

# E UNION ST PROTECTED BIKE LANE



## Updated Design Outreach Summary

### Introduction

In January 2020, the project team updated the conceptual design for the E Union St Protected Bike Lane (PBL). The team collected public comment on the updated PBL design through an online survey available January 13- February 7. SDOT advertised the survey through the following:

- Emails to the Madison BRT project listserv and relevant stakeholders
- A print mailer to 9,635 residents within half a mile of the project corridor
- Door-to-door flyering to residents and businesses along E Union St
- Holding an open house at the Liberty Bank Building on 1/29/20
- Information on the project website
- Pop up events at Tougo Coffee and Martin Luther King Jr Day at Garfield High School
- Meetings with area neighborhood and business groups
- Advertisements in The Facts and The Medium
- Posts on SDOT's social media

This report summarizes the survey responses we received in January and February. Free-response questions are summarized into topics and themes.

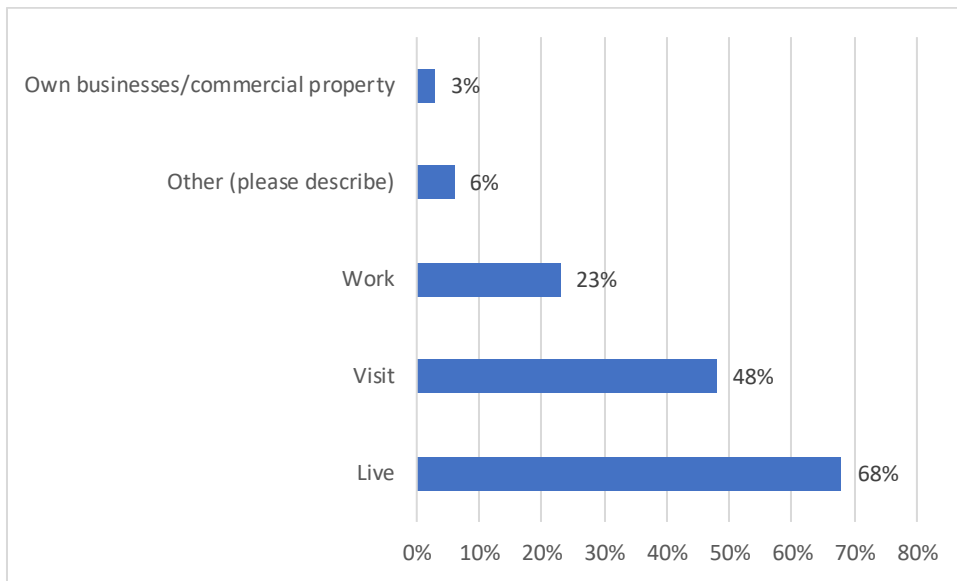
### Comment types and counts

We received 355 responses to the survey.

### Public Feedback on Design Concept–Survey Responses

The following are the results from the multiple-choice questions on the survey.

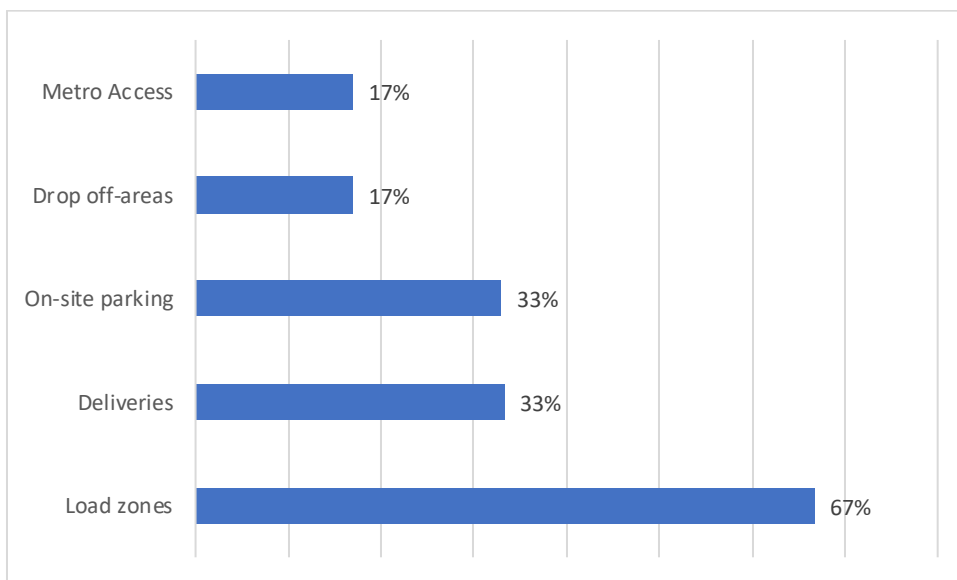
Q1: Please indicate your relationship to the neighborhoods adjacent to E Union Street. (Select all that apply.)



