

Seattle Department of Transportation

S Henderson St Stairway Project

**November 2020 Drop-in Session
and Online Survey
Feedback Summary**



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

PROJECT AND OUTREACH BACKGROUND

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is building a stairway, on S Henderson St from 39th Ave S to 41st Ave S in the undeveloped right of way. Construction is expected to begin in 2021.

The following pages summarize the feedback, ideas, and questions gathered in August 2020 during an early design drop-in session where SDOT shared the project background and early design alternatives.

Online Drop-in Session + Survey

Online Early Design Drop-in Session	Online Survey
Thursday, November 19 6-7 PM	Open from November 20th – December 11th

NOTIFICATIONS

- 466 mailers sent to notify South Beacon Hill residents, property and business owners of the drop-in session and online survey
- Emails to relevant stakeholders
- Information on the project website

60% DESIGN OUTREACH SUMMARY

Executive Summary

In fall 2020, we began outreach to gather input on the 60% design phase as well as placemaking for the S Henderson Stairway project.

Community members were engaged in various ways and provided with various opportunities to give feedback on the project. Participants provided their insight into safety design details of the project, voicing support for the new neighborhood connection as well as specific concerns. Support was apparent for the overall project with many showing an understanding and appreciation for the safety aspects of the plan and appreciation for our investment in new pedestrian connections between South Beacon Hill and Rainier Beach light rail station, schools, businesses and community amenities. Concerns focused on safe pedestrian access to the new stairway, lighting design and landscaping to enhance safety and maintenance.

A detailed summary of the overall outreach is included in the following pages.

OVERVIEW OF OUTREACH METHODS

August 2020	Project introduction mailer schedule, funding, and project contact info
November 2020	Postcard mailer to neighbors for online drop-in session to 466 addresses
November 19	Hosted online drop-in session with live Q&A
Nov 20 - Dec 11	Online survey on current design and future placemaking for the new stairway

PROJECT OVERVIEW

We're building a new stairway on S Henderson St between 39th Ave S to 41st Ave S (approx. 440ft) in the undeveloped right of way. The new stairway would better connect residents to the Rainier Beach light rail station, local schools, and Rainier Beach Community Center. Walking improvements help make neighborhoods safer and more connected. Walking is one of the simplest, most effective, and most affordable strategies for kids and adults to build physical activity into their lives.

In addition to the new stairway, the project will include:

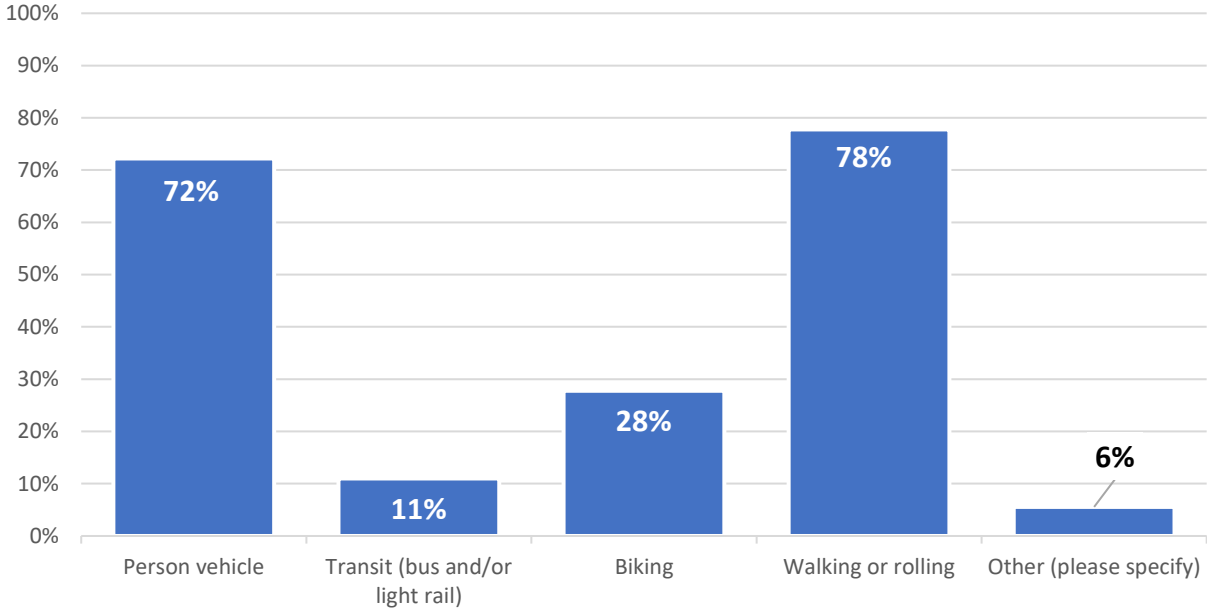
- Multiple landings to meet ADA requirements
- Pedestrian scale lighting
- Landscaping the supports natural surveillance (i.e. planting at 2 feet or below, and keep trees limbed up to 8 feet)
- A "runnel" (i.e. smooth surface next to the stairway for people to walk their bikes)
- Drainage improvements
- Lower pedestrian path on 41st Ave S west of Carkeek Drive S

