

# ROUTE 40 TRANSIT-PLUS MULTIMODAL CORRIDOR PROJECT



## PUBLIC FEEDBACK ON PROJECT DESIGN (SPRING 2023)

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### OVERVIEW

As part of the Route 40 – Transit-Plus Multimodal Corridor project, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is partnering with King County Metro (Metro) to make improvements in the Westlake, Fremont, Ballard, and Crown Hill neighborhoods to reduce travel times, improve transit reliability, and increase safety and transit access along the Route 40 corridor.

Since 2020, the community has helped design quality street improvements to provide a safer place for people to get around, keep Route 40 reliable, and foster business activity. Your feedback continues to be valued, and the designs have recently been updated to address the feedback that we have received.

In the summer 2021, community members provided feedback on the early design concepts for each neighborhood along the corridor. Key topics of concern included the locations of bus-only lanes, impacts to general traffic, and safety for people walking, biking, and driving. See our May 2022 [Feedback Summary](#) to see responses to the key concerns expressed by the community.

In spring and summer of 2022, we shared three updated early design concepts with the community via an online engagement hub and performed targeted business and community outreach. Participants provided feedback on the updated designs along Westlake Ave N, in Fremont near Fremont Ave N and 35<sup>th</sup> St, and in Ballard near NW Leary Way and 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NW.

Since we last shared an update with the community, the project team has been working on refining the design concepts based off the community's feedback and additional technical analysis. We've summarized the feedback below and have provided responses to the key concerns and issues expressed by the community.

### [WESTLAKE AVE FEEDBACK](#)

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#### **Theme: Concerns about bus only lanes on Westlake Ave N from the freight community**

Stakeholders expressed general concerns regarding Westlake Ave N bus only lanes and their benefits.

#### Our response:

Bus lanes will continue to be planned in select areas along the Route 40 corridor. Bus lanes will help keep buses moving and allow people to get to where they want to go, more efficiently and without delays. Bus only lanes also allow traffic to keep moving through the corridor, since buses do not block general purpose traffic when serving bus stops. Reallocating a lane to transit also can serve as a form of traffic calming during off-peak hours.

To keep freight moving along Westlake Ave N, new "Freight-and-Bus only lanes" (FAB lanes) are being piloted. People driving freight vehicles over 26,000 pounds (about the size of a garbage truck, large box truck, or semi-truck) can use them. The FAB lanes will be piloted for one year. After the trial period ends,



data will be reviewed and input from freight drivers will be considered to determine if they should be installed permanently along Westlake Ave N and should be added to our toolbox for other Seattle streets.

**Theme: Bus only lanes on Westlake Ave N may increase congestion while the Fremont Bridge is up, while making minimal improvements to transit travel times**

Some stakeholders shared concerns that bus lanes will increase general traffic on Westlake Ave N, without significantly increasing bus speed.

Our response: A traffic analysis was conducted that simulated what traffic could look like for general purposes vehicles if Westlake Ave N remained the same and if the project were to be completed. Under both alternatives, traffic conditions would stay similar or would not deteriorate significantly.

As mentioned previously, the reduction of general-purpose travel lanes will also help people drive at safer speeds. Additionally, Westlake Ave N is a major truck street and makes it an ideal location to pilot the new freight-and-bus only lanes, which will help keep both people and goods moving to where they need to go, including when the Fremont Bridge is up.

To help decrease transit travel times for the northbound Route 40, the bus lane approaching the Westlake Ave N, Dexter Ave N, Nickerson St, and 4th Ave N intersection to allow buses to get ahead of stopped traffic from both congestion and bridge openings and travel into Fremont more efficiently.

**Theme: Concerns from the business community regarding the impacts of bus-only lanes to commercial loading**

Our response:

All existing loading zones throughout the project corridor will be maintained or relocated. There will be no net-loss for loading zones. The refined designs have been updated to include a new commercial loading zone on southbound Westlake Ave N near N Halladay St. To request new loading zones along the corridor, please contact us.

**Theme: Concerns about driver confusion due to the location of transit only left-turn lane at 9th Ave**

Some responses indicated that positioning a transit only left-turn lane on the far-right side of the street may cause driver confusion and create dangerous conditions.

Our response:

The southbound transit-only left-turn lane on the right side of the street will have signal indications and signage to make provide clear direction of when buses and general purpose vehicles should travel through the intersection, each at separate times. A similar operation where buses make left turns from the right lane exists today at Montlake Blvd NE and NE Pacific Pl near Husky Stadium

**Theme: Desire to move proposed crosswalk to the south side of Halladay St**

In the early design concept, the proposed signalized crosswalk crosses Westlake Ave N on the north side of Halladay St. Some respondents suggested moving this to the south side of Halladay St.