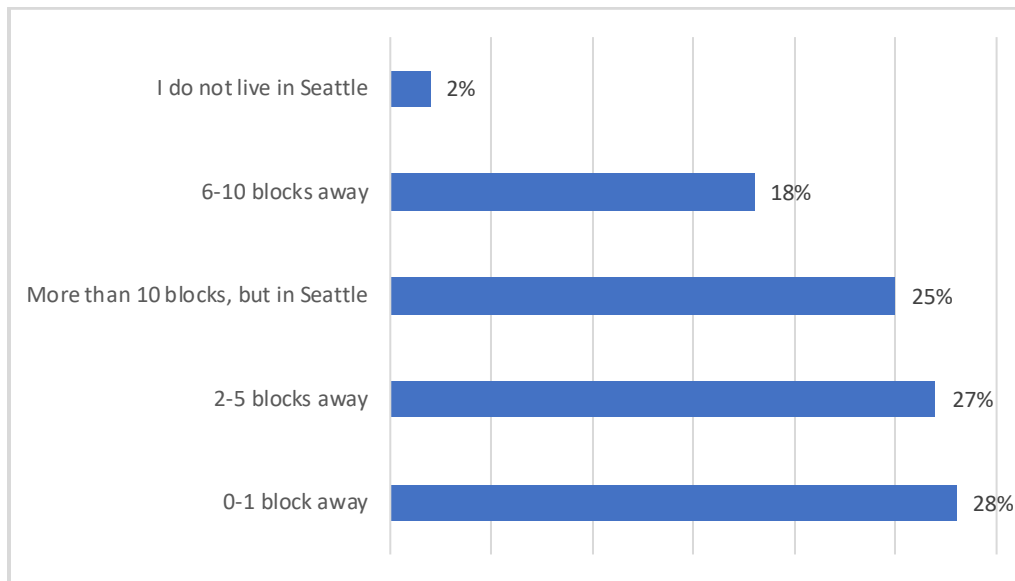
Write-in choices for "Other":

- Travel through
- Take transit through
- Commute through
- Attend place of worship or other regular activity in neighborhood
- Previous resident

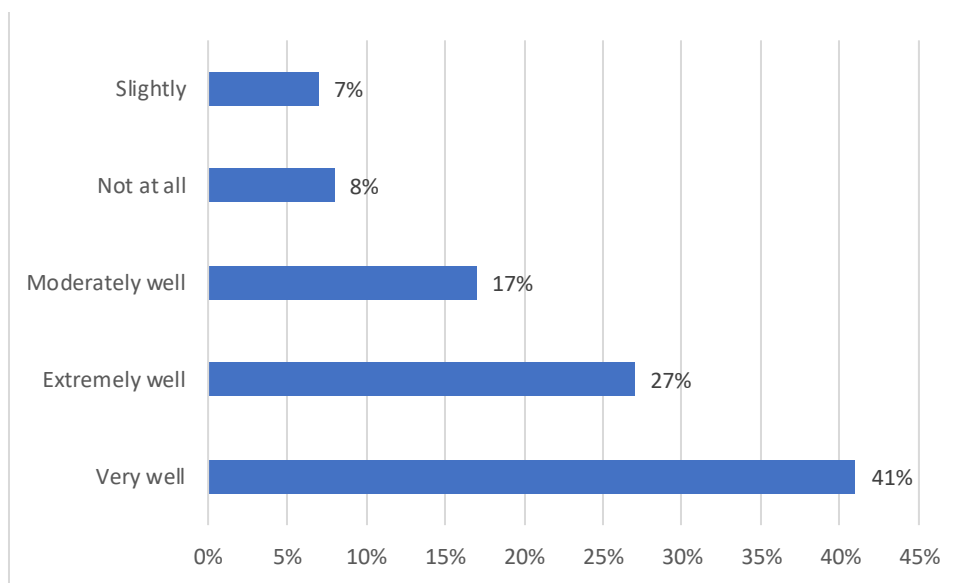
Q2. If you own a business/commercial property along the project corridor, does the property/business currently have any of the following:



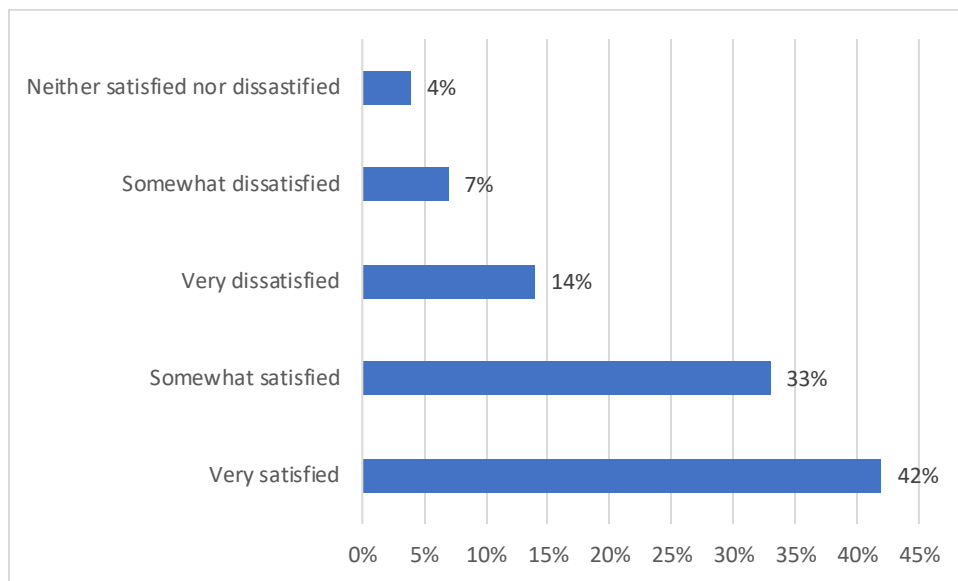
Q3. How many blocks away from E Union Street do you live?



