

5th AVENUE NE NEW SIDEWALKS (175th St – 182nd Ct)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): March 2021

Background

This project will construct new sidewalk and bike lanes along both sides of 5th Avenue NE from 175th Street to near 182nd Court where they will dovetail into the roadway and sidewalk improvements that Sound Transit is constructing from there to NE 185th Street. The primary goal of this project is to provide a safe, direct connection for pedestrians and bike riders from important City destinations to the new Shoreline North/185th Link Light Rail Station. The City reviewed other planning documents and current and future uses of the street to determine the cross section that will be built along this section of 5th Avenue NE. This effort usually involves balancing and prioritizing sidewalks, parking and bike lanes. We have compiled a list of frequently asked questions from outreach efforts and provided answers to give a broader context for the project.

Why was this sidewalk prioritized?

The 5th Avenue NE new sidewalks were one of the twelve specific locations identified in the [City's 2018 Sidewalk Prioritization Plan](#) and included in the fall 2018 ballot measure to increase Sales and Use Tax for new sidewalk construction. This section of sidewalk scored high when evaluated against the four priority metrics: safety, equity, proximity, and connectivity. In addition, the timing for this project ties in with the Sound Transit construction north on 5th Avenue NE to create a complete sidewalk and bike lane link ahead of the Shoreline North/185th Street Light Rail station opening.

If the goal of the project is to build sidewalks, why is the City also building bike lanes and why can't the bike lanes be constructed on parallel streets, such as 8th or 10th Avenue NE?

As the City is constructing new sidewalk, it is appropriate to implement the bike plan element at the same time. If this section of sidewalk was constructed without a bike lane, it would all have to be removed and replaced in the future to fill this critical gap in the bike network, so building the full roadway section now is the most efficient plan and will save the City money in the long-term. The plan for bike lanes on 5th Avenue NE has been in place since 2011 with the adoption of the City's Transportation Master Plan - [Bicycle System Plan](#); a plan vetted through resident steering committees, public hearings, and Council process.



The City envisions a robust bike network that provides choices for bicyclists. Bike lanes along 5th Avenue will tie into the existing bike lanes on 5th Avenue south of NE 175th Street, providing a direct connection to the light rail station that will be available at station opening. The City also has long-term goals to include bike lanes on 8th and 10th Avenue NE.

The addition of bike lanes on 5th Avenue NE also complies with the City's Complete Streets Ordinance (SMC 12.50.030). Complete Streets have many benefits including safety, encouragement of physical activity, traffic calming effects, and reduction of congestion and decreased emissions that contribute to climate change. In addition, the bike lane provides an offset between the edge of the vehicle travel way and pedestrian space.

Why has the City decided to build sidewalks and bike lanes over parking?

Shoreline Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Policy T36 states that the City should design transportation facilities with the primary purpose of moving people and goods via multiple modes, including automobiles, freight trucks, transit, bicycles and walking, with vehicle parking identified as a secondary use.

Bike and pedestrian infrastructure are important for equitably providing services to all residents. The benefits of pedestrian/bike infrastructure are numerous and will continue to be promoted by the City. Resources for learning more about the importance of bike infrastructure, especially as a tradeoff to parking can be found at the following links.

- [Methods for Prioritizing and Quantifying the Benefits of Bicycle and Pedestrian Investments](#)
- [A Place for the Bicycle](#)
- [Parking Has Eaten American Cities](#)

The City has also found that there is ample parking in this area. The City has completed counts of utilized parking spots along this route in 2019, 2020 and 2021 and each year the results show that of the 45 legal parking spots, less than 20% are utilized. More information on utilization of parking on City streets was presented in the [January 4, 2021, Staff Report on Discussion of the Light Rail Station Subareas Parking Study 2020 Update](#).

As redevelopment occurs, increasing demand for parking, the City has the ability to require developers to build on- and/or off-street parking to accommodate the increased demand. Sound Transit related parking demand will be managed through various tools to discourage “hide and ride” activity --people from driving to the light rail station area and parking on City streets to use light rail.



Why would you put bike lanes on 5th Avenue NE when the Trail Along the Rail is so close?

The City anticipates Trail Along the Rail (Trail) segments will be implemented in phases, will take many years to complete, and will not be a viable complete route for some time. As part of the Sound Transit Lynnwood Link Light Rail Extension permitting requirements, Sound Transit will be constructing trail improvements along portions of 1st Avenue NE, 3rd Avenue NE, 5th Avenue NE (between NE 180th St and NE 185th St), and NE 195th Street. These improvements will include short segments of the shared-use path that could eventually be connected to create the continuous Trail Along the Rail. In addition, Sound Transit will be building a shared-use path along the perimeter of the Shoreline South/148th and Shoreline North/185th light rail stations that will be ready for use by their opening date in 2024.

At this time, City Council has given no direction for the City to acquire property for the Trail project. In areas where topography or property challenges are present, on-street connections (especially bike lanes along 5th Avenue NE) will be used to connect gaps in the Trail until a time when the greater vision of a continuous trail may be achieved.

[Trail Along the Rail FAQ](#)

Is it possible to calm traffic so cars don't drive so fast and people on the sidewalk are safe?

Yes! The travel lanes are being narrowed which will encourage drivers to travel at slower speeds, as will the presence of bike lanes and sidewalks. Other physical devices such as speed humps are not appropriate for this roadway as it is an arterial, providing an important connection for emergency responders, transit, and relatively higher volumes of cars.

Can the left turn lane onto 175th be removed to reduce the impacts to private properties along 5th Avenue NE?

No, the left turn lane is critical for intersection delay and safety reasons.

5th Avenue NE is too busy for bicycling to be safe.

Bike riding is a legitimate way to travel on every street. The key is selecting the appropriate bike facility for the roadway design. This bike facility is largely slated to be a buffered bike lane – providing additional protection between bikes and cars. An example of how cities qualify the appropriate facility based on roadway characteristics can be seen in [Bellevue's bicycle level of service standard](#) (starting on page 8).

The City of Shoreline will be working on developing our targets with the TMP update. 5th Avenue NE is a two-lane roadway that carries about 4,000 vehicles per day and has a current speed limit of 30 MPH. This would indicate that the planned facility (Horizontal Buffered Bike Lane) provides adequate comfort/safety for most users. Sharrows would not be appropriate for this roadway.



Does the City expect people to use this as a bike route?

Yes! Traffic data confirms that bicyclists are currently using the roadway and bike lanes on 5th Avenue NE south of this project. By providing the bike facilities, the City will be able to promote more users. The City expects that some bicyclists will prefer this route as it will be the most direct route to the Shoreline North/185th Station. Additionally, once the project's traffic-calming improvements are complete, reduced vehicle speeds will be encouraged. All users will have increased safety and comfort along this route with the addition of bike lanes and sidewalks.

What happens when a delivery truck or garbage truck is stopped?

Delivery and garbage collection will occur as it does on other City streets with on-street bike lanes and no parking – delivery and garbage truck drivers will pull into the bike lane space and drivers are allowed to legally pass these stopped vehicles ([RCW 44.61.100\(1\)\(b\)](#)).

Are there any plans to add street lighting?

Yes, the City is planning to add lights to power poles at all public roadway intersections.

How can I learn more?

Updated information is always available at the project web page:
shorelinewa.gov/5AveSidewalks

You can sign up for email alerts using the eNotification Signup located on the project web page (linked above) to stay up to date on Shoreline Sidewalk Projects.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

If you have questions about the 5th Avenue NE New Sidewalk Project, please contact Project Manager, Laura Reiter, at lreiter@shorelinewa.gov or (206) 801-2457.

