

“Missing Link” Bike Route Study on NW Market St/Leary Ave NW/17th Ave NW

Early Design Online Open House – Questions and Answers

August 2023

1. **When will community outreach begin?**

Outreach for this bike route study began in June 2023. The outreach touchpoints to the community so far have been:

- a. **Postcards** sent to all 3,625 adjacent property owners of record along the route with website link, survey, open house invite, and basic project information.
- b. Three **A-Frame sandwich boards** were placed along the 3 street segments for over one month with a QR code to the website for more information.
- c. **Multiple Emails to Listserv** inviting participation in the survey, to attend the open house, and to stay updated via the website were sent to over 1500 stakeholders.
- d. **SDOT Twitter post** with information about website, survey, and open house.
- e. **Online survey** generated over 1,700 responses.
- f. **Website** for this bike route study is linked to the existing Burke Gilman Trail website to help people find it more easily when Googling.
- g. **Door-to-door flyer** outreach to all open businesses along the route over many weeks generated around 80 different conversations about the project and site-specific feedback.
- h. Project team has received over **200 emails** from **the public** and continues to respond to specific questions and meet stakeholders on-line and in-person to share information.
- i. **Tabling** happened August 27 adjacent to the Ballard Farmer’s Market on Market Street and September 5 on the corner of Market and 24th Ave NW.
- j. **Voicemail** has been set up to receive messages that staff are responding to.

2. **How is the work that was done in the prior Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) informing this work?**

The prior EIS laid the groundwork for studying alternative routes through Ballard, but this study will look very specifically at Market/Leary/17th and design to 30% level so that we can understand potential costs and impacts associated with moving forward with this route. The prior EIS addressed transportation impacts to a Shilshole route against other alternatives although Ballard is a different place than it was even 5-10 years ago.

3. **Would you consider closing this part of Market to only transit, commercial vehicles, bicycles, but not pass through motor vehicles? Motor vehicles would go around a block north to create enough space for everything on Market then?**

We are not planning to close Market to vehicles. We are currently working on updating our design plans and showing how the design of a sidewalk level trail facility would change Market Street. Please sign up for listserv to receive future engagement and outreach events.

4. Would you consider additional safety measures at 24th and Market, like preventing right turns on red? That crosswalk is dangerous for walkers and riders.

Yes, we have a toolbox of treatments we are looking at for that intersection including no right on red, protected left-hand turn signal, and leading pedestrian intervals.

5. Will the 30% design include traffic counts for intersections?

Yes, and we are evaluating the design in light of existing volumes and traffic flow patterns to make sure we are providing necessary treatments.

6. How will e-bikes be managed on your proposed curb level design? Will there be a separate lane for biking and walking?

All bikes must operate in a conscientious manner given existing conditions such as wet weather or crowded spaces that ensures the safety of more vulnerable users like pedestrians. The proposed design will be similar to the existing asphalt pathway design between the Ballard Locks and 24th Ave NW.

7. What type of traffic calming considerations are there for the Leary/20th/Vernon intersection? Right now that intersection isn't great with cars being aggressive with pedestrians.

A new traffic signal is proposed as part of the Route 40 Transit project's scope and federal funding package. It will exist prior to any future work on Leary that may be associated with this trail project. The new traffic signal will have crossing activation push buttons and curb bulbs to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians.

8. How do we provide input?

Please take our survey on our website. It will be open until the September 8. If you represent a business or community organization or group of residents, please let us know if you'd like a briefing. We can set up a meeting with your group to talk.

9. What is going to happen with 17th? My business is on that street and the only entrance is there and that street is not wide at all.

A trail is currently proposed to be on the west side of 17th and to connect to Shilshole on the north side. If you represent a business or community organization or group of residents, please let us know if you'd like a briefing to dig into specific design concerns. We can set up a meeting with your group to talk to you and work through access considerations.

10. Are permeable surfaces going to be considered?

The trail buffer would be a landscaped strip and permeable. The surface of the trail itself would not be permeable because it is challenging and high cost to maintain.

11. I know Sound Transit is planning on installing a light rail station in Ballard in about 2035; are these future impacts/benefits/challenges being considered in this study?

Yes. The City is working to create safe and convenient ways to walk, bike, and bus to light rail stations.

12. When do you anticipate an in-person event in Ballard?

We were at the Farmers Market on August 27 and on the corner of 24th and Market on September 5 . We are happy to brief community groups who ask us to do so, and plan on additional in-person events as we reach 30% design.

13. Will the proposed alternate design be two directional, or just one direction?

Two-Directional

14. Are the route bus 40 team and this route exploration team the same and if not what is the collaboration between them?

We're highly coordinated between the two projects. Please let us know if you have a specific area of feedback or want to talk to either project manager.

15. What is the email address to provide input/feedback?

MissingLink_BikeRouteStudy@seattle.gov

16. What will the area around the new pumping station south of the Market and 24th Ave NW intersection look like? I've heard and seen proposals for a park.

