North Aurora Summer 2026 Engagement Summary

Executive Summary

From April to September of 2026, OPCD worked with other City departments to launch the North Aurora Initiative and Community Action Plan, raising awareness of planned capital projects and gathering early community input. Our first phase of engagement included:

- ***Community-Based Organization (CBO) Engagement.*** 16 interviews with service providers, schools, and other CBOs
- ***Community Connections Pop-In Parties.*** More than 200 community members attended two open houses.
- ***Online Visioning Survey.*** 204 responses focused on visioning, assets, and opportunities.
- ***Social Service, Youth, and Family Surveys.*** 174 paper surveys (eight in Spanish) from people living in permanent supportive housing properties or shelters and 59 surveys from a welcome fair at Robert Eagle Staff Middle School for Spanish-speaking families.
- ***Small Business Outreach.*** 40 responses for an online business and commercial property owner survey. Staff attended three business roundtables convened by For North Seattle.
- ***Staff Presence in Community.*** City departments participated in more than six community safety events and meetings and conducted door-to-door outreach to businesses.

Translated factsheets and an online StoryMap were used in the engagement to provide additional project context. City departments coordinated closely to present a unified project team.

Across all engagement activities, several themes consistently emerged surrounding the future community vision for North Aurora. These themes reflect the priorities of residents, businesses, and community partners and will guide the development of the Draft North Aurora Community Action Plan.



Image 1: Illustration by local artist Natalie Dupille

Community Health and Safety. *Concerns about physical safety and feelings of safety are a consistent message across audiences, including housed and unhoused neighbors, business owners, service providers, and corridor users*.

- Residents, business owners, and service-users described feeling unsafe due to visible activities associated with the drug and sex trades, gun violence, harassment, and poorly maintained public spaces.
- People who live in permanent supportive housing emphasized safety for women and people with disabilities who live in buildings directly on the corridor and might be more vulnerable due to disinvestment along the corridor.
- Over 90% of business owners cited safety and cleanliness as the one of their biggest challenges to doing business on *Aurora*.

Transportation Safety and Mobility. *Safer crossings, improved sidewalks, better east-west and north-south non-motorized connections, and reliable transit is a strong community priority.*

- Threequarters of online survey respondents selected “Safe and easy to get around on foot” as part of their 10-year vision.
- Permanent supportive housing residents emphasized safer crossings, ADA-friendly sidewalks, more frequent buses, and shorter distances between crosswalks.
- Business owners rely on regional access and, in open-ended comments, stressed the importance of maintaining customer mobility.

Activation of Public Space. *Respondents envision public spaces that support social cohesion, multigenerational activities, cultural expression, and everyday community life.*

- Across surveys, interviews, and events, people expressed a need for low-cost, accessible places to gather, including community centers, libraries, parks, youth programs, and indoor places to rest.
- Business owners highlighted the importance of attracting customers and maintaining a corridor where people feel comfortable spending time.
- Community members described opportunities for public art, arts districts, cleaner streets, and visible maintenance.

Small Business Retention. *There is a need to stabilize and retain the corridor's unique mix of local- and regional-serving industrial and functional businesses.*

- Small businesses are widely viewed as neighborhood assets.
- Residents appreciate the diversity of local businesses along the corridor.
- 42% of business owners who responded to the survey are considering relocation, and over half say they would expand if safety and cleanliness improved.
- Community members consider the wide range of businesses – from big box stores to smaller home improvement, restaurants, auto servicing, and grocery stores an asset to the region.

Aurora's Green Future. *Many want to see the future of Aurora be a greener neighborhood, including outdoor spaces for gathering, trees, and other resources to support community identity.*

- Residents want more trees, plantings, parks, and places to rest outdoors.
- Permanent supportive housing residents linked green space to safety, comfort, and community identity.
- Online survey respondents frequently selected "more tree canopy" as a top improvement.
- Ideas included community gardens, dog parks, tree-lined sidewalks, and new parks or playfields.

Sustained Coordinated Action. *There is a need for corridor-wide capacity building to advocate for, support, and maintain a thriving Aurora, including business groups, service providers, and residents.*

- Across engagement activities, people expressed a desire for ongoing, visible, and coordinated City presence.

