

Georgetown-Downtown Safety Project

Question Bank for Virtual Public Meeting

March 30, 2023

Questions

- 1) Why doesn't the project include additional improvement around South Lucile Street?**
 - a. Due to time and budget, the project scope is focused on linking from Georgetown into Downtown and so did not consider significant improvements in central Georgetown. In order to connect this project with Georgetown to South Park Connection we will evaluate a route through the heart of Georgetown, which will be an opportunity for more significant improvements. As it is today, approximately 30% of the two-mile-long project's budget will be invested in the immediate vicinity of South Lucile St.

- 2) Why did you decide to place the bike route on 6th Ave, vs. a better lit and more inviting street such as 4th or 1st?**
 - a. This project is one of two active projects providing a better place to bike in SODO, along with the East Marginal Way project on the western edge of SODO. A route on 4th Ave S or 1st Ave S would be close to this facility that will be under construction soon, leaving the eastern side of SODO without an improved bike route. Additionally, 1st and 4th have higher vehicle and transit volumes that would be impacted by a project, and 4th Ave S has an active rehabilitation project to repair the bridge structure over the Argo rail yard.

- 3) Are there plans to install better lighting on 6th Ave to keep people safe?**
 - a. We are evaluating installing supplemental lighting on 6th Ave between S Snoqualmie St and S Nevada St to illuminate the proposed off-street bike lane. These would be pedestrian scale lights separate from existing streetlights. The other location we are evaluating for pedestrian scale lighting is the intersection of Airport Way S and S Lucile St.

- 4) Why is there a gap between this project and the Georgetown to South Park Trail Connection Project?**
 - a. The most direct route between the south end of the Georgetown to Downtown safety project and the north end of the Georgetown to South Park Trail Connection project is via Airport Way S. Installing a bike facility on this corridor will take careful collaboration with the community and local businesses as we evaluate trade-offs with parking removal, transit performance, and traffic delay. Other routes would require a similar planning process with the community, a railroad, and other stakeholders. Due to the need for an immediate improvement in SODO and the end of the Levy to Move Seattle in 2024, we have focused this project on making that initial Georgetown to Downtown connection but hope to soon begin planning on connecting the two.

- 5) There are loads of trucks that use this route daily, how will you ensure this design will be safe for cyclists, pedestrians, and truck drivers?**
 - a. We are taking the needs of all users of the corridor into account when planning and designing the project while recognizing that SODO is an industrial working neighborhood. Barrier types between people biking and driving will be concrete for much of the project in order to provide the maximum protection possible. We are restricting ample space near driveways and intersections to provide extra visibility so that all road users can see each other. We're also

designing corners so that trucks can continue to make them without blocking oncoming traffic, albeit at a slower speed. Finally, on the 6th Ave S portion of the project commonly used by drayage truck drivers for parking, we are installing an off-street protected bike lane to preserve this parking.

6) Will there be parking impact?

- a. Parking would be removed on the south side of S Alaska St, the east side of the 6th Ave S between S Alaska St and S Snoqualmie St, and both sides of 6th Ave S between S Nevada St and S Industrial Way. Parking will be removed from the east side of 6th Ave S north of S Industrial Way, and the current restrictions on parking through the curved segment will be maintained except for a few parking spaces we are adding to the west side of 6th Ave S. Parking will be removed on the west side of 6th Ave S south of S Horton St and the east side north of S Horton St.

Other design features such as the off-street protected bike lanes enables the project to preserve a long stretch of parking on both sides. Finally, we are working with other SDOT programs to evaluate designated truck parking on nearby streets in SODOs.

7) How will the protected bike lane interface with driveways to businesses? Many of these businesses are serviced by large trucks.

- a. We will be adding green pavement markings and signage at driveways as well as restricting parking immediately before and after each driveway. We have contacted many of the businesses along the corridor, and as the design progresses we will continue to work with businesses to understand how they use their driveways and work to tailor the design to each driveway.

8) Is there a plan to connect the gap between this project and the Georgetown to South Park Trail Connection Project?

