

23rd Avenue Corridor Improvements Project Phase 2 Design Outreach Summary



September 2017

Overview

From May to July 2017, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) reached out to the community to provide opportunities to view and comment on our plans to improve 23rd Ave S from S Jackson St to Rainier Ave S. This area is Phase 2 of the 23rd Avenue Corridor Improvements Project. Outreach during this period included letters to property owners, briefing invitations to local community organizations and groups, emails to the project listserv, a mailer to corridor residents and businesses, door-to-door flyering and direct business outreach, social media notifications, and an in-person and online open house. See Appendix 1 for a full list of our notification methods.

This report summarizes community feedback during this outreach phase and corresponding responses from the project team. Members of the public submitted feedback in a variety of ways:

- Verbally during door-to-door outreach
- At the open house
- Online via the online open house
- Via email to the project inbox (23rdAveCorridor@Seattle.gov)
- Via the project information phone line (208-727-8857)

Participation Summary

Open house

- Date: July 19, 2017, 5:30 – 7:30 PM
- Participants: 40 attendees
- Comments: 4 comment forms, 26 sticky notes on the design plans

Online open house

- Dates: July 10 – July 28, 2017
- Participants: 335 users
- Comments: 30



The screenshot shows the 'Welcome' page of the online open house. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Seattle Department of Transportation logo, 'MOVE SEATTLE' branding, and project-specific navigation links: 'Welcome', 'Corridor Overview', 'Phase 2 Design', 'Phase 1 Recap', 'Next Steps', and 'Thank You'. The main content area includes a 'Welcome' heading, a paragraph of introductory text, a blue call-to-action box with navigation instructions, a section titled '23rd Ave Design Open House' with a reminder about the event, and contact information for the project. A 'Next page' link is visible at the bottom right. The footer features the 'participate.online' logo, powered by Enviroloous.

Public Feedback on Phase 2 Design – Topics and Themes

We received a total of 74 comments¹ from the community regarding the design and how we are planning for construction for Phase 2. We've organized the comments into key topics and themes in the sections below. For each theme, we've also included responses from the project team as to how the feedback will be incorporated into the final design or construction plans.

TOPIC: DESIGN FEEDBACK AND REQUESTS

We received 36 comments on the design for Phase 2. Since we also received a high number of comments about various pedestrian improvements, those have been included as their own topic in the next section. Commenters provided feedback on the roadway configuration, voicing support and noting concerns about traffic and transit flow throughout the corridor. Other commenters requested additional lighting and parking along the roadway.

One comment included feedback about the adjacent Central Area Neighborhood Greenway, suggesting a need for an alternate north-south trail connection from E Yesler Way to Judkins Park with fewer road crossings. Finally, three comments dealt with property-specific requests to improve sight lines or widen residential driveways and are being responded to on an individual basis.

Theme: Three-lane configuration

Ten comments were focused on the planned three-lane roadway configuration. The design for the project includes changing the roadway between S Jackson St and S Holgate St from the existing four-lane configuration to one lane in each direction with a center, two-way left turn lane (see Appendix 2). This configuration is in place from E Madison St to E Jackson St, following completion of Phase 1 construction. Commenters provided the following feedback and requests:

- Support for the three-lane configuration (2 comments)
- Concern that the new configuration will create additional traffic backups (2 comments)
- Educate drivers about the proper function of the two-way center turn lane (2 comments)
- Modify the design to include on-street parking (2 comments)
- Add left-turn arrows at key intersections instead of reconfiguring the roadway
- Share more information how the design will impact travel times

Project team response:

On streets with fewer than 25,000 vehicles per day, changing the street from four lanes to three is expected to increase safety by reducing collisions, reducing speeding, allowing vehicles to turn without blocking traffic, managing drivers cutting in and out of travel lanes, creating space for wider sidewalks, making streets easier for pedestrians to cross, and making it easier for buses and large vehicles to travel. We anticipate travel times for general purpose vehicles will stay about the same (+/- less than 1 minute) and transit travel times will improve by about 3 minutes (assuming Transit Signal Priority [TSP] between E John St and Rainier Ave S).

While traffic changes can take drivers some time to adjust to, center two-way left turn lanes are a standard roadway configuration used in many places throughout Seattle. As an arterial street, the 23rd Ave corridor does not have space to add safe curb-side parking.

¹ When appropriate, longer comments from a single individual were separated by topic into multiple comments.

