Seattle Department of Transportation

Aurora Ave Project

Outreach Report 2022



Want to improve safety on Aurora? Take our survey and share your input.



Seattle Department of Transportation



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Do you walk, bike, or take transit on Aurora Ave?

Help us improve safety for all Aurora travelers!







您在Aurora 大道 上步行、騎自行車 或乘坐公交嗎?

幫助我們為所有在Aurora 上的旅行者改善安全。





Overview

The Aurora Ave Project is a joint development between King County Metro and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). Together, we are working to develop a refreshed planning and design study for Aurora Ave (from Harrison St to N 145th St) with funding from a WSDOT Pedestrian and Bicycle Program grant received in 2021. Additional funding comes from King County Metro and the Levy to Move Seattle.

Between July and October 2022, we conducted community outreach to better understand ways to improve safety, mobility, and accessibility for all travelers along Aurora Avenue to address the needs of residents, businesses, and corridor stakeholders.

This report presents our work over the summer, through both inperson and online activities, which gathered input from more than 2,000 people. Overall, the feedback received indicates that the Aurora Avenue Project should prioritize improvements for people walking, such as adding sidewalks and crosswalks, as well as improving existing pedestrian infrastructure. Additionally, people mentioned high speed and high traffic volume as a concern along the corridor. Input received also highlights the need for more east-west transit connections and keeping current stops in better condition. We also received comments on improvements indirectly related to road infrastructure, most expressing social concerns, such as personal safety and crime. These social concerns were shared with the Seattle Police Department and Human Services for appropriate follow-up and we will continue to engage external agencies to explore options for addressing these concerns.

During our outreach we provided communication assets in Chinese, English, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese to promote diverse participation and partnered with community leaders to engage with residents. We also conducted door-to-door business outreach and promoted our survey through multicultural media outlets, as well as digital tactics such as email outreach, social media, and display ads. Aurora Ave N/State Route 99 corridor is one of the highest traffic volume streets within the Seattle city limits. This north-south corridor offers one of the busiest bus routes within the Seattle City limits, is critical for freight movement, and offers connections to dense housing, businesses, social services, and employment opportunities. Aurora Avenue has a history of collisions, gaps in pedestrian facilities, inconsistent streetscape design, and accessibility barriers that make travel especially difficult for people with mobility challenges.

The last comprehensive <u>Route Development Plan</u> for the Aurora Ave N corridor was published in 2003, and while recommendations for near-term improvements were included, few improvements were made. Aurora Ave N has been a longstanding priority for transportation upgrades that improve safety and mobility for all travelers. Among these, there is a strong desire to enhance comfort and access for people walking along the corridor, reduce collisions for all users, and improve the quality of transit service.

SDOT recently pursued funding to study safety and mobility improvements in the corridor. In late 2021, SDOT was awarded funding through a Pedestrian and Bicycle Program grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). King County Metro is also contributing funds and partnering with SDOT to develop a new comprehensive design vision for the Aurora Ave N corridor and identify near-term projects that will advance safety while evaluating upgrade and extension options for the RapidRide E Line.

Project purpose

Our purpose is to:

- Develop a new design vision for the Aurora Ave N corridor that enhances safety, mobility, and accessibility for all travelers.
- Address the needs of residents, businesses, and corridor stakeholders in a unified vision for the corridor through an equitable and robust engagement process.
- Consider collision history and safety challenges along the corridor with a focus on addressing the most serious collisions and collisions involving vulnerable road users.
- Identify potential transit service improvements and connections (e.g., with nearby light rail stations), as well as safety and security improvements (e.g., at transit stops).
- Develop a strategy to construct corridor improvements as resources become available.

Project area



- Segment 1: Harrison St to N 38th St
- Segment 2: 38th St to Winona Ave N
- Segment 3: Winona Ave N to N 85th St
- Segment 4: 85th St to N 115th St
- Segment 5: 115th St to N 145th St
- 145th St to Mountlake Terrace was also an area of focus, specifically for the E Line assessment

Project timeline



Outreach

The Aurora Ave Project includes community engagement opportunities during each phase of the project. Community members' input is key to identify priorities, challenges, and opportunities along Aurora Ave N and to weigh in on design alternatives.

