

Seattle Department of Transportation

RAINIER AVE S CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS – PHASE 2

Outreach Summary



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

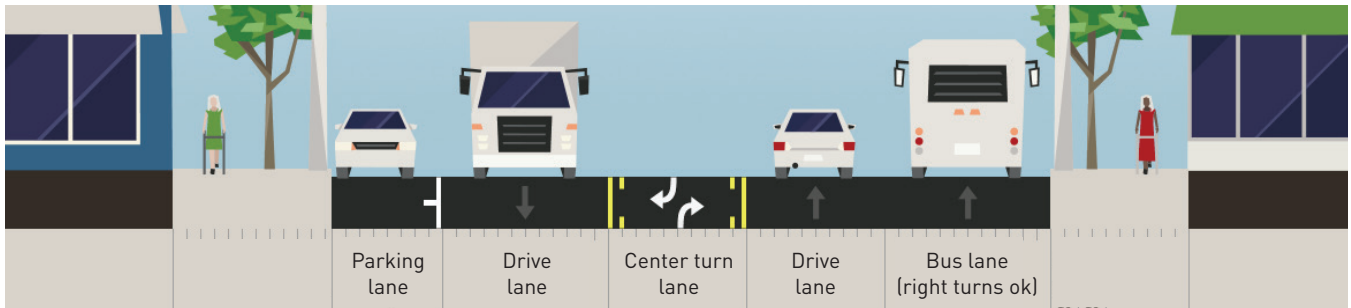
OVERVIEW

We're planning to make changes to Rainier Ave S between S Kenny St and S Henderson St to reduce crashes and ensure reliable transit service. We held a public comment period to gather feedback on two proposed alternatives between July and September 2017.

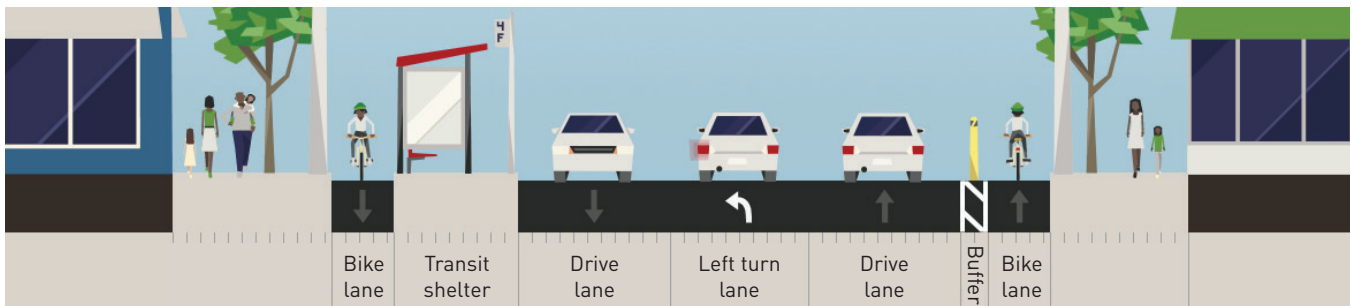
Alternative 1: Adds a dedicated northbound bus lane, maintains right turns and business access through a Business Access and Transit (BAT) lane, and retains on-street parking on the west side of Rainier Ave S.

Alternative 2: Adds protected bike lanes (PBLs) on both sides of Rainier Ave S, a left-turn lane at intersections, and in-lane bus stops in both directions.

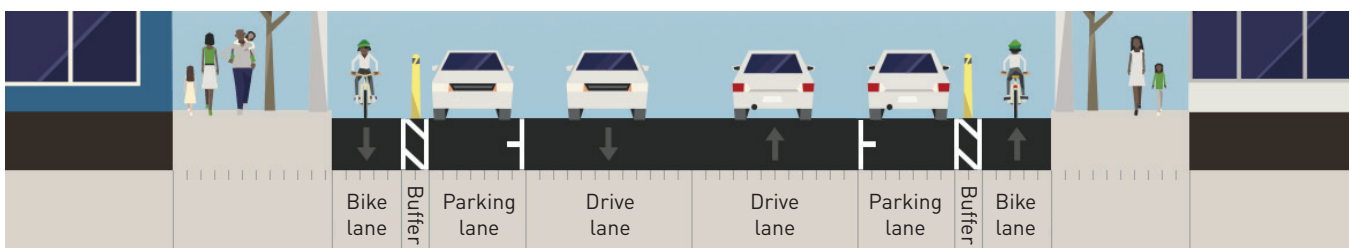
Alternative 1 (BAT lane)



Alternative 2 (PBL) – at major intersections



Alternative 2 (PBL) – between major intersections



Cross sections are looking north.

