

Seattle Department of Transportation

ELLIOTT AVE AND WESTERN AVE PAVING AND MOBILITY PROJECT EARLY DESIGN ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY April 2026



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Transportation

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Many people use Elliott Ave and Western Ave every day, including people who live, work, or travel to the area. These streets provide connections for people biking between Belltown, Uptown, and Downtown. People use these streets to reach destinations like the Olympic Sculpture Park and the Waterfront. They are also important routes for trucks traveling to the Port of Seattle, rail yards, industrial businesses, and downtown.

The Elliott Ave and Western Ave Paving and Mobility Project will pave Elliott Avenue and Western Avenue between Thomas Street and Bell Street in Belltown. The project will also make other upgrades to improve safety and mobility for people walking and biking in the area.

Project improvements will include:

- Paving and modernizing Elliott Ave and Western Ave
- Building new accessible pedestrian ramps
- Improving drainage
- Other potential improvements for people walking and biking such as repaired sidewalks, upgraded bike lanes and pedestrian crossings, and new trees. These upgrades will depend on feasibility and funding

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

As part of the design process, the Elliott Ave and Western Ave Paving and Mobility Project team is conducting public engagement to hear which potential improvements would be most useful and learn more about how people travel through the project area. Our early design engagement methods are described below:

ADVISORY BOARD PRESENTATIONS

The project team **attended Seattle’s Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Freight Advisory Board meetings** in January (Bicycle and Freight) and February (Pedestrian) 2026 to introduce the project and share details about the potential scope. After the team’s presentations, the boards had the opportunity to ask questions, share feedback, and provide design suggestions.

STAKEHOLDER BRIEFINGS

The project team attended **3 meetings with key community groups** (Downtown Seattle Streets Alliance, Seattle Housing Authority, and Belltown Community Council) and held **1 additional stakeholder briefing attended by 10 representatives** of other key community groups, businesses, and residential complexes. These attendees represented:

- Cascade Bicycle Club
- Port of Seattle
- Commute Seattle
- Homewood Suites - Seattle Downtown
- Omeros
- Espresso Elegance
- AlphaGraphics Seattle
- BioMed Realty
- JLL Properties

At these briefings, the team provided information about the project, shared preliminary design ideas, answered questions, collected feedback, and encouraged stakeholders to invite their networks to the March public open house.

BUSINESS AND RESIDENTIAL OUTREACH

Members of the outreach team went door-to-door through the project area in March 2026 to speak with approximately **120 businesses and residential complexes**. They provided information about the project, shared invitations to attend our March public open house, and collected preliminary details from owners and managers that may inform our designs and/or construction.

PUBLIC EVENTS

In March 2026, the project team held a virtual public open house to share information about the project’s goals and scope with community members, answer questions, and collect

feedback. The team had the opportunity to hear from roughly **20 community members** about their travel patterns in the project area and which potential improvements are most important to them. Additionally, members of the Seattle Public Utilities Vine Basin Combined Sewer Overflow Control Project attended to present details about their project and answer questions. The open house recording and an FAQ summarizing the questions asked have been posted to the project webpage.

PROJECT INBOX

We've received and responded to **10 emails in the project inbox** from community members with comments and suggestions on potential improvements and early design ideas.

OTHER ENGAGEMENT METHODS

In addition to the above engagement methods, the outreach team has sent out **3 email blasts to 225 community members** who have signed up for email updates, **placed 4 A-Frame sandwich boards** throughout the project area in December 2025, and updated the A-Frame sandwich boards with new content in March 2026. Finally, the **project webpage was routinely updated** with new information.

We are considering what we've heard, which is summarized below, as we approach 30% design (expected as soon as this summer 2026).

