

SE Holgate Buffered Bike Lanes FAQs

In August SE Holgate (122nd to 92nd) was converted by the City of Portland Bureau of Transportation from a five lane street to a three lane street with bike lanes. Following are some of the questions that neighbors have had about the new design. For more information and a complete FAQ listing, please go to PortlandOnline.org and search “Holgate bike project”.

Why was Holgate chosen for buffered bike lanes?

- Adding bicycle lanes to SE Holgate was identified in various neighborhood plans such as the Lents Traffic Safety Plan, the Lents Plan, and the City’s Transportation System Plan.
- It provides excellent connection to the new MAX station and I-205 cycling path for cyclists; many streets in this area do not connect to these transportation facilities.
- The Lents and Powellhurst-Gilbert neighborhood associations voted to support the conversion of Holgate to a three-lane street with bike lanes.

What is a “buffered” bike lane?

- The bike lane on Holgate is seven feet wide with a buffer between the motor vehicle lane and the bike lane that is three feet wide. The buffer provides additional protection and comfort for cyclists as compared to conventional bike lanes.

Will this change lead to congestion and/or slowing on Holgate?

- Traffic engineers analyzed the intersections with signals for rush hour conditions. They found that under the 3-lane configuration traffic would continue to flow just fine, and subsequent observations have supported this.
- Before the buffered bike lanes were added to SE Holgate over 50 percent of motor vehicles exceeded the 35 mph speed limit. Now traffic is moving slower and, consequently, more in-line with the safe speed limit. The Bureau of Transportation will continue to monitor SE Holgate to see how this change affects traffic.

How should drivers operate with a buffered bike lane?

- There isn’t much of a change for drivers; they still need to watch carefully for cyclists when turning across the bike lane to enter cross streets or driveways, and when parking. To parallel park, simply position yourself as you normally would outside of the parking area to pull in to the space. It’s ok to make those maneuvers within the buffered bike lane area.

People are driving in the bike lane because it’s confusing.

- In response to concerns expressed by motorists and bicyclists, the Bureau of Transportation is adding an additional dashed white line between the buffer zone and the bike lane, large “Bike Lane” pavement markings will be added at intervals to supplement the existing bike lane symbols, and green lanes near several intersections.

Holgate isn’t used by cyclists – why put a bike lane on it?

- Holgate was very unfriendly for cyclists until the bike lanes were added. The new design provides a comfortable space for cycling and connects cyclists to destinations. However, as with every other place in the city where we’ve striped bicycle lanes it will take some time for cycling use to grow.

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