

Beacon Ave S / 15th Ave S Safety Project

Frequently Asked Questions

March 16, 2023

Safety

- 1) **When will the safety improvements be complete, and when will the bike lane construction begin?**
 - a. We are actively working on scheduling the interim project with the goal to begin construction in June 2023. The larger capital project is in the early planning stages. We will reach preliminary design milestones in April 2023. These plans will be finalized by the end of 2023 and will likely begin construction after Spring 2024.
- 2) **Why are you doing these improvements now rather than including them in the broader project construction**
 - a. During our outreach efforts in the Fall and Winter of 2022, we heard numerous complaints about the safety of the 15th Ave S area. In direct response to these concerns, we wanted to quickly build safety improvements ahead of the larger capital projects to help the community more immediately.
- 3) **Why did you decide to focus the safety improvements on this section of 15th Ave S, and how did you decide upon specific improvements to make?**
 - a. Our focus along this specific stretch of roadway was decided based on the greater needs of this area discovered in our evaluations and safety concerns expressed by community members. Other segments of this project like Beacon Ave S have experienced more upgrades due to development in projects like the Neighborhood Street Fund. With the existing conditions on 15th Ave S including fast-moving traffic and narrow sidewalks from vegetation overgrowth, we feel that this area deserves improvements. Using knowledge about safe road design, we selected features to address the specific concerns about safety crossing the roadway and speeding cars. Through our project development review process, we decided that speed cushions would be the best to slow fast moving traffic and adding a rapid flashing beacon at the crosswalk at 14th Ave S and 15th Ave S would improve visibility for pedestrians. In addition, SDOT is installing paint and post curb bulbs to visually narrow the roadway to slow down vehicles and create better visibility for pedestrians crossing the street.
- 4) **What will be done about cut-through traffic and speeding on nearby side streets?**
 - a. After the improvements are built along 15th Ave S this spring/summer, we will conduct a speed study to compare before and after numbers. We plan to look at 14th Ave S to make sure speeding has not increased on this roadway from cars using it instead of 15th Ave S. If we see this roadway is being used as a new cut through, we will look at safety improvements to install there.
- 5) **Will traffic circles be a part of future project designs? Maybe on side streets to slow traffic?**

- a. Currently traffic circles are not a part of the future project design. Neighbors can request these on side streets by contacting our Neighborhood Traffic calming program: Neighborhood.Traffic@seattle.gov.
- 6) **Will there be accessibility improvements (such as curb ramps) as part of this project?**
 - a. Yes, this larger capital project will build new curb ramps, new sidewalks, and new curbs.
- 7) **What justification does SDOT have for not speeding up the implementation of Beacon Ave S Safe Street project on an arterial (a major road that carries large volumes of traffic) that is part of the high injury network, and is a route that has no bike facilities? Will this project help address the safety crisis in our streets, with more people being hit and killed every year?**
 - a. Safety concerns like these are the reason why we are building this interim project ahead of the larger capital project. We want this dangerous area to be safer for people walking and biking as quickly as possible, so we are doing all we can to construct these safety improvements within the next few months. Both the interim project and larger capital project provide huge safety benefits for the community. This Summer, we will be aiming to reduce traffic speeds by visually narrowing roads and installing speed cushions. We will also improve visibility of people crossing the street with curb bulbs, rapid flashing beacons, and formalized parking. The larger project will improve the safety of bikers and pedestrians with a protected bike lane and newly painted crosswalks.
- 8) **Why isn't the S Walker Street intersection part of this safety project despite concerns raised by survey participants?**
 - a. During our initial scoping period, we prioritized crosswalks closest to schools for improvements such as curb bulbs and flashing beacons. We can revisit this S Walker Street intersection to see if it meets the design standards for adding this area to our scope. These standards consider destinations in the area, the number of people crossing, and the number of vehicles on the road.
- 9) **Based on previous uses of speed cushions, what are the expected decreases in illegal speeding along 15th Ave S as a result of this project**
 - a. We expect a large reduction in top-end speeders as a result of the speed cushions being installed. We believe these speed cushions, as well as the visual narrowing of roads from painted curb bulbs and flashing beacons, will slow the average pace of traffic to the 25-mph speed limit. Previous uses of speed cushions, one example being on Lake Washington Blvd near the Arboretum, give us confidence that this will be an effective way of reducing speeding while allowing emergency vehicles to travel efficiently.
- 10) **Was the intersection of S College St and 15th Ave S considered for inclusion in the safety project?**
 - a. This intersection was not considered because it already has a stoplight. Speeding was a large factor in deciding where improvements are being made, and since drivers come to a stop here, this intersection was not seen as priority for the interim project. The larger capital project will include this intersection, with plans to restripe existing crosswalks, install ADA curb ramps, and make other needed improvements.
- 11) **Will there be signs, better lighting, trimming of trees, etc.? Where will these safety enhancements be?**
 - a. Part of this work includes tree trimming. There are pictures around the neighborhood and on the project website of what changes can be expected. The map on the project

website shows where we plan to construct these changes. As we formalize design plans, we will post these designs on our project website, and as these changes are implemented, we will upload photos of the finished improvements.

