

**From:** "Nelson, LeAnne" <[LeAnne.Nelson@seattle.gov](mailto:LeAnne.Nelson@seattle.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 27, 2013 5:49 PM

**Subject:** RE: Westlake cycle track

Thank you for taking the time to contact me and others at SDOT regarding the future Westlake Avenue North cycle track. When we spoke August 16, I thought I correctly conveyed the project process, though it sounds as if I may not have. Let me clarify now that design has not yet begun and the first phase of the project is public outreach to create a design concept that is sensitive to a multitude of needs and concerns. This outreach process begins in September and is expected to last into next year, after which a preferred design would then be finalized. Construction not expected until the spring of 2015.

As you are aware, the City's Bicycle Master Plan is currently being updated, and the update draft shows a cycle track along Westlake Avenue North. This plan is still in the public review phase, with a final likely adopted in late 2013 or early 2014. The current Bicycle Master Plan, which was adopted in 2007, identifies the Westlake Avenue Corridor as an existing pedestrian pathway with bicycles permitted, as well as an area in need of further study due to safety concerns. Safety is the main reason behind the cycle track project advancing now – safety for pedestrians accessing businesses or otherwise traveling through the corridor, and safety for all other users where more predictability of movement is needed. Because of that, a grant application was submitted and was selected for funding, providing \$1.7 million in funding for the effort.

The Westlake cycle track, while parallel to Dexter Avenue, would serve a different need than the Dexter Avenue North bicycle lanes, which provide a facility for commuters who are comfortable riding close to traffic on a busy street. The Dexter bicycle lanes offer space for commuting cyclists who have long been using that roadway for its great connections. Cycle tracks physically separate bicyclists from motor vehicle lanes, thereby providing an option for many who would travel by bike if they were not required to share lanes with or ride directly alongside traffic. Westlake Avenue also provides a more level north-south route than Dexter, providing a more comfortable facility for the less experienced or recreational cyclist. A Westlake Avenue cycle track would also more directly connect the South Ship Canal and Burke-Gilman trails to the high-growth South Lake Union area, where more demand for bike facilities is expected. In addition, reviews of corridor traffic operations and public input in recent years underscore the need to improve pedestrian and bicycle traffic safety and flow in this area.

A large number of cyclists already use the Westlake Avenue North route, commonly riding through the parking lot. This creates bicycle/motor vehicle conflicts, as you know. Traffic speeds certainly come into play when evaluating bike facilities, and for the future Westlake Avenue North cycle track we expect speed limit regulation to be discussed. We hope that you and a great many others fully participate in the public outreach process to inform the final design of this cycle track, making the change more beneficial for all concerned. Having this week selected a communications consultant to assist with the extensive outreach needed and planned for this project we expect to contact you, and the multitude of interested parties, very soon regarding outreach next steps. These steps will likely include one-on-one stakeholder interviews, organizational briefings, formation of stakeholder committees, and public meetings.

Thank you for your time and energy on this project. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,



**LEANNE NELSON**

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