Theme: Make improvements to nearby intersections and side streets

Five comments called attention to nearby side streets and east-west crossings of 23rd Ave S:

- Improve roadway conditions on S Holgate St between 23rd Ave S and 24th Ave S (2 comments)
- Add eastbound and westbound left-turn lanes on S Massachusetts St (3 comments)

Project team response:

While funds for this project are limited to improvements on 23rd Ave S, we will install curbs and pave edges at the intersection of 23rd Ave S and S Holgate St. We'll also install a temporary left-turn lane on S Massachusetts during construction. SDOT Traffic Operations will consider the possibility of keeping the turn lane post-construction.

Theme: Be mindful of changes to traffic and signal operations

Five commenters suggested various ways to improve traffic flow by modifying traffic signals and intersection configurations:

- Make sure projected future traffic levels, related to planned developments at the 23rd Ave S and S Jackson St intersection, are accounted for in your traffic modeling (2 comments)
- Adjust the length and timing of traffic signals to improve traffic flow
- Add red light cameras to the S Jackson St intersection to increase pedestrian safety, especially during construction
- Ensure that the 23rd Ave S and S Plum St intersection is simple and easy to navigate for people walking and driving

Project team response:

Drivers should plan for extra travel times during construction, but after completion of the project we expect travel times to be close to the same as before construction. We included growth assumptions in our traffic modeling. All new signals on the corridor will have the capability for timing to be updated remotely, from the Traffic Management Center, which will help improve traffic flow in the future.

We will notify the Seattle Police Department of traffic enforcement concerns from the community before and during construction. S Plum St is a "right out only" intersection due to the proximity of Rainier Ave S. We will restripe the intersection and install new signs during construction.

Theme: Include additional landscaping in the design

We received 4 comments with landscaping requests and feedback:

- Install additional landscaping between S Norman and S Judkins streets
- Install additional trees near S King St
- Install low-maintenance plantings, rather than grass, in the planting strips to prevent dead or overgrown planting areas
- Plantings and trees mitigate noise and improve the aesthetics of the neighborhood

Project team response:

We are planting street trees wherever space allows, but new trees require a planting strip width of at least 4-foot and adequate spacing from intersections, poles, and driveways. The Vulcan development at 23rd Ave S and S Jackson St will include additional trees and landscaping between S Jackson St and S King St. We will plant seeded turf (grass) in planting strips during construction—because it is low maintenance and helps prevent

weed growth—however individual property owners who would prefer to plant groundcover or low shrubs as an alternative to grass should contact us. Installation and maintenance of the plants would be the responsibility of adjacent property owners, but crews would cover the planting strip area with mulch to prepare it for planting

Theme: Additional lighting is needed along 23rd Ave S to increase safety

We received 4 comments with requests for better street lighting on 23rd Ave S, with several tied to concerns about improving safety:

- Add pedestrian lighting along 23rd Ave S to discourage crime (2 comments)
- Make sure S Massachusetts St to Rainier Ave S is well lit
- Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in the design for the intersection with S Dearborn St

Project team response:

We did a lighting analysis for the corridor to identify small improvements that will be made to bring street lighting on the corridor up to standard. During the project, we will be upgrading the pedestrian-scale lighting from S Jackson St to S King S, as this area is part of the commercial district. We generally don't install pedestrian-scale lighting in residential areas.

Theme: The placement of bus stops matters

Four commenters shared feedback about making sure transit infrastructure is well-placed for traffic flow as well as for access to key community destinations:

- Include bus pullouts at all bus stops on 23rd Ave S to prevent traffic back-ups (3 comments)
- Align bus stops with businesses and high-density areas

Project team response:

All bus stop locations on 23rd Ave S will allow for vehicles to safely pass around a stopped bus. We have coordinated with King County Metro to determine the placement of all bus stops.

TOPIC: PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

We received 31 comments with feedback on and requests for improvements to the pedestrian environment. The comments ranged from general support to specific suggestions and requests to improve pedestrian safety or mobility.