OUTREACH METHODS

Our outreach strategy combined both online and in-person communication. Online, we held an open house (which included information on the project and a feedback survey), ran a social media campaign, and provided project information on our webpage, including translations of the webpage and survey in ten different languages. In-person, we participated in multiple events and had conversations with community groups (in English and other languages) to inform them of the project (see Table 1). We also sent mailers to approximately 33,000 households to invite community members to visit our online open house and take our online survey.

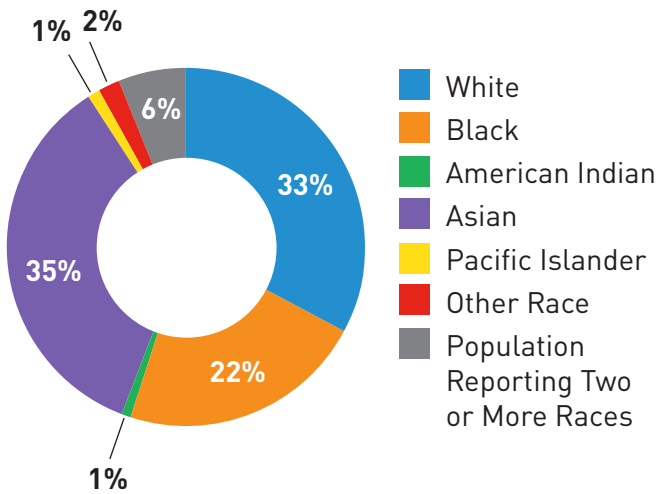
Table 1. In-person outreach activities completed (see Appendix A for the full list of community groups we talked to).

When	What	Details
February 20 – March 27, 2017	Winter 2017 online survey	Collected general feedback on the project and community needs and priorities, which were used to design alternatives 1 and 2
March 7, 2017	Community forum	Held an open house, shared crash data with the community
May – July 2017	Community Conversations	Shared project information with historically underserved or underrepresented community groups. Delivered short presentations and held open discussions in small groups. Asked questions regarding transportation priorities.
August 2017	Mailer to Rainier Valley residents (approximately 33,000 households)	Raised project awareness; shared alternatives; invited community members to visit the online open house
August 1, 2017	Rainier Beach Neighborhood Night Out	Shared alternatives with the community for feedback
August 3-31, 2017	Online open house (w/ survey)	Shared alternatives with the community, collected feedback on specific alternatives
August 12, 2017	Rainier Valley Heritage Festival	Shared alternatives with the community for feedback
August 15, 2017	Bus stop survey intercepts	Handed out project materials; raised awareness of online open house; requested feedback
August 17, 2017	Ethnic markets drop-ins & poster delivery	Shared project information through translated posters and interactions with employees; collected feedback
August 21, 2017	Safeway tabling event	Shared project information; collected feedback
August 29, 2017	Southeast Seattle Senior Center briefing	Shared alternatives with the community for feedback
August 2017	Social media campaign (Facebook posts, ads, Twitter posts, SDOT blog, South Seattle Emerald Blog and eNewsletter)	Raised project awareness; shared alternatives; invited community members to participate in the online open house
September 2017	Rainier Beach Action Coalition briefing	Shared alternatives with the community (youth/teens) for feedback
Ongoing	Website updates	Shared up to date project information; opportunities for involvement

Engaging diverse populations

To hear from people who live and travel along Rainier Ave S, we worked closely with Department of Neighborhoods for purposeful, in-person outreach with residents and community organizations in southeast Seattle. The demographics of the project area emphasize the importance of implementing an outreach strategy that incorporates feedback from communities of color, immigrant and refugee populations, and those who have historically lived and traveled along Rainier Ave S (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Rainier Valley mailing area demographics (American Community Survey 2010-2014)



Historically, we see a higher response rate in online surveys from individuals who have obtained higher education and are of White or Caucasian descent. Rainier Valley has a more diverse population compared to the rest of Seattle. We strived to capture the interest and opinions held by people of color and groups that have been historically underserved or underrepresented. Our primary method of engaging these groups occurred through in-person outreach strategies (see Table 1).



