Special thanks to the Beacon Hill community for their attendance and active participation in Station Access and Mobility Study events, meetings, and surveys.

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Thank you to other Seattle Department of Transportation, Office of Planning and Community Development, and Office of Economic Development staff for their advice and feedback!
COMMON ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS
ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act
APS - Accessible Pedestrian Signal
BPSA - Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Analysis
BMP - Bicycle Master Plan
DON - Seattle Department of Neighborhoods
FMP - Freight Master Plan
HALA - Housing Affordability and Livability
MHA - Mandatory Housing Affordability
NACTO - National Association of City Transportation Officials
PBL - Protected Bike Lane
PMP - Pedestrian Master Plan
PROWAG - Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines
ROW - Right-of-Way
RRFB - Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon
SDOT - Seattle Department of Transportation
ST - Sound Transit
TMP - Transit Master Plan
TNC - Transportation Network Company

KEY DEFINITIONS
Accessibility in this document refers both to technical requirements to meet the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design, as well as design choices that make the environment more detectable, navigable and/or comfortable to people with disabilities.
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION
The opening of the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station has spurred much change in the neighborhood - as the equitable, transit-oriented development, Plaza Roberto Maestas, and other redevelopment added (or will soon be adding) new residents and commercial spaces. Even with the growth of the past decade, the neighborhood remains and takes pride in being racially and economically diverse.

Despite transportation infrastructure improvements and increase in transportation options in the neighborhood, a significant number of ideas identified in earlier City and community plans (2008 Southeast Transportation Study, 2010 Neighborhood Plan, 2011 Family Circulation Plan) are still relevant to the neighborhood and desired by the community. The neighborhood has seen investment guided by these plans, including the Roberto Maestas Festival Street and the 18th Ave S Greenway. The aim of this study is to hone in on opportunities, goals, and intentions of previous plans, and to refine the scope of earlier concepts and ideas to ensure feasibility.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES
There are a number of important takeaways from studying the station area’s existing conditions, reviewing previous plans, and getting community feedback. These issues and opportunities underscore the study’s strategy and list of recommended projects.

Beacon Hill Light Rail Station area is a local and city-wide mobility hub. Intersections and streets in the vicinity of the station area should be made safer and more inviting for people using all modes of transportation, particularly for people walking and using transit. Beacon Ave S is heavily used by buses and cars for those who are en route to destinations beyond the neighborhood.
Pedestrian and transit travel modes are key. Outreach confirmed strong consensus about the need to improve pedestrian access throughout the neighborhood. There was also significant support for improving access to transit, and improvements that increase the reliability of bus routes on Beacon Ave S. This feedback aligns with many of the goals and objectives identified in previous plans.

Topography defines the station area. Beacon Ave S runs along the ridge of the hill and is a key neighborhood corridor. This diagonal course results in a number of irregular intersections. North-south circulation routes dominate the neighborhood, while east-west circulation is more challenging due to sightlines, short blocks, and topography. Improvements should be made along Beacon Ave S corridor to make multi-modal circulation safer.

While several investments towards the vision of the neighborhood plan have been made in previous years, safety and access improvements are still needed. The neighborhood design guidelines are helping larger redevelopment projects deliver streetscape improvements that align with the community’s vision. Redevelopment adds people to the neighborhood and pressure on existing transportation infrastructure.

An inclusive community provides for the needs of communities of color, those who are low-income, and people with different abilities. Further investment and improvements are needed to address critical gaps in universal accessibility and improve connections to key destinations such as schools.

Affordable transportation choices and language access for understanding the light rail system are important. Families, seniors, communities of color, and those who are low-income find that transportation costs are high in Seattle, which is becoming less and less of an affordable place to live. Non-English speakers need translated materials to understand how to use the expanding light rail system.

See 5. Infrastructure Improvement Recommendations on page 31 for more details on how to address accessibility needs more specifically.
2. STUDY PURPOSE & APPROACH

BEACON HILL STATION ACCESS & MOBILITY STUDY
North Beacon Hill is an attractive Seattle neighborhood with proximity to Downtown and a variety of housing options. The opening of the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station in 2009 increased the ease of traveling to major employment centers. The neighborhood is relatively well-served by bus routes and highways with connections to other cities across the region.

The North Beacon Hill neighborhood is a Residential Urban Village, a City designation that accommodates growth in mixed-use areas. Residents, workers, and visitors have highlighted that transportation issues identified in previous studies and plans are still relevant today. With the recent increase in development, new transportation challenges have also emerged.

Through this study, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) worked with the community to identify how people can safely and comfortably access the light rail station, local businesses, and unique neighborhood destinations. We also looked to improve the transfer environment between modes and ways to make better use of the streets, trails, and bicycle routes in the area.

Intended outcomes of this study are to:
• Articulate and document community transportation priorities
• Better enable the community to advocate for and advance priority projects
• Inform City transportation investment decisions

A MOBILITY STUDY...
• Examines transportation safety and access needs and documents community priorities at the neighborhood scale.
• Refines the recommendations of the Modal Master Plans (Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Transit Master Plan, Freight Master Plan) through more intensive and inclusive outreach to supplement the city-wide modal plans with neighborhood improvement projects.
• Includes neighborhood-specific transportation data to support data-driven decisions.
• Includes recommendations that address the needs of the diverse community, including communities of color and those with mobility issues.
• Provides information on existing grant sources that are available for the community to initiate implementation of recommended projects.

In an urbanizing neighborhood, more people are walking, taking transit, and biking to their destinations.
Project Approach
For this study, we sought to ensure:

- Engagement with a wide cross-section of the diverse community.
- Consideration of community concerns about equity and gentrification and how they relate to transportation improvement projects.
- Development of multi-modal design solutions in a neighborhood with an irregular grid network and significant topographic and intersection alignment challenges.
- Strategic definition of project scopes to address safety and access concerns that can lead to implementation through existing SDOT programs.

