

Denny Way Bus Reliability Project

Project briefing for Transit Advisory Board | June 3, 2026



Our Vision

Seattle is an equitable, vibrant, and diverse city where moving around is safe, fair, and sustainable. All people and businesses can access their daily needs and feel connected to their community.

Values & Goals

- Safety
- Equity
- Sustainability
- Mobility & Economic
- Vitality
- Livability
- Excellence
- Maintenance & Modernization





Agenda

1. Project Background
2. Project Overview
 1. Data
 2. Phase 1
 3. Phase 2
3. How Traffic Will Work
4. Q&A

Project Overview



What's Happening?

- In response to **Executive Order 2026-01**, SDOT is installing a bus-only lane and safety improvements on Denny Way in two phases in 2026.
- **Route 8** is one of Seattle's busiest bus routes, but it is also one of the least reliable. It is slowed on Denny Way where buses are delayed by heavy congestion, especially eastbound in the afternoon by drivers headed to I-5 south.
- The goal of this project is to help buses move more more people more reliably by **reducing conflicts** with traffic headed to I-5 south **and improving transit operations**.
- **Denny Way is a key east-west connection** linking Downtown, South Lake Union, and Capitol Hill. Today, it serves a variety of users, including buses, freight, and regional trips, within limited street space.
- Funding is from the **2024 Seattle Transportation Levy**.



Background

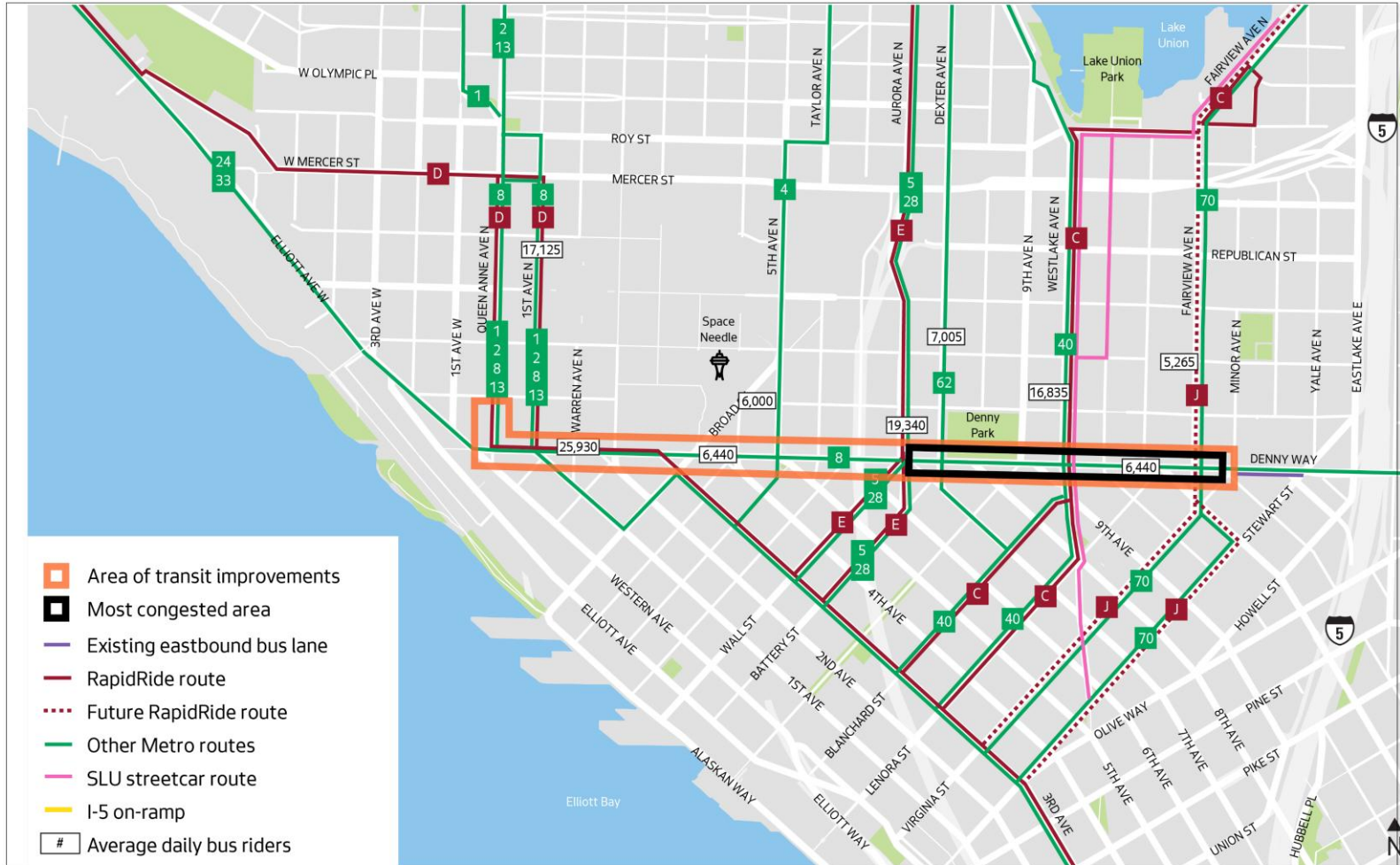
- I-5 south on-ramp is a key access point for vehicles.
- There are limited east-west routes that cross I-5 and serve transit.
- These competing demands create congestion for vehicles and bus delay.
- Rt 8 bus was delayed up to 70% of trips in eastbound direct in the afternoon peak travel time.
- **Project Approach:**
 - Install curb side bus lane on Denny Way.
 - Shift vehicle routing to I-5 ramp to other streets.
 - Incorporate education and encouragement programs to reduce number of people driving on the corridor.