We asked people shopping at Safeway in Rainier Beach to add stickers to their preferred alternative.



Community conversation with Senior Housing Assistance Group (SHAG) and Southeast Effective Development (SEED).

WHO WE HEARD FROM

In person

We received feedback on the alternatives from more than 150 community members and received general project feedback from more than 300 community members at our in-person outreach events and via community conversations (see Table 1).

Online open house

- 1,813 unique users visited the site
- 1,191 unique survey responses were submitted
 - 73% of total respondents were from Seattle
 - 21% of total respondents reported living within the project area zip code*
 - The demographics of those who visited the online open house were disproportionate to the demographics of those living in the project area (see Appendix B)*

*Demographic survey questions were optional and thus may not accurately represent all survey respondents.

WHAT WE HEARD

In person

An important component of our outreach strategy included in-person activities. We conducted in-person outreach through pop-up events and community conversations, which generated a variety of comments about the proposed alternatives (see Table 2).

Table 2. Feedback collected at in-person outreach events.

Date	Event	Preference	
		Alternative 1 (BAT)	Alternative 2 (PBL)
8/1/2017	Rainier Beach Neighborhood Night Out	9	2
8/3/2017	Rose St Apartments event (primarily immigrant/refugee community)	14	3
8/12/2017	Rainier Valley Heritage Festival (Columbia City)	21	47
8/19/2017	Safeway tabling outreach (Rainier Beach)	39	10
8/23/2017	Evening bus stop/Rainier Beach Community Center outreach	24	13
8/29/2017	SE Senior Center Meeting (Rainier & Holly)	1	1
9/11/2017	Rainier Beach Action Coalition	1	1
Total		109	77

The following key themes summarize what we heard from in-person outreach activities between July and August 2017:

Alternative 1 (bus lanes; center turn lane; southbound parking lane):

- Support for center-turn lane
- Support for dedicated bus lane(s) to improve transit travel times
- Desire for frequent and reliable transit on Metro Route 7 and future RapidRide
- Senior populations preferred Alternative 1 but expressed concerns about potential bus stop consolidation due to mobility challenges

Alternative 2 (protected bike lanes; parking lanes on both sides; left-turn lane at intersections):

- Some women with children expressed they preferred Alternative 1, but selected Alternative 2 because they support their children having bike lanes in the future
- Support maximizing number of on-street parking spaces for adjacent multifamily use

Cars:

- Desire to be able to bike or use transit more to get around, but think bikes/transit are not an efficient option to be able to get to work, drop off/pick up children from school, and run errands
- Concerns about increased congestion on Rainier Ave S and increased cut-through traffic on residential streets
- Excessive speeding on Rainier Ave S is an issue, but when faced with potential congestion to help mitigate speeding, there are difficulties reconciling the two
- Concern that increased congestion in Phase 1 project area causes aggressive behavior and excessive speeding in other areas along Rainier Ave S

Pedestrians:

- Support the pedestrian improvements made in Phase 1
- Request for more flashing beacon crosswalks and refuge areas along Rainier Ave S
- Acknowledged bike lane could be good buffer between cars and people walking to serve multifamily/affordable housing along the street

Parking:

- Desire to retain on-street parking

Transit:

- Currently do not feel safe riding Metro Route 7 late at night or during certain times of the day
- Request for improved lighting at transit stops and police enforcement

Enforcement:

- Request for more Seattle Police Department enforcement on Rainier Ave S (speeding, jaywalking, aggressive and/or reckless behavior)

Other:

- Concern that this project is another example of gentrification in the area
- Concern that people who have historically lived and worked in the Rainier Valley will be displaced or forced to move further south where transit options are limited
- Comments surrounding gentrification noted that SDOT focused improvements in Columbia City first rather than other parts of Rainier Ave S

Online

The online survey was another tool used to learn how people travel along Rainier Ave S and ask how Rainier should be designed.