This report summarizes our initial outreach efforts to gather feedback on what different populations and stakeholders, within and beyond project area, see as improvement priorities along Aurora Ave N/State Route 99 corridor for people who walk, bike, take transit, and drive. Our outreach strategy combined both online and in-person communication.

Additional community feedback will be solicited during the future phases of the Aurora Ave Project to shape the future vision of the corridor and transit services. We will consider this feedback alongside data and technical recommendations as we develop design options.



Community conversations | Survey | Door-to-door | Email blast | Tabling sessions | Website

Outreach goals

- Listen, gather feedback, and communicate equitably with all project stakeholders.
- Build relationships with residents, businesses, and stakeholders along the corridor that can be maintained throughout project planning, design, and construction.
- Collect community input on corridor issues and priorities.
- Hold stakeholder design charrettes to define corridor concept alternatives.
- Solicit community input on corridor concept alternatives.
- Offer opportunities for BIPOC businesses and community members to share ideas, concerns, and give feedback through translation, interpretation, and community liaisons.

Inclusive and equitable engagement

Inclusivity means providing equal participation access for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those with physical disabilities, elders, or minority groups, among others.

To better understand how to equitably engage populations throughout the project area, we analyzed demographic data available from the American Community Survey 2020 (5-year Series: 2016-2020).

About 84,000 people live along the five segments of the corridor. 35.4% of them live in and around Segment 1, specifically around McGraw St & Nickerson St (Table1). Segment 2 represents around 20% of the project area population, Segment 3 represents 13.5%, Segment 4 represents 12% and Segment 5 represents 19% (Exhibit A1).



Photo of community liaison doing in-person outreach. Photo Courtesy of SDOT Flickr

Exhibit 1: population on Aurora Ave Project Area

These five segments are multigenerational, with median ages ranging from 29 to 50 (Table T1). On average the age across the project area is 35 years old, with 51% female and 49% male (Table T1). Ethnically, 70% of the project area population identifies as white only (Exhibit A3). Segments 4 and 5 are more diverse, while segments 2 and 3 are predominantly white.

Median household income along the corridor in past 12 months (inflationadjusted dollars to last year of 5-year range) is \$105,722.40. Around Segment 5, from N 107 St to N 130th St, and around Segment 4, from N 95th St to N 107th St, the median income is \$55,440.00, 48% less than the average of the project area. Conversely, around Segment 3, from N 50 St to Winona Ave N, and Segment 4, from Green Lake Dr N to N 85th St, median income is \$143,089.50, 32% higher than average (Table T1).







Exhibit A3: ethnicity of the population in the project area



Table T1: project area demographics

Project Segment	Boundaries (is to locate where is Aurora Ave)	Total Population	Female population	Male population	Median Age of Total Population	Median Household Income in past 12 months *
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	Denny Way to Roy St	3358	1,124	2,234	28.7	\$130,504
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	McGraw St - Nickerson St	6460	3,253	3,207	34.2	\$97,883.00
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	N 34th St - N 42nd St	3517	1,868	1,649	29.8	\$122,422.00
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	N 34th St - N 38 St	3257	1,511	1746	31.4	\$126,380.00
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	N 38th St - N 41 St	3401	1,837	1,564	33	\$98,913.00
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	Roy st - Crockett St	3109	1,264	1,845	29.5	\$131,904.00
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	Highland Dr - McGraw St	3021	1,273	1,748	31.4	\$113,913.00
(1) Harrison St - N 38th St	Roy st - Highland Dr	3661	2,106	1,555	35.7	\$98,776.00
(2) N 38th St – Winona Ave N	N 42nd St - N 50 St	4397	2307	2,090	31.9	\$105,053
(2) N 38th St – Winona Ave N	N 50th St - N 70th St	4370	2,275	2,095	40.2	\$107,702.00
(2) N 38th St – Winona Ave N	N 50 St - Winona Ave N	3660	1,960	1,700	36.8	\$136,940.00
(2) N 38th St – Winona Ave N	N 41 St - N 50 St	4376	2,394	1,982	31	\$108,022.00
(3) Winona Ave N – N 85th St	Green Lake Dr N - N 85th St	6129	3,140	2,989	37.1	\$149,239.00
(3) Winona Ave N – N 85th St	N 70 St - N 85 St	5205	2,531	2,674	35.9	\$122,813.00
(4) N 85th St – N 115th St	N 95th St - N 107th St	4998	2,922	2,076	36.1	\$77,791.00
(4) N 85th St – N 115th St	N 85th St - N 95th St	5059	2,373	2,686	30.7	\$95,885.00
(5) N 115th St – N 145th St	N 137th St - N 145th St	2943	1,405	1,538	35.1	\$101,897.00
(5) N 115th St – N 145th St	N 107 St - N 130th St	5374	2,894	2,480	46.3	\$75,472.00
(5) N 115th St – N 145th St	N 107 St - N 130th St	3739	2,366	1,373	50.4	\$33,089.00
(5) N 115th St – N 145th St	N 107 St - N 137th St	3883	2,123	1,760	35.7	\$79,850.00
Total		83,917	42,926	40,991	35.04	\$105,722.40