Street and Traffic Volumes

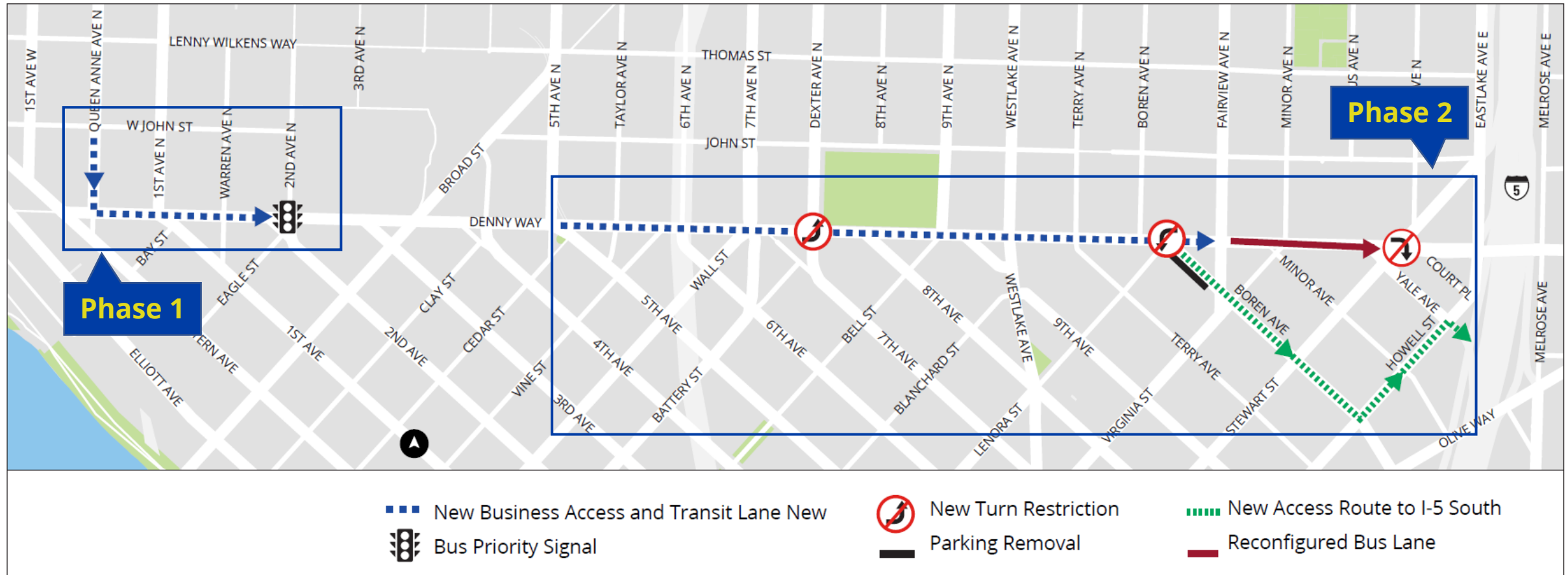
- Denny Way is a **principal arterial** that carries roughly 23,000 vehicles (both directions) a day near Boren Avenue.
- Seattle Transportation Plan Classification:
 - Premium Transit Corridor
 - Major Truck Street: freight volumes are relatively low, with ~15 articulated trucks per day, and 230 single unit trucks.
- Average speeds (near Terry Ave)
 - Bus at PM peak period – 3.31 MPH
 - Bus at Late Evening– 17.08 MPH

