In early 2009 Snohomish County began planning a section of North Creek Trail west of Bothell-Everett Highway between SR 524 and 183rd Street SE. North Creek Trail will be part of a coordinated regional trail system that will eventually connect the Sammamish River/Burke-Gilman Trail in King County with the Snohomish County Interurban Trail in Everett.

During meetings in 2010 and 2011, a series of alternative trail alignments was presented for public review and comments. The preferred west side alignment was selected in 2012 based on comments we received from the public, information from additional field studies, and design criteria. It was determined that the trail should be accessible for users of various ages and skill levels, fit the character of the neighborhoods it will serve, and provide an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment in the middle of the urban area. As Snohomish County continues to develop in the future, opportunities to create these types of regional trails will be more difficult.

What will the features of the trail be?

The trail will be designed to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, runners, wheelchair users, in-line skaters, and other non-motorized modes of transportation. It will typically be a 10 to 12-foot wide paved surface with gravel shoulders, varying in characteristic depending on terrain. Much of the trail will be a new asphalt pathway separated from the road. Where it crosses sensitive environmental areas it will be an elevated structure, such as shown in the photo below.

Graphic depictions of the various sections of trail were shown at public meetings and are posted on the project Web page: www.snoco.org, search North Creek Trail.

How is the project being funded?

The project is partially funded by King County as part of an agreement to mitigate the impacts of the Brightwater Wastewater Treatment Plant. Funds from that agreement cover the cost of environmental investigation, documentation, preliminary design, and the purchase of right-of-way.

Additional funding from Snohomish County Parks and Public Works departments and a federal grant from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program will be used to continue design of the trail. The CMAQ program was implemented in 1991 to support transportation projects and related efforts that contribute to improved air quality and help relieve traffic congestion.
What happens next with North Creek Trail?

The right-of-way process will begin in late 2013. “Right-of-way” is land owned, dedicated to, or purchased by the county or other agency for Public Works projects such as roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails. The right-of-way process is a method for compensating property owners for land that is needed for these projects.

Most of the land that the trail will occupy is already public right-of-way that can be used for the trail, but strips of land along approximately 40 privately-owned parcels must be purchased. A consultant hired by the county will conduct the property appraisals and contact property owners. If you have questions about right-of-way, refer to the “Before We Build” brochure on the project web page, or contact Adrienne Hulbert, 425-388-6564.

Design of the trail will proceed at the same time as the right-of-way process, and will be modified within trail design standards to reflect discussions with the owners of the approximately 40 parcels.

Construction of the trail is likely to occur in phases as funding becomes available.