STUDY PROCESS
The study’s key tasks occurred throughout 2018:

January – August
Engaged widely with the community that lives, works, and visits the area to understand their safety and access concerns.

January – March
Assessed previous planning efforts and identified which plans are most relevant to current community needs and conditions.

March – October
Developed a list of potential projects and prioritized them based on criteria that incorporated community concerns. Developed design concepts for the top priority projects.

October – November
Checked in with community to inform prioritized project scope and design concepts.

November 2018 – July 2019
Drafted the report to present the study’s findings and provide direction to SDOT staff and community members on how to realize multi-modal safety and access improvements around the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station.

Advisory Group
To help us meet the study’s challenges, a small group of community volunteers provided input at key stages, including development of the project list and review of proposed design concepts. Their involvement was critical not only to the identification of key issues and improvement needs, but also in providing insights on how the City and the community can better work together.
Advisory group members were:

- Tim Abell - Pacific Northwest Housing and resident
- Angela Castañeda - Beacon Hill Merchants Association and resident
- Arlene Chavez - Roberto Maestas Development
- Robert Getch - Beacon Hill Safe Streets and resident
- Dean Hasegawa - Red Apple Market
- David Miller - Lighthouse for the Blind
- Melanie Truhn - Beacon Hill Council and resident

Discussion among Advisory Group members and the project team.
3. CONTEXT

THE NORTH BEACON HILL STORY
Beacon “Hill” – the topography that defines the neighborhood – has shaped local communities for centuries. It was home to a Duwamish Tribe settlement near today’s Airport Way S and S Spokane St intersection, and Indigenous people likely used the forest resources that once abounded on the hill. The first white settlers came to the area in the early 1850s, and residential growth spread in the 1890s.

Public works investments followed, and the 12th Ave S Bridge to Beacon Hill was constructed in 1917, providing an easier link to Seattle’s growing Downtown area. The U.S. Marine Hospital, today’s Pacific Tower, opened at the north end of the neighborhood in 1933.

World War II brought a significant number of workers to the area, including many to Beacon Hill. The neighborhood became home to many Boeing employees. I-5 construction was completed in 1967, which divided the hill from neighborhoods to the west.

As the number of Asian and Latino immigrants began to increase in the neighborhood in the 1970s, the number of minority-owned businesses also began to grow. El Centro de la Raza, founded in 1972, quickly became a hub for social services and the local Latino civil rights movement.

Beacon Hill continues to celebrate the historic and current cultural diversity of the neighborhood. Several recent public investments, including a new library, improvements to the Jefferson Park play area, and the Roberto Maestas Festival Street, have helped elevate the quality of life and enhance the local community identity. Sound Transit’s Beacon Hill Light Rail Station and transit hub, perhaps the neighborhood’s most transformative project in recent years, opened in 2009.

See appendix A on page 73 for citations.
Demographics
Despite development pressures leading to gentrification and displacement in the neighborhood, North Beacon Hill remains a majority-minority neighborhood.

According to the 2017 American Community Survey data, North Beacon Hill has a higher number of residents of color compared to Seattle as a whole. The City of Seattle is comprised of 31% people of color, while in North Beacon Hill, this number is 59%.

North Beacon Hill also has twice the percentage of Asians than the city as a whole. Eleven percent of North Beacon Hill residents identify as “some other race alone,” versus 2% for all of Seattle.

North Beacon Hill has a higher proportion of males ages 25-34 than females, accounting for 60% of that age demographic. This deviates from Seattle as a whole, which is 48% male.

FIGURE 2. COMPARISON OF NORTH BEACON HILL AND SEATTLE AVERAGES: DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN BY RACE

Note: Data from the 2017 5-year American Community Survey
Recent Growth and Change
The Beacon Hill Light Rail Station is surrounded by a mix of shops, restaurants, and homes. In addition to its geographic proximity to Downtown Seattle, the Columbia City neighborhood, I-5, and I-90, light rail has made Beacon Hill even more accessible to major employment centers such as Sea-Tac Airport and the University of Washington. This accessibility has helped attract numerous new residents, workers, and visitors to the neighborhood.

To address the issue of unaffordable housing, the City’s Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) increased development capacity and introduced new forms of housing around Urban Villages. In North Beacon Hill, the Urban Village boundary has been expanded and continues to support mixed-use multistory structures. Several new residential buildings with ground floor commercial spaces have been built in recent years along and near Beacon Ave S. The residential areas that flank each side of Beacon Hill are primarily single family homes, though some are being replaced by townhome-style buildings in areas currently zoned for low-rise development. North of the commercial center is zoned for low-rise multifamily development and includes a mix of small apartment buildings, single family homes, and townhome developments.

As with other neighborhoods in Seattle, gentrification and displacement are top issues for Beacon Hill, a community that has a high concentration of people of color (59%) and people whose primary language used at home is not English (47%). The cultural and racial diversity that makes North Beacon Hill special is at risk of displacement, as development pressures are pushing out long-time residents and businesses.

North Beacon Hill is designated by the City of Seattle as a Residential Urban Village - an area targeted for residential growth and provision of local goods and services.

The increase in development and population has resulted in more people walking, busing, taking light rail, biking, and driving to get places. Further development and additional residents will increase demands on the transportation system, highlighting issues of safety, especially around areas of high activity.
Important Places and Spaces

Beacon Ave S is the spine and primary commercial corridor of the North Beacon Hill neighborhood. The Beacon Hill Light Rail Station is located within the neighborhood’s commercial center – home to El Centro de la Raza, the Hilltop Red Apple Market, and the Beacon Hill Branch Library. This center is a diverse and thriving community of cafés, restaurants, retail shops, salons, and professional offices. South of the center, additional commercial spaces continue along Beacon Ave S, with small clusters of shops, cafés, and restaurants. Many of these local businesses are owned by people of color and are important meeting places for community members.

