

Frequently Asked Questions
New westbound SR 520 off-ramp to Lake Washington Boulevard at 24th Avenue East
Updated January 29, 2016

Bicycle/pedestrian path across 24th Ave E bridge over SR 520

- 1. Why did WSDOT decide to keep the bicycle/pedestrian path closed on the 24th Avenue East overpass above SR 520?**
 - The one and only reason is public safety. There simply is not enough width on the overpass, as temporarily configured for vehicular traffic and construction access, for bicyclists and pedestrians to safely cross the bridge.

- 2. How much room is there for a bicycle-pedestrian path?**
 - With two lanes needed on the overpass/off-ramp for general traffic and another, separate single 2-way lane required for SR 520 construction vehicles, only about 4 feet remains for a bike-pedestrian path. A two-way, 4-foot-wide path would not be safe for bicyclists and pedestrians alike.

- 3. Couldn't you remove one of the overpass's two lanes for cars and create a wider path for bicyclists and pedestrians?**
 - No. Narrowing the off-ramp to one general-purpose lane would cause back-ups for drivers turning onto East Lake Washington Boulevard, and could cause back-ups on to SR 520's mainline. In order to keep traffic flowing, two general-purpose off-ramp lanes, at a minimum, are needed to replace the function of the previous off-ramp.

- 4. Who did WSDOT coordinate with before deciding to maintain the closure of the bicycle/pedestrian path on 24th Avenue East?**
 - WSDOT consulted with the Seattle Department of Transportation department before making the decision to keep the path closed. The city was eager to see the path reopened when the new off-ramp opened, but agreed with our determination after learning how narrow the path would have to be. The city, like WSDOT, was concerned about the potential for conflicts between bicyclists/pedestrians and general traffic or construction vehicles as well as backups onto SR 520.

- 5. WSDOT said last fall that they expected the path to reopen when the new westbound off-ramp opened at 24th Avenue. Why didn't you anticipate that the bike path would be so narrow and have to remain closed for longer than 6 months?**
 - As we began to demolish portions of the overpass, our crews realized that the existing structure had inadequate width to accommodate the planned 24th Avenue bridge design elements – including a wider construction access lane.
 - As soon as we knew there was likely not enough room for a bicycle and pedestrian path, two-lanes of traffic and our two way construction lane, we evaluated different options. WSDOT determined, in consultation with the city of Seattle, that it would be safer for the bicycle and pedestrian path to not reopen at this time.

- 6. How were sidewalks improved on Montlake Boulevard for bicyclists and pedestrians?**
 - In anticipation of the path closing on 24th Avenue East, crews widened the 8-foot-wide sidewalk to 10 feet wide along the eastside of Montlake Boulevard between East North Street and East Hamlin Street. Crews also improved key crossings for bikers and walkers



at the key intersections of SR 520 and Montlake Boulevard, such as adding a stop light and removing the free right-hand turn at the westbound off-ramp to Montlake Boulevard.

- 7. Why weren't the sidewalks upgraded farther north and south along Montlake Boulevard? The sidewalks by East Roanoke Street are very bumpy.**
 - The sidewalks farther north and south are not a part of the WABN project limits. Sidewalk improvements will extend farther north and south in subsequent phases of the SR 520 project and/or will be considered as part of other planned city of Seattle projects.
- 8. So when will the bicycle-pedestrian path on 24th Avenue East reopen?**
 - The West Approach Bridge North project is scheduled to open to traffic in mid-2017, and WSDOT currently plans to reopen the path across the 24th Avenue East overcrossing at that time.
- 9. Is the Rest of the West fully funded now? What is the timing of the next construction phase?**
 - Yes, WSDOT is happy to say that the 2015 legislature provided full funding for the final phases of the SR 520 corridor, known as the Rest of the West. As with all major construction, it is expected to be phased over time. The construction phases and timing are under development now, including elements such as the new Montlake lid and the West Approach Bridge South. When construction is complete, the result will be new community enhancements, including improved connections for bicyclists and pedestrians to and through the Montlake area and across the SR 520 corridor. WSDOT appreciates the public's patience and understanding as we move forward in constructing the remaining phases of these important improvements.

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- 10. How long will the temporary ramp configuration at 24th Avenue East be in place?**
 - The final ramp configuration will open when the WABN project is complete in summer 2017.
- 11. What have you done to discourage local access into the neighborhoods from the new off-ramp?**
 - The lanes on the off-ramp are marked as either a right or left turn to discourage cut-through traffic. In the final WABN configuration, WSDOT will also install additional intersection improvements like curb bulbs and raised crosswalks to further discourage drivers from cutting through the neighborhood.

Traffic

- 12. Montlake Boulevard and East Lake Washington Boulevard are already crowded during rush hour. How will you manage traffic with the addition of the new off-ramp?**
 - We recognize that as traffic adjusts to the new off-ramp, there is additional congestion on East Lake Washington Boulevard during peak hours. WSDOT and Seattle Department of Transportation traffic engineers are actively monitoring the traffic conditions and will adjust the timing of signals on Montlake Boulevard as needed to address overall traffic flow.



13. Why did you change from an off-ramp that had only one stop sign to an off-ramp that forces traffic to stop twice?

- Keep in mind that the current off-ramp is in a temporary configuration must allow for both SR 520 drivers and construction access. The additional stop sign is so that construction traffic can safely enter the construction staging area while drivers exit the off-ramp. When construction is complete in summer 2017, the first stop that drivers encounter will be removed.