OVERVIEW OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Feedback was collected in various ways at the online drop-in session and survey, project inbox, and community and stakeholder conversations. Community responses, comments and feedback are presented below:

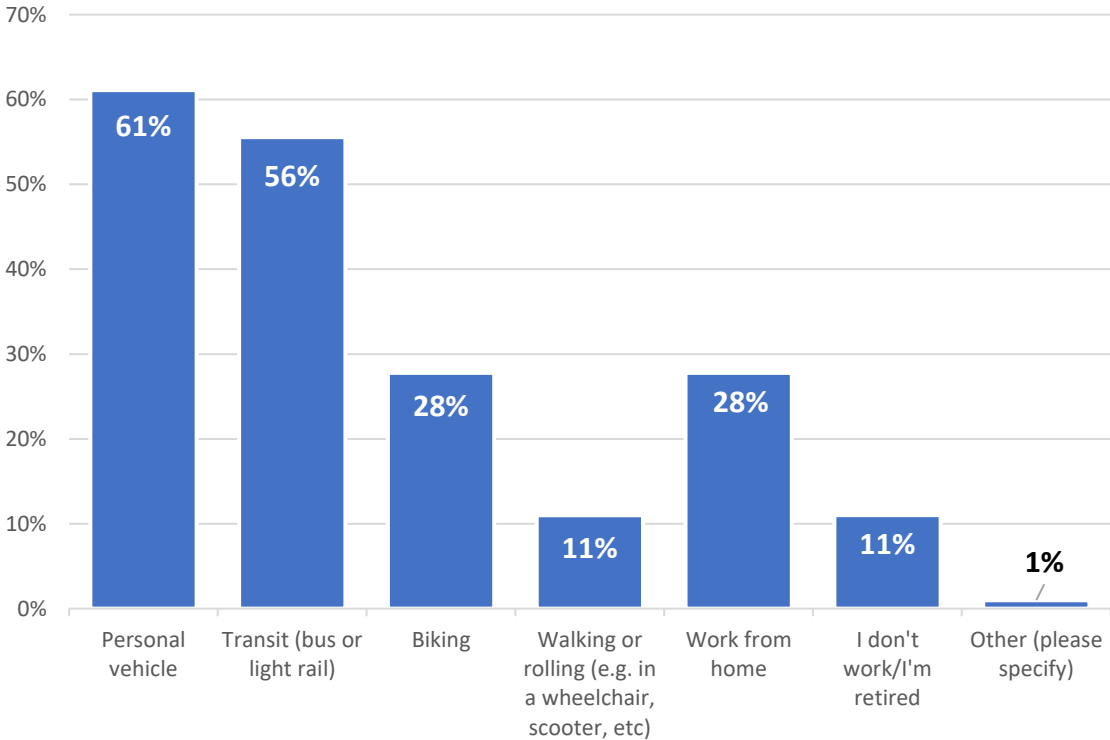
How do you travel between South Beacon Hill and Rainier Beach?

