

# Alaskan Way Safety Project

60% Design Virtual Public Meeting – Questions and Answers

September 2023

1. **Have you coordinated with the Port of Seattle to ensure this design works cohesively with the cruise terminal operations at Pier 66?**

We've been in close contact with the Port of Seattle to ensure this project doesn't interfere with cruise terminal operations at Pier 66. We've collected information about Pier 66 from the Port, looked at the existing traffic patterns, and observed sailing day operations. Our initial design was revised to balance needs at Pier 66 with this project's goals of creating seamless connections and enhancing safety and accessibility.

2. **What protection will be used for the protected bike lane?**

The protected bike lane will be protected by a tall, concrete curb buffer. Near Pier 66, flexible bollards will be installed. These bollards will be removable to allow for loading and parking at Pier 66 on sailing days.

3. **Is this project related to the Elliott Bay Connections project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation?**

The newly announced Elliott Bay Connections (EBC) project is separate from this project, but the two will complement each other. We have and will continue to coordinate closely with the EBC project team during design and construction.

4. **What other opportunities for the public to engage in this design will be offered?**

We'll continue to post updates about engagement opportunities on the project webpage and through our project email updates. We expect to host more open houses and we continue to welcome feedback through our project inbox and by phone.

5. **Will narrowing Alaskan Way to two lanes increase traffic congestion?**

The newly opened Elliott Way diverts people driving from Alaskan Way onto Elliott Way, which has significantly reduced car volume on Alaskan Way north of Pine St. This change created the opportunity to reduce Alaskan Way to one lane in each direction without creating traffic congestion.

6. **How does this project align with SDOT's Vision Zero goals?**

The lane reductions in this design are closely aligned with findings from SDOT's Vision Zero review, which showed reducing lanes on multi-lane arterial roads slows people speeding which

makes it safer for pedestrians.

**7. How will this design impact parking?**

This project will maintain the parking lane on each side of Alaskan Way. During sailing days in front of Pier 66, the parking lane on the west side of the street will temporarily be used as a passenger loading bypass, and the parking lane on the east side of the street will temporarily be used as a truck staging area.

**8. Will this project impact the proposed rehab of the Alaskan Way seawall?**

The Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement project is very early in its process. It's not currently funded and there's still a lot of work to do to bring it together, but we're working closely with the Waterfront and looking forward to that project. Any bicycle infrastructure we put in will be maintained in some capacity as that project eventually moves forward.

**9. Why is the NACTO standard of 12ft for bidirectional paths not being followed here? I would expect this path to be heavily used and having a below standard path would only cause bikes and scooters to use the sidewalk.**

We are using NACTO standards, as well as our own SDOT standards, for this project's design. While 12ft is desirable, 10ft is our standard for a two-way bike lane like this, so that's what we're using based on space constraints in this corridor. We are confident that width will be substantial. For reference, most of the 2nd Ave protected bike lane downtown is 10ft wide and bidirectional and that's a fairly busy route, so we think this route will also work well with a 10ft width. We'll certainly monitor to ensure that once the project is built.

**10. Won't increasing car lane widths from 10ft to 11ft encourage higher speed driving?**

The existing vehicle lane widths in the city range from 10ft to 12ft, so some are wider than this proposed design. While we are increasing lane width from 10ft to 11ft on Alaskan Way, the most notable change in this project is that we're reducing the number of lanes from two in each direction to one in each direction. We've found in other corridors in the city that reducing lanes has been more impactful than lane width in reducing vehicle speed and creating a safe environment for everyone.

**11. What will the moveable bollards be made of/look like? How many will there be, and who will be responsible for moving them?**

The bollard design is still in development. We've been looking at several different options and when we reach 90% design next month, we'll share what we've selected. We're looking to choose something that's safe and provides protection for the bike lane, but also that's lightweight and easy to take out/put in. We'll be doing so about 100 times a year, so we want something that's convenient and feasible to take out/put back in that often. We have a lot of

good options we're looking at, but we haven't decided on an exact type/brand. We're working with the Port to see who will be responsible for moving them, but our proposal is that the Traffic Control Plan that puts signs up and reconfigures the roadway on sailing days will also be in charge of removing/replacing the bollards.

- 12. Will the sailing day route be constructed at the same time as the main route? How does this path construction relate to the Elliott Bay connections work as it sounds like it is on the same side?**

Yes, the detour will be constructed at the same time as the main route. All aspects of this project will be constructed at the same time and be open by the same time. The bike path construction on the west side is generally outside of the footprint of the Elliott Bay Connections planned work, but the detour may overlap, so that's definitely something we're looking at between Blanchard St and Wall St.

- 13. Will there be greater enforcement to prevent cabs and rideshare from making abrupt U-turns and other dangerous maneuvers in the area?**

This is a tough issue, but the aim of the design of the project is to help address this issue. With the new Elliott Way connection, a lot of traffic is rerouted which takes some of the pressure off this area, reducing that activity. By redesigning the road to have two lanes as opposed to four, it encourages safer driving and fewer U-turns. It's an ongoing challenge, and in talking with the Port, their traffic control plan has evolved over the years to respond to that activity we've also been seeing.

