

FAQs – Canyon Road Regional Connection Project

Thank you to those who have already shared feedback and asked questions about this project. We are committed to providing ongoing communication for anyone who wants to share their thoughts or know more. In this FAQ we've addressed some questions and concerns that we heard during our Fall, 2021 outreach. Click on the links below to find the answers that interest you.

Why are you removing the Milroy Bridge?

What's happening with access to North Levee Road East and River Road East?

Do you expect 70th Avenue East to become more congested?

I'm a resident who lives right along or near some of these proposed changes and I'm worried about people cutting through my neighborhood and increasing traffic. Do you think this will happen more as a result of this project?

How will this project impact our local farms?

How will this project affect pollution in the Puyallup River and Clarks Creek?

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What will the public transportation options look like in this area as a result of this project?

Will the bus routes be changed, or will new ones be added?

Why are you removing the Milroy bridge?

- Currently, the bridge contributes significantly to the amount of time people crossing the river spend in traffic. But it also has historic value as a community landmark. For that reason, we have looked at keeping the Milroy Bridge and incorporating it into the design of the new roadway. Unfortunately, the bridge location does not work with the new alignment. Just as importantly, the bridge is not designed to support the number of vehicles that need to cross the river, and the cost to repair it so that it could meet that need is more than the cost of building a new bridge.
 - Many people have suggested that the project keep the bridge for pedestrian and bike traffic, and we did explore that idea. The bottom line is that the cost of maintaining the Milroy bridge in its current location is more than the pedestrian and bicycle solution planned on the new bridge.
 - There's also an environmental cost to keeping the existing Milroy Bridge, whether it carries cars or pedestrians. It is potentially hazardous for fish in the Puyallup River because paint, rust, or sediments from the bridge can fall into the water. And because the bridge deck has an open grate design, there is nothing keeping the debris from cars (oil drips, tire residue, etc.) from spilling into the river. In short, keeping and maintaining the Milroy Bridge is too costly and would contribute to environmental damage.
 - The shared-use pedestrian path planned for below the new bridge will be much larger than a standard sidewalk. All non-vehicular traffic can use the shared-use path to cross the river, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Once across the river, shared-use path users will be able to access either the newly installed sidewalks or the roadways on either side of the Puyallup River.
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What's happening with access to North Levee Road East and River Road East?

- The new bridge over the Puyallup River is "grade-separated," which means it will pass over North Levee Road East and River Road East without intersecting with those roads. Drivers coming from Fife on 70th Avenue East will access River Road East by crossing the bridge onto Canyon Road East and turning right onto 66th Avenue East, which will take them to River Road East. Drivers traveling toward Fife will access North Levee Road East by crossing the bridge onto 70th Avenue East, turning right on 45th Street Court East, and right again onto 74th Avenue East, which will take them to North Levee Road East. [\(Back to top\)](#)



Do you expect 70th Avenue East to become more congested?

- In addition to removing the Milroy Bridge, Pierce County, as part of the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project, will also add lanes to 70th Avenue East, which should help to ease congestion. Pierce County will connect 70th Avenue East directly to Canyon Road East and create/build a five-lane roadway (two lanes in each direction and a center turn lane) to match the existing five-lane roadway near 43rd Street East. Pierce County will connect North Levee Road East to 45th Street Court East, which will allow for a direct route to 70th Avenue East.
- The City of Fife also has plans to address the congestion that builds where 70th Avenue East crosses the railroad tracks to the north of the project. See the links below.
 - [Resolution-1940---2021-to-2026-Six-Year-Transportation-Improvement-Program \(cityoffife.org\)](#)
 - [2021-to-2026-Six-Year-Transportation-Improvement-Program-MAP \(cityoffife.org\)](#)

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I'm a resident who lives right along or near some of these proposed changes and I'm worried about people cutting through my neighborhood and increasing traffic. Do you think this will happen more as a result of this project?

- We heard a lot about drivers currently cutting through neighborhoods to avoid traffic. While creative drivers will always find novel ways to get from point A to point B, staying on 70th Avenue East to Canyon Road East is really going to be the most efficient route for people who want to get across the river going south, and staying on Canyon Road East to 70th Avenue East will be the fastest way to cross the river going north. We're confident drivers will quickly find that they're taking a slower route by trying shortcuts and that, as much as anything, will discourage the practice. [\(Back to top\)](#)

How will this project impact our local farms?

