

East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project



May 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

Project funding and schedule

- **What parts of the project are fully funded?**

Segment	Design	Construction
North (Between S Atlantic St and S Spokane St)	Funded	Partially funded
Central (Between S Spokane St and Diagonal Ave S)	Funded	Unfunded
South (Between Diagonal Ave S and 1st Ave S)	Unfunded	Unfunded

In 2019, we secured grants to complete full design for both the North and Central segments, and to begin Phase 1 construction. Depending on when particular scopes of work are funded, this project may be broken into several phases of construction to build critical safety features as early as possible. SDOT has applied for several federal grants in 2020 and should know by the end of 2020 how the project will be phased.

- If a phased project is constructed, design should be completed in 2020 and construction of Phase 1 started in March 2021.
- If SDOT is successful in securing additional federal funds, design will extend into 2021, with construction starting in 2022.

We will continue to pursue additional funding opportunities, but future construction phases are currently unscheduled.

Bike lane

- **Will the new intersection at S Horton St include a signalized crossing for people on bikes?**

Yes, this project will add traffic signals to the intersection of East Marginal Way S and S Horton St, which does not have signals today. Included with these traffic signals will be a signalized crossing for people riding bikes to or from West Seattle.

The crosswalk will be positioned diagonally across the intersection so that people riding bikes will not need to alter their route to cross at a perpendicular angle to the roadway. The goal of this crossing is to provide people on bikes a safe and protected place to cross East Marginal Way S.

- **How will the new signals at S Hanford St and S Horton St work?**

The new traffic signals will use intelligent systems to detect cyclists in the bike lane.

The signals at S Hanford St and S Horton St will use sensors in the pavement to identify cyclists before they arrive at the intersection and trigger a crossing signal. Cyclists will not need to rely on push buttons to trigger a signal change. The goal of the system is to minimize wait time for cyclists and facilitate a safe and predictable crossing for cyclists riding to or from West Seattle.

- **How tall will the barrier between the protected bike lane and the roadway be?**

The barrier will measure 42 inches high in total, consisting of three feet of concrete with a six-inch handrail or fencing on top of it. It will separate the bike lane and the roadway, reducing the risk of conflicts between people on bikes and vehicles.

- **Will SDOT be able to maintain the new protected bike lane?**

The new bike lane will be designed to minimize maintenance needs as much as possible. The concrete barrier that separates the protected bike lane from the roadway will help keep debris out. Where the concrete barrier is not needed, the design team is considering a raised section of planting strip to help keep roadway debris out of the bike lane.

When debris does gather in the bike lane, SDOT has two four-foot-wide street sweepers that are used to clean bike lanes. The protected bike lane on East Marginal Way S will easily fit one of these sweepers.

Additionally, we have received feedback that large puddles can form in the current bike lane when it rains, making it difficult for people on bikes to ride in their designated lane. The new bike lane will be designed to avoid water collecting there. Our design team is also considering drainage on the East Marginal Way S roadway to avoid the creation of large puddles that would splash into the bike lane.

- **Why does the protected bike lane end at S Spokane St and continue south as a shared-use path?**

As the project extends south of S Spokane St into a commercial area of East Marginal Way S, right-of-way constraints mean less space for a protected bike lane to be built alongside a new sidewalk for pedestrians. During design, we explored different options to determine if there was a way to add separate bike and pedestrian facilities, but none of the options considered proved to be viable.

- **Will the shared-use path eventually extend to the 1st Ave S Bridge?**

Because of the train tracks that extend south of Diagonal Ave S, we will not be able to continue the shared-use path on the west side of the street beyond that point. We have completed a preliminary design that includes constructing missing sidewalks on the east side of the street, as well as transit stop improvements and signal improvements to improve safety for people walking. The plan for bicycle facilities in this area will be included in the City of Seattle's next [Bicycle Master Plan](#) update, which will be released in 2024.

The remainder of this section of the project is currently unfunded, however we will continue to pursue additional funding opportunities.

- **Will SDOT include lighting along the bike lane under the viaduct?**

Yes, the new section of bike trail that travels under the viaduct will have nighttime lighting at a level consistent with other sections of the bike path.

