6th Street Active Transportation Improvements Project
Frequently Asked Questions – November 12, 2024

Background	
What is the background of this project?	In 2007, the City of Bremerton adopted its *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* which developed a strategy for an interconnected multimodal transportation network. This initial plan established the framework for bicycle lanes on 6th Street and noted the need/opportunity to improve pedestrian safety. In 2016, the City's *Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element* developed a strategy for a bicycle priority network and identified an east-west "road diet" on a 20-year project list focused on improving bicycle safety and connectivity. In 2020, a *Strategic Road Safety Plan* was developed which identified 6th Street as a one of five priority projects and identified a re-channelization of the corridor as an effective countermeasure to improve safety for all road users. A re-channelization includes a reallocation of existing space in the street for users, and in the case of 6th Street generally includes a reduction in vehicle lanes and/or parking to integrate a new dedicated space for bicycles. The project has continued to be evaluated and highlighted as a recommended improvement as travel and development patterns have evolved including, most recently, through the adoption of the *Joint Compatibility Transportation Plan*. The project focuses on improving safety for all users while connecting a critical east-west link in the City's bicycle network providing access to existing and planned active transportation routes. 6th Street has been identified as the recommended east-west corridor for a re-channelization based on vehicle demand, topography, and availability of alternate parallel corridors including 11th Street and Burwell Street (SR 304). More information on the project background and related plans/studies can be found on the project webpage. Reference: Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and City's Comprehensive Plan and Strategic Road Safety Plan
Project Overview	
What's the project's overview?	The proposed re-channelization for 6th Street generally includes a cost-effective conversion of the roadway from 4-lanes to 3-lanes (west of Park Avenue) and reduction of existing on-street parking (East of Park Avenue) to provide space within the existing roadway for on-street bike lanes. These improvements are planned to extend previously constructed on-street bike lanes on Kitsap Way (completed in 2022) to Washington Avenue providing improved east-west active transportation connectivity. Additionally, the project will emphasize improved user safety through the roadway re-channelization and consider additional

	pedestrian crossing improvements where warranted. The project is funding constrained, and alternatives being considered seek to balance achieving the project goals with cost-effective roadway improvements.
Where is this project?	The project begins at the intersection of Kitsap Way (SR 310) and 11th Street and continues east along 6th Street to the terminus of Washington Avenue. The City of Bremerton has other transportation capital projects which overlap with this project. Naval Avenue between 1st Street and 15th Street (*Naval Avenue - 1st to 15th Bicycle and Pedestrian Enhancements Project*) is providing similar bicycle facilities and pedestrian improvements and is currently in the final design stages. Additionally, in 2025, the City is expected to begin construction of a pavement preservation project along 6th Street between Naval Avenue and Warren Avenue (*6th Street Naval Ave to Warren Ave Pavement Preservation Phase III*). More information on these capital projects can be found on the City's webpage.

Why is the project re-channelizing 6th Street to add bike lanes and not, instead, improving bike facilities on lower traffic residential streets?	Re-channelizing 6th Street aligns with the City's long-range plans and previous planning studies. This project will provide the "missing link" for cyclists between existing bicycle lanes on Kitsap Way and Washington Ave. Most importantly, re-channelizing 6th Street will improve safety for all modes of transportation along the corridor and is an important step toward improving safety for all road users.
Won't reducing the number of vehicle lanes make traffic congestion worse?	This is a common misconception – re-channelization's can often maintain a similar roadway capacity by providing dedicated bicycle facilities, turning spaces and reducing conflict points. The City has developed previous traffic studies which show a re-channelization can meet the city's current and future service level requirements.

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Of the nine (9) existing signalized intersections on the project, only the intersections of Naval Avenue and Warren Avenue have been determined to require separate right-turn lanes in order to meet current and future service level requirements. Left-turn lanes are primarily maintained on the project unless shown otherwise on the alternatives presented.