- Community-based organizations emphasized past challenges working with public agencies and the need for trust-building and funding to support their work.
- Online respondents repeatedly reported their appreciation for their community and their neighbors and demonstrated a desire for more connection.
- Many supportive housing residents described wanting a future Aurora where people treat each other with respect and where neighbors living on Aurora and in the neighborhoods know one another.
- Residents and businesses want consistent maintenance and safety coordination.







(Top and Left) Images from Community Connections Pop-in Party. (Right) Spanish Speaking Community Liaison Martha at an event at Robert Eagle Staff Middle School

Community Engagement Summary Details

CBO Interviews

Date: March 2026 – June 2026

Goals and Audience: Staff conducted interviews with community-based organizations (CBOs) and leaders to gather neighborhood context, understand concerns, and coordinate engagement strategies. These conversations helped identify past concerns related to working with public agencies and informed the North Aurora Initiative's messages and outreach materials. The interviews also helped to identify trusted community leaders and ongoing initiatives existing in the corridor.

Contacts: Aurora Commons, Aurora Reimagined Coalition, Cascadia Elementary, Chief Seattle Club, Downtown Emergency Service Center, Epic Life Church, Haller Lake Community Club, Ingraham High School, Lake City Collective, Licton Springs Community Council, NW Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, Purpose Dignity Action (PDA), Robert Eagle Staff Middle School, Seattle Indian Health Board, and Washelli Cemetery.

What We Heard: CBO participants shared insights on project naming, community goals, and potential opportunities for collaboration. They particularly emphasized a gap in social service providers and the high need for support on the corridor. This early relationship-building laid the groundwork for future participation and deeper partnership in the Initiative. Through this work, City staff heard about community safety concerns, and social service organizations pointed to ongoing gaps in behavioral health services.

Community Connections Pop-In Parties

Date: May – June 2026

Goal: Community members were invited to launch the North Aurora Initiative, meet City departments and organizations doing work along North Aurora, and share their feedback to guide future planning in North Aurora.

Attendees: 200+ community members in Aurora-Licton (May 26) and Bitter Lake (June 6)

Community tables: Aurora Commons, Aurora Reimagined Coalition, City of Seattle (including the Office of Planning & Community Development, Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Parks & Recreation, Seattle Police Department, and Seattle Public Utilities), Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery, Greenwood Community Council, Haller Lake Community Council, Licton Springs Community Council, and the University of Washington Master of Urban Planning North Aurora Initiative Spring 2026 studio.

Event details: Across the two events, roughly 200 community members attended, taking the opportunity to engage with the City about utility and street infrastructure, community planning, and community safety. Events featured welcome tables, local food, tabling by multiple City departments and community partners, and family-friendly activities such as face painting and coloring. Interactive components included community mapping, live art and visioning exercises. The Pop-In Parties also provided opportunities for City departments to strengthen relationships with community-based organizations.

What we heard: Attendees want Aurora to feel safe to walk at night and to send children to the bus stop independently. Attendees value and want more small businesses, neighborhood retail, restaurants, and ground-floor commercial uses that draw activity. Attendees expressed a desire for community centers, gathering places, plazas, and events. Participants expressed a desire for visual improvement of Aurora and a stronger sense of place. A complete report from the events was published online.



(Left) Seattle Public Utilities Representatives demonstrate terrarium making at Pop-in Party on Saturday, June 6, 2026 at Bitter Lake Community Center. (Below) Local face painter providing pop-in party attendee with Aurora themed face paint.