Theme: Add or adjust curb ramps, pedestrian signals, and sidewalks

Most commenters were glad to see pedestrian improvements in the plans, but had specific areas at which they would like to see additional changes. We received 13 comments related to specific pedestrian infrastructure design elements including curb ramps, pedestrian signals, and sidewalks:

- Adjust pedestrian signal timing:
 - at S Dearborn St (2 comments) and S King St intersections
 - to be more responsive / to ensure adequate pedestrian crossing times (2 comments)
 - to automatically change with traffic
- Feedback about curb ramps in the design:
 - widen throughout the corridor to enable better ADA access
 - widen at S Lane St and S Charles St
 - add on the southwest corner of the S Holgate St intersection

- Widen the sidewalks throughout Phase 2 (2 comments)
- Repair the sidewalk on S Dearborn St from 23rd Ave S to Judkins Park entrance
- Address the sidewalk gap between S Holgate and S Grand streets and consider revising the island in this area

Project team response:

We're replacing the pedestrian signals at S Dearborn St and S King St, which should result in better signal timing at those intersections and other signalized intersections throughout the corridor. In order for signals to operate most efficiently, it is important to detect vehicles and pedestrians. Pedestrians push the button to operate the signal, which will provide adequate crossing time. The accessible pedestrian signals (APS) also provide auditory signal for pedestrians with visual impairments.

Regarding curb ramp improvements, all curb ramps will comply with ADA width requirements. We're building two curb ramps per corner if space allows. At corners where there is only space for one ramp, we're widening the curb ramp to accommodate travel in both directions. Existing curb ramps in good condition will not be removed and replaced.

Our goal for all areas of sidewalk replacement for this project is a 6-foot minimum width, but this is not always possible due to the width of the public right of way. We will repair the broken sidewalk on S Dearborn St leading to Judkins Park, and will make improvements to the pedestrian path across the S Grand/S Holgate St triangle.

Theme: Pedestrian changes are needed at the intersection of 23rd Ave S, S Hill St, and Rainier Ave S

At the online and in-person open house events, the project team introduced a set of proposed improvements for the Rainier Ave S, S Hill St, and 23rd Ave S intersection, with the goal being safer and less-complicated pedestrian crossings and a reduced potential for collisions. Among other changes, the design included adding a pedestrian crossing across Rainier Ave S, adding accessible pedestrian signals (APS) at all signalized intersections, and bulbing out the corners of S Hill St to create narrower entrances (see Appendix 3).

We received 10 comments with feedback about the proposed changes to this intersection:

- Concern regarding the safety and/or convenience of the proposed plan, particularly for people with visual impairments and/or limited mobility from the nearby Lighthouse for the Blind and Center Park Apartments:
 - Create an east-west crosswalk at S Hill St to decrease crossing distance across Rainier Ave S (4 comments)
 - Provide tactile or textured crosswalks (2 comments)
 - Close S Hill St (2 comments)
- Support for the proposed changes (2 comments)

Project team response:

Based on this feedback, SDOT operations engineers have looked closely at this intersection and have modified the design to propose what they believe to be the safest and most efficient configuration for all modes of transportation. SDOT also met with a working group from the Lighthouse for the Blind in September 2017 to discuss modifications to the design, which include:

- A wider crosswalk across Rainier Ave S to shorten the crossing distance

- Directional curb ramps to support navigation
- A tactile guide strip along the edge of the crosswalk to guide people with visual impairments across the intersection

The new signal will provide ample crossing times for people of all abilities. Because Rainier Ave S is a high-volume roadway, an “all-walk” signal would not be possible because it would cause significant travel delays through the intersection. S Hill St will not be closed entirely, but the intersection will be narrowed significantly and treated as a driveway with sidewalks to provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians.

Theme: Need more safe pedestrian crossings across 23rd Ave S

Eight commenters suggested adding more pedestrian crossings across 23rd Ave S, including:

- Add crosswalks (and a traffic signal) at the S Holgate St intersection (4 comments)
- Changes to pedestrian crossings over the I-90 lid:
 - Add a pedestrian crossing to connect to the new trail on the north side of the Northwest African American Museum (2)
 - Change signage at the I-90 trail crossing to inform people to activate the crossing signal only if needed
- General support for safer crossings

Project team response:

We will be improving the safety and accessibility of pedestrian crossings at all 23rd Ave S intersections in the project area by making sidewalk improvements and building or improving existing ADA curb ramps. S Holgate St and S Plum St are both being evaluated for a future east-west [greenway crossing](#), which will likely add a pedestrian signal across 23rd Ave S at one of these streets. The existing signalized pedestrian crossing at the I-90 trail will remain in place to serve the new Sound Transit Judkins Park Station. Sound Transit will upgrade this crossing, including a new pedestrian signal and curb bulbs, during construction of the station. For the best safety and visibility, we recommend activating the existing pedestrian signal when crossing 23rd Ave S.