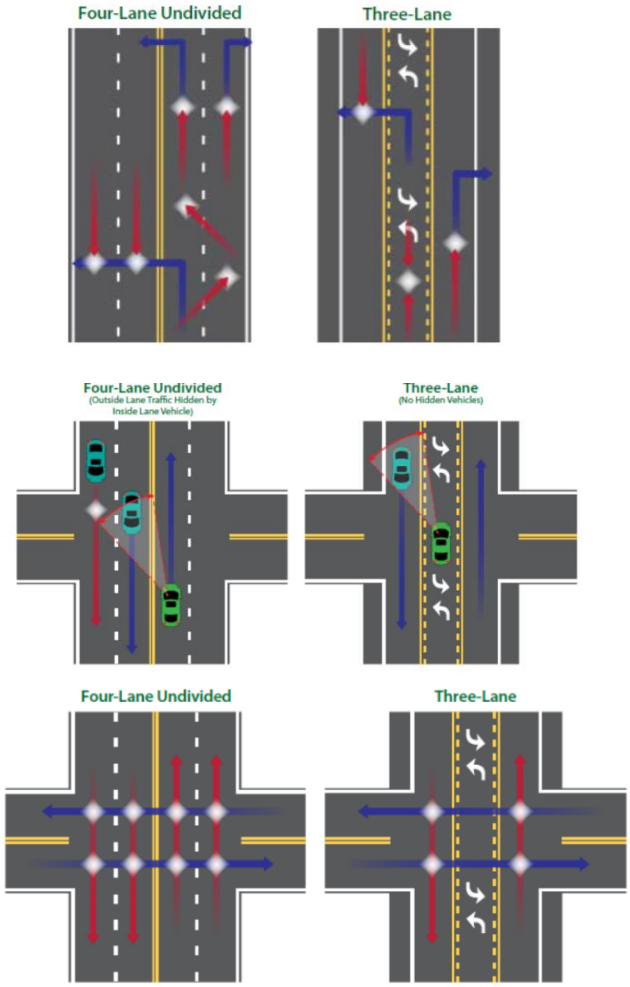
Reference:
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/resources/pdf/roadDiet_MythBuster.pdf

How does the project improve safety for all road users?

Vehicles

Reducing vehicle lanes from a 4-lane undivided roadway to a 3-lane roadway with a center two-way left-turn lane (TWLTL) reduces conflict points by separating left-turning traffic from through lanes. This design also reduces vehicle operating speeds and improves sight distance for turning vehicles leading to safer and more predictable traffic flow.

Images from:
https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/guidance/info_guide/ch2.cfm



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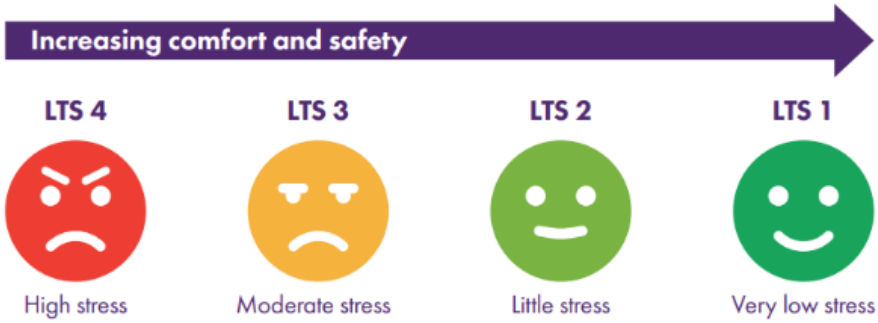
Bicycles	By providing a dedicated space for bicycles there will be an overall reduction in the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS). BLTS, as defined by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), provides an indication of the performance and relative comfort with respect to bicycle riders. It is expressed between the range of 1 to 4 with a higher number representing higher bicyclist (perceived) stress. The existing project corridor has been identified as having a BLTS Level 4 (high stress). The alternatives provided seek to achieve a BLTS Level 2 (little stress). Additionally, separating bicycles and vehicles inherently reduces the likelihood of a conflict and also result in lower speed differentials between vehicles and cyclists. Achieving a BLTS Level 1 is not possible based on WSDOT criteria due to the number of vehicles per day which travel on the project corridor. 
Pedestrians	Integration of bike lanes along the existing roadway curb provides a new buffer between the existing sidewalk and re-channelized vehicle lanes, lowering the Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress (PLTS). PLTS, as defined by WSDOT, provides an indication of the performance and relative comfort for pedestrians. It is expressed between the range of 1 to 4 with a higher number representing higher pedestrian (perceived) stress. The existing project corridor has been identified as having a PLTS Level 3 (moderate stress). The alternatives provided seek to achieve a BLTS Level 2 (little stress). Additionally, the re-channelization will shorten the distance pedestrians are required to cross vehicle lanes at intersections. Achieving a BLTS Level 1 is not possible based on WSDOT criteria due to the number of vehicles per day which travel on the project corridor.