There are several small public spaces in the commercial center including a community garden at El Centro and Stevens Place Park. Jefferson Park is located at the southern boundary of the neighborhood and is a short walk from the commercial center.
Two Seattle Public Schools are located in the study area – Beacon Hill International School and Kimball Elementary. Hamlin Robinson School is an independent school that serves children with special needs and an upcoming development will bring two additional co-located private schools near Hamlin Robinson.

The neighborhood also has preschool programs at El Centro de la Raza and the Denise Louis Education Center at Beacon Ave S and S Hinds St. A third day care facility is planned for the upcoming development adjacent to the Pacific Tower. The Pacific Tower, a former Marine Hospital and home to Amazon between 1998 and 2010, serves as a prominent gateway into North Beacon Hill. The new facility will also include adult care. Currently, it houses the Pacific Medical Center, as well as offices and community rental spaces.

Historically, the neighborhood has offered relatively affordable housing options to low-income earners and families. This is generally no longer the case due to increases in Seattle real estate values. Seattle Housing Authority operates Beacon Tower at S Massachusetts St and 14th Ave S, providing 108 affordable senior housing apartments. Plaza Roberto Maestas has added 112 new affordable units in the area, many of which were built to accommodate families.

A number of religious institutions complement social services that are offered in the area and serve as centers for community gathering.
Getting Around Beacon Hill
Residents and visitors surveyed online and in person in Beacon Hill reported using a mix of transportation modes to travel around the neighborhood.

Walking is a primary transportation mode for many residents, workers, and people visiting the neighborhood. Survey results confirmed the importance of walking in Beacon Hill, and improvements to benefit pedestrians continuously ranked at, or near the top, on priority rankings.

Transit is also a critical travel mode in the neighborhood, and many residents of color, seniors, and/or residents who are low-income depend on transit. Participants engaged during the study reported frequent bus and light rail use. The top five bus stop destinations for boarding and alighting in the area were stops near:
- Beacon Hill Light Rail Station
- Veterans Affairs (VA) Hospital (outside of the study area)
- 14th Ave S / S Massachusetts St
- Beacon Ave S / S Bayview St; Beacon Ave S / 15th Ave S
- Pacific Medical Center

In addition to walking and taking transit, many residents, workers, and frequent visitors to Beacon Hill depend on private vehicles to get to work, school, and/or to run errands.

A smaller percentage of Beacon Hill residents and workers ride bikes to get to work, school, and run errands, as well as for pleasure and recreation. Safety concerns for those who do bike, or would like to bike, ranked high, and people expressed a desire for more bike infrastructure and safer street conditions.
PAST COMMUNITY PLANNING EFFORTS
Throughout the past decade, the Beacon Hill community has been articulating neighborhood transportation needs through SDOT plans, other City plans, and community initiated plans. Many of the transportation projects identified in the following plans have been constructed, while some concepts are still relevant to how the neighborhood would like to shape growth and investment.

SDOT Plans
Several plans provided a foundation for this Mobility Study, and we sought to incorporate and/or refine many of the recommendations:

- The Southeast Transportation Study (2008) predates the opening of the Beacon Hill Light rail Station in 2009. Many of the projects identified in the study were refined by the subsequent City plans.
- **Move Seattle (2015)** proposed a Beacon/12th/Broadway Complete Streets project to provide smooth and integrated traffic flow for all modes, but was not carried into the last levy cycle.
- The Seattle Transit Master Plan (2012, amended 2016) indicates planned priority bus service along 14th Ave S and Beacon Ave S.
- The Seattle Freight Master Plan (2016) did not identify streets in the study area included in the designated Freight Master Plan Network Map but streets carry truck and commercial vehicle traffic to support local businesses.
- The Seattle Bicycle Master Plan (2014) and Bicycle Implementation Plan (2019) proposes several bike improvements in the neighborhood including implementation of a bike facility between S Spokane St to Jose Rizal Bridge and implementation of on Beacon Ave S between S 39th St and S Spokane St.
- The Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan (2017) and Pedestrian Implementation Plan (2018-2022) identifies streets within the study area that are proximate to schools and transit and are included in the plan’s Priority Investment Network.
Other City Plans

- **Find It, Fix It Report (2018)** identifies street, maintenance, and community open space improvement needs in the North Beacon Hill neighborhood.

- **North Beacon Hill Neighborhood Plan (2010)** and **Beacon Hill Town Center Urban Design Framework (2011)** identify right-of-way improvements that enhance the safety and quality of experience for people walking, biking, and using transit in the neighborhood’s commercial center (see examples in Figure 4). Several proposed improvements have been implemented, such as the construction of the Roberto Maestas Festival Street.

- **Mandatory Housing Affordability (2019)** is a component of the Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda. The Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) legislation requires new development to include affordable homes or contribute to a City fund for affordable housing throughout Seattle’s Urban Villages. Changes expanded the North Beacon Hill Urban Village boundary and allowed more mixed-use commercial and residential buildings along Beacon Ave S, particularly south of the commercial center.

![FIGURE 4. PREVIOUSLY PROPOSED BEACON AVE S CROSS-SECTIONS](image-url)
Community Plans

- **Beacon Hill Council** implemented their own survey around MHA legislation. It was a multi-lingual survey that identified key community concerns.

- **Beacon Bikes Family Circulation Plan (2011)** identified bike and pedestrian improvements to increase safe access to key neighborhood destinations, notably Seattle Public Schools and parks (See Figure 5).

- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Air and Noise Pollution Study (2018)** was led by El Centro de la Raza and focused on reducing and mitigating air and noise pollution impacts in Beacon Hill.

*FIGURE 5. PREVIOUS CONCEPTUAL INTERSECTION DESIGNS*

The Beacon Hill Family Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan (2011) proposed several conceptual designs, including concepts for Beacon Ave S / 17th Ave S / S Forest St and 21st Ave S / S McClellan St.
**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

**Topography**
North Beacon Hill sits on a ridge that runs north-south through the neighborhood and shapes the character of and circulation through the area. The ridge roughly aligns with Beacon Ave S south of the light rail station (S Lander St) and with 14th Ave S north of the station.

There are significant grade changes on all east-west streets that cross the hill (see Figure 6). Several streets on the north end of the neighborhood are very steep, with a few streets interrupted by stairs. For many people, the steep grades are a barrier to comfortable pedestrian and bike circulation in the area.

The western edge of the neighborhood is bounded by significant slopes that flank the eastern side of the I-5 corridor, limiting connections to adjacent neighborhoods, to the S Holgate St Bridge, and the Mountains-to-Sound trail.

On the eastern side of the neighborhood, south of S College St, the hill flattens out as it drops down to Rainier Ave S, though there are still very steep segments further to the southeast side of the neighborhood.

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**What We Heard**
Several residents told us they would ride a bike in the summer if their routes didn’t require going uphill, or if there were comfortable and safe routes to get to their destinations.

People from the larger Southeast Seattle area likely use Beacon Hill streets when traveling into and out of Downtown Seattle.
Street Network

North Beacon Hill has a slightly irregular street grid, the most notable element of which is Beacon Ave S as a diagonal corridor through the neighborhood. This results in a number of oddly shaped intersections, particularly in the commercial center. In other areas, the street grid responds to or is interrupted completely by steep topography. The rest of the street network has slight interruptions or bends where the streets follow the topography.

Every street in the city has a street type designation based on adjacent land uses and the envisioned character of the street. Street types provide design guidance to produce a street network that is responsive to the needs and desires of individual communities for future development and capital infrastructure projects.

North of the town center, several Neighborhood Corridor Streets connect Beacon Hill to First Hill and the Chinatown/International District (see Figure 7). These streets have adjacent residential uses and help move people and goods between urban villages, centers, and the city’s regional transportation network. South of the Town Center, Beacon Ave S and 15th Ave S are designated as Urban Center Connector Streets. These principle and minor arterial streets are part of the Frequent Transit Network that links urban centers and villages with buses.

In the commercial center, the dominant flow of vehicular traffic runs north-south. Urban Center Connector and Neighborhood Corridor streets transition to more neighborhood-focused Urban Village Neighborhood streets in this area. East-west circulation is more challenging in the neighborhood. S College St and S McClellan St connect directly to Rainier Ave S.

None of the streets within the study area are included in the 2016 Freight Master Plan(FMP)’s Network Map. However, given the delivery needs for local businesses, these streets carry truck and commercial vehicle traffic.

What We Heard

Due to the proximity of North Beacon Hill to two major freeways, there is a significant traffic that uses neighborhood streets to access ramps to I-5 and I-90. Traffic is notable on 15th Ave S, 21st Ave S, 23rd Ave S, and S Spokane St. Traffic volumes on smaller residential streets is also an issue for residents in the neighborhood.
Sidewalks
The study area includes locations that lack sidewalk facilities (see Figure 8). Several of the gaps in the sidewalk network are due to the steep slopes. However, there are areas just west of Rainer Ave S and north of S College St, and a number of sidewalks around 23rd Ave S near Kimball Elementary that are missing.

Though North Beacon Hill has a relatively connected sidewalk network, the condition of existing sidewalks is another key concern for the neighborhood. Many sidewalks are cracked or have poor surface conditions due to age or uplift from existing trees. This is particularly true along Beacon Ave S where the large beech trees that shade the corridor are constrained by planting pits that are not large enough to accommodate these trees. Significant stretches of 15th Ave S also have sidewalks that do not meet the current standard width. See Figure 29 on page 51 for a map of the sidewalk conditions assessment conducted by SDOT in the study area.

The Pedestrian Master Plan’s Priority Investment Network (PIN) identified walkways that are proximate to transit and schools (see Figure 9). Almost all of North Beacon Hill’s sidewalks are part of the PIN, and there is a prioritized cluster of streets in eastern portion the study area, just west of Rainier Ave S. There are also missing sidewalk segments throughout the neighborhood, many due to the area’s steep topography.

What We Heard
People said uplift by tree roots make the sidewalk uneven, which is especially a barrier for those who are vision and/or mobility impaired.
Quality sidewalks allow for people of all ages and abilities to comfortably move around the neighborhood.
**Bicycle Facilities**

Beacon Hill’s topography has a strong influence on bike circulation in the neighborhood. All existing bike routes run north-south and include in-street facilities, which are a mix of sharrows, bike lanes, and neighborhood greenways on lower-traffic volume streets (see Figure 10).

The Mountains-to-Sound (MTS) Trail wraps around the northern edge of the neighborhood and is an amenity especially for those in the northeast part of Beacon Hill. Recent improvements include a hill climb\(^1\), which connects to the Beacon Hill commercial center and the MTS Trail via Beacon Ave S before approaching S Holgate St Bridge.