Online Community Survey Findings

Dates: May 7, 2026 – August 4, 2026

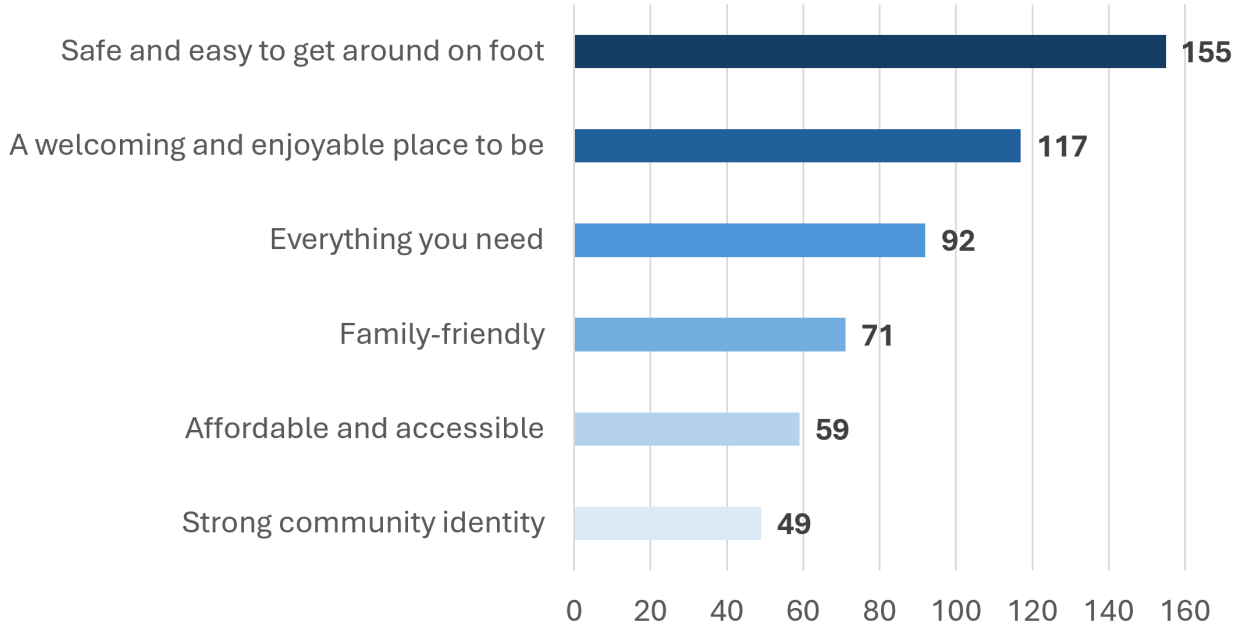
Goal: The Office of Planning and Community Development collected responses to an online Community Action Plan visioning survey. The survey asked questions about the community vision and ideas for the future of North Aurora, neighborhood assets that people like, and changes the community would like to see to North Aurora neighborhoods.

Respondents: OPCD collected 204 responses in the survey, which was built out in ArcGIS Online's Survey123 tool.

Details: OPCD advertised the survey with the launch of Community Action Plan engagement, during summer Pop-In Parties, via OPCD social media and newsletters, and through direct messaging to known community organizations and community councils.

What we heard: Across survey responses, community members described a vision for the future of North Aurora that focused on safe mobility, public safety, and a vibrant mix of neighborhood assets. While respondents appreciated the corridor's diverse small businesses, industrial activity, transit access, affordability, and sense of community, many also emphasized that persistent safety concerns, public cleanliness, and vacant properties limit their ability to enjoy neighborhood places today. When asked to identify special or meaningful locations, respondents most frequently highlighted businesses along Aurora Ave N, followed by parks, trails, and other public spaces dispersed throughout the neighborhoods.

North Aurora Future Vision. The first question of the survey asked "Picture the neighborhoods along North Aurora in 10 years. What do you hope they look and feel like? Select up to three." Respondents could choose from the six options shown, or write their own vision in an "other" category. While all six options were frequently chosen, the highest number (three-quarters) of survey respondents chose "Safe and easy to get around on foot," which highlights respondents' goals for a safe and walkable public realm.



Twenty-six respondents chose to write in their own answers in the "other" category. Most frequently, respondents who wrote in answers described a neighborhood where they would feel safer – with different suggestions including the elimination of violence and public drug use, or increased police presence. Additionally, respondents described their future North Aurora neighborhood as one that is green with dense with vibrant cultural and business community, one where diverse small businesses and light industry can coexist alongside residents, and there is an active group working to keep the streets clean for people walking, biking, and taking transit. Some respondents also noted in the "other" category that they would like to see Aurora Ave N maintain its existing lanes to accommodate vehicle capacity.

Future Vision for North Aurora

"[In the future] I hope to still be able to get my car repaired, shop for home improvement/lumber, plumbing, rent tools, buy a car, etc."

