



# Route 40

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**ROUTE 40 TRANSIT-PLUS  
MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR PROJECT  
FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESS AND  
NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS**

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2023



## OVERVIEW

Since 2021, the Route 40 Transit-Plus Multimodal Corridor (TPMC) project team has reached out to a number of community organizations, property owners and managers, and business owners in the project area to share information and gather feedback on the project design. Throughout 2023, the project team has continued to receive questions and feedback on the early designs and the refined designs. This summary focuses on the feedback that the project team has received from some stakeholder groups, including:

- Westlake neighborhood property owners
- Westlake neighborhood business owners
- Fremont neighborhood property owners
- Fremont neighborhood business owners
- Fremont Chamber of Commerce
- Ballard Alliance
- Ballard neighborhood business owners
- Ballard-Fremont Greenways
- North Seattle Industrial Association

To learn about what other community members shared during our last outreach effort, you may read the [summer 2023 outreach summary](#).

## METHODS

In 2023, neighborhood stakeholder groups have engaged with the project through emails, briefings, phone calls, and formal letters.

The feedback received from these stakeholders is summarized below.

Please note that these themes are not representative of all organizations, business owners, or property owners in the project area. This is a summary of feedback we've received from specific businesses and stakeholder groups. To learn more about additional outreach results, please read the [Summer 2023 Outreach Summary](#). Additionally, some of the feedback below is verbatim in order to provide transparency on the feedback that was received.

## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

### General Feedback

- Several Westlake property and business owners request frequent and direct dialogue with SDOT on the Route 40 project.
- Several property owners and businesses along the project corridor commented that their concerns have not been addressed in a timely and responsive manner.

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- Business organizations were unsure if the time and financial investment in the project was worthwhile due to current ridership compared to pre-pandemic ridership. There is a belief that the extent of the proposed changes do not account for changing commute and work patterns, and that ridership will remain at reduced levels.
- Some organizations believe more data is needed to justify the proposed changes, including a lack of information on transit benefits compared to the impacts on businesses and neighborhoods.
- Some neighbors feel concerned about potential vehicle backs and congestion.
- There are some concerns that Route 40 ridership will not return to pre-COVID-19 levels due to threats to rider safety, including drug use and exposure to secondhand fumes.
- A Ballard Fremont community advocacy group shared that this project will improve connectivity, safety, and sustainability in some of Seattle's fastest-growing neighborhoods and believe it is essential transit route connecting North Seattle and Downtown
- Support for the Route 40 for commuting to work and local destinations

## Westlake Neighborhood Feedback

- Supports the addition of a well-lit signalized crosswalk at Westlake Ave and Halladay St
- A Westlake stakeholder group is "unanimously opposed to the introduction of freight and bus (FAB) lanes in both north-bound and south-bound directions" on Westlake Ave
  - One comment references that the freight and bus lane would worsen congestion, particularly during peak hours.
  - Business organizations believe adding dedicated FAB lanes on Westlake Ave N is not worth the impacts, including potential congestion and delays for commuters, residents, and small businesses, especially in the summer.
  - Some organizations and business owners believe that bus-only lanes or Freight-and-Bus (FAB) only lanes will have a negative environmental impact while ridership is still recovering. Buses that are not at capacity have a negative environmental impact.
- A Several Westlake property and businesses owners shared that the reduction of vehicle transit travel times from downtown to Northgate increases the vehicle travel time of people who work for delivery service providers and people who travel through the Westlake corridor for general purposes.
- Several Westlake property and business owners are skeptical of the design of the commercial loading zone outside at Westlake Ave and Halladay St for nearby businesses
- Several Westlake business and property owners have raised the concern of increased air pollution from increased congestion for general purpose traffic. Congestion and longer queues could result experiencing longer idling times, especially during the Fremont bridge openings.

