



LAKE TO BAY LOOP

Connecting Elliott Bay to South Lake Union

What is the Lake to Bay Loop?

Originally imagined as the Potlatch Trail, this pedestrian route between Lake Union and Elliott Bay creates a vital and safe connection to some of Seattle's civic treasures – Lake Union Park, Seattle Center, the Olympic Sculpture Park and Myrtle Edwards Park. While only separated by a mile, these attractions for residents and tourists have remained divided by Highway 99 and the “Mercer Mess.” The Lake to Bay Loop reconnects these major destinations and nearby neighborhoods with a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Why now?

The Uptown, Belltown, South Lake Union, and Denny Triangle neighborhoods are growing dramatically and are in need of safe and accessible connections to green space and cultural institutions. The Lake to Bay Loop's former incarnation, the Potlatch Trail, has been identified by each of their Neighborhood Plans. Historically divided by Highway 99 and Denny Way, there is also now an opportunity to reconnect these neighborhoods with transportation projects such as the Mercer Project and the North Portal of the Highway 99 Alaskan Way Viaduct bored tunnel and the recently adopted Seattle Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans. The community not only supports this project, but is actively advocating for it.

Who is involved?

Many community organizations, businesses, and City agencies have been involved since 2007 to revive the 2001 City of Seattle Concept Plan for the Lake to Bay Loop (then the Potlatch Trail). These include Seattle Center Foundation, Seattle Parks Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Uptown Alliance, Seattle Art Museum, Great City, Pacific Science Center, Vulcan, Feet First, Cascade Bicycle Club, KCTS9 and the City of Seattle's Departments of Transportation (SDOT), Planning & Development (DPD), Seattle Center (CEN) and Parks & Recreation (Parks).

Who owns it?

With the exception of the Olympic Sculpture Park which is privately owned by Seattle Art Museum, all of the Lake to Bay Loop route is owned by the City of Seattle and managed by SDOT, Seattle Center, and Parks and Recreation. Where possible the route utilizes existing street right of way, parks, and existing edges and paths at Seattle Center. This arrangement provides for the streamlining of planning, public input processes, funding, and development (similar to the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop). Strong partnerships with private landowners along the Loop offer the opportunity to extend the trail experience with art installations, plazas and other amenities.

Where is the route?

The Lake to Bay Loop forms a figure-8 starting from the Olympic Sculpture Park on Elliott Bay north along Myrtle Edwards Park, east along Thomas Street to the edges of Seattle Center and across Aurora, north on Terry Avenue to Lake Union Park, then west on Mercer Street under Aurora, south on 5th Avenue N. past the EMP|SFM and the Gates Foundation, then southwest along Broad Street to the bay.

How will it be built?

The creation of the Lake to Bay Loop will be an incremental process, spanning many years. Timing will be subject to several considerations such as private development opportunities, public and quasi-public project implementation and funding opportunities. Although an incremental process, it will not be temporary - all work will be lasting, and the parts will eventually connect into a unified and recognizable whole. For this reason, schematic design should begin immediately so that it can serve to guide the building of the portions of the trail that will come from many disparate projects. Schematic design will include a plan for art, and the artistic elements will be integrated into the design and funding of each portion of the trail.

Will this be a bike trail?

The Lake to Bay Loop is a pedestrian-oriented route with amenities for cyclists. The Bicycle Master Plan identifies a nearby fast route for commuter cyclists, and certain sections of the Loop will require bikes to be walked for the safety of others. However, the trail will be designed with clear signage and ample space for recreational cyclists where possible to provide a safe route for those not comfortable with on-street riding.

What will I see along the route?

The Loop will be an open space in its own right, with art installations, plazas, landscaping and interpretive signage sharing the history of this significant route. Imagine a pleasant walk that takes you by such features as waterfront parks; outdoor art; the icons of Seattle Center, such as the Space Needle Experience Music Project/Science Fiction Museum, and the Monorail; the Gates Foundation's new world headquarters, and the Pacific Science Center. Views of the Olympic Mountains, Puget Sound and Lake Union will abound.

Where can I get more information?

A preliminary concept plan, graphics, map and links are available online at www.lake2bay.org. Please direct questions to Todd Burley, Communications Director at Seattle Center Foundation at 206.684.7211 or tburley@seattlecenter.org.