Across all Seattle zip codes, most online survey respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44, and most respondents preferred alternative 2*. Of the online survey respondents who reported living in the 98118 zip code, most were between the ages of 25 and 44, and most preferred alternative 1*. Younger age groups from the online survey preferred alternative 2, while older age groups seemed to prefer alternative 1. To see which community members we were able to reach, survey data was broken down by demographics, modes of transportation, and design preference (see Appendix C).

The following key themes summarize what we heard in our online survey, which was posted on our online open house between August 3-30, 2017:

Alternative 1 (bus lanes; center turn lane; southbound parking lane):

- Support for Business Access and Transit lanes:
 - Moves a greater number of people along Rainier Ave S
 - Serves people who may not be able-bodied to ride a bike, or have the luxury to own a bike, or use a bike to get to work, school, and run errands
 - Reduces single-occupancy vehicles and lowers carbon dioxide emissions
 - Transit has a higher percentage of ridership throughout the year than people biking
 - Business Access and Transit lanes will help reduce congestion on Rainier Ave S

- Southeast Seattle communities have historically relied on bus service and the City should continue to prioritize the needs of those communities

- A center-turn lane will help reduce traffic congestion and provide convenient business access
- Concern about a high volume of cars making right-turns and taxi/carshare loading and unloading in the Business Access and Transit lane

Alternative 2 (protected bike lanes; parking lanes on both sides; left-turn lane at intersections):

- Support for bicycle routes that are protected, direct, and flat
- Bike lanes can help calm traffic
- Bike lanes can increase patronage to local businesses
- Build the protected bike facilities and people will use them
- The Rainier Valley Neighborhood Greenway is not a viable alternative to protected bike lanes on Rainier Ave S. The neighborhood greenway is not a direct or flat route.
- The proposed bike lanes need to connect to existing bike facilities in the City
- One travel lane in each direction would significantly increase travel times in southeast Seattle
- Bike lanes will benefit the community now and for future generations
- Bike lanes improve public health and minimizes car traffic, noise, pollution, and risk of collisions

Other comments:

- Design an alternative that maximizes transit, bike, and pedestrian safety
- Build a cycle-track on Rainier Ave S
- Concern that the Seattle Department of Transportation is pitting bikes against transit when the goal is to design a multi-modal street that achieves the Vision Zero safety goals

*Demographic survey questions were optional and thus may not accurately represent all survey respondents.

- Remove parking on Rainier Ave S and build protected bike lanes and Business Access and Transit lanes in either one direction or both directions
- Remove parking to increase vehicle capacity on Rainier Ave S
- Remove parking on Rainier Ave S and create Business Access and Transit lanes, travel lanes, and a center-turn lane

Cars:

- People depend on cars to get around their neighborhood
- Support for traffic calming and crash reductions on Rainier Ave S
- Concern that re-channelization will result in vehicles using residential streets and display negative and/or aggressive driving behaviors
- Concern that re-channelization will significantly reduce travel times
- Concern about increased traffic on Seward Park Ave S, Wilson Ave S due to re-channelization in Phase 1
- Request to improve signal timing to improve travel times

Parking:

- Retaining parking on Rainier Ave S does not encourage people to use other forms of transportation
- There are parking alternatives on side streets near Rainier Ave S
- Remove parking on Rainier Ave S and build protected bike lanes and Business Access and Transit lanes in either one direction or both directions
- Remove parking to decrease vehicle traffic on Rainier Ave S
- Remove parking on Rainier Ave S and create Business Access and Transit lanes, travel lanes, and a center-turn lane

Pedestrian:

- Request for more marked crosswalks across Rainier Ave S
- Lengthen signal timing for crosswalks in Columbia City and Hillman City
- Jaywalking is common on Rainier Ave S and should be discouraged
- Request for sidewalk improvements on Rainier Ave S

Enforcement:

- Request for more Seattle Police Department enforcement on Rainier Ave S (speeding, jaywalking, aggressive and/or reckless behavior)
- Request for more Seattle Police Department presence to decrease crime and improve vitality of the community
- Request for speed limit detection signs to calm vehicle traffic

Mail

We received approximately 250 form letters supporting alternative 2 (originated by Cascade Bicycle Club). 42% of the letters were from people living in or near the project area (zip codes 98118, 98144, and 98108).