- 12) **What type of divider will be used to protect the bike lane, and will there be a temporary, pop-up bike lane, like what was done in SODO?**
 - a. We are looking at installing a concrete barrier for this project. Currently, we have not evaluated constructing a temporary bike lane due to our commitments to move forward with our planning and community outreach for more long-term changes.
- 13) **Is it possible to add a leading pedestrian interval at the traffic lights intersection at S College St and 15th Ave S during this year's improvements?**
 - a. With the larger capital project, we are planning to do some of this work, but it may not be possible for the interim project. We appreciate the suggestion, and we will evaluate whether we are able to add this to the interim safety project.

Parking

- 14) **When and how long will parking be restricted on 15th Ave S to install the safety improvements?**
 - a. Currently parking is not allowed in 20 feet of all sides of an intersection. This upcoming interim project will install signs to enforce this. Additionally, our crews will be street sweeping along 15th Ave S in five stages between April 17 and May 3, 2023. While each of these sections is being swept, parking will be restricted between 9 AM and 4 PM Monday to Friday on both sides of 15th Ave S. There will be no restrictions for evening and weekend parking. During the larger capital project, parking will be removed on the east side of 15th Ave S from 14th Ave S to S College St. Visit the project website for a [map of this area](#).
- 15) **You mentioned that 100 parking spots will be lost. Where will those be and how are you deciding which parking areas will be impacted?**
 - a. These 100 parking spaces are located along 15th Ave S between 14th Ave S and S College St. This is due to the narrow roadway width, which cannot accommodate past uses and the new uses proposed in the capital project.
- 16) **What does it mean to formalize existing parking, and why are you formalizing parking if it will be replaced by a bike lane in the future?**
 - a. We are trying to mitigate the loss of parking on 15th Ave S from these safety improvements by making better use of existing parking space on side roads. Dirt paths being used as parking on side streets will be looked at as potential areas to re-organize parked cars in a way that can fit more vehicles. This formalization will also enforce parking rules that are designed to improve safety. One example is creating proper signage that people cannot park within 20 feet of an intersection, which improves visibility of people crossing the road.
- 17) **How do you plan to accommodate the increase of parked cars in the neighborhood from the construction of apartment buildings with less on-site parking than can accommodate their tenants? Will there be an updated parking study?**

- a. We are looking at expanding the Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) 17 around this area. We are working on a parking management strategy which will consider multiple tactics to efficiently use existing parking space on side streets. We will also analyze alternatives to see what can be built to help mitigate the increased concentration of parked cars.
- 18) With no side streets between S Golf Dr and S Atlantic St, where will these residents park?**
- a. This section of road has been identified as our most constrained. We are looking at formalizing parking in the surrounding areas to help accommodate this. Many of the residents in this area have driveways and garages, and we will be reaching out to individual residents who do not have access to their own parking spaces to help solve this problem.
- 19) Can you discuss more about the parking study findings?**
- a. We conducted an independent, third-party parking study of North Beacon Hill during the Summer of 2022. Looking specifically at 15th Ave S and the surrounding area, our study found these nearby streets can absorb the amount of lost parking on 15th Avenue South.

Community

- 20) For folks who live on 15th Ave S, how will we know what to expect during construction?**
- a. We will be actively reaching out to neighbors directly impacted by construction. This will include delivering construction notices to nearby residences and posting informational project flyers around the area. The best way to stay up to date is to subscribe to the [project Listserv](#) where we send out information regularly.
- 21) How is this project going to benefit the people who live in Beacon Hill (vs. people who travel through it)?**
- a. Both the interim safety project and the larger capital project will make these roadways safer for all modes of travel, whether you are walking, biking, rolling, or driving. SDOT is partnering with multiple programs to deliver new sidewalks, upgraded signals, new curb ramps and crossing improvements, and protected bike lanes.
- 22) If community members are opposed to a bike route, why are you moving ahead with it?**
- a. This project originated from a 2019 effort with the Department of Neighborhoods to respond to community concerns about the equity of the Bike Master Plan Implementation Plan. Through a large outreach process, North Beacon Hill was identified as needing a safe biking connection. Seattle City council then found construction funding for this project due to the amount of community support for the project. While some community members may be opposed to the bike element of the project, there are still other benefits from the project, such as new sidewalks, to be supportive of.
- 23) When and how can I give feedback on the project? And how will I know when you're making decisions?**
- a. You can visit our project webpage to learn about project updates and sign up to receive project updates via email. We will host a public meeting when we reach 30% design to

share more information and solicit community feedback. The project schedule is also posted on the website.

