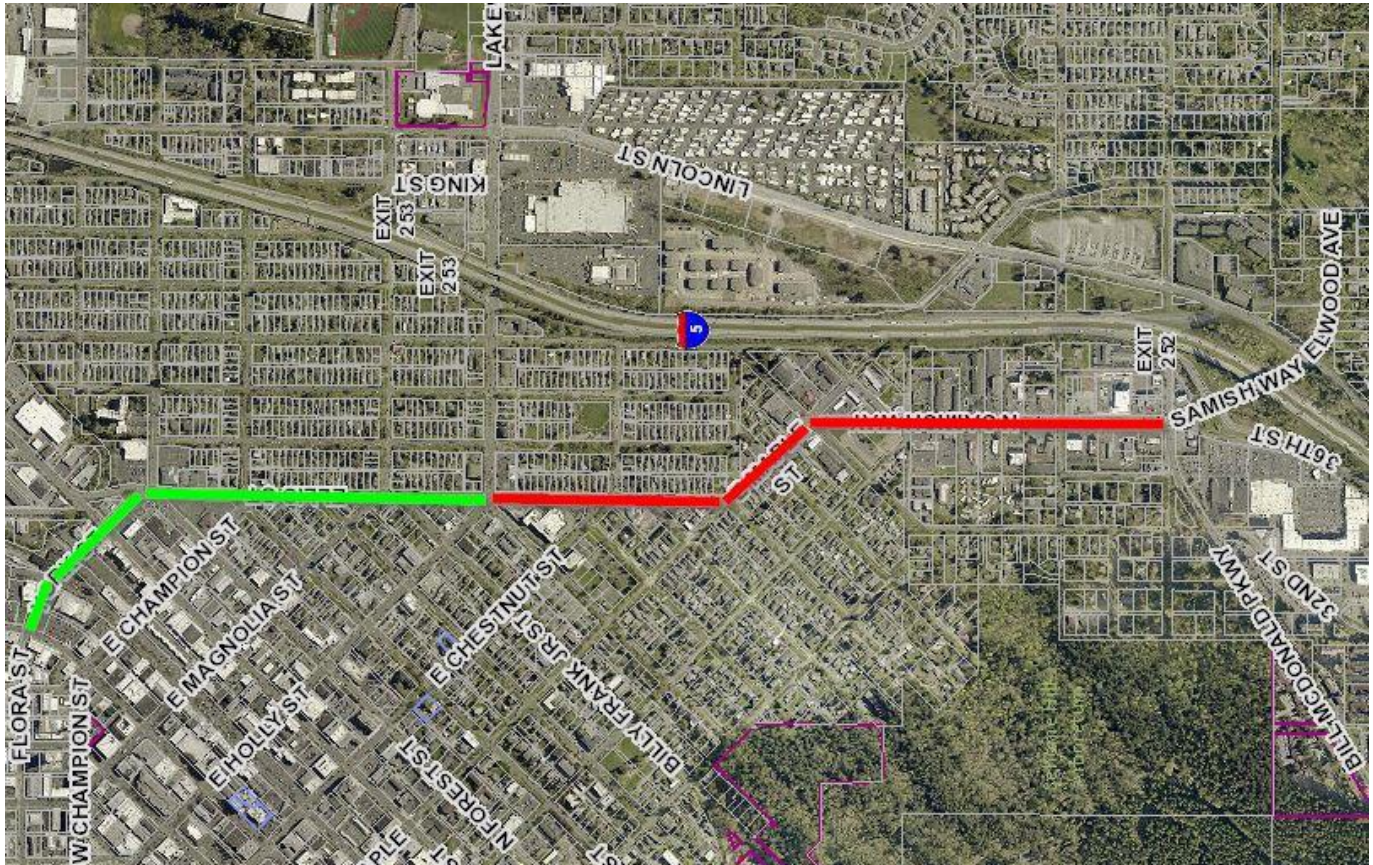




Frequently Asked Questions about:

The [Samish-Maple-Ellis Multimodal Safety Improvements \(ES-0552\)](#)



What do these improvements include?

In July 2020, the 1.5-mile-long N. Samish-Maple-Ellis-York arterial corridor from the I-5/Samish interchange to Lakeway Drive (Red above) and then to Cornwall Avenue (Green above) will experience major changes, including:

- From Bill McDonald Parkway to Chestnut Street, one vehicle lane in each direction will be removed and replaced with buffer-separated bike lanes;
- From Chestnut Street to Lakeway Drive and Cornwall Avenue, vehicle lanes will be rechannelized to allow installation of marked bike lanes;
- A flashing crosswalk will be installed across Bill McDonald Parkway between the Sehome Hagen driveway and 35th Street, site of one of the busiest WTA bus stops serving WWU and Sehome High School;
- A flashing crosswalk will be installed across Ellis Street at Gladstone Street between the York Neighborhood and the Eleanor Senior Resident Apartments; and,
- Green bike boxes will be installed at some signalized intersections where safety conflicts exist and bicycle connections are needed for people riding bikes.