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Will emergency access be impacted?	Studies show a benefit to emergency access, with emergency vehicles able to make use of the center two-way left turn lane, where provided. Bremerton Police and Fire Departments are being consulted on the design to ensure it meets their operational requirements. Reference: https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/road_diets/resources/pdf/fhwasa17020.pdf
How were project alternatives developed?	Project guidelines: • Safety for all users • Improved access for walking and cycling • Maintain operations for vehicles and transit • Cost-effective improvements which minimize impacts to existing infrastructure Major constraints considered in alternative development include: • The presented alternatives have been developed to meet project goals and work within project constraints to the maximum extent feasible. These alternatives balance the needs of all road users, including general traffic, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and emergency services within the available road space. They have also been developed to fit within project constraints such as an existing curb-to-curb and right-of-way width, limited budget, and minimizing impact on the project timeframe. Ongoing community and stakeholder feedback will guide development of the preferred alternative.
What changes to existing street access and use would be expected by the project?	The proposed re-channelization alternatives, as currently developed, would: • Remove the existing separate right-turn lanes at Wycoff Avenue (EB) and Park Avenue (EB). Removal of these existing right-turn lanes has been determined to be appropriate based on current and future vehicle volumes and provides additional space for on-street bicycle facilities. • Restrict left turns at Montgomery Avenue (EB). Removal of this left-turn lane was based on extremely low peak hour vehicle turns and allows for additional left-turn lane capacity at Callow Avenue (WB). • Restrict left turns at Olympic Avenue (EB, NB, and SB with an option to restrict WB instead of EB) and Hewitt Avenue (EB and SB). Removal of these left turns was based on mitigating the 'head-on' conflict at the offset intersection due to the re-channelization. Adjacent cross streets would provide alternate access left-tun access to and from 6th Street for vehicles.

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	• Reduce availability or remove existing on-street parking between Park Avenue and Washington Avenue. This reduction in on-street parking is required to accommodate integration of continuous on-street bike lanes.
Did the City consider removal of a center two-way left-turn lane to provide additional space on the roadway for other users?	Yes, however the center two-way left-turn lane was determined to provide the most benefit for roadway safety due to vehicle volumes and the high number of driveways along the project. The primary benefit includes accident reduction through removing stopped and slow left-turning vehicles from the through lanes. Additionally, this center lane provides increased comfort for users navigating left-turns onto the roadway from adjacent driveways.
What additional bike safety features (other than a standard marked bike lane) are or have been considered by the City?	A wide range of options were considered in determining the layout of the re-channelized roadway. These included locations of potential physical bike lane protection, painted buffers, tactile lane marking types, and various intersection treatments. All these options were assessed against metrics of best use of physical space for all modes of transportation, budget allocation, Bicycle Levels of Traffic Stress (BLTS) indicators, and City operations and maintenance impacts. It is important to note that based on WSDOT guidance, it is not feasible to achieve a BLTS Level 1 (lowest stress) on the project due to vehicle volumes. Additionally, physical bike lane protection (defined as a "Separated Bike Lane" per WSDOT) requires a minimum 2-foot buffer from vehicle travel lanes which is not possible in some project areas without compromising safety and use by other road users. Physical bike lane protection will be subject to subsequent review by the City to ensure that implementation would allow for proper maintenance and operations such as routine street sweeping, repair activities, trash collection, snow/ice removal, etc.
What is the timeframe for construction of this project and how is the project funded?	The design phase of this project is locally funded through the City. Construction funding has been requested through the WSDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Program, and if successful, is expected to be awarded in mid-2025. Contingent on award of this grant and selection of a preferred alternative that minimizes right-of-way acquisition, construction could begin as soon as 2026.

What to expect

What are the next steps for the project?	The next steps involve gathering public input, which the city will use to inform its final recommendations on a preferred design alternative to Bremerton City Council. The selected preferred alternative will then proceed to final design which is currently anticipated to occur in 2025. Construction timeframe would be subject to the city securing funding for the project construction-phase.

Community involvement

What community feedback is being requested now and how will that input be used for the project?	Feedback is being requested on the design alternatives developed, as well as any additional feedback which the City should consider during the alternative development process. This feedback will be used to assist in selecting a recommended preferred corridor alternative. Additionally, feedback may be used to provide additional clarification to the public related to development of alternatives.
What did we hear from the community at the previous virtual project meeting?	The community has overwhelmingly expressed a desire to improve safety along the corridor and reduce vehicle speeds. A summary of the feedback received can be found on the project website.
How has community feedback informed the project's design so far?	Community feedback has been instrumental in shaping the project's design. Based on input, the design alternatives have incorporated measures to mitigate speeds, improve pedestrian crossings to enhance connectivity, identify opportunities for physical bike lane protection, and exploring options to retain on-street parking where feasible. These elements aim to address community priorities for safety, accessibility, and convenience.
How can I stay informed about the project's progress?	For regular updates please visit the project website. If you would like to be included on future email notifications for this project, please email or call the City's project manager, Nick Ataie, at nick.ataie@ci.bremerton.wa.us or 360-473-2306.

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