Check out [spushipcanal.participate.online](https://pushipcanal.participate.online) to learn more about that project and get in touch.

We're coordinating with them on this planning process, but they have their own way to engage and are looking forward to hearing from you.

17. What sides of the street will the project be on for Leary and 17th?

The south and west sides (sides closest to Shilshole).

18. Does bidirectional mean just on one side of the street or on both sides?

Just one side of the street but with bike travel going in both directions.

19. What is the cost in 2023 dollars of 2001's resolution 30408?

We are not sure at this time. We are still analyzing financial requirements associated with the design development.

20. How will this study differ from the previously studied Leary option that was already rejected?

This study is looking at curb-level shared-use trail design and anticipates the future transit route improvements that will already be making channelization, signal, and pedestrian improvements. The previous design assumed protected bike lanes and a slightly different route.

21. What is currently being done to WIN the litigation and use the more direct, less crowded Shilshole route?

The City is still evaluating options for next steps in the court case and environmental permitting.

22. What if after this initial 'concept' is completed, it's determined that the cost is prohibitive or too much disruption of infrastructure/utilities, etc.?

At this point the focus is on getting the route designed so that we can have a true comparison to the Shilshole route impacts and costs.

23. Does the Leary proposal mean that we would stop fighting for the Shilshole route? That would be a real shame.

The goal of studying an alternative to Shilshole to connect the Missing Link is not to abandon Shilshole but to provide a safe connection through Ballard as the City continues to evaluate safety measures on Shilshole.

24. Is there anything besides the litigious opposition preventing the Shilshole route?

The main obstacle is the litigation associated with the environmental permits. However, access to industrial businesses, the Shoreline Permit area, and the railroad tracks have complicated construction of transportation projects on this road for over 25 years. The City also just rezoned areas along Shilshole adding protections for industrial use, while also upzoning Leary for additional housing and commercial uses.

25. Why is the project framed as a "bike route"? The Burke Gilman is much more than a bike route.

Correct, this section of the "Missing Link" through Ballard would be part of the larger shared-use Burke Gilman Trail system. However, right now the space we are studying and designing for at the sidewalk-level on Market, Leary, and 17th is trying to fill a gap that currently exists for bikes in the bike network. The space for different users would be delineated by surface color and texture, but you are correct that yes, it would still function much like the rest of the Burke Gilman Trail as a shared space for two-way travel. Bike route study on Market/Leary/17th is just the term we are using right now as we sort through the historically understood Missing Link on Shilshole trail litigation; but yes, this route would be an alternative route for the Ballard Missing Link portion of the Burke-Gilman Trail.

26. Realistically, if you moved forward with what you have right now, how long would it take for this to be done?

The goal is to have 30% design by then end of 2023. It is currently not funded for construction. The construction timeline would depend on finding funding.

27. Are any changes being made to protect people on bikes who will continue to ride on Shilshole (as this is still the shortest path)?

SDOT continues to look at safety measures along Shilshole that are within the legal and environmental constraints that exist due to the ongoing litigation and Shoreline Permit area.

28. When do you expect to build this route?

That is not currently known. We will have a better understanding of schedule once we reach 30% design and have a cost estimate.

29. Will completing the Leary option prevent improvements to Shilshole or a future bike path on Shilshole?

No, it will not prevent future improvements to Shilshole for safe bike and pedestrian facilities

30. Can you explain what curb level bike lanes are?

A bike lane that is grade separated from the roadway, typically at the same level as the sidewalk. The goal would be to build this project to mimic the existing asphalt pathway between the Ballard Locks and 24th Ave NW.

31. Why is maintaining some parking spots considered as important as completing safe bike infrastructure that has been in Seattle's strategic plan for 25 years?

They are not equal, but we are trying to maintain some parking to serve the commercial loading needs for local businesses.

32. Does the Shilshole design keep bikes to the side or elevated in some way? Where can we find drawings of the 100% Shilshole design?

The designs are on their project website: seattle.gov/transportation/BGT_MissingLink

33. Can the train tracks on Shilshole be removed or covered to provide more space for bikes, pedestrians, cars, industry, etc.?

There is currently a franchise and operating agreement for the train tracks with certain legal restrictions

34. Will we see any specific designs before the end of the year?

The draft 30% plans will be shared prior to the end of the year with an opportunity to provide feedback. An updated schedule with project milestones will be added to the project website.

35. Will the bike lane be separated from the sidewalk? Unlike the lane on Market west of 24th?

This is still in design. Some portions will be separated by landscaping, but some pinch points will see the sidewalk directly abutting the trail. The segment between the Ballard Locks and 24th Ave NW has the same configuration.

36. Leary is already extremely wide (2 lanes in each direction plus parking on both sides). Would the number of car lanes be reduced?

The Route 40 project design already proposes changing the cross section of Leary to have a bus lane and a general-purpose lane in each direction. This project design assumes this as an existing condition and would not further reduce the number of general-purpose lanes.

37. How wide is the trail designed for the Shilshole design?

10 ft minimum.