LESSONS LEARNED

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

- Dot sticker exercises helped increase engagement at festivals and tabling events
- Incentives at events helped increase participation (Vision Zero swag; snacks and refreshments)
- Use interpreters at smaller, targeted meetings (i.e. Community Conversations)
- Use interpreters for non-native English-speaking business drop-ins

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

- Use Facebook ads and other social media to increase participation in online surveys
- Encouraging people to use tablets to take the online open house in-person had a low success rate
- Translated online materials, including social media, had a low success rate
- Online open house was largely used by those who identified as White, which is not representative of the demographics in Rainier Valley. Future outreach efforts should create an outreach strategy that meets people of color who live in, work in, and visit the project area where they are (apartment buildings, bus stops, grocery stores, parks, community centers/libraries, auto shops, and laundry mats).

APPENDIX A

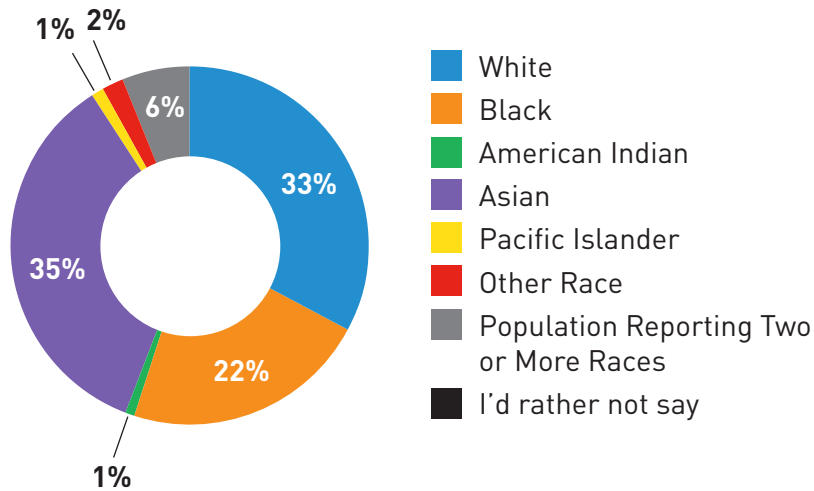
Community groups and City/SDOT programs we reached out to

- Groups we reached out to, to inform them of the project:
 - Community groups:
 - > Bellwether Housing- Kingway Apartments
 - > Bellwether Housing- Rose Street Apartments
 - > Columbia Gardens at Rainier Court
 - > Dakota at Rainier Court
 - > Mt. Baker Village Apartments
 - > Rainier Beach Action Coalition (RBAC)
 - > Southeast Seattle Senior Center
 - > Rainier Beach Safeway tabling
 - > Rainier Beach Community Center tabling
 - > Bus stop riders (outreach at bus stops)
 - Local business groups:
 - > Rainier Beach Merchants Association
 - > Rainier Chamber of Commerce
 - > Ethnic markets
 - ~ West African Market
 - ~ Vientiane Market
 - ~ Island Pacific Market
 - ~ Sharif Grocery Halal
 - ~ Mahadevan Mini Market
 - ~ Ethio Mini Market
 - ~ Me Kong Market
- Events we participated in to inform community members of the project:
 - Rainier Valley Heritage Festival
 - Rainier Beach Night Out
 - Rainier Beach Resources Fairs
 - Chinatown Dragon Fest
 - Banh Mi Fest (Celebrate Little Saigon)
 - Mt Baker Hub Fest
- City and SDOT programs we partnered with to coordinate on outreach activities and design alternatives:
 - Department of Neighborhoods (DON) (identified appropriate outreach activities, community stakeholders, language needs, and provided community liaisons and interpreters)
 - Housing Authority and Livability (HALA)
 - Safe Routes to School

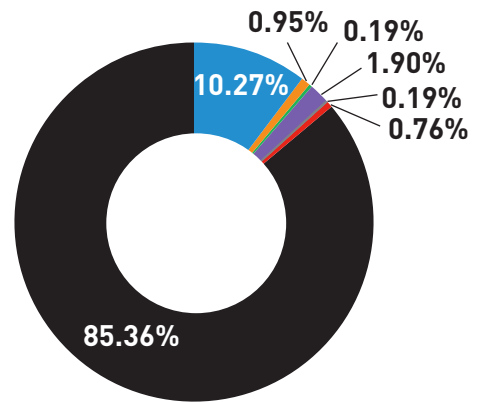
APPENDIX B

Online open house survey demographics

Rainier Valley mailing area demographics
(American Community Survey 2010-2014)