TOPIC: PREPARING FOR CONSTRUCTION

During our design outreach, we also shared community feedback from the first phase of construction and asked for feedback on additional considerations as we prepare for Phase 2 construction. We received 7 comments related to coordination efforts, construction duration, and limiting traffic impacts.

Theme: Coordinate with other projects in the area to limit the duration and cumulative impacts of construction

Five commenters spoke to a need for coordination with other nearby construction projects and a goal of reducing the duration of construction:

- Request to work closely with Sound Transit to minimize cumulative impacts from the 23rd Ave project and construction of the Judkins Park Station (2 comments)
- Shorten the duration of construction (2 comments)
- Support for efforts to coordinate schedules with other projects and limit cumulative impacts

Project team response:

We are in close coordination with Sound Transit and other nearby projects and will work to coordinate schedules, where possible, to limit construction duration and cumulative impacts to the community.

Specifically, we're coordinating schedules to shorten the duration of cumulative impacts at the S Jackson St intersection and we will complete our work that requires the southbound detour prior to Sound Transit construction activities on 23rd Ave S.

Theme: Be mindful of traffic impacts from construction

Two commenters shared requests for traffic coordination during construction:

- Modify signal timing along Martin Luther King Jr Way S when the detour is in place to improve traffic flow, especially in the school zone north of S Massachusetts St
- Mitigate for increased neighborhood traffic on east-west side streets during construction

Project team response:

SDOT Traffic Operations will monitor signals on the southbound detour route on Martin Luther King Jr Way S and make changes if necessary to help keep traffic flowing during construction. We collected speed and volume data prior to construction to document existing conditions. Shortly after construction begins and the detour goes into place, we will take another look at speeds and volumes to see how, if at all, neighborhood traffic has changed and consider adjustments to address speed and safety concerns. For more information about traffic management city-wide, see these [neighborhood traffic FAQs](#).

Next Steps

The project team is incorporating the above community feedback into the final design and specifications for the construction contract for Phase 2. Information about planning for construction will be shared at another open house this fall (Thursday, October 5, 5:30-7:30 PM, Northwest African American Museum), and in early 2018 after a contractor has been selected. Construction is expected to start as soon as April 2018 and last for approximately 1 year.

Appendix 1

Public meeting notifications and outreach

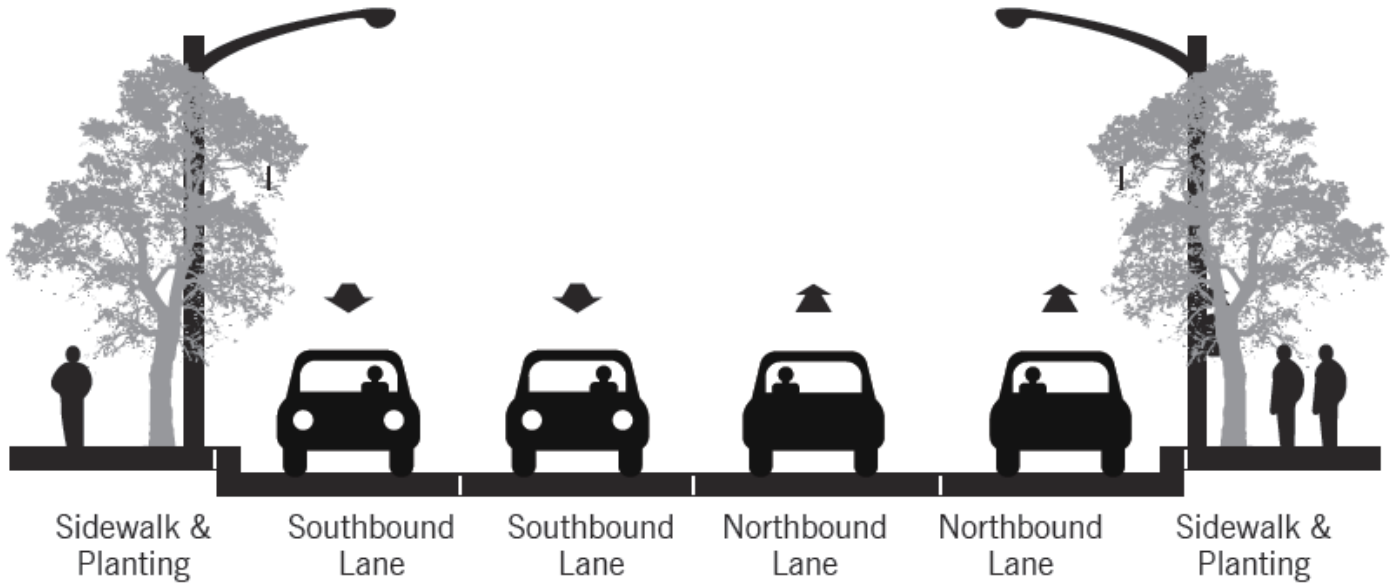
Date (2017)	Activity	Audience	Approximate Reach
Mid-May	Letters to property owners	Property owners adjacent to Phase 2 corridor	125 property owners
Late June/early July	Calls and emails to key stakeholders	Phase 2 community organizations	5 community organizations
June 30	Open house email announcement	Email listserv	760 recipients
July 10	Open house invite postcards	Phase 1 and Phase 2 communities	8,000 recipients
July 10	Open house email reminder	Email listserv	760 recipients
July 10 - 28	Online open house	Community members and stakeholders (online)	335 users
July 13	Door-to-door flyers to adjacent property owners and residents	Adjacent residential properties in Phase 2	250 residences
July 13	Door-to-door visits to adjacent businesses	Phase 2 businesses	20 businesses
July 17	Open house email reminder	Email listserv	760 recipients
July 18-19	Blog post, social media updates	SDOT blog, SDOT twitter, City of Seattle twitter	Unknown
July 19	Open house	Community members and stakeholders (in-person)	40 attendees
July 25	Online open house reminder	Email listserv	780 recipients