- Pierce County is actively working with local farmers, agricultural groups, and regional partners to minimize effects on agricultural lands. Of all the potential design options studied, Pierce County has pursued the road alignment with the smallest impacts on local farms.
- In addition to preserving as much farmland as possible, Pierce County has taken measures to design the new road in a way that respects the needs of the neighboring farms. The project team's outreach to members of the agricultural community in 2020 and 2021, and the leadership of the Pierce County Agricultural Advisory Committee led the Pierce County Council to unanimously pass [Resolution 2021-96](#), which establishes the project area south of the Puyallup River as an agricultural corridor, and directs any transportation projects in an agricultural corridor to consider how to create a design that meets the transportation needs while respecting the needs and unique nature of agricultural areas. This includes:
 - o Creating signage that clearly identifies the area as an agricultural corridor
 - o Reviewing speed limits to allow for safer passage of pedestrians and equipment in the corridor
 - o Designing the roadway to benefit agricultural producers
 - o Setting traffic impact fees that make sense for agricultural producers
- Since our project is in an officially recognized agricultural corridor, it also needs to meet the requirements of this new resolution. ([Back to top](#))

How will this project affect pollution in the Puyallup River and Clarks Creek?

- Current plans will actually reduce the amount of pollution flowing into the Puyallup River and Clarks Creek by addressing and treating stormwater. Stormwater is rain and melted snow that runs off of rooftops, paved streets, parking lots, and other hard surfaces, collecting pollution like oil, fertilizers, pesticides, and trash. Currently, much of the stormwater from the roadways in the project area flows directly into the neighboring waterways. Our project will add features like bioswales, artificial wetlands, and retention ponds to collect and treat stormwater in the project area before it gets to the river or the creek. ([Back to top](#))

Are you going to be adding new points where stormwater can enter the Puyallup River and Clarks Creek?

- This project will treat stormwater to remove toxins picked up as water moves over roadways. Once treated, that water will be released back into the Puyallup River, Clarks Creek, or Oxbow Lake. Release points, also known as “outfalls,” allow the treated water to exit the stormwater system.
- We won’t be adding stormwater release points to the Puyallup River. Any stormwater going into the Puyallup River will be treated and then released through existing stormwater outfalls. This is a commitment Pierce County made in our consultation with the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.
- We are creating new release points to Clarks Creek, but we will treat all the water released into Clarks Creek from those outfalls.
- On the Fife side of the river, we will collect, retain, and treat stormwater in the project area before releasing it into Fife’s existing stormwater system. The water collected will eventually discharge to Oxbow Lake or to the Puyallup River through existing outfalls. ([Back to top](#))

What will the traffic look like for nearby schools and buses?

- Traffic patterns will change dramatically when the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project, the Washington State Department of Transportation’s [SR 167 Completion project](#), and road improvement projects in Fife are all complete. The patterns that we currently see, the routes that buses currently use, the routes we take to the grocery store, and more will all look different. We are working with emergency service providers, school districts, and others to make sure they are aware of how the patterns will change both during and after construction so they can optimize their routes. ([Back to top](#))

What will happen to the Ardena Gale Mobile Home Park?

- The roads around the Ardena Gale Mobile Home Park will change, but this project will not require the residents of the Ardena Gale Mobile Home Park to move. While 48th Street East will end in a cul-de-sac where it currently connects to 70th Avenue East, the new 74th Avenue East will border the neighborhood’s eastern edge. The new 74th Avenue East will provide plenty of easy access in and out of the neighborhood. We are working with Ardena Gale Mobile Home Park directly to determine how to best support them in the final design, and during construction. ([Back to top](#))

Why is 48th Street East being turned into a dead-end road?

- Currently, 48th Street East intersects with 70th Avenue East right where this project will be placing supports for the new bridge. As a result, 48th Street East will dead end just to the east of the new bridge footing. ([Back to top](#))

When will this project be done?

- This is one of the largest projects we have undertaken at Pierce County. We want to make sure we are considering all input as we work through complicated design issues, environmental review, permitting, and right of way acquisition. We want to provide the community with infrastructure that will meet the needs of people living and traveling through Pierce County well into the future. Pending funding, construction is anticipated to begin in 2025 with a completion date in 2027. We are grateful to community members who have been with us every step of the way. ([Back to top](#))

Will this project make it easier for pedestrians or cyclists to get around?

- The new roadways in the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project will meet Pierce County's Complete Streets requirements. That means that the needs of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, are being considered in the design.
- In addition to the suspended multi-use pathway below the new Puyallup River bridge, the project is adding features like sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals, and curb ramps to make traveling through the corridor easier for people who are walking, biking, or rolling.
- While new trails are outside the scope for the Canyon Road Regional Connection Project, we are designing the project to easily connect with future trail systems such as the Riverwalk Trail that will go from Puyallup to Fife. ([Back to top](#))

What will the public transportation options look like in this area as a result of this project? Will the bus routes be changed, or will new ones be added?

- The Canyon Road Regional Connection Project, the Washington State Department of Transportation's SR 167 Completion project, and Fife's Six-Year Transportation Plan will all change the way people move through the area, including those who use public transportation. Adding bus routes or changing bus routes is the responsibility of Pierce Transit, and we do not know yet how they will take advantage of these new regional connections. We will coordinate closely with them as we near construction. ([Back to top](#))