Source: own elaboration based on data from American Community Survey 2020 (5 years series 2016-2022)

We combined the data analysis with field work. We intentionally worked with the Department of Neighborhoods for purposeful, in-person outreach to engage with residents in the northern portion of the corridor, which is considerably more diverse than the rest of the project area. This allowed us to incorporate feedback from BIPOC populations, and those who have historically lived and traveled along Aurora Ave N/State Route 99 corridor.

While adopting inclusive outreach methods, we also analyzed preliminary survey demographics to identify equity gaps in participation. This allowed us to redouble our efforts to engage the Black population, which three weeks prior to our survey-close-date represented 2.42% of respondents, with this population making up 4.33% of Aurora Ave Project area residents. At the close of the survey, Black community participation represented 4% of all respondents. Preliminary analysis showed a representative participation of all other populations in the project area.

In short: Our efforts included online and in-person activities, so people of all ages and from different ethnic and socioeconomical backgrounds could provide feedback for the project.

Translation needs

Based on the demographics of the project segments, and in the interest of engaging diverse populations, we translated materials into the same six languages in which the survey was available: in Chinese, English, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese (Appendix C). The project website is also available in 16 languages.

Community Liaisons facilitated group and one on one conversation in the native language of these diverse populations, such as Korean, Spanish and Tigrinya.

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To view all in-language fact sheets, please see Appendix C.

Outreach methods

We used the following methods to inform and engage with different populations about the Aurora Ave Project:

Online:

- **Survey:** We launched the *Aurora Ave N Safety Planning Survey* on July 20th, 2022, to help us better understand ways to improve safety for people walking, biking, taking transit, and driving through Aurora Ave. The closing date of the survey was October 7th, 2022.
 - The survey was available seven languages: Chinese, English, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Tigrinya, and Vietnamese.
 - 2,082 took the survey. Results had a maximum confidence interval of 2% at 95% confidence level.
 - The comprehensive survey report can be found <u>here</u>.
- Multicultural media & digital campaign: Through a mix of digital tactics and local, multicultural media, we targeted current Aurora Ave residents (people walking, people biking and business owners), as well as anyone passing through the corridor who may have been interested in engaging. Digital tactics included retargeting (utilizing web browser data to re-show the same ad across different platforms), geo-targeting (serving impressions to audience members within a certain zip code or location), and geofencing (serving impressions to audience members based on demographic criteria).
 - Multicultural media flight dates: September 9, 2022 October 7, 2022.
 - Total clicks: 121
 - Digital display ads flight dates: August 30, 2022 October 7, 2022.
 - Total clicks: 1235; total impressions (number of times the ad is shown): 431,886;
 CTR (click-through rate): 0.29%.
 - Both campaigns ran in English, Spanish, Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean.
 - The comprehensive Multicultural Campaign Report can be found <u>here</u>.