Beacon Ave S between 14th Ave S and S Spokane St was not designated as part of the bike network in the Seattle Bike Master Plan (BMP). Nonetheless, Beacon Ave S is the flattest route through the neighborhood and is one of the most used avenues for bicycling\(^2\). Bike lanes and sharrows were added along this section of Beacon Ave S. Per the Bicycle Implementation Plan (2019), SDOT will be exploring and implementing improved bike facilities on this segment by 2024. Strava data from June 2017 shows that bicyclists are using Beacon Ave S and the neighborhood greenway to connect to the Mountains to Sound Trail, and 15th Ave S as the main north-south routes.

Strava is a social fitness network where users upload their rides and runs to track cycling and running exercises. From March 2014 to August 2017, the City purchased this data from the company to gain an understanding of the routes that current cyclists were using. Though the data does not provide a comprehensive picture of routes being used by people who bike, it is currently one of the few sources of bicycle data that SDOT has access to.

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\(^{1}\) Since bicycle travel uphill is often at slower speeds, hill climbs provide bicyclists a dedicated, separate space for the uphill segments of a street when there is space for one bicycle lane in the right-of-way.

\(^{2}\) June 2017 Strava Data

**What We Heard**

Safer north-south bike routes are still needed to connect to existing facilities. The neighborhood lacks east-west bike routes, but that circulation is also limited by topography. Several people indicated a desire to bike on Beacon Ave S since it is the flattest north-south route through the neighborhood.
The regional bike network provides north-south bicycle travel through the neighborhood. The Chief Stealth Trail crosses Beacon Ave S south of Columbian Way S (south of the study area) and likely directs the bulk of Downtown-bound bicycle traffic onto Beacon Ave S. In addition, a new protected bike lane on S Alaska St between Beacon Ave S and Martin Luther King Jr Way S (construction to be completed in 2019) will provide an easier connection for bikers traveling to and from Columbia City.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety analysis Locations**

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Analysis (BPSA) identified locations with factors (built environment, demographics, roadway, and exposure) that might make them at higher risk for collisions. Beacon Ave S, between the commercial center and S Spokane St, has six safety priority locations, the highest number for any corridor within the study area.

**What We Heard**

Bicycle safety improvements along Beacon Ave S were mentioned as a priority at all of our outreach events.
Public Life Data
SDOT collected data across the city in the summer of 2018 on the number of people using streets and sidewalks, and how they were using these spaces. In Beacon Hill, SDOT counted pedestrians and observed stationary activity on S Lander St and Beacon Ave S. They collected this data over two weekdays and one weekend day - in the morning, midday, and evening.

Pedestrian Count Findings
SDOT counted pedestrians at two mid-block points - S Lander St between 16th Ave S and 17th Ave S (on the north side of S Lander St) and on Beacon Ave S between S Lander St and S McClellan St (on the east side of Beacon Ave S).

Compared to other Seattle urban villages, Beacon Hill had a slightly higher than average ratio of people walking on weekends versus weekdays. Beacon Hill had the highest percentage (85%) of people walking in groups (2+ people) on the weekend.

Stationary Activity Findings
SDOT counted stationary activity, when someone intentionally stopped along the street segment. See Figure 12 for sample tool used to record observations.

S Lander St is a more social (41%) and commercially engaged (38%) block with a large proportion of people involved in passive recreation (41%). Passive recreation is a catch-all term for hanging out, relaxing, or people watching. Beacon Ave S is almost exclusively used for waiting for transit (88%) and is less social than the average block included in the Public Life Data study.

Females were more likely to linger than men. Although 42% of passing pedestrians were female, 53% of those stationary were female.

To further explore the data from the 2018 Public Life Study, please access the following webpage: https://public.tableau.com/profile/city.of.seattle.open.data.program#!/vizhome/2018_public_life/Overview

FIGURE 12. PUBLIC LIFE STUDY 2018 DATA COLLECTION TOOL
Transit network and facilities
North Beacon Hill is well-connected and has good transit options [see Figure 13]. Riders arrive at Sound Transit’s Link Light Rail station by all modes to get to destinations to the north towards Downtown and the University of Washington, or to the south towards Sea-Tac International Airport. Amongst the five light rail stations in Southeast Seattle that include Beacon Hill, Mount Baker, Columbia City, Othello, and Rainier Beach Stations, train ridership is the highest at the Beacon Hill Station with almost 3,000 average weekday boardings¹. Ridership is anticipated to keep increasing as redevelopment, especially multifamily housing, continues in North Beacon Hill.

For public school students participating in the ORCA Opportunity Youth Program, Beacon Hill Station was the second most used Light Rail station after the Mount Baker Station, averaging 210 trips per day during the period October 31, 2018 to November 27, 2018. The ORCA Opportunity Youth Program provides all participating students with free, unlimited 12-month ORCA cards for the 2018-2019 school year. Eligible students include high school students enrolled in Seattle Public Schools, income qualified middle school students in Seattle Public Schools, and Seattle Promise Scholars. For more information, please access the following link: www.seattle.gov/transit/orca-opportunity-youth

¹Data from Sound Transit’s 2017 and 2018 Quarterly Performance Reports [www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/documents-reports/service-planning-ridership].

Elevators in the light rail tunnel to the ground floor plaza level.
Buses also provide a key transit service in the neighborhood. Route 36 serves the neighborhood and has the most daily weekday trips of any King County Metro operated route. This route connects Beacon Hill to the Chinatown/International District and Downtown Seattle to the north, and terminates at Othello Station in the south.

According to the Fall 2018 King County Metro schedule, there are 15 buses per hour in each direction on Beacon Ave S adjacent to the Station during the PM peak for Routes 36, 60, and 107, with about 1,500 bus trips per week. The three bus stops closest to Beacon Hill Station have on average almost 2,000 riders² getting on and off the buses on a typical weekday. See Figure 14 on page 21 for bus route origins and destinations.