"[I see a future] Arts and Cultural district with LOTS of public art - murals!, art walks, gallery, performance, and practice spaces, artists' lofts, coffee houses, theaters, art, music, theater, improv classes, institutes, unique public transportation - trollies, gondolas"

Neighborhood Assets. In an open-ended question, respondents were asked what they like about or what is important to them in North Aurora neighborhoods. Respondents most commonly said that they appreciate small businesses that they can reach quickly; the range of businesses; the diversity of the people living along the corridor; the sense of community with their neighbors; the access to transit, affordability, and accessibility; and great schools. Some people also highlighted historic buildings with historic or older signs, pedestrian bridges, diversity of cultural businesses, trees, and a variety of public spaces.

One of the most frequent responses given was that there was nothing the respondent liked – with survey respondents frequently citing cleanliness, store closures and vacant spaces, and limited neighborhood walkability as issues preventing them from accessing or enjoying places around North Aurora. Some responders also highlighted that public safety specifically was important to them and expressed wishes to improve public safety in the area.

Neighborhood Assets

"My neighbors are great people. There is a strong community of families with young children who look out for each other."

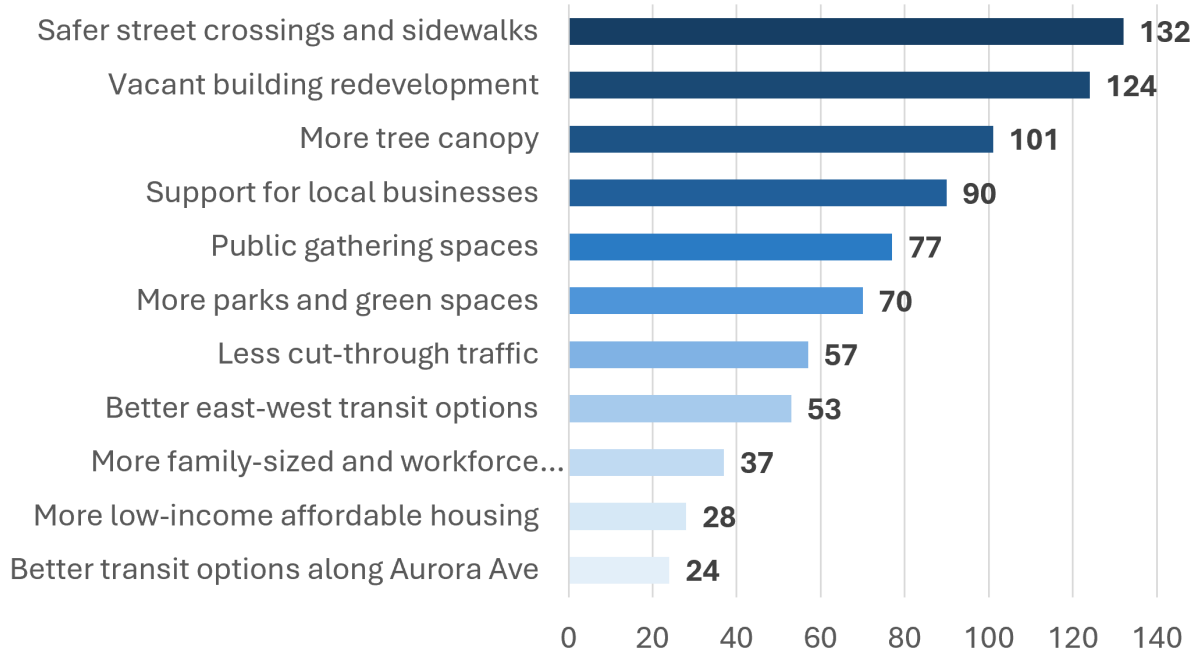
"Very little currently and avoid it due to how scary and sad the prostitution. I would appreciate it if it was greener, and safer. I'd use it for transit, food and services. But at this point I try to find alternatives."

Significant Places. Respondents were next asked what one place they visit or think is special in the neighborhoods along North Aurora. They could name specific places or place a pin on a map and categorize the place by "type," as shown in the word cloud below. Categories included businesses (blue), public spaces (green), gathering places (orange), public art (purple), landmarks, or another type of place (grey). They could then share a description of the place, or what they find special about it.