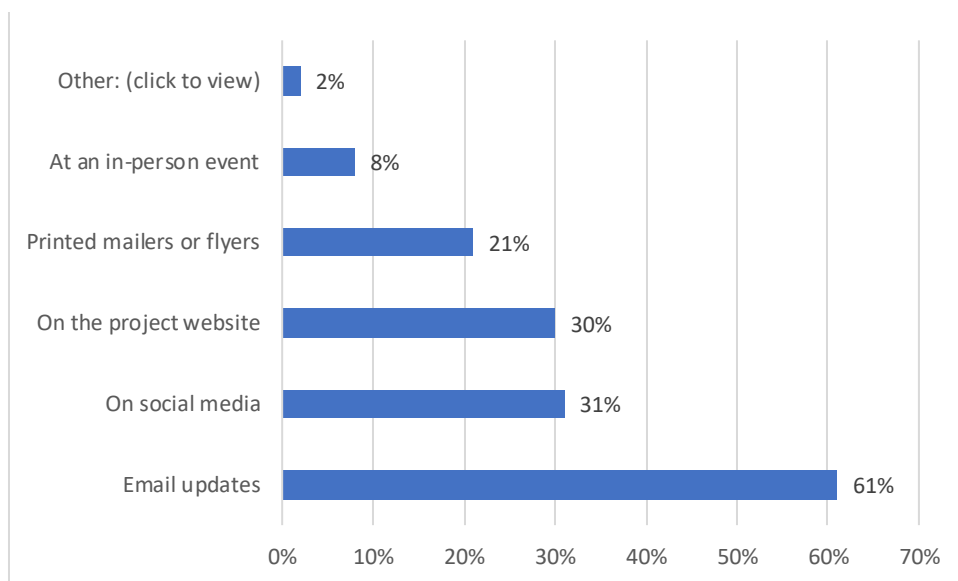
Q4. Does the updated design address this feedback?



Q5. How satisfied are you with the updated design?



Q8. How do you prefer to receive information about this project?



Write-in choices for "Other":

- Capitol Hill Seattle blog
- From friends
- Nextdoor
- The Urbanist

## Public Feedback on Updated Design Concept– Topics and Themes

The topics presented below are summarized from the two free-response questions:

- Do you have additional feedback on the updated design?
- Do you have any additional information you'd like to share with the project team?

Key themes from the Union PBL survey are included below; refer to Appendix A for demographic details of the survey and next steps.

## **TOPIC: Implementing the PBL**

We received a high volume of responses supporting the implementation of a PBL. Responders expressed that a PBL would make bike riding safer, encourage riders to bike more, and that a PBL would provide greater accessibility through the city. Most commenters were pleased with the PBL connecting through the intersection of 23rd and E Union St. Some commenters expressed interest in a full PBL connection to MLK Jr. Way in both directions. Some responders shared concerns that drivers and bicyclist traveling at the same speed on downhills could cause a potential collision. Commenters also shared their preference of a fully protected bike lane rather than having sharrows which can cause confusion for bicyclists and drivers. Some commenters expressed concerns about the potential impacts of the PBL.

### **Theme heard: Implement a fully connected PBL to Martin Luther King Jr Way in both directions (west and eastbound).**

Commenters identified MLK Jr way as unsafe for walking and biking and requested that 26th Ave to MLK Jr Way include a PBL on both sides of the street. Commenters also shared how the PBL gets blocked by drivers and car share drivers for loading purposes.

#### **Requests included:**

- Implement a fully connected PBL through intersections, downhills, and uphill's
  - Downhill PBL to continue through 26th and MLK Jr. Way
  - PBL to connect to MLK Jr. Way and Broadway bike lanes
  - Include an uphill PBL going Eastbound from 12th Ave to 14th Ave
  - Consider connecting the PBL up to 34th Ave to provide a safe route to Madrona
- Support for having the PBL to be next to sidewalks instead of street parking
- Downhill PBL to not be located next to parked cars due to driver visibility issues and bicyclists speeding down hill
- Improve safety at intersections for bicyclist and pedestrians
  - Intersections on Union between 14th, 17th, 19th, 20th, and 23rd Ave are not safe for pedestrian and bicyclists crossing
- Provide more bicycle racks along corridor
- Connect PBL to neighborhood greenways

#### **Project team response:**

The current design for the eastbound bike lane does not continue past 26th Ave to MLK Jr Way S due to challenges with the right-of-way. E Union St tightens from 50 feet to 42 feet at 26th Ave. To carry the PBL downhill to the east would require removing all parking on the south side of E Union St. This area has lower vehicle volumes and high parking utilizations, so we decided to maintain the parking and only include a PBL on the uphill side. The Madison Bus Rapid Transit project will expand the PBL on the west from 14th Ave to 11th Ave.