Our response:

The crosswalk cannot be relocated to the south of Halladay St due to the limited amount of space that is currently available. Any new crosswalks, curb ramps, or bus stops south of Halladay St would require digging into the hillside, which may require building a retaining wall and adding costs and complexity to the project. Additionally, there is a structure on the east side of the parking area that would make pedestrian crossings on the south side of Halladay St not possible there.

**Theme: Desire for short pedestrian waiting periods**

Some respondents asked for short waiting periods for pedestrians crossing Westlake Ave N at the new signalized crosswalk at Halladay St.

Our response:

Timing for all new signals will be evaluated by the traffic engineering team to ensure that all travelers are moving efficiently along the project corridor. During off-peak periods and weekends, the signal would likely operate with minimal delay for pedestrians.

**Theme: Desire for a protected bike lane along Westlake Ave N**

Our response:

Westlake Ave N is not identified in SDOT's Bike Master Plan as a part of the recommended bike network, so the design team will not be considering options to install bike facilities on Westlake Ave N as part of this project.

## **FREMONT NEIGHBORHOOD FEEDBACK**

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**Theme: Desire for improvements for people walking or rolling**

Some respondents mentioned improvements such as upgraded curb ramps near the proposed bus stops or raised sidewalks for wheelchair users getting onto buses.

Our response:

The refined designs include wider sidewalks and new curb extensions or bus bulbs. Bus stops in Fremont and Ballard will be upgraded to be new in-lane bus stops with a bus bulb. These ADA compliant bus bulbs create more space for people to wait for their buses and separates them from sidewalk amenities, structures, and people traveling on sidewalks. At select locations, bus bulbs also provide space for more bus amenities, such as signage, shelters, benches, and more.

Curb ramps will be integrated in the new curb bulb extensions in our improvement areas on Fremont Ave N and along N 36th St.

**Theme: Concerns about transferring between routes from the new bus stop locations near Fremont Ave N**

Respondents opposed the proposed relocation of bus stops due to increased difficulty and speed of transfers between Route 40 and Routes 31, 32, and 62.



Our response: To meet the goals of our project and facilitate the best transfer experience for riders, the new Route 40 bus stop will be placed as close to the Fremont Ave N and N 35th St intersection as possible. By relocating the existing bus stop to two locations around the corner on N 35th St (Routes 31, 32, and 62) and Fremont Pl N (Route 40), buses and traffic can flow through the intersection more efficiently and we will be able to reduce the potential for conflicts from other modes. Traffic modeling shows that there would be a bus at the new stop on Fremont Pl N approximately every 5-15 minutes, and the intersection would clear within one cycle of the traffic signal.

**Theme: Desire for permanent protected bike lane elements**

There was strong support for the addition of a new protected bike lane on Fremont Ave N, and many respondents mentioned a desire for planters or cement blocks rather than lane markings or flexible posts.

Our response: The project will construct a 6" high raised concrete island to separate the bicycle lanes from the vehicle lanes along Fremont Ave N between N 34<sup>th</sup> St. and N 35<sup>th</sup> St.

**Theme: Concerns from the business community regarding impacts to parking and loading on Fremont Pl N**

Our response:

The new street design removes about 4 on-street parking spaces where the sidewalk extends. A 32-foot load zone will be installed on Fremont Pl for business deliveries and customer pickup, which we're designing based on community input. There will continue to be street parking on the west side of Fremont Ave N between 35th and 36th St.

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**BALLARD NEIGHBORHOOD FEEDBACK**

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**Theme: Pedestrian safety near 15th Ave NW is a concern and the proposed pedestrian signal timing is insufficient**

Our response: The signals for people walking across 15th Ave NW at NW Leary Way will be modified to improve the crossing experience and walk time.

**Theme: There is a desire for protected bike lanes on Leary Ave NW between NW Market St and 20th Ave NW**

Our response: SDOT's [Bicycle Master Plan](#) (2014) does not include Leary Ave NW as a part of the Recommended Bicycle Network and there are no planned bicycle projects on the corridor in the most recent Bicycle Master Plan Implementation Plan (2021). Given the objectives of the Route 40 TPMC project to improve transit operations, including protected bike lanes on Leary Ave NW was not studied as an alternative.