Appendix 2

Roadway cross-sections

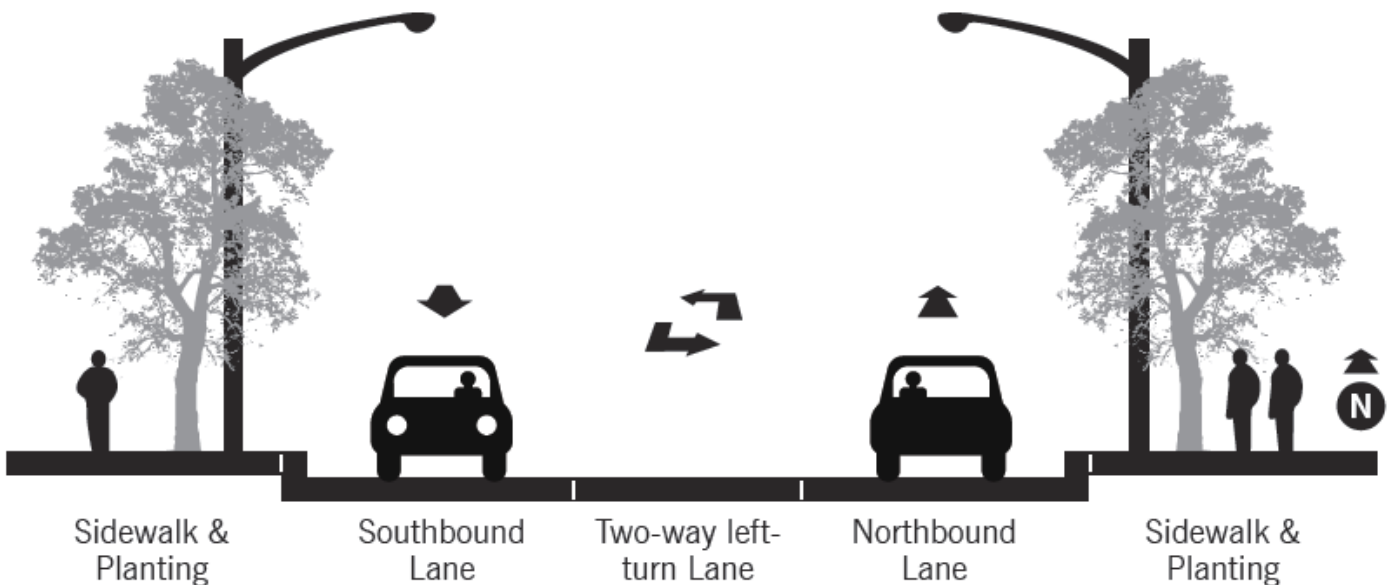
Existing

Typical four-lane cross-section on 23rd Ave S



Future

Typical three-lane cross-section on 23rd Ave S



Appendix 3

Proposed S Hill St intersection improvements



The below design proposal was shared at the July 2017 open house, and is being modified to reflect community feedback. An updated design will be shared at the next open house in October 2017.