38. While we wait on the missing link to be solved, most bikers are going along Ballard Avenue. Can safety improvements such as eliminating car traffic be made to that street in the meantime?

Ballard Ave is being designed as a shared café street, not the main biking corridor.

39. If the sidewalk will be 6-10 feet and the trail is 10 feet and the buffer is 5 feet, then measuring from the edge of the ROW in 25 feet will need to take away the parking lane, correct?

Not exactly. There are some landscape areas, bus stops, and set back buildings that don't make the math that straight-forward along the route. We are trying to preserve parking and loading on the south and west side of Leary.

40. Do we have confidence that this study/new approach will receive buy-in from local businesses or other stakeholders? I know the Shilshole route has been held up for decades, and have concerns about continued years of delay to solve the Missing Link.

We are using thoughtful, direct outreach and engagement to ensure adjacent business owners need's are met to the best of our ability.

41. Is repaving any of the roads going to be part of this project? There are so many potholes on Market, especially between Leary and 24th.

Yes, there will be a need for some repaving to facilitate the design.

42. Is SDOT still fighting for Shilshole at all?

The City is still evaluating next steps in regards to the ongoing litigation.

43. I took the survey and it is very constraining and car-centric, and does not provide the opportunity to provide real input.

There are several open-response questions that people can provide additional comments on.

44. My concern with the proposed route is that Shilshole is more direct. It seems like PBLs on the west side of 17th and Leary would obviate the need for crossing 17th and Leary, which would make it take a lot longer (especially for commuting). Is that a consideration?

Yes, we are aware of how Shilshole is a more direct route through Ballard. We are currently designing this alternative as the Shilshole route remains in ongoing litigation.

45. To be frank, I am concerned that the timeline is slow considering the amount pedestrian and cyclist injuries and deaths in Seattle. Do you have any timeline goals beyond 30% for end of year?

Not for the Missing Link Alternative study of Market/Leary/17th currently. But we are evaluating safety improvements and next steps for Shilshole. We will have more information regarding the schedule once the 30% design is completed.

46. ROW question - this seems like it would for sure take parking away on the west side of Leary - can you address this?

The design we are looking at shifts all the lanes over, narrows the landscape strip, and preserves the majority of parking on the west side of Leary. We are evaluating issues and want to preserve business access as much as possible.

47. How many people attended the Virtual Open House.

The Virtual Open House had 27 attendees. The presentation was recorded and posted on the website for future viewing.

48. Shilshole could easily be closed to through traffic without taking away precious parking or impacting transit times.

Shilshole provides industrial access that cannot easily be closed, thus the ongoing litigation.

49. What amount of parking removal?

The design aims to preserve as much parking and loading as possible along Leary. The curb-level design for the trail facility would just move the curb line out a few feet and maintain parking on the southwest side. It is unknown yet exactly how much parking would be lost along this route as compared to Shilshole.

50. If this project is built along the proposed Market/Leary/17th route, would it need a Shoreline Permit?

Yes, the portion of the project along the south end of 17th Ave NW falls within the designated Shoreline area. The project team is aware of the needed environment permits.

51. Couldn't another legal case just keep this alternative from moving forward toward construction too?

Yes, that is a possibility.

52. How many trees would need to be removed to allow sufficient space for the bike pathway to be built along the route?

The design tries to preserve as many trees as possible by keeping the landscape strip either in front of or behind the asphalt bike path along Market and Leary. All trees impacted by design would need to be replaced at a 3 to 1 ratio within the project area. There is not a final count yet on impacted trees, but a few mature trees would most likely need to be removed to open needed sidewalk space.

53. What is the anticipated project budget?

The anticipated project budget is unknown at this time. SDOT only has plans to perform outreach and reach 30% design in 2023 and future scope, schedule and budget will be informed after the 30% design is completed.

54. Do you have outside consultant involvement?

Yes, two outside consultants are involved in this work; DOWL is focusing on engineering and Cascadia Consulting Group is doing outreach. Both were selected from our on-call consulting contracts for their expertise in multi-modal design and outreach.

55. Has there been any preliminary work done prior to the Council Member request?

No preliminary work was done prior to the request from Councilmember Strauss. This outreach is the first step in the process that Councilmember Strauss and Mayor Harrell asked for, to have transparent outreach and engagement to reach 30% design.

56. What is the integration of this project into the Metro Route 40 Improvement?

We're coordinating with other projects in the area, including the Route 40 project. This work will not preclude improvements associated with Route 40.

57. What are your outreach methods?

We're running a public outreach process including smaller meetings with each business along the corridor, door-to-door flyering, and circulation of a survey. All written correspondence is public record.

58. Will this project require SEPA Analysis?

We do anticipate this project will require a SEPA analysis prior to construction due to the anticipated area of ground disturbance threshold exceeding 5 acres

59. Will this design be designed as a Bike Route or Multi-Use Path?

We are still in the preliminary phase of design, but the goal will be to construct best practices for a multi-use path as the rest of the Burke-Gilman Trail is designed as a multi-use path.