(Select all that apply)

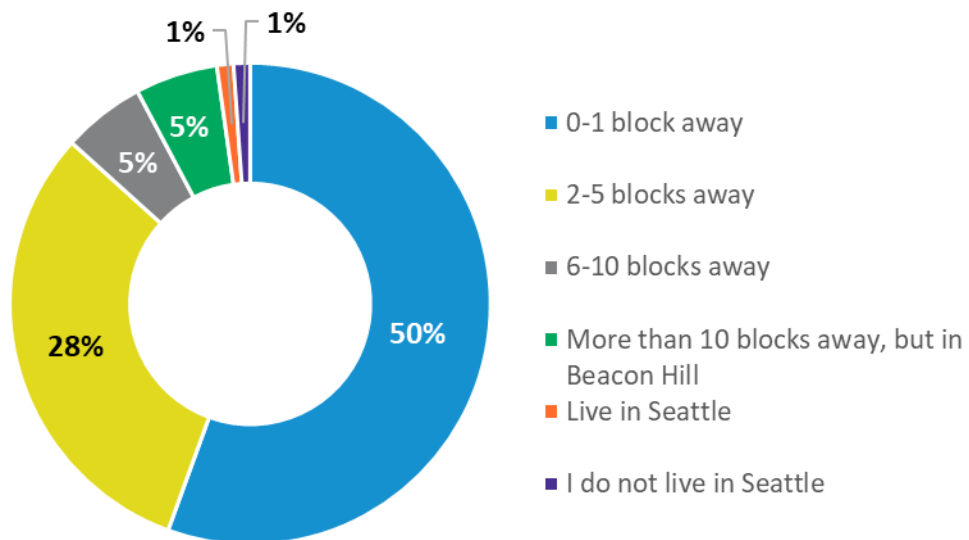


How do you commute to your job? (Select all that apply)

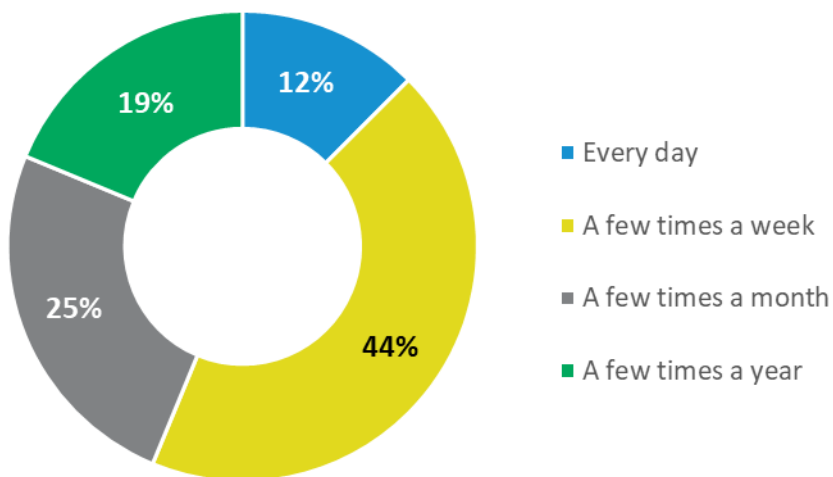
(if COVID has impacted your travel patterns, assume pre-COVID)



How many blocks away from the study area do you live?