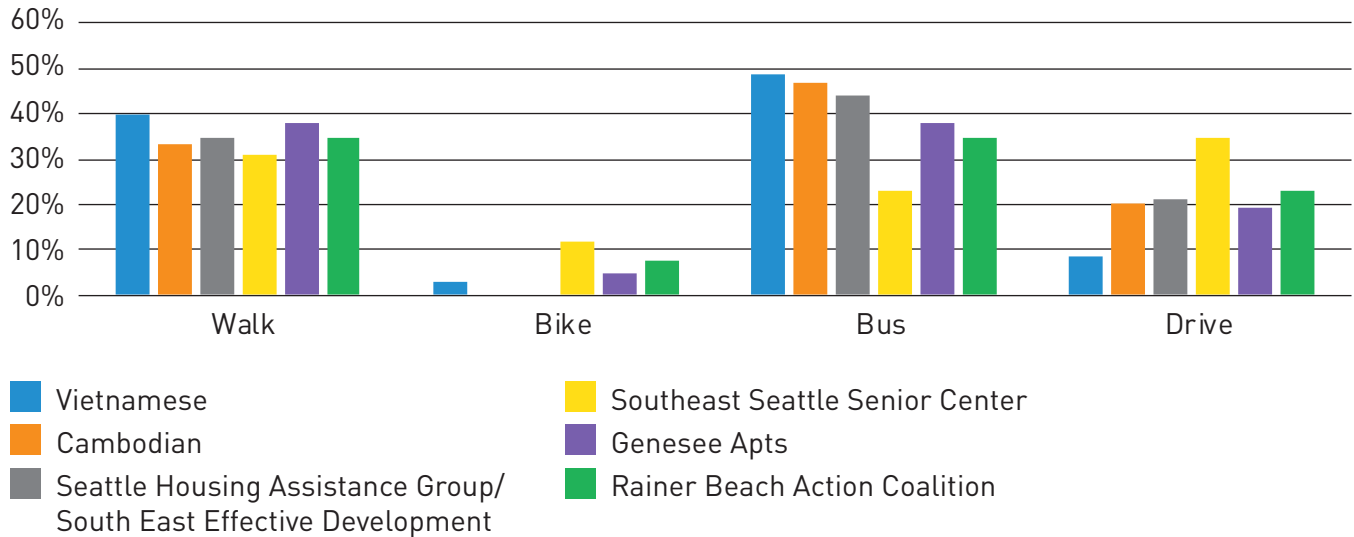
Racial demographics from respondents in
98118 zip code (526 responses)