- a. A future project linking this project and the Georgetown to South Park Connection is not currently underway, but we hope to launch a planning process to collaborate with the Georgetown community on this link soon. Although short, the two main options each come with challenges that means that both will be high cost and thus not feasible before the end of the Levy to Move Seattle in 2024.

9) Will any safety measures be installed in the gap between the two bike lane projects like lower speed limits, for example?

- a. We're still working on interim measures between the two facilities, but at a minimum we would restripe shared lane markings that remind drivers to watch for bikes and show cyclists a riding position to take within a lane.

10) What safety improvements will be included in this project for people walking and rolling?

- a. The project will be constructing several curb ramps, remarking crosswalks, and adding a new multiuse path to link existing sidewalks on 6th Ave S to the SODO Trail. The exact number of curb ramps will be determined later in the design process but will include improvements at Airport Way S and S Lucile St and at 6th Ave S and S Forest St. Further improvements at the S Lucile St intersection will include slightly expanded pedestrian space on the southeast corner and closing the slip lane allowing for free right turns on the northwest corner.

11) Will this project cause more congestion on 6th Ave or the general area?

- a. Traffic modeling for the project suggests negligible difference in travel time or delay along 6th Ave S. There may be increased delay on southbound Airport Way S approaching S Lucile St in the northbound and southbound directions. We are not modeling peoples' changes in transportation modes after the project, but do expect an increased number of people choosing to ride bicycles once they have an improved route to and from Georgetown.

12) Why build these bike lanes now if they will have to be rebuilt in two years when Seattle City Light plans to move a power line?

- a. It is important to build an immediate safety improvement in SODO, even if future construction is planned. The projects we are coordinating with are still in their planning and early design phases, and waiting to ensure that all designs are fully compatible during construction phases would delay the start of construction on Georgetown to Downtown project until at least 2026.

Coordination as all projects in the area advance will help us identify areas of the Georgetown to Downtown that should be built with low cost interim materials if it is known that they must be removed in two years. We will be using interim materials on the east side of 6th Ave S between S Forest St and S Hinds St at a minimum. Current concepts include rebuilding that segment of the project with partial concrete barriers that serve double duty protecting both the bike lanes and power poles.

13) Can you be more specific about what time and budget constraints prevent these bike lanes from connecting to the Georgetown to South Park Trail Connection project? Why begin construction before this problem is solved when you acknowledge this gap makes both of these trails less useful?

- a. Levy to Move Seattle funds should be invested in projects by the end of 2024, creating a deadline for delivering this project. We need to work with the community, peer agencies, and private businesses to determine the best route through central Georgetown. But even before launching this planning process we know that the two main route options would both require large, multimillion dollar investments that are not currently budgeted for. Building each project individually still serves each project's core purposes – linking Georgetown to Downtown and Georgetown to South Park.

14) What are the expected changes in local business traffic near this route during and after construction? Should businesses prepare for less visitors during construction and/or more visitors once the construction is finished?

- a. As we're still early in the design we will better understand construction impacts closer to construction. We will work with businesses on construction access closer to construction, typically beginning around the 60% and 90% milestones. As this project is expected to only make spot repairs to pavements, we do not expect significant street closures that would affect access to businesses associated with larger scale road rehabilitation projects. Short term closures may be required to allow contractors to have a safe working environment, particularly in busier areas along the project route.

15) Where can I find information on the separate project connecting this route to Downtown?

- a. We will be sharing details on that project on the same project webpage. Although they will have different delivery methods they will share the same outreach and development teams given how closely related the two projects are.

16) What is the expected increase in cyclists as a result of this project?

- a. Typically we do not model increases in cycling, as the increase in cycling after a street is improved can vary. Experience in facilities such as the 2nd Ave protected bike lane downtown has shown strong growth in cycling as infrastructure is improved. That protected bike lane has seen at least a five-fold increase in the number of people using it, and that was on a street that already had a basic bike lane.

17) In an area of the city where residents tend to rely on driving, what plans does SDOT have to motivate or incentivize local residents to use this bike lane?