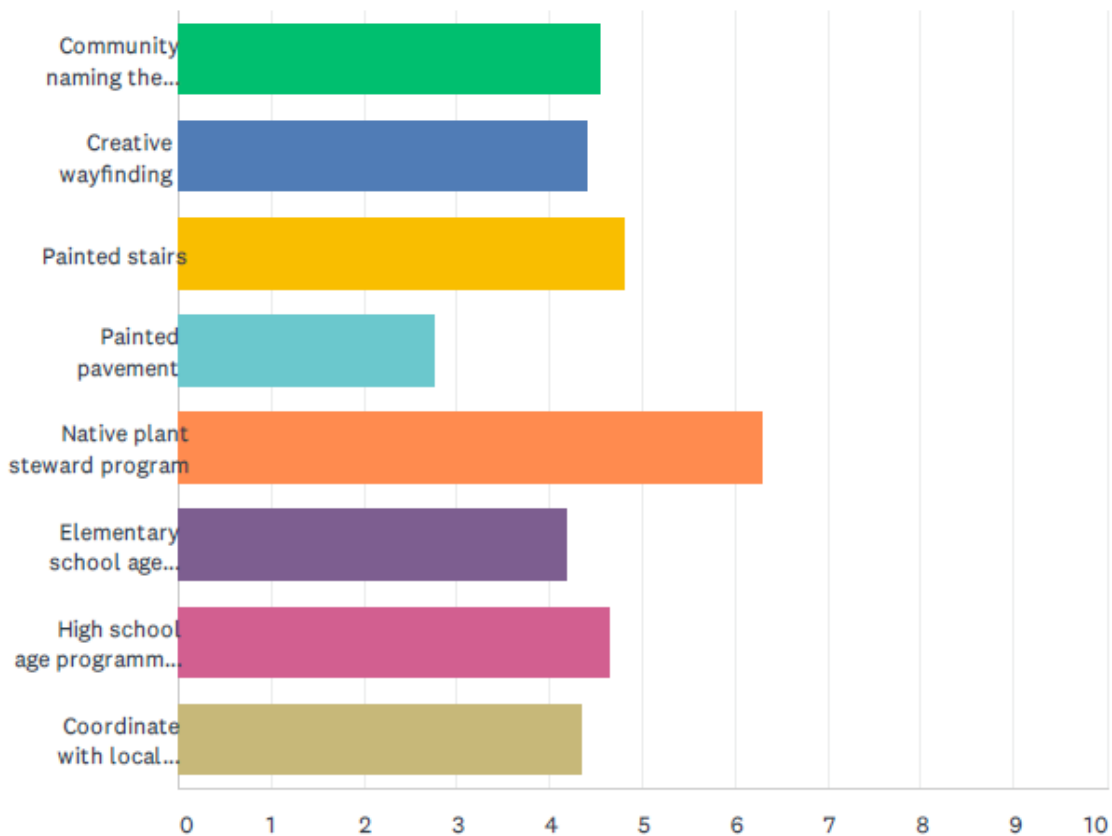


How often do you bike or walk between South Beacon Hill and Rainier Beach?



OVERVIEW OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Please rank the placemaking actions you would like to see for the S Henderson Stairway Project to strengthen community connection and ownership?



Are there other placemaking ideas you would like to suggest?

1. I believe getting all the communities involved in the stairway is key so I am good with the list above. Maybe, having Seattle Public School students plant native plants along side the stairway would be awesome. I am not sure if that's the native plant steward program?
2. Sculptural elements
3. No, I don't think we need any of them.
4. Engage closely with the Parks Department and the volunteers stewarding the green belt on existing place making efforts (a trail was installed a few blocks north, with the same goals, and there has been a decade of neighbors and volunteers stewarding this trail and restoring the green belt). Place making signs should reference the forest trail.
5. Community stewardship, volunteer gardening

6. Proper Inviting Signage with directions from Beacon Ave. Also, very good lighting at night, perhaps motion detected, but bright enough to assure no ambushes in this relatively remote, treed location. Perhaps a 911 call box in the middle of the stairway? Also, it is very important to make related path improvements for walking from MLK Ave to the bottom of the stairs. There should be at least one wide sidewalk of at least 8 feet, for bikes and rollers, suitcases for airport travel, and pedestrians side by side. Also, please be sure to keep the native plants low, not bushy, and not encroaching at all on the walkway, so that security is assured, and required maintenance is reduced. Sorry to say, but the bike paths are a mess, and all that money invested is wasted when the bike paths are littered with debris and leaves and branches, and overgrown grasses. I would say, lighting and signage is very important. No painting, and that fades with age, and is always a maintenance nightmare. If you want something cool, make nice designs in the concrete, or maybe some mosaic tile, or something more permanent, and uplifting. Also, engraving of some cool uplifting poems, or sayings, on the vertical portions of the stairs, so that you see it as you go up. Mt. Rainier National Park has examples of these on the steps next to the visitor center at Paradise, and it is pretty cool. Also, make the stairs so runners could use it going two stairs at a time up, so it will get better use. Also, maybe make it part of a loop where runners could make a nice up and down loop. Please make it nice, and keep it nice.
7. Student artwork from neighboring schools, community garden area around stairs
8. Community clean up effort along stairway and Henderson/Carkeek Dr. bi-annually. Once in the spring (Earth Day) and once in the fall.
9. No, these are all great ideas.

What concerns about the stairway design would you like to share?

