

# PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL PRIORITY PROJECT LIST

## *NARRATIVE PROJECT INFORMATION* *October 2011*

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**Project Sponsor:** Seattle

**Project Name:** Ballard Bridge Bike and Pedestrian Improvements

**Project Location:** Ballard Bridge - 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northwest from West Nickerson Street to Shilshole Avenue Northwest

**What type of project is it:** Support Centers \_\_\_\_\_ Corridors Serving Centers \_\_\_X\_\_\_

**Plan Consistency:**

- Transportation 2040 project number: \_\_ (bridges not included in T2040) \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the project consistent with the Transportation 2040: Yes\_x\_\_ No \_\_\_

**Project Description - No more than two full page -** (see evaluation criteria for information to include):

- Briefly describe the project:

The Ballard Bridge serves as a significant link between northwest Seattle and downtown for general purpose traffic, freight, bicycles and transit. Located on 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and Northwest, it is one of only five general-purpose crossings of the 8.6-mile long Lake Washington Ship Canal. The approach structure to the Ballard Bridge was constructed in 1938 and replaced the original timber structure with a concrete and steel structure. Due to constraints at the time, the sidewalk was constructed at a width of 3.5 feet, which is now shared by pedestrians and bicyclists. Cyclists do not use the vehicle travel lanes because the grated bridge deck surface is not suitable for cycling.

The project will double the width of the sidewalk for pedestrians and cyclists, and improve the transitions to and from the sidewalk. The length of the bridge, and structural limitations that prevent adding weight to this movable bascule bridge, have been challenges to finding cost-effective sidewalk widening options.

Recently advancements in lighter-weight structural materials have created a renewed interest in addressing this need.

- What is the intended outcome & benefit:

**Benefit to Center - 20 pts** - The approach structure to the Ballard Bridge was constructed in 1938 and replaced the original timber structure with a concrete and steel structure. Due to constraints at the time, the sidewalk was constructed at a width of 3.5 feet, which is now shared by pedestrians and bicyclists. Cyclists do not use the vehicle travel lanes because the grated bridge deck surface is not suitable for cycling. Widening the sidewalk for pedestrians and cyclists, and improving the transitions to and from the sidewalk have been goals of the City of Seattle for some time. The project also implements goals identified in Vision 2040 and Transportation 2040. The project is specifically identified in Seattle's 2007 Bicycle Master Plan which was developed with significant public support and adopted by City Council. Improvements to the bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists are the most frequently mentioned requests by individual residents and bicycle and pedestrian interest and advocacy groups.

**System Continuity - 20 pts** - The project is located in the Ballard Interbay North End Manufacturing and Industrial Center (BINMIC). The Ballard Bridge is a key link between the northwest part of Seattle and the rest of the city and region. For bicyclists and pedestrians, it links to Ballard, Queen Anne, Magnolia, Interbay, Discovery Park, and, via on-street connections, to the Burke-Gilman, Ship Canal and Elliott Bay trails. The project will provide safe and convenient access to multiple regionally and locally designated centers.

**Long Term Benefit/Sustainability - 20 pts** - The project provides a long-term solution for moving people to multiple regionally and locally designated centers by providing a safe and convenient alternative to driving. Walking and biking provide a health benefit to the individuals and reduce harmful emissions from driving.

**Mobility and Accessibility – 20 pts** - The project addresses current non-motorized needs in the community and improves the existing non-motorized network by replacing a narrow sidewalk shared by bicycles and pedestrians with a wider sidewalk and by improving the current challenging transitions on the bridge approaches. In 2008, 240 cyclists crossed the bridge during the a.m. peak period, compared to 800 on the Fremont Bridge and 525 on the University Bridge. This relatively low number is a reflection of the concerns expressed by cyclists and does

not reflect a lack of demand; the volumes on the other bridges indicate that there is significant demand for bicycle access across the ship canal.

There is a high level of public support for the project due to its location on one of the few bridges that cross the Lake Washington Ship Canal, which separates north Seattle from downtown and points south. One of the goals of Seattle's Bicycle Master Plan is to triple the amount of cycling by 2017 and, based on the bicycle volume on other Ship Canal bridges, there is clear demand for better bicycle facilities on the Ballard Bridge. Meeting this demand will help meet mode shift goals for the city and the region.

### **Project Status & Timeline**

**Where is the project at in development?**

Planning

**What is the timeline for this project from start to completion?**

*(Please identify the major phases)*

Design and ROW complete 2013

Construction complete 2015

### **Additional Comments**

**REPEAT THE ABOVE INFORMATION FOR EACH PROJECT**