We are working with other projects at SDOT to look at pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements along E Union St. For example, the Neighborhood Greenway program is improving the crossing at 18th Ave and Union St. We are also retiming the signal at 22nd Ave to be more responsive during off-peak hours. We are making crossings at 23rd Ave and Union St more accessible for pedestrians crossing in all directions. At the request of a local business, we are also evaluating the intersection at 24th Ave and will provide an update if anything is planned.

**Theme heard: No implementation of the PBL**

We received a few comments against the implementation of the PBL. Commenters expressed that PBLs don't get used enough to warrant the cost, the PBL would negatively impact businesses and the neighborhood, and the implementation of the PBL would make traffic worse along the corridor.

Common concerns included:

- The PBL will slow down traffic in the corridor and cause confusion for drivers
- Construction will be impactful to the neighborhood
- Enough bike facilities already exist on alternative streets
- The PBL will conflict with buses traveling down the corridor
- The PBL will cost taxpayers more money
- The PBL should be considered on a neighborhood street instead of a main arterial

**Project team response:**

Seattle has a Bicycle Master Plan (BMP) which provides a framework for improving the bicycling environment throughout the city. The BMP recommends E Union St for a protected bicycle lane (PBL). SDOT evaluated multiple east/west bicycle routes to help connect to existing bike facilities and improve the overall bicycle network. SDOT evaluated multiple east/west bicycle routes, and the Union St PBL was the community's preferred bicycle improvement. This project will be constructed by SDOT crews and is anticipated to take up to 2-3 weekends to complete with minimal impacts. Construction is planned for summer 2020 and is weather dependent.

**TOPIC: Parking removal**

We received significant comments regarding parking. Some commenters expressed concern about the impacts of removing parking for those with accessibility needs, residents, and businesses. Commenters expressed concern that the design would remove parking for customers who visit businesses from outside the area on a regular basis. Survey responders also shared that removing parking would impact residents who use street parking and impact those with accessibility needs and families. Other commenters supported the removal of parking, because it will increase safety for bicyclists and make it easier to access businesses along the corridor by bicycle.

**Theme heard: Removing parking would negatively impact businesses**

Common requests included:

- Consider the needs of people who visit from outside the area or have mobility challenges or children
- Maintain parking in front and near businesses
- Maintain loading zones for businesses
- Move the car share parking spaces near the Good Shepard Lutheran Church to increase parking for senior members

**Project team response:**

We are working to minimize impacts to parking as much as reasonably possible. Some parking will be removed to meet current City of Seattle safety standards related to sightlines at intersections and active driveways.

We are also removing three parking spaces near 23rd Ave and E Union St to make space for the PBL. We are working with local businesses to discuss alternatives for parking. We will maintain loading zones for businesses along E Union St where possible. Residents with mobility challenges can request a disabled parking space near their residence. Learn more at SDOT's [disabled parking site](#).

**Theme heard: Reduce parking for bike safety**

Some commenters expressed support for removing parking spaces to create a better PBL and/or transit experience. Some commenters noted that the safety of bike riders and pedestrians is more important than parking.

Common requests included:

- Remove parking near MLK Jr. Way to add a PBL
- Remove a travel lane on E Union St
- Prioritize street space for moving vehicles, transit, bikes, and pedestrians, especially on arterials
- Consider off-peak parking
- Require developers to provide more parking so people don't have to park on the street
- Include no parking signs from 4-6pm at the eastbound intersection of E Union St for a few of blocks

**Project team response:**

Enhancing safety is one of the top goals of this project. As described in the section above, minimal parking spaces are being removed to improve safety at intersections and to allow the PBL to cross 23rd Ave.

**TOPIC: Bus stops and routes**

Some commenters expressed concerns about bus stops being removed, relocated or consolidated which would impact their main form of commuting. Survey responders also shared concerns about the distance between bus stops not being accessible for people with mobility challenges especially bus stops located on hills.

Requests and comments included:

- Eastbound bus stop located on 15th Ave interferes with crosswalk
- Provide a marked cross walk on 17th Ave
- Fix blinking light at crosswalk on 15th Ave
- Keep westbound bus stop on 16th Ave
- Locate the westbound bus stop closer to MLK Jr. Way
- Keep westbound bus stop on 27th Ave due to accessibility barriers (hills, long walking distances, etc.)
- Keep eastbound bus stop on 25th Ave instead of 26th Ave because it has a crosswalk
- Do not relocate the bus stop on 16th Ave
- Do not remove the bus stop on 27th Ave
- Need more bus stops along the corridor to improve accessibility for people with mobility challenges
- Proposed bus stop on 13th Ave is not safe for pedestrian crossing E Union St Consider bus islands like the ones used on Dexter Ave to avoid bus and bike conflicts.