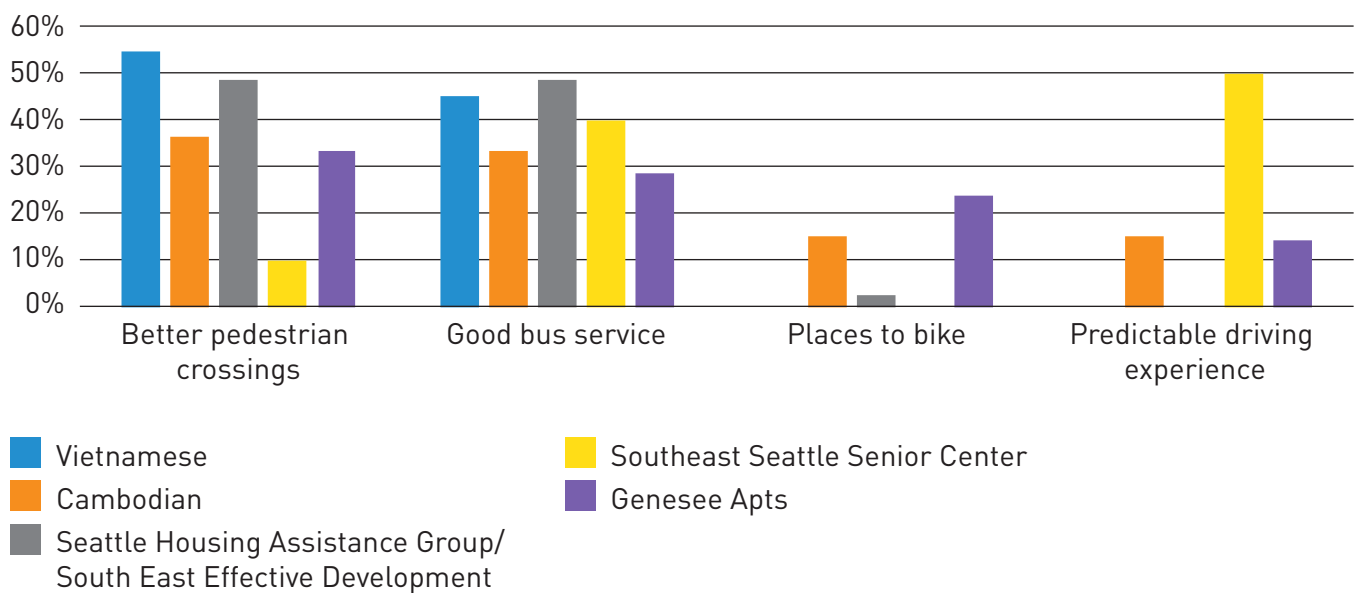
APPENDIX C

What we heard from community conversations

How do you travel on Rainier?



What do you think should be a priority for Rainier?



Online survey results by age

Feedback from Seattle zip codes, separated by age:

Age range of respondents	Preference		
	Alternative 1 (BAT)	Alternative 2 (PBL)	No response
20-24	3	0	3
25-34	16	37	23
35-44	27	37	13
45-54	16	14	9
55-64	11	6	10
65 or older	6	4	4
I'd rather not say	0	1	1
No response	235	354	361
Grand total	314	453	424

Feedback from zip code 98118, separated by age:

Age range of respondents	Preference		
	Alternative 1 (BAT)	Alternative 2 (PBL)	No response
20-24	1	0	1
25-34	5	16	5
35-44	11	13	3
45-54	9	3	2
55-64	5	3	2
65 or older	4	2	0
No response	118	97	226
Grand total	153	134	239

Demographic survey questions were optional and thus may not accurately represent all survey respondents.

Online survey results for zip code 98118, by mode(s) of travel and identified race

For those who selected “walking” as one of their modes along Rainier:

Race	Preference		
	Alternative 1 (BAT)	Alternative 2 (PBL)	No response
Asian	3	2	1
Black, East African, or African-American	3	1	
Hispanic or Latino		1	
I’d rather not say	2	5	1
Other - Write in	1		
Two or more races	1	1	
White or Caucasian	19	21	6
No response	80	85	158
Grand Total	109	116	166

For those who selected “biking” as one of their modes along Rainier:

Race	Preference		
	Alternative 1 (BAT)	Alternative 2 (PBL)	No response
Asian		1	
Black, East African, or African-American		1	
Hispanic or Latino		1	
I’d rather not say		3	
Two or more races		1	
White or Caucasian	6	19	3
No response	19	60	78
Grand Total	25	86	81

Demographic survey questions were optional and thus may not accurately represent all survey respondents.

For those who selected “driving” as one of their modes along Rainier:

Race	Preference		
	Alternative 1 (BAT)	Alternative 2 (PBL)	No response
American Indian or Alaska Native	1		
Asian	4	4	2
Black, East African, or African-American	2		1
Hispanic or Latino		1	
I’d rather not say	2	5	1
Other - Write in	1		1
Two or more races	2	1	
White or Caucasian	21	22	8
No response	111	86	212
Grand Total	144	119	225

For those who selected “transit” as one of their modes along Rainier:

Race	Preference		
	Alternative 1 (BAT)	Alternative 2 (PBL)	No response
Asian	2	1	1
Black, East African, or African-American	3	1	
Hispanic or Latino		1	
I’d rather not say	1	3	
Other - Write in	1		
Two or more races	1	1	
White or Caucasian	13	17	3
No response	61	74	120
Grand Total	82	98	124

Demographic survey questions were optional and thus may not accurately represent all survey respondents.

The Seattle Department of Transportation
700 5th Avenue, Suite 3800
PO Box 34996
Seattle, WA 98124-4996
(206) 684-ROAD (7623)
www.seattle.gov/transportation



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