Traffic

- **Will the project improve the crossing for people on bikes at S Atlantic St?**

Currently, northbound to eastbound vehicles must cross the bike lane in order to access the right turn lane on East Marginal Way S. The new protected bike lane will be located farther to the east, under the viaduct and away from traffic, eliminating the need for vehicles to cross the bike lane to turn right onto S Atlantic St.

The protected bike lane will have a signalized crossing at the intersection of East Marginal Way and S Atlantic St, so people on bikes will get a protected signal cycle to cross the street and access the Elliott Bay Trail.

- **What is the Heavy Haul Network? What is the Heavy Haul permit and how does it benefit businesses?**

The [Heavy Haul Network](#) is a system of streets in Seattle that are designed to accommodate overweight vehicles, making it easier for freight to move through the city and reduce congestion around the port. East Marginal Way S, between S Holgate St and Diagonal Ave S, is part of this network. Once funded, the new roadway surface on East Marginal Way S will consist of 15-inch-thick concrete, which will have a longer lifespan and require less maintenance than the current asphalt surface.

The Heavy Haul permit is required for overweight vehicles operating within the network and provides a single system for overweight vehicles, reducing the need for passenger vehicles to mix with freight traffic on other streets. Learn more about the Heavy Haul system [here](#).

- **Will the project help congestion on 1st Ave S or 4th Ave S?**

The East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project does not include work on these streets. However, once we receive funding to rebuild the roadway on East Marginal Way S and upgrade the intersections at S Hanford St and S Horton St, more vehicles may use East Marginal Way S instead of 1st Ave S or 4th Ave S.

- **What will the speed limit be on East Marginal Way S?**

As part of Seattle's [Vision Zero](#) goal to end all traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030, the speed limit on East Marginal Way S will be reduced from 35 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour. We expect this change to take effect in 2021 before we begin construction on the [North Segment](#), between S Atlantic St and S Spokane St.

Public spaces

- **What are next steps for the opportunity areas you showed on the project map?**

[Visit the project website](#) to view the project map

At the north end of the project, between S Atlantic St and the entrance to Jack Perry Memorial Park, the City of Seattle owns land that is currently being used for a nearby construction project. Once that project is complete, this space will become available for a different use.

While it is not part of the East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project, this project has sparked a conversation about how this space can be used in the future, such as public art, recreation space, or another use with some benefit to the public. We are keeping track of suggestions from community members about what they want to see in this space. Next steps for creating uses in these spaces would need to be generated by organizations willing to work with SDOT's Street Use division regarding permitting.

For questions about this public space use or if you have ideas for potential uses, please email us at EastMarginal@seattle.gov.

- **Will the project add a public restroom to this area?**

A public restroom is outside of the scope of this project, however we heard from some survey respondents that they would like to see a restroom available along East marginal Way S. As we work with the community to identify how public spaces in this area can be used the future, we will keep this feedback in mind as a potential feature to include.

- **Will this project affect the East Marginal Skatepark?**

The project will not impact the park itself. We recognize that the East Marginal Skatepark is an important community asset and we are committed to working with the skate community to ensure that it remains open. As part of the East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement Project, we hope to relocate a railroad track at the S Hanford St intersection farther east to create more space for the protected bike lane on East Marginal Way S. If we relocate the track, the area currently used for parking at the skate park may become unavailable for parking.

We will continue conversations with members of the skate community as we develop the project, including potential for a new small public space at the northeast corner of East Marginal Way S and S Hanford St near the skatepark.

- **How is SDOT working with other agencies and stakeholders to develop the project?**

We are in close coordination with Port of Seattle and Union Pacific Railroad as we advance design for the protected bike lane. We want to make sure that any ideas we include in the project will be feasible for these stakeholders whose operations depend on East Marginal Way S. Based on feedback we received on our 60% design plans, we have already begun working with Port of Seattle to identify possible ways to improve operations at the south driveway of Terminal 25, where people walking and riding bikes pass by to access the West Seattle Bridge Trail.

Moving forward, we will also coordinate with Sound Transit as they advance design for their West Seattle Link Extension, which will cross East Marginal Way near the West Seattle Bridge.