**Project team response:**

Some bus stops on E Union St are placed very close to other stops. King County Metro is relocating some of these stops to help improve speed and reliability for the Route 2 on E Union St. Higher ridership at the bus stops along E Union St increases the amount of time it takes for passengers to board and leave the bus. This delay increases throughout a trip the more frequent a bus stop. Consolidating bus stops helps keep buses moving and on-time.

King County Metro has reviewed the feedback from this outreach and is adjusting their proposed changes to a few bus stop locations.

**TOPIC: Pedestrian and bicyclist safety**

We received concerns about safety and conflicts between drivers, bike riders, and pedestrians. Commenters raised awareness that bike riders and pedestrians feel unsafe crossing through busy intersections and arterials (e.g., E Union St and Martin Luther King Jr Way, etc.) because drivers speed through streets and down hills, and drivers do not give pedestrians and bike riders the right of way when making turns at intersections. Commenters also shared how the PBL gets blocked by drivers and used by car-share drivers for loading passengers.

Common requests included:

- Increase bike lane and pedestrian visibility at busy intersections
- Enforce new 25 mph speed limit
- Provide clear sightlines on downhills for drivers to increase biker visibility
- Preference for PBL on downhills instead of sharrows, although a few commenters preferred to use sharrows on steep downhill segments.
- Include left turn lanes for bicyclists



### **Project team response:**

We are also concerned about safety for all users of E Union St. The PBL will be painted green across the intersections to help provide visibility for bicyclists. Studies also show that narrowing the vehicle travel lane leads drivers to reduce their speed and serves as a traffic calming measure. Sightlines will be increased by removing parking spaces at select intersections.

## **TOPIC: World School bus loading zone**

We received multiple responses against moving the school bus loading zone onto 18th Ave. Commenters expressed concerns that a school bus loading zone on 18th Ave will create more traffic, make the narrow street unsafe and take away parking. We also heard from community members and groups that preferred the school bus loading zone on 18th Ave to reduce impacts to the PBL. These commenters noted that the safety of PBL users and students should be a higher priority than the inconvenience it may cause to adjacent neighbors.

### **Theme heard: No school bus loading zone on 18th Ave**

Common requests and concerns included:

- Keep the school bus loading zone on E Union St instead of 18th Ave
- 18th Ave is an unsafe location for children/students to be picked up
- Not enough clearance on 18th Ave to accommodate bus loading needs and drivers

### **Project team response:**

The current load zone on E Union St between 16th and 18th Ave is not wide enough to accommodate school buses without them encroaching upon the bike lane. As part of the Seattle World School remodel, 18th Ave was equipped with a curb cut out and sidewalks to accommodate bus loading and unloading and still allow one-direction vehicle travel on 18th Ave. If moved, these buses would be operating on a 25-foot-wide street which is a city standard used at other schools. Moving the school bus loading zone from E Union St would reduce conflicts among bike riders, buses, and students accessing the bus stop and improve safety for all users. To access the load zone with our current concept, buses would travel north on 16th Ave then turn right onto E Pike St and south onto 18th Ave. Two parking spaces would be removed to accommodate these turns on and off E Pike St. Buses will only be parked on 18th Ave during load and unload times (Weekdays 8-10 am and 2-4 pm). We are aware of the concerns about locating the school bus loading zone onto 18th Ave. We are working with the school to discuss options and have not made a final decision.

## **TOPIC: Corridor improvements**

Some commenters expressed the need for improvements along the corridor to address safety concerns and to provide better visibility of bicyclists and pedestrians.

Common requests included:

- Repave of roads and sidewalks
- Traffic calming measures to help enforce new 25 mph speed limit
- Improve right-of-way (ROW) on 13th Ave, fence near bus island blocks ROW

- Add better signage to indicate PBL, sharrows, and neighborhood greenways to improve safety
- Make the intersection on 19th Ave and E Union St a four way stop
- Retain the parklet on E Union St near 25th Ave

#### Project team response:

While roadway improvements benefit the community, many of these requests go beyond the scope of the project. The parklet along E Union St and 25th Ave will not be impacted by the construction of this project. We will share these requests with other city departments and keep the community updated.

### **TOPIC: Additional questions**

Some commenters asked questions in the survey to gain more understanding and clarity about the changes that will happen along the corridor. We will review and address the questions.

Questions that were raised included the following. Below each question is a response from the project team.