Of 161 responses to these questions, businesses directly along Aurora Ave N were most frequently cited (72 responders, 36%). Respondents named a broad range of local businesses, big-box stores, and shopping centers representative of the diverse offerings available along the corridor. Public spaces interspersed throughout North Aurora neighborhoods – including parks, trails, school playfields, water features, and community centers – followed with the second most frequent responses (38, 19%). Gathering places, public art, landmarks, and other places were each mentioned only a handful of times; however, some people did highlight there was nowhere they liked to visit or found special.

Changes community members would like to see. This section of the survey asked, "In past conversations with people around North Aurora neighborhoods, we heard about some improvements that people are hoping to see. Which of the following are most important to you? Select your top five." Of 203 responses to this question, roughly two-thirds responded by saying they would like to see safer street crossings and sidewalks throughout the North Aurora Community Action Plan study area. The next most frequently cited topic was vacant building redevelopment, followed by more tree canopy and support for local businesses thereafter.



In addition, 53 respondents wrote their own responses in the "Other" category. Most of these respondents highlighted specific issues about public and community safety – including preventing prostitution, gang violence, gun violence, and open drug use. Some of these responses highlighted specific intersections along Aurora Ave N where these issues are persistent or highlighted that safety was the respondent's highest priority. Some responses also discussed other topics – with varying ideas like preserving single family neighborhoods, ensuring shopping centers continue to have available parking, fixing stormwater to prevent flooding, having better connectivity between public amenities.

Action opportunities. We also asked "If you, your neighbors, or the City could take action on one of these opportunities, what would it be, and where would it be?" We received over 100 unique ideas ranging on topics like:

- ways to improve public safety,
- redevelopment or reuse of vacant properties,
- creating public art and arts districts,
- adding new tree coverage, green plantings, parks, and trails,
- adding community spaces,
- adding housing, including affordable and family-sized housing,
- adding east-west connections,
- improving the flow of cars throughout neighborhoods and along Aurora Ave N., and
- improving walkability.

Opportunities for Action

"Redevelopment or reinvestment in vacant buildings. There's lots of businesses and artists that want space but can't afford it at Seattle's rent prices. A vibrant and bustling avenue of businesses with both foot and car traffic is good for public safety."

"Safety is the highest priority I hear due to crime and shootings from Aurora. Housing affordability is also a priority."

"More trees. This place is a furnace in the summer."

"Community center with green spaces and new police station near 130th and Aurora."

Social Service Provider Community Survey Findings

Date: August 2026

Goal: Survey people commonly excluded from traditional engagement practices, including those who utilize a low-barrier homeless day shelter, those who live in emergency shelter house, and those who are residents of permanent supportive housing properties.

Attendees: City staff both distributed and assisted participants in walking through a paper survey with a series of mostly open-ended questions related to neighborhood assets, challenges, and opportunities. City staff received 139 completed or partially completed surveys, 8 of which were in Spanish language through Spanish speaking community liaison Martha.

Event details: City staff attended the Aurora Commons BBQ Event and surveyed 22 neighbors that use the Commons, many of whom are experiencing homelessness. In addition, City staff went to four supportive housing properties owned and operated by the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) to distribute and facilitate paper surveys for residents. Staff visited three Permanent Supporting Housing Properties - North Star, Burbridge Place, and Clement Place – and the Mary Pilgrim Inn Enhanced Shelter.

What we heard: Feedback emphasized a strong desire for safety in the public realm, green space, accessible transit, a sense of community, and additional service supports. Residents described wanting a corridor where people feel secure moving through daily life, where public spaces foster connection, and where essential services are easier to reach. Permanent Supportive Housing residents expressed hope for a more welcoming Aurora with community centers, libraries, parks, youth programs, and indoor places to rest. They envisioned tree-lined sidewalks, more parks and plantings, and outdoor areas that feel comfortable and cared for.