 Web updates: We provided up-to-date information about the project. Our website (<u>www.seattle.gov/transportation/auroraproject</u>) got 2,159 visits from August 2nd to October 2022.

Early July

We updated our website to let the public know about the Aurora Ave Project, including project background, project area, outreach timeline and project funding.

Late July

We launched the web content about the survey and shared links for inlanguage surveys.

Late August

We updated content to promote the survey and acknowledge that it included opposing scale questions, providing a brief explanation to ensure that the logic of the responses would not be affected.

September 23rd

We let the public know that our survey period was extended one more week until Friday October 7th; we included a reminder that the survey requested feedback on improvements to the RapidRide E Line; and mentioned that we are also collaborating with Seattle Public Utilities to incorporate drainage issues and needs into our right-of-way design plans.

Early October

we uploaded fact sheets in seven languages and updated the public on the closing of the survey.

- **Parental engagement:** We sent a flyer (Appendix C) to parents of school age children through the Peachjar service at Seattle Public Schools to both inform about the project and encourage survey participation.
 - We targeted eight Seattle schools around project area: Broadview-Thomson K-8, Ingraham High, Green Lake Elementary, Daniel Bagley Elementary, Hamilton International Middle, B F Day Elementary, Cascadia Elementary, and Robert Eagle Staff Middle.
 - Peachjar Service delivered 7,237 emails; we got 5,831 email impressions (number of times the flyer was shown), and 596 views (number of times a user clicks through).

- **Listserv:** Throughout the survey period, we sent email blasts to both inform and invite stakeholders, local business owners, and community members to stay up to speed on the project news and provide input by taking the survey, as follows:
 - Stakeholder invitation to subscribe to Listserv July 16th, 2022, 19 recipients.
 - Listserv subscribers' invitation to take the survey July 20th, 133 recipients.
 - Survey participation reminder 1 to Listserv subscribers August 17, 297 recipients.
 - Survey participation reminder 2 to Listserv subscribers September 23, 477 recipients.
 - Local business along informational email August 15, 66 recipients.
 - \circ Survey thank you to Listserv subscribers October 18, 617 recipients
- Social media and blog posts:
 - On August 2nd, 2022, we posted a blog to both inform the public about the project and promote survey participation. There were nearly 800 blog post page views and 490 people re-shared the blog post via the blog's share buttons.
 - From July 20th to October 7th, we also posted eight times on social media pursuing the same objectives.

Social Media Platform	Posts	Engagement	# of People Reached
7	4	73 Likes, 52 Retweets, 25 Comments	36,347
0	2	249 Likes, 45 Comments	3,491
f	2	72 Likes, 21 Shares 12 Comments	9,686
TOTAL	8	394 Likes, 73 Shares, 82 Comments	49,524

• To see a gallery of our social media and blog posts, see Appendix D

In-person:

- **Pop-up events**. Between August and October, we had the opportunity to meet in person with Aurora neighbors at community events, such as Party in the Parking Lot, and we held pop up events at Oak Tree Market and Bitter Lake Community Center.
 - To see all feedback received in Party in the Parking Lot event, see Appendix A & B.
- **Door-to-door business outreach.** Between August and September, we visited 137 businesses located between Roy St and N 145th St. We shared information about the project with 104 of them.
- **One-on-one conversations and community group conversations:** We partnered with the Department of Neighborhoods for purposeful in-person outreach with residents in the northern portion of the corridor. In total, seven Community Liaisons held conversations with diverse populations in the northern portion of the corridor. They focused on the following populations:
 - o Vietnamese
 - o Filipino
 - o Latino (a)
 - o Korean
 - o Chinese
 - o Seniors
 - o East African
 - People experiencing homelessness
- **Bus signs along the corridor.** We posted signs at bus stops along the corridor to inform the public about the project and promote survey participation.
- To visualize our summer outreach tactics on an interactive map click here.