Both King County Metro’s Metro Connects long-range vision and Seattle’s Transit Master Plan (TMP) indicate future priority bus service along portions of this route, which primarily moves through this neighborhood along Beacon Ave S and portions of 12th Ave S and 15th Ave S. The priority bus service recommended in the TMP would provide a new connection between Beacon Hill and the Central District.

Demographic data gathered for King County Metro’s 2017 System Evaluation report³ found that all three bus routes (Route 36, 60, and 107) have 88% or higher of their boardings in low-income census tracts and 89% or higher boardings in minority census tracts. These routes play an important role in providing transit access to low-income households and households of color.

²Data collected by King County Metro in March 2017 to June 2017 and September 2017 to March 2018.

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**What We Heard**

For Chinese seniors going to the Chinatown/International District, Bus Route 36 is a dependable and easy option. For those who are not fluent in English, lack of familiarity with the light rail system prevents some from considering it as a viable transit option.
Beacon Hill is relatively well-connected to adjacent neighborhoods via transit.
FOCUS ON ACCESSIBILITY
As part of the study, we devoted a significant amount of attention to accessibility challenges around the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station area for people with low-vision and/or limited mobility. The project team included two experts in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility needs who helped inform the study direction. A walking audit of the station area conducted early in the study identified key safety concerns and mobility issues. The study also benefited from input from the Advisory Group and the larger North Beacon Hill community, with many participants highlighting the need to provide safe mobility for the most vulnerable users, including seniors, children, and people with limited mobility.

In addition to the need to improve critical infrastructure to meet accessibility standards, there are ways that street design can provide an environment that is legible and accessible to all users. Sidewalks, street crossings, and transit stops that are accessible to all provide an inclusive and welcoming environment. Simple solutions that are consistently implemented allow community members to travel with ease—confidently and independently.

Roberto Maestas Festival Street located adjacent to the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station.
RECENT IMPROVEMENTS

During the course of the study, SDOT made improvements to a few key intersections based on analysis and follow-up from earlier work and feedback from the local community. These improvements include:

- A new, accessible pedestrian-activated half-signal at Beacon Ave S / S Lander St. When a push button is tapped, the signal stops all north-south traffic on Beacon Ave S. Stop signs continue to control east-west traffic on S Lander St. This accessible unit also communicates “walk” and “don’t walk” information to pedestrians who are blind or have low vision through audible tones and vibrations of the buttons. This improvement was made at the request of local community members, who identified the existing crossing as challenging, particularly for those with limited mobility and/or low vision.

- At 14th Ave S / S McClellan St, two-way stop signs were added on S McClellan St to better control traffic across the intersection, a site of a fatal collision where a pedestrian was struck by a vehicle in early 2016.

- At S Lafayette St / S Spokane St, a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB) was added to the existing crosswalk that provides a key connection between Jefferson Park, a new bike trail, and the adjacent neighborhood greenway. A RRFB is a device for improving the safety of uncontrolled, marked crosswalks through two rectangular-shaped yellow indications, each with an LED-array-based light source that flashes with high frequency when activated.

- As part of a city-wide effort to increase tree canopy, SDOT and Seattle City Light are partnering to plant trees throughout the north Beacon Hill neighborhood (See project 12).

- Speed bumps were installed on S Hill St and 13th Ave S to increase safety in the school zone around Beacon Hill International Elementary School.

- A RRFB was installed and pedestrian surface improvements were made across 15th Ave S at Plum St for a better connection to Beacon Hill International Elementary School.
4. WHAT WE HEARD

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
SDOT set out to hear community concerns and gather ideas in meetings and events in Beacon Hill. Tapping into neighborhood expertise was essential to ensure that the study prioritizes transportation issues that are of most import to the community.

Our focus was to engage those who do not traditionally participate in city processes. Where needed, a team of Community Liaisons from Seattle’s Department of Neighborhoods provided translation and other engagement support. These Liaisons are community members who bring expertise of their communities’ needs and concerns, and who help build bridges between City government and local communities.

Three principles guided our engagement for this study.

1) Go where people already gather.
Staff attended existing meetings and events to prevent “meeting burn-out” and to reach those who typically do not, or cannot, attend City-held meetings. Community Liaisons helped SDOT identify important organizations and gathering places for the communities they represent in Beacon Hill.

2) Provide translation support where needed and affordable tools to supplement that effort.
Community Liaisons helped with on-site translation, and when they were not available, staff used Language Line, a service that provides translation services over the phone. Additionally, English and translated Facebook ads directed people to online surveys in eight languages.

3) Make it fun and relevant.
Transportation is an issue that touches people of all ages and backgrounds, so SDOT asked questions that were relevant to everyone’s experience and had activities that were fun. The project team made engagement feel like talks with neighbors over snacks and beverages and supplemented by drawing activities, caricature artists, and a spin-wheel for prizes.

Cantonese-speaking residents of Beacon Tower, a Community Liaison, and project staff talk about transportation issues.

Community members’ ideas recorded during casual conversations.
Community meetings

In addition to engaging advocacy and other community groups, SDOT staff and Community Liaisons attended meetings and events with translation support.