1. I have a few concerns which is the safety and maintenance of the stairways and preventing illegal encampments and illegal dumping in the East Duwamish Greenbelt adjacent to the stair ways. I am hoping there will be clear city warning signs throughout the stairway that deters homeless encampments, loitering, and illegal dumping. Also, if possible, putting fake cameras in the stairways and putting a sign that says there is a video surveillance would be great since I believe we can't have real video cameras in public areas? Also, there is blind spot on the bottom of the stairway on S Henderson St before you get to 41st Ave S, and we were hoping coming with a way to warn cars from hitting pedestrians while they are coming down the stairs.
2. Adequate lighting and plant maintenance (pruning) to ensure safety.
3. Pedestrian safety, open sight-lines on connecting street corners.
4. There are some serious safety issues in the community such as homelessness and a very run down house, which are causing some neighbors to be very wary of the stairway project. Also, what is the lighting situation and will this impact any wildlife in the greenbelt.
5. Ensure it allows for connectivity to the trail through the green belt just north (ie, a gap in the railings so a path can connect the stairs and the trail). Concern for excessive lighting that can

impact wildlife - if installing lighting, use an approach that minimizes light pollution into the green belt.

6. Safety! It would be great if everyone felt safe using the stairs morning, day and night.
7. That it shouldn't go in.
8. Security is a big concern, given the proximity to gang related activity, and the economics of the area. This will be a blessing to me, but I want it to be safe for everyone.
9. What is the long-term projected upkeep of the area to the stairway and the stairway? Will the city be responsible for repairs and cleaning or will the community need to come together to contact the city for repairs/clean-up?
10. I would be curious to learn more about the bike ramp. See response to 14 for more detail.
11. none. i live about 5 doors down on 39th and am very excited for these stairs!
12. Design to limit litter and dumping
13. I think the stairway design is fine.
14. I hope that the city continues to maintain the stairway. Often communities of color get neglected after the project is done.

What other questions or concerns do you have about the project that we can work to answer or address as we move forward with the project?

1. There is a current drainage on the stair way area that starts on the top of the driveway for the house on 8838 39th Ave S. We would like to know what is going to be the plan for this since the drainage is buried inside the ground near the top of the stairway project near 39th Ave S.
2. Taking care of the homeless situation and the situation at 8655 Trenton would be paramount!
3. The south Beacon Hill area has second lowest crime in the city after Harbor Island, that's because there aren't any direct routes into this area, you have to want to get here and can't just wander into. With a direct route there will be some who want to explore a new area and cause trouble, from break-ins to graffiti which there isn't any currently. This area has never had a direct route off the hill and for safety sake it would be better if it doesn't go in.
4. Please be sure to work on the connection from the bottom of the stairs to the transit center. And please be sure to improve the walkway from Beacon Ave to the top of the stairs. Most people will access the top of the stairs from Beacon Ave, so the entire corridor must be included in the program. Thanks so MUCH!!! This is very exciting.

5. I am wondering what the city is doing to support community businesses around the Rainier Beach Light rail. Feels like more business around the light rail would support the community and connecting the two parts of the city.
6. Will there be additional lighting along the stairway and to and from the light rail? Will there be more of a police presence and monitoring of the homeless?
7. I would be curious to understand whether the bike ramp will be useful. Given that most riders may elect to ride up Carkeek, I wonder if this element of the stairs is beneficial and contributes to a high ROI. Is there a cost/benefit analysis for this element of the project? Could the cost of constructing this piece be utilized elsewhere?
8. I appreciated that the presentation included time to speak about the chop shop near the s Trenton st trail. I hope that there's a long time plan to keep the trail passable. It's been heartbreaking watching how that house has suddenly cut off access to community resource.

When walking near the study area, are there things about the pedestrian environment that you would like to see SDOT improve in the future?

