So, we definitely want to be able to meet that by the time it opens.