What We Heard

- Concerns about the number of vehicles using the neighborhood’s residential streets, sometimes at high-speeds, to get to surrounding destinations
- People who walk do not always feel safe, especially along and across arterial streets
- Personal security concerns around the light rail station and at bus stops, where there have been recent incidents of crime
- Poor paving conditions on streets and sidewalks
- Desire for more frequent bus service
- Concern around affordability of transit options and language barriers to understanding the light rail system
- Interest in safe biking routes to destinations in the neighborhood

How We Responded

- Incorporated traffic calming into several project descriptions
- Added a project to the study project list to address ADA accessibility and sidewalk improvement needs
- Provided Sound Transit with a summary of feedback on safety and security issues around the station (see appendix B on page 74)
- Considered the design needs for the corridor to provide dependable and reliable bus service in the future for all projects proposed along Beacon Ave S
- Documented feedback regarding bike facilities, to be further developed in the next Bike Master Plan update
- Provided King County Metro with a summary of bus-related feedback (see appendix B on page 75)

7 Language translations of study information and surveys

- Spanish
- Mandarin
- Cantonese
- Vietnamese
- Tagalog
- Somali
- Japanese

10 Events with Community Liaison support

International Drop-In Center (IDIC) Filipino Senior and Family Services lunch attendees take a break from dancing to speak to staff and a Tagalog-speaking Community Liaison about their transportation issues.
Survey
To gather information about travel (transportation mode) preferences, key neighborhood destinations, and specific locations of concern, we conducted an online survey. About 350 people participated. We translated the survey into seven different languages and gave hard copies to community groups in the neighborhood.

What We Heard
- Intersections and streets around the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station emerged as a high priority for all types of transportation modes
- Beacon Ave S / S Lander St intersection was a key issue for people walking, using transit, and driving
- People who bike also indicated the Beacon Ave S corridor is challenging
- The Beacon Ave S and 15th Ave S corridors both emerged as needing safety improvements for multiple modes
- Other intersections that were top concerns for all transportation modes include:
  - Beacon Ave S / 15th Ave S
  - Crosswalk in front of the library and Beacon Ave S / 17th Ave S / S Forest St
  - Beacon Ave S / S McClellan St
- In addition to the locations noted above, a few additional streets feel unsafe to people who bike: 15th Ave, 17th Ave, and S Spokane St
- Priorities from responses to the 69 translated surveys were generally similar to the larger survey results, with slight nuances:
  - Of these 69 respondents, none identified themselves as someone who bikes
  - Strong interest in improvements for people walking and using transit
  - Beacon Ave S / S Lander St was the top priority intersection for pedestrian safety overall, though S McClellan St emerged as a significant pedestrian safety concern for Tagalog speakers
- Desire for more frequent bus service and more direct connections to nearby neighborhoods

How We Responded
- Ensured that the top locations identified were addressed by potential improvement projects in this document
- For all projects proposed along Beacon Ave S, the study considered the design needs for the corridor to accommodate priority bus service in the future

Residents of Plaza Roberto Maestas talk about mobility improvements at a tenant meeting with project staff, a Spanish-speaking Community Liaison, and an Advisory Group member.

Staff and a Chinese Community Liaison, attended the Lee Family Association Spring Banquet to provide information on the study and get feedback on transportation issues in the study area.
Open Houses
To reach a wide audience, we hosted a booth at the Jefferson Park Family Festival on June 2, 2018. About 150 people stopped by the booth and over 140 individual comments were recorded.

The booth included information about the study and provided an opportunity for participants to give feedback about their safety and access concerns and provide input on community values to help inform the project evaluation process. To add to the festive nature of the large community festival, SDOT hosted a caricature artist and provided giveaways to kids and participants including pre-loaded ORCA cards.

On November 24, 2018, we hosted a booth at the Shop Seattle Gems event and invited community members to envision improvements using virtual reality tools.

What We Heard
- Improvements that increase safety and access for pedestrians is a top interest, particularly at street crossings
- Top locations of concern included:
  - Beacon Ave S Corridor
  - The Light Rail Station Plaza and adjacent streets and alleys
  - 12th Ave S and Golf Dr S / 14th Ave S / 15th Ave St intersections
  - S Spokane St
- Safety and Equity ranked as the top two most important values to weigh project criteria

How We Responded
- Identified a number of pedestrian improvement opportunities in the neighborhood
- Dedicated additional project time to refine recommendations and design concepts for the intersections of top concern
- Safety and Equity were weighted more in the project evaluation process
- Developed a phased approach to project implementation that can serve as a pilot and identified opportunities for implementation through existing programs

Community members using virtual reality tools and crayons to design their own street mural at the Shop Seattle Gems event. This activity helped people envision what a street mural could look like at a community priority location - the Beacon Ave S/16th Ave S/5th Ave S/Lander St intersection - by merging art, technology, community engagement, and transportation.
Advisory Group
The study depended on a small group of dedicated volunteers to provide oversight and input. This group met at key project milestones and helped shape the direction of the project’s engagement strategy and overall recommendations.

The Advisory Group served several key roles throughout the study. First, they provided a link to the larger Beacon Hill community and helped to identify primary needs and priorities for the neighborhood. Second, their input resulted in the study’s focus on several key areas of concern, particularly around the Beacon Hill Light Rail Station and at intersections around the Jose Rizal Bridge. Finally, as many members engage with other community organizations, the Advisory Group provided a sounding board for brainstorming potential partnership opportunities and identifying projects that the community could take a lead role in implementing.

What We Heard
- North Beacon Hill is a diverse community, and there is a need to ensure that there are safe transportation options for all users, particularly those who are most vulnerable
- The neighborhood has changed significantly in recent years, and there are concerns about gentrification and displacement
- The growing population of the neighborhood is putting more pressure on the area’s sidewalks, streets, and intersections
- Programmatic changes, such as ORCA transit fare card payment systems and improving communications, are also important in a neighborhood as diverse as North Beacon Hill
- Several groups within the Beacon Hill community are ready to see improvements implemented and to work with the City to help realize projects

How We Responded
- Refined the study’s engagement strategy to connect with particular groups
- Focused project attention in areas where redevelopment was upcoming and along corridors where future redevelopment may occur
- Provided information about potential planned improvements and solicited feedback from the group
- Responded directly to concerns within the community by attending events and key meetings
- Identified potential partnership opportunities for a number of projects

Project staff engaged two groups of Franklin High School girls who are part of the Women’s Transportation Seminar’s (WTS) lunch hour Transportation YOU program. Since not all the girls were familiar with the study area, SDOT engaged them in an activity to redesign a major street that they are familiar with based on how they prefer to travel through the city.