Bus Ridership and Routes



- Route 8 carries approximately **7,000 riders each day** and is one of King County Metro's top ten routes by ridership.
- **A total of 15** routes cross Denny Way, including three RapidRide lines, the future RapidRide J Line, and the Seattle Streetcar.
- Transit crosses **eight streets** that intersect with Denny Way.
- The north-south routes crossing Denny Way serve approximately **73,000 riders per day**.

Project Area



Phase 1 – West: May 2026

Queen Anne Ave N between John St and Denny Way, and Denny Way between Queen Anne Ave N and 2nd Ave

- Installed a southbound bus-only turn lane in the center lane on Queen Anne Ave N between John St and Denny Way
- Installed an eastbound curbside business access and transit lane (BAT) on Denny Way between Queen Anne Ave N and 2nd Ave
- Installed a bus priority signal at 2nd Ave so buses get a short head start before merging into general traffic

Following Phase 1 installation, this segment now has two westbound general-purpose lanes, two eastbound general-purpose lanes, and one eastbound business access and transit (BAT) lane.



Phase 1 – West: May 2026



Looking South:
New Bus-only Turn Lane on Queen Anne Ave N

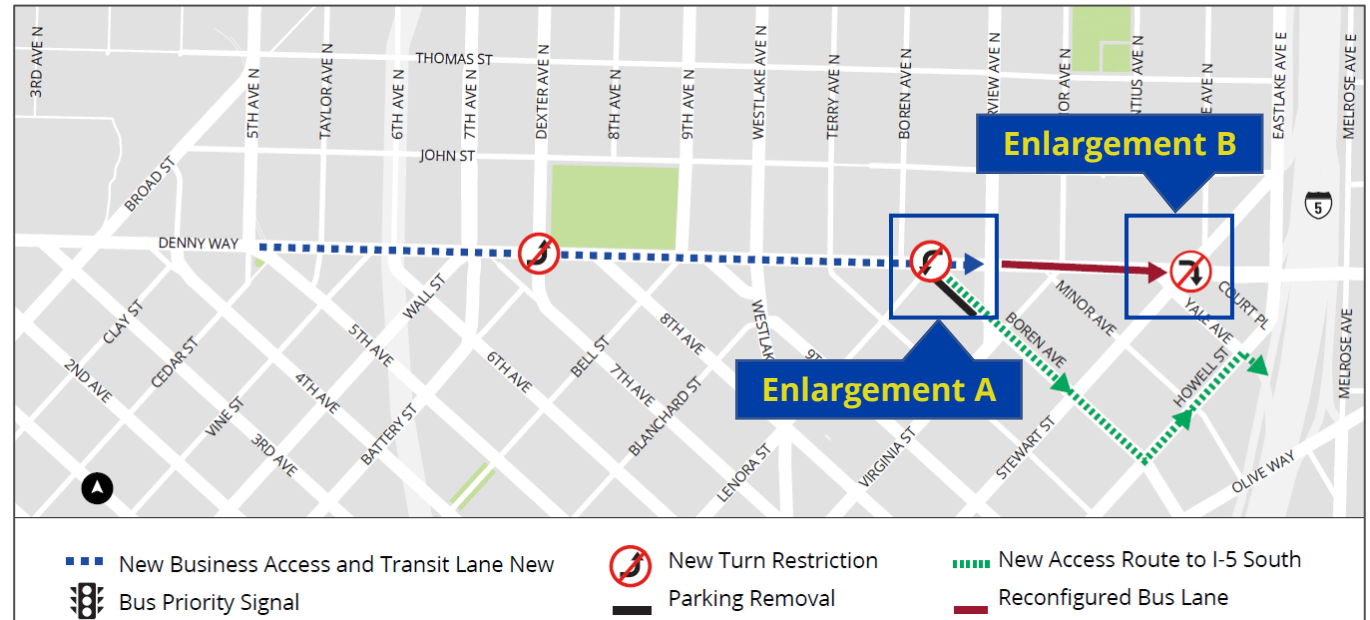


Looking East:
New BAT Lane on Denny between Queen Anne and 2nd Ave

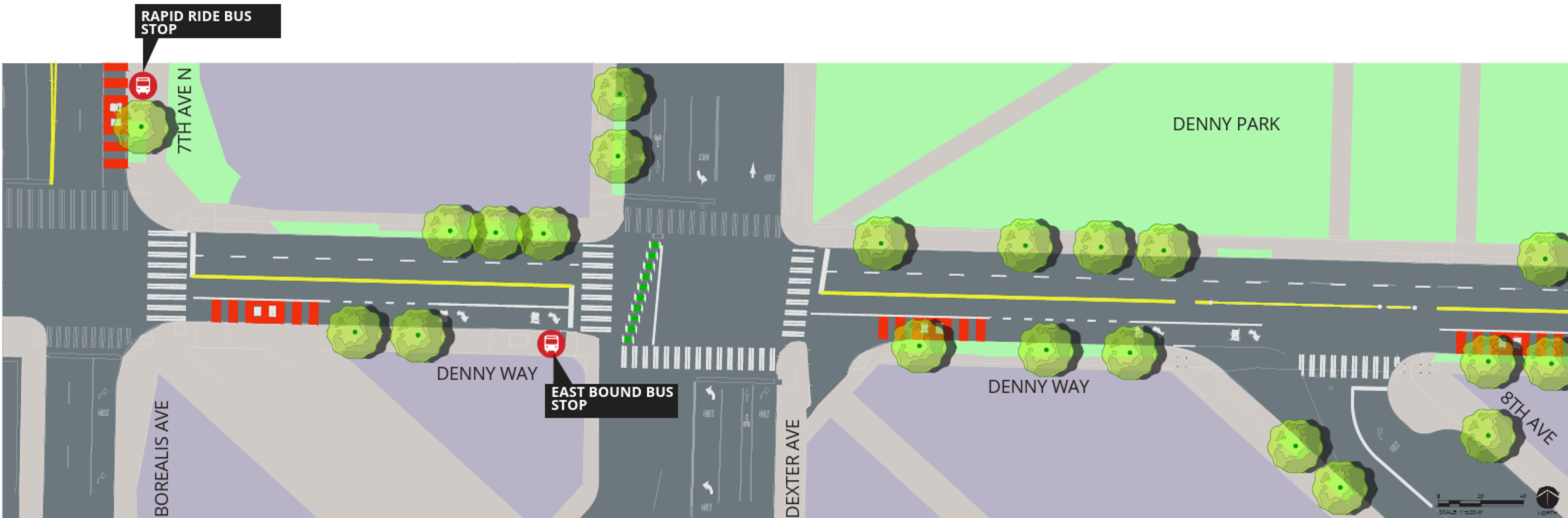
Phase 2 – East: August 2026

Denny Way between 5th Ave N and Fairview Ave N, connecting to the existing eastbound bus lane at the east end