Why are these improvements happening now?

Here's a link to the project web page [Samish-Maple-Ellis Multimodal Safety Improvements](#), which provides documentation showing that we've been working on this project for a long time, as follows:

- In 2009, the [Samish Way Urban Village Plan](#), adopted by City Council, included major changes to the N. Samish Way corridor. This plan was re-adopted by City Council in December 2019.



Frequently Asked Questions about:

- In 2014, the [Bicycle Master Plan](#) was approved by City Council and recommended bike lanes on the south half of N. Samish Way and “Further Study Needed” on the north half of the Samish-Maple-Ellis corridor.
- The Samish-Maple-Ellis corridor is listed in Table B., page 33 of the [Multimodal Transportation Chapter](#) of the 2016 Bellingham Comprehensive Plan, as a transportation improvement needed to accommodate the type of growth and development that Bellingham is planning for over the next 20 years.
- In 2016-2017, Public Works conducted an extensive [Samish-Maple-Ellis Corridor Study](#) to examine all future (to the year 2036) development allowed in the Samish Urban Village and downtown Bellingham and the associated transportation impacts. The study recommended the removal of one vehicle lane in each direction on the Samish-Maple-Ellis corridor to allow bike lanes to be installed.
- In 2017, the study results were shared with neighborhood residents, as well as appointed and elected officials, at several public meetings with the Sehome, York, and Puget Neighborhood Associations, the [April 2017 Bellingham Transportation Commission meeting](#), and at the May 2017 City Council public hearing for the 2018-2023 [Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#). June 2017 adoption of the TIP allowed Public Works to seek state grant funding for the project.
- In August 2017, the City applied for, and in November 2017 received, a Washington Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant for \$250,000 to reconstruct the Samish/Maple/Otis intersection with ADA upgrades and a flashing crosswalk between Boomers Restaurant and the former Aloha Motel site, which is being redeveloped for 150 low-income apartments by the Bellingham Housing Authority (BHA).
- In May 2018, the City applied for, and in July 2019 received, a WSDOT Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety grant of \$1,007,000 in state funding. Letters of support for the Samish-Maple-Ellis Multimodal Safety Improvements were included from BHA, Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and local businesses along the corridor.
- The Samish-Maple-Ellis project interconnects to several other major bikeway projects that the City has completed in past years or are working on in 2020 as well, such as Bill McDonald, Chestnut, Magnolia, Champion, Forest, State, and Cornwall. All of these projects were first proposed in Draft Six-Year TIPs, subject to City Council public hearings, then programmed for funding and adopted by City Council.
- All of these bicycle and pedestrian improvements are especially important given the growth and development that is occurring along N. Samish Way with more development already in the permit review pipeline. All of the project elements are also supported by WTA, which is just embarking on a long-range transit plan and anticipates providing more transit service on N. Samish Way as development in the Samish Urban Village creates a larger transit ridership base.

Won't this just create terrible traffic congestion on Samish Way?

There is already traffic congestion at the busiest intersections at the busiest times of day and this will remain true; however, this project will provide bikeway connectivity into and through several neighborhoods, Urban Villages, and across Interstate 5 from the Puget Neighborhood to the Sehome, York, Samish Urban Village, and downtown Urban Village. The Samish-Maple-Ellis corridor is a 5-lane remnant of [Historic Old Highway 99](#) that was the main automobile route connecting Bellingham to Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. before Interstate 5 was constructed in the 1960's. The land use context of motels, gas stations, and drive-in restaurants was defined by Highway 99 for fifty years, but that has been changing, as envisioned in the [Samish Way Urban Village Plan](#), which calls for higher density development, greater emphasis on walking, biking, and transit and less emphasis on auto convenience.



Frequently Asked Questions about:

Did the City consider the opinions of the public with this project?

Everything proposed in the [Samish-Maple-Ellis Multimodal Safety Improvements](#) project is consistent with the City plans listed below, all of which involved extensive public process:

- [2009 and 2019 Samish Way Urban Village Plan](#)
- [2014 Bellingham Bicycle Master Plan](#)
- [2016 Multimodal Transportation Chapter of the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan](#)
- [2016-2017 Samish-Maple-Ellis Corridor Study](#)
- [2020-2025 Bellingham Transportation Improvement Program](#)

Summer 2020 Construction

The project is fully funded, the City is working with consultants and WSDOT on preliminary engineering and design work, and construction is anticipated for August 2020, following asphalt resurfacing of Bill McDonald Parkway.

If you have questions regarding the project construction schedule, then please contact:

Freeman “Fritz” Anthony PE, **Greenroads STP**

City of Bellingham Public Works
104 West Magnolia Street - Suite 109
Phone: 360.778.7924 Email: fanthony@cob.org

If you have questions about the history of this project or any City transportation plans, please contact:

Chris Comeau, AICP-CTP, **Transportation Planner**

Bellingham Public Works Engineering
104 W. Magnolia Street, Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: (360) 778-7946 Email: ccomeau@cob.org