Advisory Group meeting at the Centilia Cultural Center at Plaza Roberto Maestas.
The chart below lists the study’s engagement activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT/ ACTIVITY</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Group Meeting</td>
<td>3/12/2018</td>
<td>Beacon Hill Merchants Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Family Association</td>
<td>3/18, 2018</td>
<td>Restaurant in Chinatown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Banquet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beacon Hill Council Presentation</td>
<td>4/3/2018</td>
<td>Jefferson Community Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin High School Event</td>
<td>4/5/2018</td>
<td>Franklin High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Maestas Tenant Meeting</td>
<td>4/12/2018</td>
<td>Centilia Cultural Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHA Beacon Tower Tenant</td>
<td>4/17/2018</td>
<td>Seattle Housing Authority Tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking Audit</td>
<td>4/30/2018</td>
<td>In Beacon Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop-up Beacon Hill Library</td>
<td>5/2/2018</td>
<td>Beacon Hill Library lobby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabling</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Filipino Senior and Family</td>
<td>5/11/2018</td>
<td>International Drop-In Center</td>
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<td>Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pop-up Tabling at The Station</td>
<td>5/19/2018</td>
<td>The Station coffee shop</td>
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<td>coffee shop</td>
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<td>Advisory Group Meeting</td>
<td>5/29/2018</td>
<td>Centilia Cultural Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Booth at Jefferson Park</td>
<td>6/2/2018</td>
<td>Jefferson Park</td>
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<td>Family Festival</td>
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<td>Online Survey</td>
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<td>Translated Surveys</td>
<td>May–July 2018</td>
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<td>Beacon Hill Safe Streets Event</td>
<td>6/23/2018</td>
<td>Jose Rizal Bridge</td>
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<td>Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beacon Hill Safe Streets</td>
<td>6/28/2018</td>
<td>Beacon Hill Merchants Association</td>
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<td>Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisory Group Meeting</td>
<td>8/30/2018</td>
<td>Beacon Hill Merchants Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pop-up outreach on sidewalk</td>
<td>10/23/2018</td>
<td>On Beacon Ave S sidewalk</td>
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<tr>
<td>by bus stop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle Transit Advisory Board</td>
<td>10/24/2018</td>
<td>City Hall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pop-up outreach in front of</td>
<td>10/25/2018</td>
<td>Beacon Hill Library</td>
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<td>Beacon Hill Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle Pedestrian Advisory</td>
<td>11/14/2018</td>
<td>City Hall</td>
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<td>Board</td>
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<td>“Shop Small” Event</td>
<td>11/24/2018</td>
<td>Plaza Roberto Maestas</td>
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<td>Pedestrian Accessibility</td>
<td>12/3/2018</td>
<td>Seattle Municipal Tower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisory Board</td>
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</table>

The chart below lists the study’s engagement activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people engaged</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Advisory Group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150+ Beacon Hill Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 Inclusive outreach meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 Pop-up outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 City Advisory Boards/Committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342* Survey responders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~50 Final event/celebration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A third of survey responders were people of color (translated surveys plus those who identified themselves as a person of color in the online survey)*
**Actions to Address Community Needs**

The following recommendations are not physical projects, but opportunities to enhance access and mobility through communication practices and programmatic improvements.

**Other Efforts to Meet Community Needs**

We recognize that mobility around a light rail station is key to building ridership of the system, which will contribute to improved mobility in the city and the region. To collectively address community concerns and provide holistic transportation solutions, SDOT staff will continue conversations with Sound Transit and King County Metro to enhance the function of this mobility hub.

SDOT and our partner agencies are continually working towards affordability of transportation options. Through the 2014 voter-approved Proposition 1, SDOT contributes to the funding of:

- ORCA LIFT transit fare card - Low-income access to transit for adults ages 19-64
- ORCA Opportunity transit fare card - Low-income access to transit for high school students enrolled in Seattle Public Schools; income-qualified middle school students enrolled in Seattle Public schools; and Seattle Promise Scholars
- Additional Metro bus transit service for Seattle residents

For more information on these programs, visit the Seattle Transportation Benefits District website at www.seattle.gov/transit/about-stbd.

**Improving Access and Communication**

The City of Seattle and our partner transportation agencies are working to improve access to information and services to limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. In 2017, the City of Seattle’s Language Access Executive Order directed each City department to develop a work plan to ensure that immigrants and refugees can access the information and services they need.

Currently, SDOT makes use of the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Language Access Resource guide, which is a comprehensive document that lays out standards around translation, interpretation, and partnering with Community Liaisons and community-based organizations to support in-language outreach.

SDOT is committed to conducting more equitable and inclusive engagement with LEP communities through in-person permit service counters, via communications tools like website and social media channels, and through project and program outreach efforts.

While access to translated documents varies within and throughout each of the transportation agencies, access to an interpreter is available through the general customer service lines. Customers can call or visit the websites below for more information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Seattle</td>
<td>206-684-2489 (CITY)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.seattle.gov/customer-service-bureau/contact-us">www.seattle.gov/customer-service-bureau/contact-us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King County Metro</td>
<td>206-553-3000 (select interpreter option by pressing 1)</td>
<td>kingcounty.gov/depts/transportation/metro/contact-us.aspx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound Transit</td>
<td>800-823-9230 (non-English translation services)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.soundtransit.org/help-contacts">www.soundtransit.org/help-contacts</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Project team staff and Community Liaisons.*