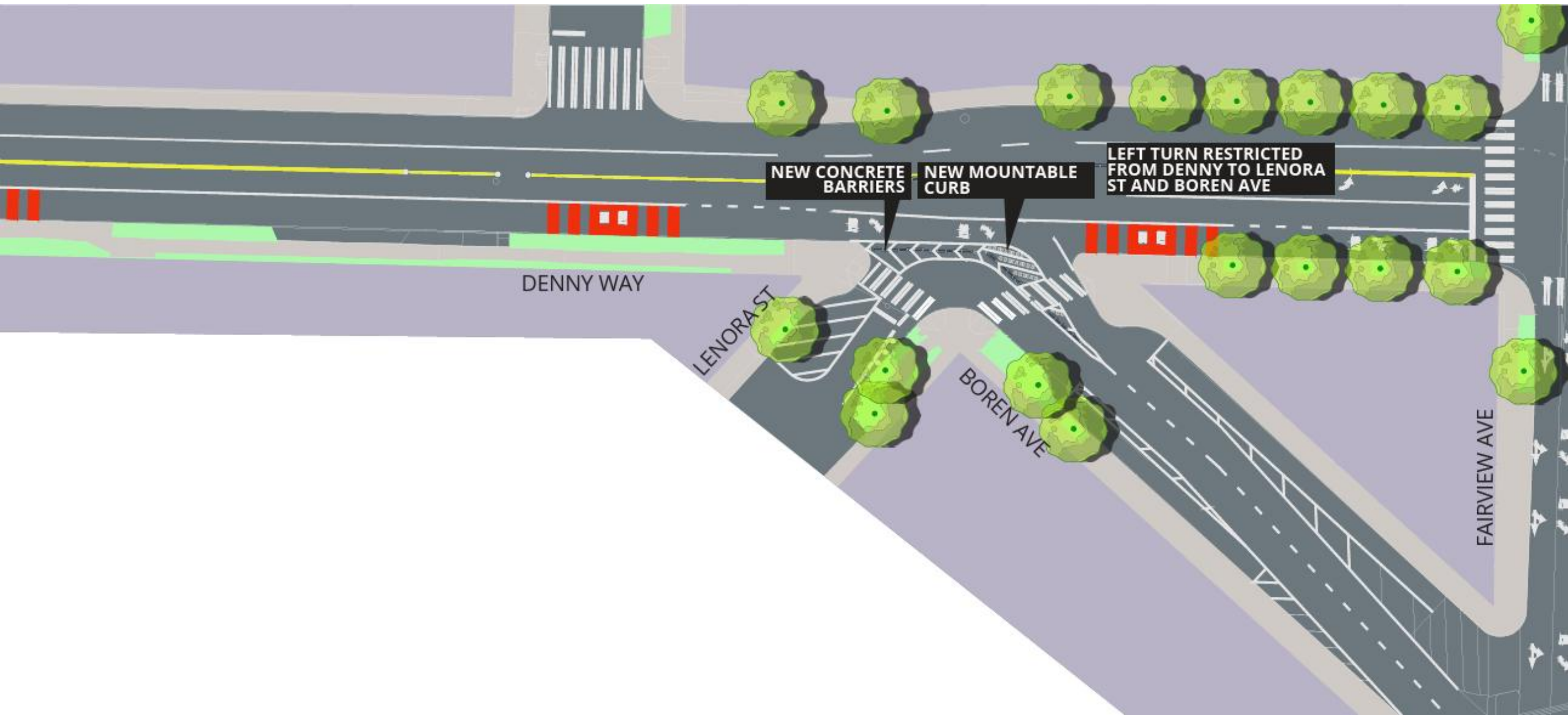
- Install a new eastbound curbside bus lane on Denny Way, from 5th Ave N to Fairview Ave N.
- Rechannelize the block between Fairview Ave N and Yale Ave N.
- Restrict turns to support bus reliability.
- Remove some parking on Boren Ave N in the block south of Denny Way.
- Keep a gap in the new bus lane between 2nd Ave and 5th Ave, where traffic volumes are higher, more eastbound traffic leaves Denny Way at 5th Ave N, and the street is narrower than it is farther west.