OPCD, SDOT, and DON staff, at Mary Pilgrim Inn Emergency Center during surveying on Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

Community Safety. Residents across all sites frequently describe safety as the most important factor to them on the corridor. Many wrote directly about wanting less visible drug activity, less sex trade and commercial sexual exploitation, fewer shootings, and less harassment, especially for women and people with disabilities.

Community Safety Quotes

"Other than shootings it is pretty cool." (North Star)

"Too much violence, street crime." (MPI)

"Less shootings, get the drugs off the streets." (Burbridge Place)

"With drugs and violence it will be unable to live here." (Burbridge Place)

A Sense of Community, Belonging, and Respect. Many residents described wanting a future Aurora where people treat each other with respect and where neighbors know one another. Residents across all four buildings expressed a desire for public gathering spaces, including: Community centers, Libraries, Parks, Safe indoor places to rest, Youth programs, and Spaces for families.

Sense of Belonging Quotes

"More kids playing, families, sense of home" (MPI)

"More community gatherings, doing things together, block parties" (North Star)

"Kids + teenager activities." (MPI)

"Outdoor gatherings; more information and education." (Burbridge Place)

"More of a melting pot, culturally, economically." (Clement Place)

Residents also described frustration with being judged or profiled, and hoped for a future Aurora where people "are treated the same way as others, with respect" (MPI). In addition, some residents brought up ideas for ways that future PSH properties could fit their needs

and help them establish community, such as PSH for seniors, sober living, or properties that allow for partners or families to live together.

Green Space and Parks. Residents expressed the need for more trees, more parks, and more plantings. Residents envisioned tree lined sidewalks, more public parks and playfields, community gardens, more places to sit and rest outdoors, and dog parks. Green space was often linked to safety, comfort, and community identity.

Easier Movement on and Across Aurora. Surveys showed that transit access is central to residents' daily lives. Many rely on the E-line and nearby bus stops. Residents expressed viewing the E-line as an asset and that they had the ability to access the bus to travel through or out of the corridor, such as to reach grocery stores or to use service support systems located downtown. Residents expressed issues crossing the street and were often burdened by long walks to services. Across properties, residents asked for: More frequent buses, Safer street crossings, ADA-friendly sidewalks, Crosswalk signals at key intersections.

Transportation Quotes

"Good transit, easy to go places." (MPI)

"Better ways for me to walk across Aurora. I am ADA." (North Star)

"No button to cross at 145th and Aurora." (MPI)

"85th to 90th is a long walk, add crosswalks." (Burbridge Place)

Across Aurora Commons users and DESC's permanent supportive housing sites, residents envision a future North Aurora that is safer, greener, cleaner, and more connected, with better transit, more affordable housing, and public spaces that foster community. Their experience of living along the corridor highlights the urgent need for safer crossings, consistent maintenance, and expanded services.

Business Community Outreach

Date: May-August 2026

Goal: A focus of the North Aurora Community Action Plan will be to prepare small businesses and commercial property owners located and reliant on Aurora Ave N for the time leading up to Aurora Ave N construction, during construction, and after construction is completed. Outreach included an online survey, door-to-door outreach, and attendance at local business meetings. OPCD conducted an online North Aurora Corridor Business and Commercial Property survey in SurveyMonkey to further understand how business owners are thinking about their business outlook, plans for their property, and challenges they are facing today.

Attendees: To connect with business owners as OCPD builds out the Action Plan, City staff from OPCD, OED, and SDOT attended a business roundtable convened by For North Seattle in July of 2026. Through an Online Survey, the City received 40 responses from our online business survey from business owners throughout the corridor, of which one third owned the commercial property they operated out of. A range of industries were represented, including professional services, wholesale, medical, restaurant, personal services, retail, and auto-oriented businesses. Over 80 percent of business owners who responded to the survey have been located on the corridor for more than seven years.

What we heard: When asked what was most important about being located along Aurora Ave N, most business owners responded with saying that the access afforded by being along the corridor was most important – whether it be for public transit, proximity to residents, or having direct highway access. Respondents also mentioned the diversity of small businesses collocated in the neighborhood including restaurants, retail, and services like auto repair. When asked about location choice, respondents also added finding building space and square footage that matched the needs of their business.

