



Winter 2024

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

Why is this project needed?

East Marginal Way S is a major freight corridor that provides access to the Port of Seattle terminals, rail yards, industrial businesses, and between local Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MIC's). As a designated Heavy Haul Route, critical last-mile connector, and vital route for over-sized trucks or those carrying flammable cargo, improvements to freight mobility are essential to our economic competitiveness.

The corridor also provides a major connection for people biking between the West Seattle Bridge Trail, downtown, and the SODO neighborhood. Improvements to separate people walking, biking, and rolling from freight traffic create a safer environment for all users and provides more predictability for freight drivers.

Why is the project divided into North, Central, and South segments?

This project extends along East Marginal Way S from S Atlantic St to 1st Ave S. The project is divided into 3 segments to deliver these improvements more quickly and as funding becomes available. Each segment will advance on its own schedule.

- The **North Segment** is designed and construction is expected to begin as soon as March 2024 and last approximately 26 months.
- The **Central Segment** is completed through 90% design and is unfunded for further design and construction.

The **South Segment** is completed through preliminary design and is unfunded for further design and construction.

What is happening now?

This project began in 2015 and has advanced through project planning and design with consistent engagement with community members, businesses, partner agencies, and community advocacy groups. We secured funding to construct the North Segment of the project and expect to begin construction between S Atlantic St and S Spokane St as soon as March 2024. We estimate construction completion in 2026. Construction schedules are subject to change based on staffing and material availability.

During final design, SDOT conducted field work, gathered construction materials, and coordinated with key partners and community groups leading up to construction. During early construction, we will provide opportunities to meet the project team to learn what to expect during construction. We encourage you to [sign up for email updates](#) to stay informed of project activities.

Construction of the Central and South Segments will depend on identifying funding sources.

Freight and traffic improvements

What are the biggest improvements for freight traffic?

- Reconstructed street to heavy haul standards
- Improved traffic signal operations at S Hanford St that react to traffic volumes
- Weigh-in-motion system
- New protected bike lane with concrete buffers on the east side of East Marginal Way that reduces conflicts with freight traffic and Port of Seattle driveways
- Improved turning radius for westbound trucks turning right at S Spokane St

What is the Heavy Haul Network?

The Heavy Haul Network is a system of streets in Seattle designed to make it easier for freight to move through the city by accommodating overweight vehicles and reducing congestion around the Port of Seattle. East Marginal Way S, between S Holgate St and Diagonal Ave S, is part of this network. The new street 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.

Will the new signals at S Hanford St and S Horton St cause delays for freight?

While some safety improvements (such as restricting right turns on red to create a fully protected crossing for people walking and biking on the east part of the intersection) may cause people driving to feel delayed, the new signals will be smarter and able to react to real-time traffic conditions. Unlike the existing S Hanford St signal that runs on a set cycle, the rebuilt signal at S Hanford St and new signal at S Horton St will have sensors that allow them to give more time to people driving through the intersection when needed. The signals will also be coordinated with each other to minimize delays.

What is the Heavy Haul Network Permit and how does it benefit businesses?

The Heavy Haul Network 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 Network Permit [here](#).

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

This project does not include work on 1st Ave S or 4th Ave S but may help reduce congestion by providing an alternate route with upgraded traffic signals that adjust to real-time traffic conditions.

Why was the speed limit reduced 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 was reduced from 35 miles per hour to 25 miles per hour in 2021. Data shows that a person hit at higher speeds is less likely to survive a collision. For example, only 1 out of 10 people hit at 40 MPH are likely to survive, while 9 out of 10 people hit at 20 MPH are likely to survive.

Will the project improve traffic signal operations at S Hanford St?

Yes. North Segment improvements include rebuilding the traffic signal at S Hanford St. Additionally, SDOT is building a new multi-use path on the west side of the street between S Horton St and S Spokane St. The improved intersection at S Hanford St will include a new signalized diagonal crossing for bike traffic. These improvements will promote safety and efficiency for both vehicle and bike traffic.

Will a new signal at S Horton St cause more delays for freight?

The improvements along the North Segment of East Marginal Way will promote freight traffic efficiency through signal modifications, improving wayfinding and lighting, and intelligent transportation systems.

What are the improvements for trucks at S Spokane St? How will this project minimize conflicts for bicyclists?

North Segment improvements include a revised curb radius with a truck apron at S Spokane St to help large vehicles make safe turns more easily. Just north of S Spokane St, we will redesign the driveway at Terminal 25 to improve visibility for people biking and driving.

Additionally, we will build a new protected bike lane separating non-motorized traffic from freight traffic on the east side of East Marginal Way S between S Atlantic St and S Spokane St, and a new shared-use path on the west side of the street between S Horton St and S Spokane St. These improvements are designed to minimize conflicts by separating non-motorized traffic from vehicle traffic.

Walking and biking improvements

Will the project include signalized crossings for people biking?