24) Will project construction affect local businesses and if so, what will SDOT do to mitigate those impacts?

- a. Unfortunately, road construction can sometimes interrupt access for certain periods. SDOT knows this and will work with specific impacted business to ensure they have sufficient notice ahead of time, and certain mitigation tools can be implemented to ensure business can continue as usual.

25) Given that we have data that shows that men of color are as likely to bike as white men, why is SDOT officially representing cyclists as white men rather than pushing back against probably false statements?

- a. Our mentioning of cyclists in this way represents many local community members' concerns of gentrification-related displacement. Some view the construction of bike lanes in this area as a project benefitting those who do not live in the neighborhood, and we feel that representing those opinions is important. We do understand that white men are not the only cyclists and that there are many local cyclists, many of whom are People of Color. We did not intend to support any false claims and we will do our best to represent both perspectives as this project moves forward.

26) How will you address the racial and economic equity concerns of residents, particularly around parking losses?

- a. We are taking concerns of racial and economic equity and gentrification seriously. We want to work with residents to identify ways to reconfigure the parking and minimize losses. We hope that residents understand the shared benefit of improved pedestrian safety and will work with us to create a satisfying outcome on each of these issues.

Project Information

27) Will you have to undo/redo some of these improvements to accommodate future bike route construction?

- a. Many of these improvements happening ahead of the larger capital project will stay in the current version being installed. We are currently in an early design phase with the larger project, so changes to this plan may require adjustments to some of this earlier work if necessary.

28) What additional work is planned?

- a. The larger capital project (Beacon Ave S and 15th Ave S Safety Project) will create a safe and continuous bike route from Jefferson Park to Downtown Seattle, improving access to the Beacon Hill light rail station, the Pacific Medical Center, and El Centro De La Raza, and more! The new protected bike lanes will connect to the Dr Jose Rizal bridge, travel south along 15th Ave S, and turn south to travel along Beacon Ave S, terminating at Jefferson Park, or S Spokane St. In addition to the protected bike lane, this project plans to improve the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Greenway crossing at Beacon Ave S and S Hanford St and make safety enhancements to Beacon Ave S including new sections of sidewalk and upgraded bus stops.

29) You mentioned that the project is at 30% design, what does that mean?

- a. We are working towards the 30% design milestone and hope to reach it by late March or early April. 30% design milestone is the beginning of the design phase. Before this 30% milestone is considered the planning phase.

30) Where is the funding for this project coming from?

- a. The funding for this project is coming from the Levy to Move Seattle, as well as a federal grant from the Puget sound regional council.

31) Will trees need to be cut down for this project? And if so, will SDOT be replanting trees?

- a. At this early stage of the project, we're not able to confirm yet whether the project will impact any trees in the neighborhood. We work closely with our Arborist from Urban Forestry to assess the health of impacted tree before we decide whether it should be removed. Once a tree is identified to be removed, we will reach out to adjacent neighbors and community and post the tree at least two weeks prior to removal. We do replant trees to nearby locations should they be removed.

32) Is there a chance that a more permanent bike route will not happen through the design process?

- a. We have conducted numerous events and community walks. Our Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation, Greg Spotts, is in full support of moving forward with the project. We can confidently say that we are moving forward with both projects—the interim safety project and the permanent capital project.

33) Do you expect reductions in traffic volume as a result of this project?

- a. Yes, we do expect traffic reductions. Specifically, we are expecting a reduction in traffic from people using 15th Ave S to avoid traffic on Interstate 5.

34) How will you measure success in terms of bike route use before and after bike lanes are installed?

- a. As part of our design process, we collected traffic counts on vehicles, trucks, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Once our capital project is installed, we will take these traffic counts again to measure for changes in use. In general, adding protected bike lanes does increase the number of bicyclists traveling through the area, so we expect to see increases in that count. For specific data on these traffic counts, please reach out to our project inbox.