Business owners also highlighted the importance of attracting customers to the area. We asked businesses where their customer base was located – in nearby neighborhoods, regionally located or traveling in, or a mixture of the two. Over two-thirds of businesses responded by saying that their customers come from a mix of nearby neighborhoods and from far away, highlighting the importance of regional access to their businesses.

When asking about challenges that businesses owners face, nearly all respondents highlighted the challenges of public safety and street cleanliness as impacting their business and customers. Some business owners also highlighted a costly business environment in Seattle while expressing the feeling that they see little direct benefits. In particular, business owners highlighted high local taxes and minimum wage, while feeling like the public realm directly in front of their location was not well managed by the City.

> *"The constant shootings are driving away customers."*
>
> *"Customers don't feel safe when open air drug use is constant."*

When asked to finish the sentence "In 10 years, I would love to see a North Aurora Corridor that is ____" business owners responded in ways that talked about leveraging the strengths that exist along the corridor, such as collocating with other businesses or having regional access, while fixing the public safety, parking, and traffic problems that exist.

> *"Free of prostitution, free of gun violence and free of homeless and drug users. I would like to see car traffic flowing smoothly, with many opportunities to stop at restaurants and small businesses (in larger buildings, with apartments and condos above)."*

Finally, we asked about the future of businesses and commercial buildings along the corridor. 42 percent of business owners are considering relocating off Aurora Ave N., while an additional 28 percent highlighted that their business is struggling but likely to stay. Over half of business owners said they would like to expand, but expanding along Aurora Ave N. would be a challenge due to lack of safety, limitations to their physical property, and affordability. One business owner stated that "I have to close earlier than I want because customers do not feel safe at night." Property owners (58% of respondents) said that the top reason they would invest more in commercial property on the corridor would be improvements to public safety and cleanliness.

Robert Eagle Staff Middle School SOAR Event

Date: September 10, 2026

Goal: Family welcome fair at Robert Eagle Staff Middle School. The North Aurora Initiative tabled at an event that welcomed students' families, shared information about capital project planning, and handed out paper surveys.

Attendees: 63 community members completed surveys, 5 of which were in Spanish. A Spanish-speaking Community Liaison aided the event.

Event Details: The North Aurora Initiative team tabled at the school's SOAR family night and collected 63 surveys. 45 respondents have lived on or near Aurora for more than three years. Respondents mostly use Aurora for food and restaurants, catching the bus, shopping, and getting to work and school. Many said they value Aurora for its diverse, locally owned businesses, its Asian and Latino markets and restaurants, and how easy it makes getting around North Seattle.

What we Heard: Many parents want Aurora to be safe for their children to walk to school, ride the school bus, visit local businesses and spend time with friends without fear. Some said they would not let their kids walk along Aurora today. Attendees raised concerns about crimes associated with the sex trade and commercial sexual exploitation, especially near schools and bus stops. The most requested changes were public gathering spaces like community centers, libraries and plazas (38), more parks and green spaces (34), safer street crossings and sidewalks (32), reinvestment in vacant buildings and lots (31), and support for local businesses (29). Sidewalks and crosswalks (44), chances to connect with neighbors (41), street lighting and cleanliness (35) were the factors most often named as making people feel safer. Attendees hope the corridor becomes cleaner, greener, more walkable and more family-friendly, with trees, parks, playgrounds, thriving small businesses and room to gather, while staying racially and economically diverse.



Spanish speaking Community Liaison interviewing a Spanish speaking event attendee at Rober Eagle Staff Middle School on September 12, 2026.

Community Events

Throughout the engagement period, City departments participated in a range of community events focused on safety and relationship building. These included “Our City Our Safety,” NPAC meetings, safety walks, and special events. These events helped reinforce a coordinated City presence, deepened connections with residents and partners, and gather additional feedback on safety, mobility, and community priorities. Staff specifically heard about:

- Safety challenges for youth getting to and from school, in particular concerns about young women being harassed
- A desire for ongoing process for community members to hear updates about how the City is addressing safety in the neighborhood
- Gaps in behavioral health services combined with an increase in permanent supportive housing units



Community Advisory Group (CAG) participants, SDOT staff, and a representative from OPCD, at Aurora Ave N and N 130th St during the corridor site tour on September 30, 2026.