Summary of engagement

Table 2. summer outreach activities completed

When	What	Details
August – October 2022	Web updates	Kept the project webpage up to date with information
August 2, 2022	Door to door outreach	Business door-to-door outreach targeting businesses from N 100 St (West side of the street)
August 10, 2022	Bus sign placement along the corridor	Posters that drove bus riders to survey
August 15, 2022	Targeted email to businesses	Sent an email to businesses between N Harrison St and N 100 th St
August 16, 2022	Door-to-door outreach	Business door-to-door outreach targeting businesses between Harrison St and N 100 th St
August 17, 2022	Survey reminder gov delivery blast	Sent out a listserv email reminding people to take survey
August 17, 2022	Door to door outreach	Business door to door outreach targeting businesses on N 100 th St (East side of the street)
August 20 – September 30, 2022	Community Liaison outreach	Community Liaisons conducted outreach to community members
August 27, 2022	Community Event Tabling	Staffed table at the Party in the Parking Lot event at Oak Tree Village
September 9 – October 7, 2022	Multicultural and Digital Ad Campaign	Multicultural ad campaign that drew awareness to the survey
September 12 and 14, 2022	Pop Up Event	Staffed pop up event at Oak Tree Market
September 22 – September 30, 2022	Flyer	Sent flyer out to schools in surrounding project area
September 23, 2022	Survey reminder email blast	Sent out a listserv email reminding people to take survey



Map of community engagement



Who we heard from

- Survey respondents. The largest amount of feedback we received was through the survey. In total, 2,082 people took the survey from more than 20 neighborhoods in and around the project area (Exhibit A4).
- Businesses along the corridor.
 As mentioned above, we heard from over 100 businesses when conducting door-to-door outreach, from Roy St to
 N 145th on both the west and east side of the Avenue. Click <u>here</u> to see a full list of businesses we visited.
- Online feedback (other than survey). We heard from 79 people through social media, and 10 people shared their input through the project inbox aurorastudy@seattle.gov (Exhibit A5).
- Aurora Residents. In one-on-one and community group conversations, we spoke with and received feedback from nearly 450 Aurora residents, thanks to the work of the Community Liaisons.
 - These conversations took place in points highlighted in purple in the map of community engagement above.
 - More details of this conversations are highlighted in purple in <u>this</u> interactive map.





Respondents geography

Exhibit A4: Aurora Ave Project survey participation by neighborhood



What we heard

The following key themes summarize what we heard during our summer outreach activities, between July and October 2022:

- Transit Improvements and Connections. Feedback received indicated that buses should run more frequently, with better east-west connections and that the current stops need more maintenance. In addition, community members expressed concern that transportation changes would not solve their concerns around social issues.
- Safety improvements for people walking. People that provided feedback expressed that having an increased number of sidewalks with improved conditions and more signalized crosswalks would make their experience walking through Aurora feel safer. They also expressed that there could be better lighting during the evenings and that it would be ideal to have some type of physical barrier between them and the road.
- Safety improvements for people biking. Most of the feedback received is related to adding more bike lanes and building physical separation between bicyclists and drivers of other motorized cars.
- Collision reduction. Most of the people who provided comments on collision reduction expressed concern over high-speed traffic and high traffic volume and acknowledged them as elements that make driving unsafe throughout the project area.
- Business owner concerns. Business owners expressed that the number of crosswalks and sidewalks need to be increased and street lighting needs to be improved. They also mentioned collisions and speeding as a constant challenge along the corridor, and some of them consider that bike lanes are not necessary.
- Crossing locations. Feedback received indicates that people would like the new study for Aurora to include new crosswalks and improvement of the signage at existing crossings. People also indicated that the N 130th St crossing is both one of the busiest and most avoided crosswalks. Other busy and frequently used crossing locations identified by people that provided input are the N 85th St and N 100th St crossings. The N 125th St, N 46th St, and N 85th St, are some of the most avoided crossings due to speeding vehicles nearby and social concerns.
- Social concerns. Regarding improvements indirectly related to road infrastructure, most people that provided feedback expressed social concerns, such as personal safety, crime, sexual workers, and homelessness as the main concerns that need to be addressed along the project area.

These social concerns were shared with Seattle Police Department and Human Services Department to help inform their ongoing efforts to address these social issues. We will also continue to take these concerns into account as we explore design options for the corridor and its transit services.