Yes, we are updating the following intersection crossings to improve safety for people biking:

- **S Atlantic St:** Signalized crossing with access to the Elliott Bay Trail
- **S Massachusetts St:** New Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) to alert approaching vehicles that people intend to or are crossing the street
- **S Hanford St:** Upgraded signal that includes a crossing phase for people biking to or from West Seattle
- **S Horton St:** New signalized diagonal bike crossing

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

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

The protected bike lane barrier is 42 inches tall, consisting of three feet of concrete with a six-inch handrail or fencing on top.

Will SDOT maintain the new protected bike lane?

The new bike lane is designed to minimize maintenance needs. The planting strip and concrete barriers will help keep debris from collecting in the bike lane. When debris does gather in the bike lane, we will send out bike lane sweepers.

Additionally, the new bike lane is designed to avoid ponding or water collection, and the new reconstructed East Marginal Way S will limit large puddles from forming that would splash into the bike lane.

Why does the North Segment protected bike lane end at S Spokane St and continue south as a shared-use path in the Central Segment design?

We explored several options for continuing the protected bike lane along the east side of the street but none of the options were viable. The Central Segment has limited space on the east side of the street to continue the North Segment protected bike lane because of conflicts with the SR 99 viaduct support pillars. A west side shared-use path provided the greatest benefit for a protected walking, biking, and rolling facility within the project constraints.

Will the South Segment design extend the shared-use path to the 1st Ave S Bridge?

We completed a preliminary design for the South Segment that includes safety and mobility improvements for people walking and rolling to the 1st Ave S Bridge. Improvements include completing the east side sidewalk, making bus stop improvements, and upgrading signals. The South Segment section is currently unfunded for additional design or construction, and we are identifying funding opportunities.

Improvements to biking facilities in this area will be included in the City of Seattle's [Bicycle Master Plan](#) update, which will be released in 2024.

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

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.

Construction of North Segment

Will there be detours during construction?

Yes. East Marginal Way S will be restricted to freight vehicles and Port of Seattle traffic only. SDOT will maintain northbound traffic for Port of Seattle terminals, as well as two-way traffic between S Massachusetts St and S Atlantic St. Traffic heading southbound from the Port of Seattle will detour along 1st Ave SW.

All non-Port of Seattle vehicle traffic will be detoured to nearby streets. We will maintain access for people walking, biking, and rolling along East Marginal Way S using different routes that avoid active construction areas. Detour routes may change throughout construction to accommodate project work.

We will release the detour routes for non-Port of Seattle vehicle traffic and for people walking, biking, and rolling before starting construction and we will place detour signs throughout the area.

How will truck queuing be handled?

During construction, East Marginal Way S will be restricted to northbound traffic destined for the Port. The majority of this traffic will be trucks queueing to use the Port terminal entrances. One travel lane will be provided at all times, with a second lane provided for additional queueing whenever possible. Traffic heading southbound from the Port of Seattle will detour along 1st Ave S.

How will SDOT ensure safety during construction?

Safety is our top priority and we are working with the contractor to ensure the safety of people driving, walking, biking, and rolling on East Marginal Way S during construction. We will share notices in advance of construction activities so businesses, residents, and traveling public can prepare and plan ahead.

How are you managing truck parking conflicts on East Marginal Way S?

We are aware of the truck parking conflicts on East Marginal Way S. We are working on long-term alternatives for truck parking and will share updates as we have them.

Will all segments of the project be under construction at the same time?

No. The North Segment is the only segment currently funded for construction and is expected to start work in early 2024. The Central and South segments are not funded for construction but will be constructed separately when funding is secured.

Will people riding bikes be required to detour?

Access for people walking and biking will be maintained. Routes may change during construction. All detours will be signed.

How will I know what to expect during construction?

SDOT is committed to sharing regular updates during construction. We will share updates when we anticipate potential traffic disruptions and send regular email updates with general updates on construction progress and activities. The easiest way to stay informed is by [signing up for our project listserv](#) and/or texting “eastmarginal” to 206-222-0105 to get SMS text alerts.

Other items

Will there be community art for this project?

SDOT selected [Will Schlough](#) to create art along the corridor to separate the bike lane from the nearby railroad tracks. Schlough is a public artist living and working in Seattle, Washington, whose practice is inspired by the power of art and community engagement. His work aims to inspire viewers to explore possibilities in the physical landscape, within themselves, and in their communities. Schlough plans to work with community groups in and around the SODO neighborhood to develop his public art concepts.

Public art for the East Marginal Way Corridor Improvement project is funded through the City of Seattle Public Art Ordinance, which designates one percent of project costs to works of art.

Will this project impact the East Marginal Skatepark?

The East Marginal Skatepark is an important community asset and the project will not impact the park directly. However, the new protected bike lane will impact the area currently used for parking. We are committed to working with the skate community to minimize impacts and ensure that the skatepark remains open.