- a. SDOT as well as non-profit groups, bike shops, and Seattle's biking culture all engage in activities that incentivize cycling. SDOT helps support bicycle education, distribute lights and helmets, produces cycling maps and guidebooks, and participates in community events and group rides. Georgetown is a neighborhood with a culture around cycling events as well as several bicycle related businesses and so we're excited to provide this link with the rest of the city's bike network.

18) Why were one-way and two-way bike lanes chosen for different segments of road? What are the safety benefits of each type?

- a. Using a two-way facility on Airport Way S means that people cycling don't have to cross Airport Way S to reach S Alaska St. It also takes up less space on the road, allowing us to maintain freight and transit mobility by replacing only one travel lane with the new protected bike lane. Generally one-way protected bike lanes perform better in areas with more driveways and intersections, and so we will transition to this facility type on 6th Ave S.

19) I'm concerned about the truck access for our facilities, 24 hours a day. Will our businesses be impacted, and are there efforts to minimize these impacts (we are on Airport Way South, Elysian Brewing. I am concerned about access for trucks and deliveries that run 24 hours a day at our facility. we want to make sure business isn't impacted)

- a. For all businesses in the area, we are happy to meet and discuss your business operations to prevent business impact. For the area close to your business, we're looking at expanding the sidewalk outside your facility and digging a narrow trench for a new underground cable that connects our signal equipment together. We will need to temporarily close a portion of your driveway while the concrete sets, but we're more than happy to plan the timing of this that minimizes business disruptions.

Please reach out to our team and we can discuss as soon as possible to help inform our design, and then again closer to construction to coordinate the best times.

20) How will the trail connect into the bike amenities in the CID to the north?

- a. At the very north end, the trail ends at Royal Brougham Way at the Stadium Link light rail station on your left and the Greyhound Bus terminal on your right. We are thinking that people biking would cross the crosswalk to the north side of Royal Brougham to where there is a large sidewalk which we are planning on converting to a multi-use trail for about a 200-foot stretch.

When you get to 6th Ave S, you would turn left and continue to Seattle Blvd, at which point we have two options we are considering. One option is turning left onto Seattle Blvd and then right onto 6th Ave S again where there is an existing southbound protected bike lane and where we

would add a new northbound lane that links to Dearborn. That provides a direct path to the downtown bike network but could require signal changes at nearby intersections. The second option is that bikers would use the signal to go onto Charles, turn left on Maynard, and then continue to Dearborn. This would require some signal changes, some parking removal, and it may be out of the way for some cyclists, but it would provide a direct connection to the Maynard St Neighborhood Greenway.

21) Will there be any signals protecting cyclists from cars turning onto the I 5 ramp at Spokane?

- a. At this point, there is not a signal that would separate people biking and people making a right turn onto the I-5 ramps. We are looking into improving the safety of this area, especially the signals at the Spokane St intersection. Installing a signal would mean higher costs and longer traffic delays for people biking and driving, but it is still something we are actively considering.

22) Right now much of the parking along 6th Ave S is used by large trucks/semis -- will the parking spots be large enough to hold them so they don't extend into any of the bike lane space?

- a. We are looking at different widths for the buffer between the bike lane and parking stalls. The parking stalls will be standard widths, between 7 and 9 feet. The buffer space between the parking stalls and protected bike lane will be a minimum of 3 feet, and in many cases 4 feet or more. Some areas of the bike lane itself will be wider, creating even more separation.

Along 6th Ave S we will be building an off-street protected bike lane, which will further separate trucks and bikes while preserving more parking. We are also looking into designated truck parking on streets near the project, especially for overnight hours, but that would be more of a response to the project as opposed to the project itself.

23) Can there be consideration to minimize on-and-off ramps for bicyclists at junctions and bus stops? The verticality slows bicyclists and makes riding uncomfortable. Having cars go up to a bike/ped crosswalk level helps slow cars during right turns, which otherwise reinforces car right-of-way.

- a. We are considering some areas of raised pavement at S Spokane St and at 6th & Alaska to provide some measure of traffic calming for all users in areas where different modes cross paths. We found that raised crosswalks around the city are quite effective at slowing drivers and bikers down. The one area of raised pavement we are installing is the bus stop near S Edmunds St.