Lessons learned

We've noted the following lessons for future in-person events:

- When briefing the community about the Aurora Ave Project, we can let them know that safety feedback related with social concerns are going to be shared with the Seattle Police Department and Human Services Department.
- In the future, we will go out at times closer to 4:00pm 5:00pm to capture more feedback from people who have already left work.
- When briefing the community about the project, we will be more emphatic about the current stage of the project (gathering feedback from everyone traveling along Aurora) and explain the project stages that follow.
- We can let members of the public know that, aside from the survey, they can also provide feedback over the phone (206) 905-3620) and through the project email (aurorastudy@seattle.gov). This is particularly relevant for people with disabilities.

We've noted the following lessons for future online outreach:

- When promoting the online survey through Community Liaisons consider the length of the survey and the complexity of some of the questions, so we balance how many hours they are assigned to target diverse populations.
- Don't use opposite scales in survey questions. We will be more careful in future occasions to avoid confusing respondents.

To stay up to date on this project, sign up for email updates <u>here</u> and visit <u>our website</u>. If you have questions or comments, please contact us at (206) 905-3620 or <u>aurorastudy@seattle.gov</u>.



Appendices

Appendix A: all feedback received in Party in the Parking Lot event, board 1





Appendix B: all feedback received in Party in the Parking Lot event, board 2

Appendix C: communication assets

- 1. Fact sheet (click in each fact sheet to redirect and see content)
 - English
 - Spanish
 - Tagalog
 - o Korean
 - Vietnamese
 - Chinese (Traditional)
 - Tigrinya
- 2. Flyer, parental engagement



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Seattle Department of Transportation and King County Metro are working to develop a refreshed planning and design study for Aurora Ave (from Harrison St to N 145th St). Together we'll be planning for improvements for people who walk, bike, take transit, and drive on or near Aurora Ave.

Your feedback is crucial to help us identify what changes the community needs to enhance safety for all travelers.

Scan the QR code to take the survey. The survey will be open until **September 30th.**



PROJECT GOALS

Aurora Ave Project goals are to:

- Design improvements for people who walk, bike and take transit along Aurora
- Reduce collisions for all users
- Engage community members in the area on shared vision for Aurora

We are still in the early stages of this project, which means you can have a say in what happens on Aurora! **Take our survey** to help us better understand ways to improve safety on Aurora Ave N.

For more information, please visit our project webpage.



Project Contact: Phone: (206) 905-3620 Email: aurorastudy@seattle.gov Website: www.seattle.gov/transportation/auroraproject

Seattle Department of Transportation

Appendix D: social media & blog posts



We are launching a study to plan & design safety improvements for Aurora Ave! Your feedback is crucial to help inform what changes the community needs for a better walking, rolling, biking, & transit experience. Access the survey on the project webpage: bit.ly/sdotAAP



4:05 PM · Jul 20, 2022 · Twitter Web App

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LEVY DOLLARS AT WORK | Take our survey to help develop a better, safer Aurora Avenue N and learn about other projects in the area!

Next >>

by Ethan Bancroft on August 2, 2022



Editor's Note (9/30/2022): This blog post was updated to note that the survey has been extended through October 7, 2022.



Aurora Ave has a history of collisions, inconsistent streetscape & accessibility barriers that make travel difficult. Please take our survey to help us, @wsdot, & @KingCountyMetro better understand community priorities to inform future design improvements: surveymonkey.com/r/AuroraNSafety

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27 Retweets 3 Quote Tweets 41 Likes

Seattle Department of Transportation September 20 · @

Aurora Ave has a history of collisions, inconsistent streetscape & accessibility barriers that make travel difficult. If you haven't already done so, please take our survey to help us develop a refreshed planning and design study for Aurora Ave N, with a focus on enhancing safety, mobility, and accessibility for all travelers.

The survey will be open until September 30th: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AuroraNSafety

Photos are people walking on the September 14 Seattle Pedestrian Advisory Board walk audit of Aurora Ave N with Director Greg Spotts.