1. If possible and I am not sure if this is part of the project already. Adding a seamless walkway from 39th Ave S to start of the stairway and the start of the bottom would be great. Also, if possible, having a sidewalk from the bottom of the stairways on S Henderson St near 41st to the Carkeek Dr S would be splendid.
2. I think we are still missing sidewalks in the Rainier Beach neighborhood.
3. Near the east end of stairs, at the intersection of Carkeek, Henderson, 41 & 42 Ave, I witness pedestrians are more likely than not to cross Henderson/Carkeek. As a neighbor I have witnessed cars routinely moving 45+ mph around the bend from Carkeek to Henderson. From the inside of that curve, a pedestrian is challenged to see oncoming vehicles. As a driver it is hard to see pedestrians coming out of "nowhere", i.e. the inside of that bend. I am ignorant of feasible remediation options, but I could imagine a crosswalk signal could help. Or physical barriers to deter pedestrian crossing? Or keeping connecting sidewalks clear enough of vegetation so as to give less resistance to using existing sidewalks?
4. 39th has no sidewalks and is much busier now that it is open to Cloverdale. Additionally, we are going to have a very large increase in population with the new town homes on Cloverdale. I could see that at least some of these people might be using the stairway for exercise, which I would consider a good thing.
5. Any chance you could put a gravel bike trail, or a bmx trail on the old beacon avenue easement going down the hill from the end of beacon to Carkeek parkway? Along the easement for the waterline? Maybe runners would use it as well. Thanks for doing this. This would be almost a direct connection from Benefit Park, to the transit station, or you could continue across carkeek, all the way to MLK, about a block south of the station.

6. Support community gardening of space for future, invest in plants to make it a pretty community area, provide benches and places to make it a welcoming space for people.
7. Where the street narrows, will there be a designated lane for pedestrians?
8. I would eventually like to see sidewalks constructed along S Fairbanks Street leading up to Henderson and the staircase. I understand these are currently not in the budget for this project.
9. I would love a sidewalk on 39th between beacon & cloverdale.
10. This area can be scary to walk in due to cars speeding on Henderson and 42nd ave s, and the lack of pedestrian visibility on 41st Ave s. It'll be important to maintain the work to improve visibility for pedestrians (sounded like the plan is to cut back the bramble on 41st - but this can't be a one time thing). Also, the lack of maintenance of the s Henderson st sidewalk is frustrating. The side walk is probably 5 feet wide yet most of the year only 2 feet is exposed if that. It's not possible with a stroller due to the mud. I fear that based on the lack of maintenance of other pedestrian infrastructure in the area that this stair way will also be neglected which is a shame because it's such a great connection for the neighborhood. The other issue we face throughout South Seattle is illegal dumping. The dumping in the chief sealth trail south of Henderson has made that area feel very unsafe and it would be sad if that were to happen to this stairway. Both Henderson and 42nd ave s have had frequent dumping, including the infamous pile of junk tied to a utility pole maneuver. All this to say thank you for reopening this important connection, but please implement plans to take care of the connection and increase care of South Seattle in general. Thank you!
11. There are no sidewalks, limited sight lines (turns and vegetation), and a single lane road between the bottom of the stairway and Carkeek Dr, so any effort to improve the pedestrian experience and safety would be relevant to making the stairway a success.
12. Maybe add sidewalks or some sort of beatification and remove bushes and stickers.
13. It would be great to make sure that there's enough light so that people can feel safe.

If you use a mobility device (scooter, stroller, wheelchair, etc.) near the study area, are there things that you would like to see SDOT improve in the future?

1. Yes, better maintenance on the sidewalk along Carkeek Drive. The sidewalk is always a mess, wet and covered with mud and debris. And people park cars on it sometimes, really irritating me, and making it muddier. Thanks.
2. Bike lane.
3. The Carkeek Drive & 41st bus stop does not have a landing for individuals dependent on a mobility device. I recently helped guide a woman in a mobility device who was waiting in the street at this bus stop. I guided her to the S. Henderson St & MLK bus stop as this was a safer option.

If you bike near the study area, are there things that you would like to see SDOT improve in the future?

1. Widen and repave the sidewalk up Carkeek from Henderson so slow moving cyclists can use it to ascend the hill and stay out of traffic. The "sharrows" on that narrow hill are worthless.
2. ramps over the curbs at various spots on carkeek parkway, so you can pedal up the sidewalk. I am too slow going up hills to stop traffic.
3. Bike lane on Henderson/Carkeek Dr. up to 39th as well as another sidewalk on the west side of Carkeek Dr. up to 39th.
4. I would appreciate a dedicated bike line up and down Carkeek that ultimately connects to the Beacon Ave bike line project.
5. we're very excited about the bike lane up beacon ave that is being worked on.
6. Anything SDOT can do to keep cars from speeding in this area would be great. Other than that-completing the chief sealth trail so that there's a continuous trail from mytle to the South 5.