24) Green crosswalk markings at intersections of trails can be made safer if they are a raised crosswalk and painted. The raised sidewalk slows cars approaching the intersection. Can you do that instead?

- a. Because of time and budget constraints, we don't anticipate this being possible at every location, but we plan to work with each business to tailor the best and most cost-effective treatments at each and every driveway. Raised pavement would be something that we can only do at a few key locations, such as locations where there may be hundreds of box trucks coming in and out every day.

25) Curious why it's called Georgetown to downtown if it skips Georgetown & Duwamish Valley in general?

- a. With a strict time limit to have this project done in 2024, we were not able to include Central Georgetown in the route. We do want to begin planning how include that area in the future, but for now this route will connect the north side of Georgetown into downtown Seattle, and link directly with the downtown protected bike lane network. The [Georgetown to South Park Connection Project](#) is on an similar timeline, so after these projects, we plan to link the two

routes through Georgetown. This would be quite costly and time-consuming, carrying significant community impacts and significant community benefits, so we will need to be engaging very deeply with business owners and stakeholders in the area. We would also need to make significant changes to traffic signals and install permanent, high-quality concrete treatments, which is just not possible in the time frame of our current project funding.

26) Are there any concerns with delays? Will the project be completed if it gets delayed past 2024?

- a. Our priority is delivering the project within 2024, but we do have a few months of leeway in 2025 if a delay is absolutely necessary. While much of our funding expires if not used in 2024, we do have a federal grant that does not expire at that time which will support the end of the project if there is any small delay that pushes some work into 2025.

27) For the bike lane goes from two lanes on one side of the road to a single lane on either side, how will bikers make the transition?

- a. This area is in active development, so as we solidify our plans for this transition we will provide more details and graphics on the website. The two-way, on-street protected bike lane on Airport Way S will continue onto S Alaska St and then north on 6th Ave S until it becomes a two-way off-street facility at S Snoqualmie St. This off-street design takes advantage of a wide area of grass left after a federal urban renewal project in the 1970s, but that grass ends just short of S Nevada St.

The transition would most likely happen at S Nevada St to avoid having to do the transition farther north at Industrial Way S, a very complex intersection. The transition at S Nevada St could be operated as an all-way stop similar to the 9th Ave N and John St intersection in South Lake Union, or it could be a location where only cyclists traveling south will need to stop to make the crossing at S Nevada St.

28) Why are some spots planned to have flexible posts instead of concrete barriers? A flexible post vs a big truck does not equal to great protection.

- a. Areas that we have planned to install flexible posts are those that will be impacted by the Seattle City Light Project, future repaving projects, or were not evaluated as high priority as others in terms of safety concerns, and thus had to be planned with the lower cost option to fit in our budget. In some areas with flexible posts, there will be vehicle parking between the flexible posts and the travel lane which will provide more significant protection.

29) Will there be increased maintenance of this bike route? Spokane Street is often covered in gravel or refuse on the ground that makes it unsafe. More materials tend to exist on the roadway in the industrial areas.

- a. Towards the end of the design process, we will work more with our maintenance group on issues like this. We will look into this area and see if we can plan for extra cleaning using the bike lane street sweepers.

30) Do you anticipate the bike lanes on Airport Way will help slow through traffic on the business area of Airport Way? Currently it feels like vehicle commuters drive aggressively there and makes biking there nerve wracking. In what ways can the plan replace flex posts with infrastructure that protects people from fast moving freight and cars traffic?

- a. It has been proven in Seattle and worldwide that narrowing roads influences drivers to more closely follow speed limits. This is one of the reasons why it is necessary to implement concrete barriers on Airport Way S, where on most of this stretch, and especially near the bridge, many people are driving at 35 to 40 miles per hour. It is hard to know exactly how much average speeds will be reduced, but we expect that narrowing this portion of the roadway by adding the vertical concrete buffer will result in slower driving.