- 14. It looks like the bike lane will cross the driveway shared by the Marriott Waterfront and the World Trade Center. Have you looked at other options, given that this is a very busy driveway?**

Yes, we're looking at that intersection at Blanchard St closely. We've heard that from many people and observed in the field that especially on cruise days, there's substantial traffic through that driveway. So, we're looking at options like potentially relocating that crossing or making it a diagonal crossing, as well as other intersection safety improvements. It's a complicated intersection, so we're taking a harder look at that to make it as safe a crossing as possible.

- 15. Will the west side bike lane in front of Pier 66 be closed the entire day on sailing days, or only for portions of it? What will close off the west side bike lane to direct people to use the detour?**

We're still working on the details of this, but our proposal is to limit the closure periods. Typically, the most active times are from 6am to 4pm, so ideally, we'd only have it closed when needed and have it open by afternoon rush hour. The goal is to not have it be a full-day closure. We're still working on the details of how the protected bike lane will be closed, but we're working to ensure our bike lane closure methods are clear and in alignment with our bike lane closure standards.

- 16. On behalf of FRS, Clipper, and Pier 69, our guests are picked up and dropped off on Alaskan Way twice a day. Will cabs, shuttles, and rideshare be able to do this safely or will the people they're loading/unloading need to walk across the bike lane?**

This project will maintain curb lane access. The bike lane will be on the west side, so passengers will need to cross the bike lane, but we're designing it with a separate walking space, biking space, and island for passengers to wait for/get out of vehicles. We're designing this space to provide clear, safe spaces for people to cross the bike lane.

- 17. Doesn't the Elliott Bay Connections project make parts of this project redundant?**

We don't think that the Elliott Bay Connections project makes this project redundant; we think it enhances the project and the street experience for everyone that uses it. The PBL is on the west side and it's continuous from north to south, while the Elliott Bay Connections project is looking at greenway improvements on the east side. There is some overlap, especially at the detour in front of Pier 66, but we think it enhances the project and isn't redundant. The Elliott Bay Connections project focuses more on greenway improvements, while the goal of this project is to offer a bike path along the waterfront, specifically. We see these two projects as two completely separate efforts, though their cumulative effect will be to create a safer experience for people walking, biking, and rolling along Alaskan Way.

- 18. Why is parking being maintained at all when the Port needs as much space as it can get?**

The parking lanes are available on non-sailing days only, when Port operations aren't active. On sailing days, the Port's Traffic Control Plan occupies those parking lanes: on the west side for passenger loading and pick up/drop off and on the east side for truck staging.

- 19. There are currently zero bike lanes; is the plan three? Given limited space in the area, I don't understand three bike lanes. What is the rationale for this?**

There are currently no bike lanes on this portion of Alaskan Way, correct. However, our project plus the Elliott Bay Connections project will only result in two bike lanes. The west side bike lane that we're leading is considered one bike lane, even though it goes in two directions. It's a direct route that connects the Elliott Bay trail to the north and the new Park Promenade and Bike Path to the south. The Elliott Bay Connections project's planned improvements for the east side will be a parallel facility and will improve the experience of people who utilize this corridor even further. Each project will result in one bike lane, with a total of two bike lanes on Alaskan Way.

- 20. How will you be integrating the philanthropic investments being made to the waterfront in your final designs?**

The Elliott Bay Connections project is in its very early stages, but we'll be working closely with them as they advance. Based on what we've discussed, the projects are complementary but if there's any opportunities to enhance the project and work together, we'll definitely be looking

for those opportunities as we move forward.

21. **“Looking for opportunities to work together,” isn’t really an answer; at this point in time do you see economies of bringing the two projects into alignment? The philanthropic gift was not anticipated when you began this project and it’s certainly had an impact, hasn’t it?**

Yes, working together and ensuring the two projects are in alignment is valuable, and we’re doing that. The philanthropic gift has had an impact, and we’re definitely looking at how the two projects come together. The Elliott Bay Connections project is a lot further behind where we’re at, and this project is a long time coming so we want to get this project out and installed, while we continue coordinating as the Elliott Bay Connections project comes through.

22. **Could you further explain the passenger drop-off/pick-up and delivery protocols on the west side of Alaskan Way during sailing and non-sailing days?**

On non-sailing days, it functions the way it does now. During cruise operations, the Port manages that space in front of Pier 66 with their Traffic Control Plan. There’s a dedicated taxi queuing area to the north of Pier 66, north of the north driveway, up to Wall St and that’s generally where taxis, shuttles, and rideshare are supposed to be picking up/dropping off. We know there’s some activity that spills to the south of Pier 66 which is something that will be watched, but it should be generally to the north of Pier 66.

23. **This was once a temporary solution. Is this plan permanent?**

Yes, this project is permanent. It’ll be a permanent protected bike lane, including the signal improvements and other pedestrian improvements. What isn’t necessarily permanent is how the street is used during cruise operations. That’s something we’ll continue to work on with the Port in terms of how we use the space and how this street operates during cruise operations. However, having that protected bike lane on the west side is permanent, as is the detour on the east side.