- Will there be a physical barrier to protect the bike lane?
  - There will be paint and flexible posts to separate the bike lane from the vehicle lane.
- How many school buses will load and unload on 18th Ave and how long will they be parked?
  - The World School needs to accommodate approximately 13 of buses during the load/unload time which is Weekdays 8-10 am and 2-4 pm
- Is 18th Ave wide enough to accommodate parked cars and school buses and allow traffic flow?
  - Yes 18th Ave can accommodate parked buses and cars and allow one lane of traffic to travel. This is similar to other residential areas where parking is permitted on both sides of the street.
- What changes are being made to traffic signals? Will cyclists be protected from right-turning drivers?
  - At 23rd Ave and Union St, pedestrians will get a leading pedestrian interval which means they receive a walk signal before cars receive a green light, so pedestrians are more visible to turning cars. We are not planning to restrict right turns on red lights at this intersection.
- How does the design encourage both cyclists and cars to travel at safe speeds?
  - Studies show that narrowing the vehicle travel lane leads drivers to reduce their speed and serves as a traffic calming measure. The bicycle lane will also be at a width that encourages bicycle riders to travel at reasonable speeds.
- Can you make bikes more visible to cars?
  - The painting and added posts of the bike lanes will help increase visibility for bicyclists. We are also ensuring that sightlines are adequate at intersections and active driveways to ensure that bicycle riders are seen by approaching drivers.
- Will the city sweep the PBL to prevent debris from blocking the lane?

- SDOT will conduct regular maintenance on the bike lanes and adjacent roadways.
- Are bikes permitted to ride in the lane of travel with car traffic once the PBL is installed?
  - Yes, bikes may choose to use the main travel lane as long as they obey traffic laws. Washington State laws give bikes the same rights and responsibilities as cars.

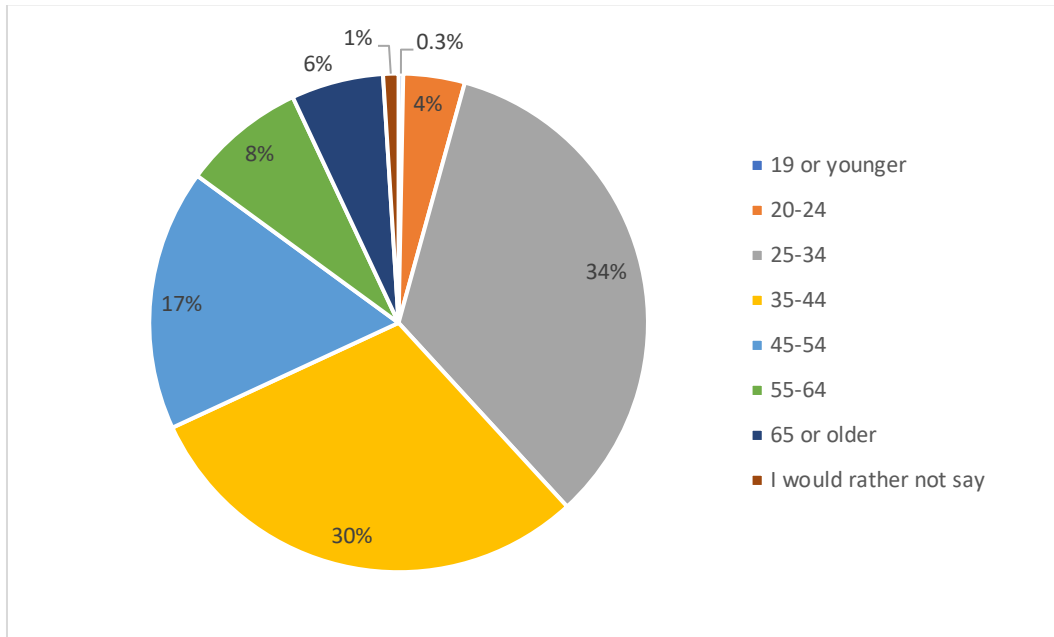
## Next steps

Later this spring, we will finalize the design and share it with the public. Construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2020. It will take SDOT crews about 1-2 days to install the PBL. Construction is anticipated to cause minimal impacts.