WHAT WE HEARD: KEY THEMES

In conversations with community members and stakeholders, we heard many varying perspectives on the project's goals and potential mobility improvements. For some, the potential improvements for people walking and biking were the most exciting part of the presentation. Others shared hesitations about calming traffic by reducing lanes for people driving because they felt doing so could increase traffic backups. To learn more about the perspectives shared during engagement, see the key themes below:

A NEED FOR TRAFFIC CALMING

There was a consensus among community members that people drive over the speed limit in the project area and exhibit other dangerous behaviors like running red lights and ignoring “No Turn on Red” signage. These concerns align with data we've collected during traffic studies. We heard many requests for traffic calming improvements, such as speed bumps, new traffic signals, and more marked crosswalks to encourage people driving to slow down and yield to people walking and biking at intersections.

SAFER, MORE WALKABLE SPACES

We spoke with many community members who said the infrastructure in place for people walking, like crosswalks, doesn't reflect how people actually walk through the area. Some crosswalks are never used because of where they're located, while other intersections with a high volume of people crossing have no marked crosswalks. Many community members expressed they want more traffic signals or RRFBs installed to help signal to drivers that people are crossing. Additionally, we heard requests for:

- Sidewalk repair
- Wayfinding signage
- Raised crosswalks
- Barriers or separation to help reduce conflicts between people walking and people biking

These potential improvements for people walking were a priority for most, with some concerned that the project's budget may not be substantial enough to deliver all the improvements they'd like to see.

BICYCLE FACILITIES

We heard conflicting perspectives on potential upgrades to existing bike lanes. Some community members felt we should add more bike lanes in addition to upgrades, while others said that, instead of upgrading these bike lanes, funding should be prioritized elsewhere because there are other bike lanes in the area. We heard support for realigning the bike lane on Elliott Ave from the east side to the west side of the street, and concerns about people having to bike close to vehicles in the portions of the project area where no bike lanes will be added, but lanes may be reduced.

LANE REDUCTIONS AND PARKING

We also heard contrasting perspectives on proposed lane reductions and parking in the project area. Some community members liked the idea of reducing lanes to calm traffic and create safer crossings for people walking and biking. Others shared they weren't in support of this potential improvement because of perceptions that it would lead to traffic backups. In particular locations, like near where the Sounder Train runs, we heard requests to preserve dedicated turn lanes that allow drivers to avoid waiting for the train to pass when others are turning. Finally, many community members expressed a desire to preserve as much parking as possible, while others advocated for reducing parking to make more space for freight trucks.

BUSINESS AND RESIDENTIAL NEEDS

Business owners and property managers at residential complexes communicated that access to their parking, curbside dumpster locations, loading zones, and rideshare pickup areas are priorities for them. We plan to work directly with these owners and managers to ensure their access is preserved. Additionally, some businesses in the project area shared strong support for improvements that benefit people walking and biking because they serve many customers who access their location by walking, biking, or taking transit. Finally, depending on how the business or complexes' staff travel to work, we heard differing perspectives on whether they advocated for preserving lanes and parking, or more facilities for people walking and biking.

Appendix A (Raw Briefing Summaries)

Date	Source	Summary of Comments
2/19/2026	Seattle Housing Authority Briefing	Stakeholders emphasized significant pedestrian and mobility challenges around Elliott Ave and Western Ave. Many SHA visitors use the Queen Anne Ave N & Denny Way bus stop and must cross fast-moving traffic on Elliott Ave, where speeding, collisions, and few crosswalks make conditions unsafe. Informal “deer trails” show strong demand for more direct pedestrian routes, especially for people with mobility limitations who avoid long detours. The pedestrian bridge is safest but underused. Poor visibility, overgrown vegetation, lack of rideshare drop-off space, drainage issues, and limited funding for new signals constrain solutions, while freight and loading needs must still be accommodated.
3/10/26	Combined Stakeholder Briefing	SDOT discussed potential speed-reducing and safety improvements for the Elliott–Western corridor, including lane rechannelization, medians, enhanced crossings, RRFBs, curb bulbs, and speed cushions, while balancing freight, parking, and funding constraints. Freight access, loading zones, and maintaining throughput were major stakeholder concerns, with mixed views on lane reductions and daytime parking. Construction is tied to SPU’s overflow project and expected to begin around 2028. SDOT is gathering early feedback on travel behavior and constraints, with designs to follow. Bike improvements focus north of Broad, though wayfinding and transit stop coordination are under consideration.
3/11/2026	Belltown Community Council Meeting	Stakeholders mostly had questions around Elliott and Western side streets, SPU, and unsafe sidewalks. The project will focus only on Elliott and Western Avenues, with no work planned on side streets. The SPU Overflow Project aims to increase stormwater and sewer capacity from Vine Street to reduce discharge into the Sound. Traffic volumes on Western Ave are lower than before the tunnel due to viaduct removal, but vehicle speeds have increased. Unsafe sidewalks outside the project area must be reported through Find It, Fix It. New traffic signals are not funded due to cost and warrant