31) Can you talk more on the connection to downtown on the North segment? What discussions are going on with the real estate developer of S buildings?

- a. The developer in that area planned to add sidewalks, plantings, and protected bike lanes on a similar timeline to our project. However, they have delayed their project by up to five years meaning we need to add an interim bike facility until that private project moves forward. We are evaluating interim facility options now and will post progress on the project website as we continue discussions with other stakeholders.

32) Can you talk more about the safety measures on northbound 6th at Spokane?

- a. We are planning on marking a protected bike lane for northbound cyclists. People driving north on 6th Ave S and turning right would yield to people biking before making their turn. This area of the project is one that is still being designed as we work out the best solution.

We are also adding wayfinding signs and markings to help people biking north on 6th Ave S reach the north sidewalk of S Spokane St. Although this isn't a designated bike facility, the wide sidewalk is commonly used by cyclists not comfortable riding in traffic to travel east and west through SODO and to reach West Seattle.

33) Why were one-way and two-way bike lanes chosen for different segments of roadway? What are the safety benefits of each type?

- a. Two-way protected bike lanes will be used on Airport Way S, S Alaska St, and 6th Ave S from S Alaska St to S Nevada St. They work well in areas with fewer intersections and driveways and take up less space on the road, allowing protected bike lanes to be installed in space-constrained corridors without removing additional parking or other lanes. However, they can be confusing to people driving turning across them who aren't expecting traffic approaching from behind and they can add delay for all users at complex signalized intersections.

We are using one-way protected bike lanes for the project north of S Nevada St due to the higher number of intersections and driveways in this area. The complex S Spokane St intersection is also better suited for one-way protected bike lanes, and the lower parking use in this area means we can remove parking to make room for the bike lanes with less of an impact on project neighbors.

34) What will happen after the Levy to Move Seattle ends and what future plans are there?

- a. Our project schedule allows for the project reaching substantial completion in 2024 before the end of the Levy to Move Seattle. If there are project delays we will endeavor to spend Levy to

Move Seattle funding before the end of 2024 and draw on the project's other sources of funding if there are any delays requiring significant work in 2025.

On a broader level, SDOT is currently planning a holistic [Seattle Transportation Plan and Future Transportation Funding Plan](#) to build it. It has been informed by extensive engagement with the public and peer agencies. This multimodal plan is approaching the final phase of engagement in mid-2023 which will be the next opportunity for you to weigh in.

35) What is the design going to look like around 6th Ave and S Industrial Way? Currently, it can be confusing to safely navigate the area due to all of the intersecting directions and stop signs.

- a. Reconfiguring the complex Industrial Way intersection is not being considered by this project for schedule and cost reasons. We plan to add protected bike lanes with concrete buffers through this area that would be required to stop at stop signs similar to how vehicles travel through the area.

36) Are there considerations to convert a two-way car lane to a one-way car lane, with a two-way protected bike lane?

- a. At this point we will maintain two-way vehicle travel along all roads in the project area. Two-way bicycle travel will be improved by the infrastructure that the project is building. Given that many of the streets are used for local freight access it is important to allow for flexible freight movement even as we're adding new bicycle infrastructure.

37) 2024 is a long time away – how possible would it be to do a pilot of the project with cones blocking off the bike areas? Can we measure the improvement in speed compliance in a pilot?

- a. At this point there are no plans to implement a pilot version of the project prior to the final installation. It's possible that we could pilot small portions of the project temporarily using interim materials, something we do with partners like Metro and local businesses when evaluating freight and transit turns. Experience with the 1st Ave S temporary protected bike lane shows that this kind of pilot in an industrial neighborhood can be costly to maintain.

38) What other public outreach will you be doing at this 30% design stage? Will there be a survey or other way for people to chime in with their thoughts?

- a. We're continuing to engage with neighbors and businesses along the project route at this 30% design stage. We will be holding similar virtual meetings at 60, 90, 100 percent and pre-construction stages as well as attend community meetings such as Georgetown Community Council, SODO BIA Transportation Committee, Duwamish Valley Safe Streets, and South Park Neighborhood Association.