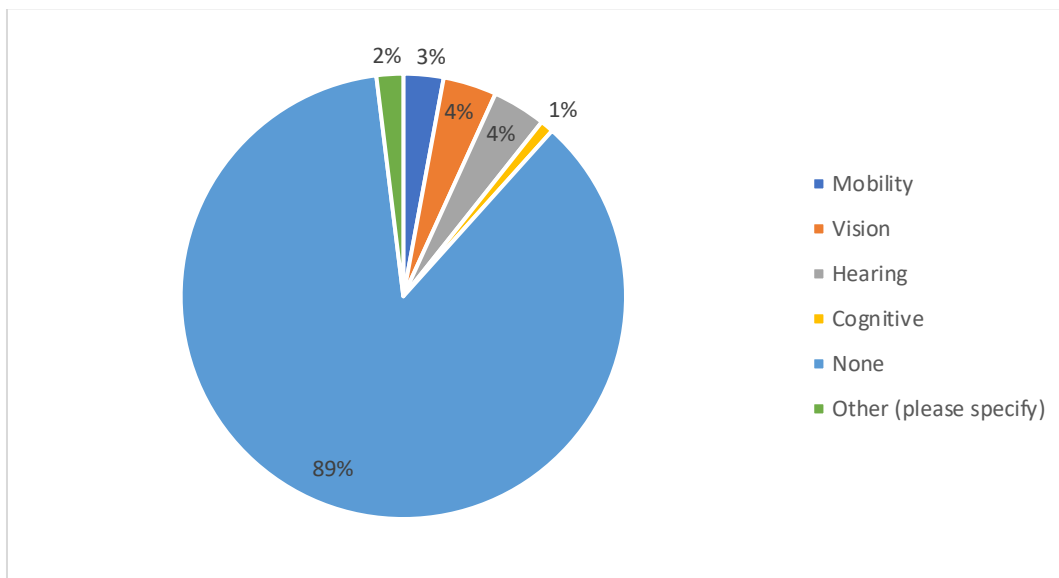
The latest information will also be available on our project website ([www.seattle.gov/transportation/e-union-st](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/e-union-st)), which includes a form to sign up for the project contact list. Questions about the open houses or the comments we heard can be sent to the project inbox at [UnionPBL@seattle.gov](mailto:UnionPBL@seattle.gov) or by calling 206-684-5312.