		requirements, but speed cushions, speed bumps, and possibly raised crosswalks may be explored. Parking will largely be maintained, with limited daylighting adjustments.
3/30/2026	Seattle Streets Alliance Briefing	Discussion focused on improving safety, signals, and bike/pedestrian operations along Elliott and Western. At Bell & Elliott, SDOT plans to update signal phasing, remove the east-west bike phase, and coordinate with Vision Zero to address red-light running. RRFBs are compliant on one-way segments but visibility improvements like curb bulbs are planned where speeds are high. "No turn on red" signs are base scope. Lane reductions would rely on paint, delineators, or curbing due to funding limits. Bike lanes north of Broad are outside project scope because of cost, connectivity, and right-of-way constraints. Daylighting will increase visibility while minimizing parking loss.

Appendix B (Frequently Asked Questions)

	QUESTION	ANSWER
GENERAL	How can I stay connected with this project?	The best way to stay up to date with our project is by signing up for email updates . We also encourage you to check our project webpage regularly, as all announcements and materials are published there.
	What decisions will be made by the 30% design milestone?	By the 30% design milestone, we will have decided our project scope and what changes can be included based on the project budget.
	When will construction happen, and how long will it take?	Our construction schedule is being closely coordinated with Seattle Public Utilities' (SPU) Vine Basin Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) Control Project . Based on current schedules, SPU could start construction towards the end of 2027. Once SPU has completed their underground work, SDOT will follow up with the street restoration. As design progresses, we will share more details about construction beginning and end dates.
PARKING	Is parking being taken away?	We expect parking some small changes to how people park in the project area. Some parking spots may be removed near intersections and driveways to improve visibility and safety for people crossing the street.
	Parking availability has gone down, and population is going up. This has impacted businesses. What can be done to help?	The project area is mostly paid parking, which provides us with information about how often parking is used within the project limits. Parking on these blocks is below our target (70%-84% occupied), but we will continue to monitor usage. Businesses and residences that need additional loading or passenger pick-up spaces should