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- Several Westlake businesses and property owners requested additional information about the exact location of the new bus stop at Halladay St and the construction impacts.
  - Several comments referenced the potential construction impacts to Westlake businesses.
- Several property and business owners commented that the reduced number of parking spaces in the parking lot on Westlake Ave would be detrimental.
  - Additional comments referenced that the reduction of parking spots would decrease the profit of businesses along Westlake Ave.
- Some business stakeholders expressed strong support of the project because their employment workforce commutes using Route 40 and depend on it commute back forth to the organizations satellite offices

### Fremont Neighborhood Feedback

- Some business owners expressed concerns about buses in general, including:
  - Increased noise from bus engines and wheelchair lifts, which would “negatively affect the ambiance” of businesses near bus stops.
  - When buses are stopped, businesses at the bus stop would be blocked from natural light.
    - Additionally, stopped buses would reduce visibility for storefronts.
  - Concerns about exhaust from buses entering businesses near bus stops and therefore impacting air quality.
- Some business owners expressed concerns about parking loss throughout the Fremont neighborhood.
- Some business owners believe that the southbound bus-only lane will make the Fremont neighborhood a less desirable place to shop and dine due to increased traffic.
- Some business owners and organizations shared concerns about increased crime at bus stops, personal safety, and business impacts, including:
  - Some businesses shared that bus stops “will attract all types of people to stand around” and “there are not just more people, but they tend to be associated with increased levels of crime, and a population that has higher rates of drug abuse and mental illness.”
  - Some organizations stated that the Starbucks in Fremont closed “due in large part to the sustained impact from the Route 40 bus idling directly in front of the store multiple times a day – and the crime and theft that accompanies the bus presence on a daily basis.”
  - Due to concerns about noise and theft, businesses near bus stops would not be able to keep their doors open during the summer, which impacts air flow and cooling.
  - Some of the small businesses only have one employee working at a time, so the their concerns about the types of people at/near bus stops are heightened.
  - To ease their safety concerns, the businesses feel like they would either need to invest in increased security measures or move their businesses elsewhere.

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- Some of the businesses in the project area are “of a high-end nature” and there is “an expectation of privacy and safety,” which “would be eliminated with a bus stop out front.”
- Some of the businesses are open later into the night, which increases the security concerns that they already have without a bus stop located near them.
- Some property owners requested more information about traffic operations at the Fremont Ave N, Fremont Pl N, and N 35th St intersection. There are concerns that the current design is unsafe.
- Some business owners are concerned that traffic speeds would increase through the neighborhood “without people stopping to park” on Fremont Pl N.
- Some business owners expressed a desire for redirected investment in improving sidewalks, adding trees, putting brick pavers, and slowing down traffic rather than the proposed multimodal improvements to the Route 40 corridor.
- Some business owners do not approve of the protected bike lane on Fremont Ave N and instead propose sharrows and signage.
- Some business owners expressed a desire to move the bus stop closer to Evanston Ave N instead so that it would be away from storefronts and that traffic operations would be clearer for general traffic.

### Ballard Neighborhood Feedback

- Questions from business organizations about speed and reliability improvements with the proposed designs
- Concerns about bus only lanes on NW Market St impacting parking and congestion
- Additional questions about the environmental impacts from idling private vehicles due to the perceived increase in traffic from the proposed bus-only lanes
- Concerns about impacts on small businesses and tourism due to perceived increases in congestion in the neighborhood
- Concerns about increases in traffic on non-arterial roads near the Leary Way NW Safety Improvements area
- Concerns about maintaining access to and parking for businesses due to the traffic safety improvements on Leary Ave NW and the bus-only lanes on sections of NW Market St and Leary Ave NW.
  - There are concerns that the proposed changes will have substantial impacts on small businesses and residential communities along Leary Ave NW and NW Market Street.
  - There are concerns that cut-through traffic will increase on non-arterial roads due to the reduced number of travel lanes on a section of Leary Ave NW

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## Additional Community Feedback

In September, the project team received an official letter of support from the Ballard-Fremont Greenways group. Additionally, over 60 letters from community members supporting the proposed improvements on the Route 40 corridor. Common themes in the letters include:

- The designs have been “updated significantly in response to community and stakeholder feedback”
- This project will improve connectivity, safety, and sustainability in some of Seattle’s fastest-growing neighborhoods
- Improvements to transit, walkability, and safety will increase access to businesses
- Bus lanes and transit priority signals will reduce travel times and increase transit reliability for thousands of daily riders
- This project is essential for the extremely popular transit route connecting North Seattle and Downtown
- Significant safety improvements will create a more safe and connected Westlake, Fremont, and Ballard not just for pedestrians and bicyclists but for drivers and local businesses as well

If you or your business/organization has any questions about the project, please contact the project team at [Route40@seattle.gov](mailto:Route40@seattle.gov).