## Appendix A. Survey respondent demographics

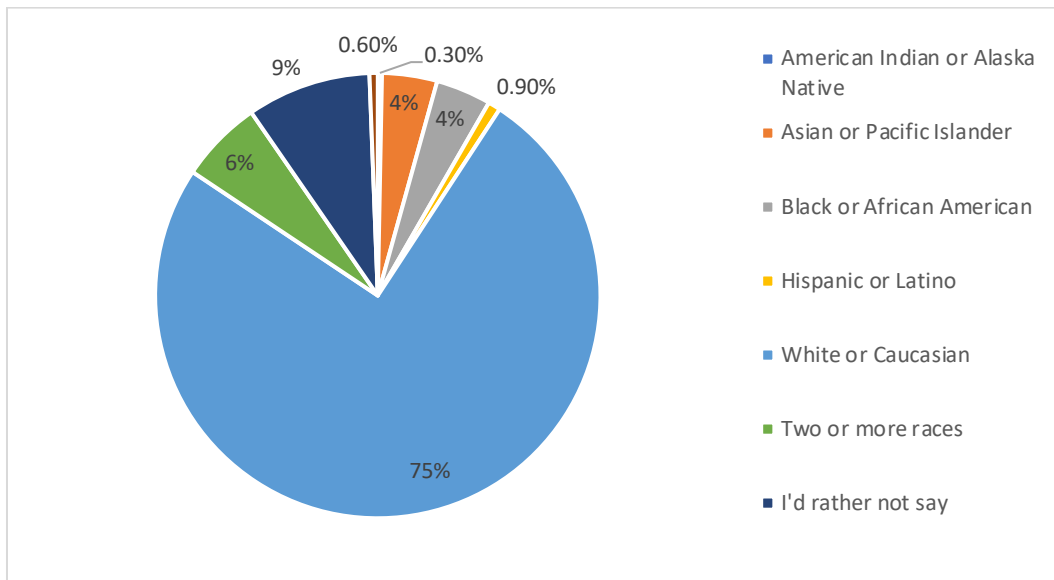
### Age



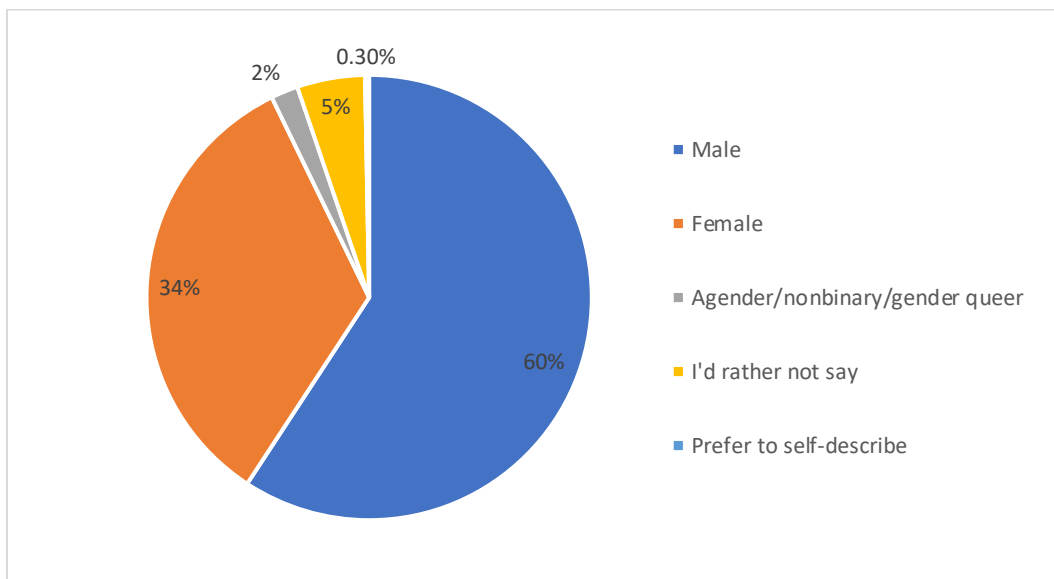
### Disability



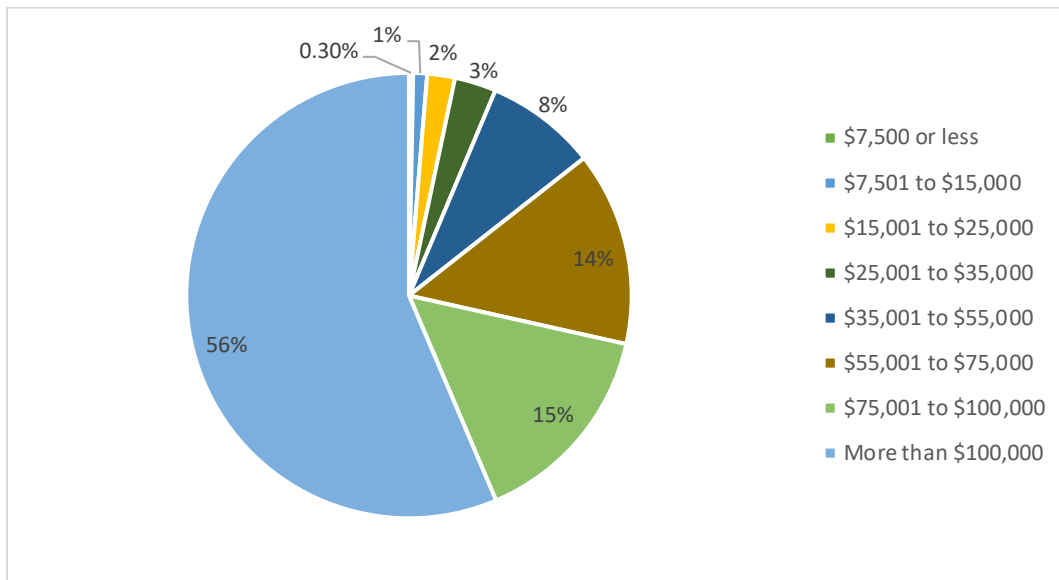
## Race/ethnicity



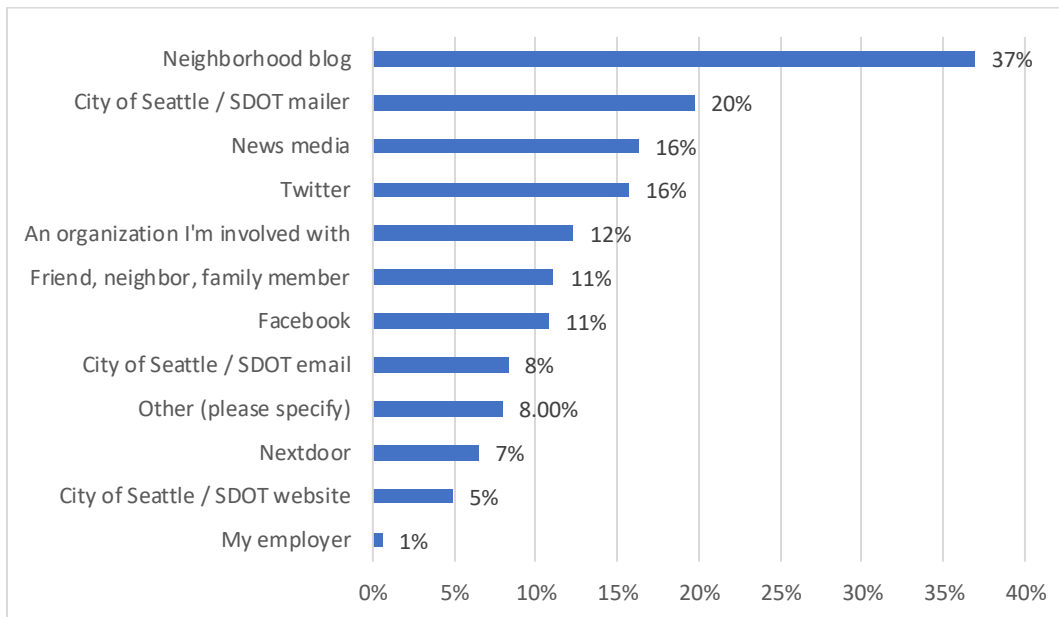
## Gender



## Annual household income



## How did you learn about this project?



## Write-in choices for "Other":

- Seattle Bike Blog
- Capitol Hill Blog
- Urbanists Blog
- The Medium
- 2020 Cycles
- Neighborhood Greenways
- Department of Neighborhoods
- Project team tabling in the neighborhood
- Flyer