		reach out to the project team so we can see if we can help.
BIKE FACILITIES	Where will this project install new bike facilities?	Consistent with the Bike Element of the Seattle Transportation Plan , the project will upgrade the existing bike lanes to add protection on both Elliott Ave and Western Ave, between Broad St to Bell St.
	Why do we need to add more bike lanes? We already have bike lanes on Alaskan Way and 2nd Ave.	Our design is based on the Bike Element of the Seattle Transportation Plan which included a robust public involvement process. Within our project area, the plan identifies both Elliott Ave and Western Ave as Bike+ Arterials between Broad St and Bell St. Due to steep streets going east to west, we heard support for providing many, parallel north to south options for people biking.
	Have you considered extending the bike lanes north, beyond Broad St?	Our design is based on the Bike Element of the Seattle Transportation Plan , which included a robust public involvement process. The current Bike Element does not show either Elliott Ave or Western Ave north of Broad St as part of the planned bike network. Instead, Broad St is shown as the connection to other parallel bike routes on Alaskan Way and 2nd Ave. Our project is not funded to make improvements on Broad St, which is outside of our project area.
TREE PRESERVATION	Are you removing trees?	SDOT does not plan to remove existing trees as part of this project. It is possible that we will create new areas that could increase the number of trees in the area.
POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS	What techniques will be used to reduce travel speeds and improve safety along the corridor?	Traffic calming and safety improvements may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We could change the street layout or reduce the number of travel lanes in areas with less traffic.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We may install parking-protected bike lanes between Bell St and Broad St. • Using curb bulbs to shorten the length of crosswalks and improve visibility at crossings. • Other potential improvements, such as concrete islands or hardened center lines, depending on feasibility and funding.
	<p>Is there an opportunity to install speed cushions to decrease speeding on these streets?</p>	<p>We are unable to install speed cushions on Elliott Ave and Western Ave currently due to street types and classifications. We do not typically install speed cushions on streets like Elliott Ave and Western Ave, which are Principal Arterials, Major Truck Streets, and Tier 1 Emergency Response Routes.</p>
	<p>Why are we considering options that reduce vehicle lanes?</p>	<p>Our policy states that if fewer than 25,000 vehicles travel on a street per weekday, we will consider options that provide one lane in each direction. Since the SR 99 Tunnel opened and the Viaduct was removed, traffic on these streets dropped below 10,000 vehicles on an average weekday (except on Western Ave north of Denny Way). Our initial traffic design showed the proposed lane changes would have minimal impacts on traffic operations, including freight travel times. We plan on collecting additional traffic counts over the summer during peak cruise season to verify these results.</p>
	<p>Are there details on what sidewalks will be repaired?</p>	<p>SDOT’s Sidewalk Repair Program has completed an inventory of the sidewalk condition in the project area and recommended locations for sidewalk repair. We will share these locations of the proposed upgrades once the plan is final.</p>

	<p>How likely is it that the “Complete Streets” scope will get funded?</p>	<p>Given funding constraints, we will prioritize the potential “Complete Streets” scope. We are confident we can deliver the proposed bike lane upgrades south of Broad St, most of the identified sidewalk repair, and some of the enhanced crossing treatments. By the 30% design milestone, we will have a better sense of what scope will be included in the project. We will continue to seek your input on the priorities for these types of improvements.</p>
	<p>As part of SDOT’s Major Street Maintenance and Modernization program, how is SDOT defining ‘modernization’ on this project? This seems like a maintenance project.</p>	<p>All paving projects require curb ramp upgrades and drainage improvements to meet current standards. In addition, the Seattle Transportation Levy includes funding from several other programs to support adding Complete Streets treatments to these paving projects.</p>
	<p>What constraints affect this project’s design?</p>	<p>Some of our project constraints include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with any project, funding is limited, so we will have to prioritize project elements. Our current budget is unlikely to support sidewalk widening, new traffic signals, or landscaping. • Both streets are part of the Over-Legal Route network, which means we must maintain at least 20 feet of clear space (both width and height) for oversized hauling operations. Vertical elements in the roadway, like concrete medians or trees, can be a challenge on these routes.
<p>BUSINESSES AND RESIDENCES IN THE PROJECT AREA</p>	<p>How will business access be affected?</p>	<p>We will continue to look at how our project impacts business both during and after construction. As design moves ahead, we will share more information about these potential impacts and engage one-on-one with businesses to reduce impacts as much as possible.</p>

		<p>Please reach out to the project team at ElliottWestern@seattle.gov with any questions or concerns.</p>
	<p>How will this project affect garbage collection or the placement of my dumpsters?</p>	<p>In locations where dumpsters are stored on the street for collection, we are coordinating with the Seattle Public Utilities' Solid Waste team to accommodate these needs. As we get further into design, we will be reaching out to property owners and managers to learn about specific needs and share potential solutions.</p>