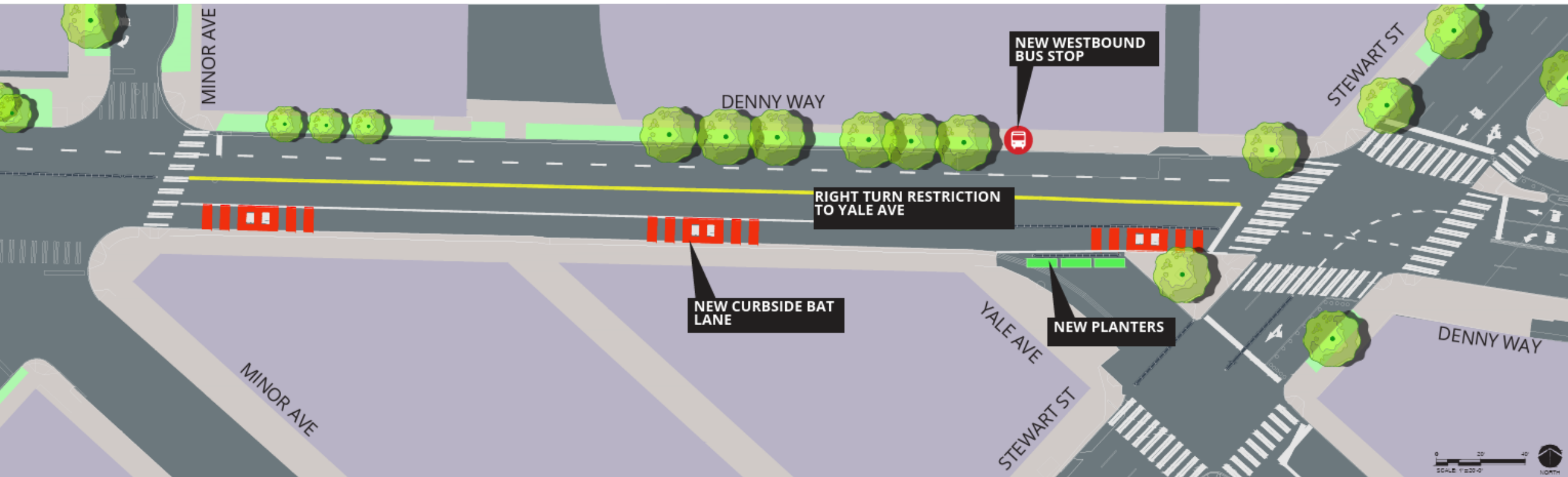
Denny Way and Dexter Ave



Denny Way/Boren Ave/Lenora St



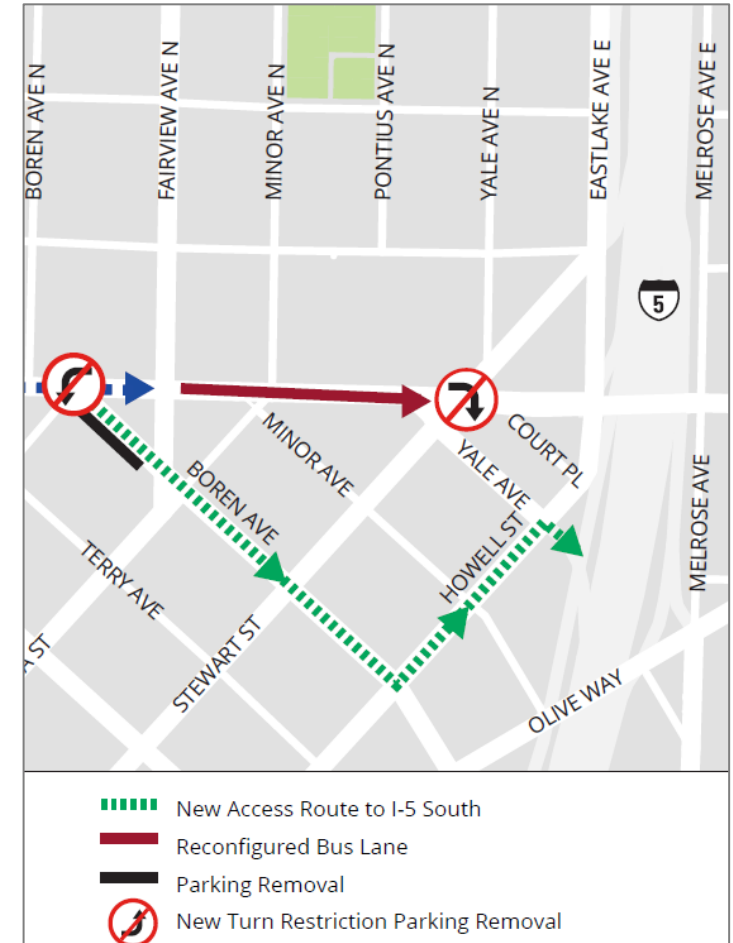
Denny Way - Minor Ave to Stewart St



How Traffic Will Work

The main change to operations is expected in Phase 2.

- Eastbound Route 8 will be separated from general purpose traffic going to I-5, leading to more reliable travel times.
- Some traffic currently traveling on eastbound Denny Way during the afternoon peak will seek alternative routes, shift to transit/other modes, and travel at different times of the day.
- Traffic heading to southbound I-5 from eastbound Denny Way will be routed to Boren Ave via Howell St to access I-5 south ramps.
 - **We tested this reroute and approach** during a large construction project. During this time, we found:
 - The same number of drivers were able to access the southbound I-5 on-ramp during the PM peak but more used Howell St instead of Yale Ave.
 - Travel times on eastbound Denny Way improved by up to 15% by not having the backups from Yale Ave.
 - Travel times on Boren Ave increased slightly. Queuing traffic on Boren Ave did not back up to Denny Way.



Transportation Demand Management

- Goals:
 - Support people who want to shift to other modes
 - Reduce number of drive-alone trips and encourage mode shift.
 - Educate folks in the neighborhood about their transportation resources and modes available.
 - Grow awareness among residents and businesses along the corridor.
- TDM strategies will be deployed along Denny Corridor and throughout South Lake Union
 - Pledge campaign for residents and employees to flip trips.
 - Videos and advertising showing folks how to use alternate modes of transportation.
 - Incentives to encourage mode shift.
 - Advertise Postcards Business Passport Program to small and medium businesses.

Example postcard from the Seattle Streetcar ORCA business passport campaign



Wrap-Up & Next Steps



Next Steps



- Phase 1 – May construction (done).
- Phase 2 – August
- **We'll continue engaging** with community members and key interested parties.
- Once both phases are in place, **we'll monitor** bus travel times and traffic patterns to see how the street is functioning. Based on those results, we may return to adjust the design as needed.

Questions?

Contact

Stay in touch

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Project phone: (206) 207-2527

Scan the QR Code to visit the [project website](#)



Thank you!



Seattle
Department of
Transportation