

## What We Heard

### Stakeholder Interview Summary

February 2016

In January and February 2017, a series of stakeholder interviews were conducted as part of the consultant team's initial efforts to learn about challenges and opportunities regarding safety and access on Lake Forest Park streets. These interviews are helping inform the public outreach event on March 21. This document summarizes key ideas raised by multiple interviewees.

#### *Vehicle Conflicts with Pedestrians and Cyclists*

All the interviewees gave examples of locations where speeding, cut-through traffic, and/or insufficient pedestrian/bicycle amenities are creating conflicts between street users. Interviewees also noted roadway impediments such as overgrown vegetation and garbage bins, which affect pedestrian/cyclist safety and level of comfort. **NE 178<sup>th</sup> Street** was discussed by multiple interviewees. The sidewalk does not extend west past 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE to the city boundary, and speeding is a major issue given grade change and speed limit change from 30 miles per hour on the Shoreline side of 178<sup>th</sup> to 25 miles per hour on the Lake Forest Park side. It is viewed as one of the key street "spines" through town, and it will likely see more traffic as the region grows.

There were also numerous concerns raised regarding **NE Perkins Way**. Many cyclists use Perkins Way since it is a connection to the Interurban Trail, yet the street does not have a shoulder despite its many blind curves and hidden drives. Cars (and cyclists) speed due to the topography, which creates conflicts and dangerous situations.

**40<sup>th</sup> Place NE** was mentioned by a few interviewees due to its lack of sidewalks, vehicular speeding, and conflicts between users. It is a key street spine, and many use it to access Mountlake Terrace. Further, we heard that cars frequently run the stop signs at the intersection of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and NE 202<sup>nd</sup> Street. **NE 197<sup>th</sup> Street** sees a lot of speeding and lacks safe facilities for walking and cycling, despite its proximity to Horizon View Park and the reservoir. There are also conflicts between street users along **NE 184<sup>th</sup> Street** and **47<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE**, as there are no crosswalks or sidewalks despite grade issues and the presence of a school bus stop. Several interviewees noted that speeding is an issue on **55<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE**, though conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists are generally seen as less of an issue in this location.

#### *Safe Routes to School*

Numerous interviewees feel Safe Routes to School are a top priority. Lake Forest Park Elementary and Briarcrest Elementary<sup>1</sup> both have **Walking Wednesdays**, where parent volunteers walk students through the neighborhood to school. Sidewalks are missing for most of these routes, including on NE 195<sup>th</sup> Street, 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, 40<sup>th</sup> Place NE, NE 155<sup>th</sup>, 156<sup>th</sup>, and 163<sup>rd</sup> Streets, and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE. Crosswalks would also be helpful at crucial intersections.

Numerous students walk on **37<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE** to get to Brookside Elementary, but there are no sidewalks (except for a short segment directly across the street from the school). There have been a few "near misses" between cars and pedestrians, and the street gets very congested during drop-off/pick-up

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<sup>1</sup> Briarcrest is technically in Shoreline, but it has students who live in Lake Forest Park and is therefore important to consider.

times. Speeding has also been an issue, particularly between NE 156<sup>th</sup> and 169<sup>th</sup> Streets, and vehicles roll through stop signs at 165<sup>th</sup> and 162<sup>nd</sup> Streets, but there are fewer conflicts with pedestrians in this section because there are sidewalks. There are also concerns on 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE north of SR 104 near Lake Forest Park Elementary. The street gets very congested during drop-off/pick-up times, which results in illegal and unsafe driving behavior in close proximity to students and student crossing guards.

There were also concerns about **NE 160<sup>th</sup> Street**. While the Police Department does not view speeding as a chronic issue on this street, vehicle speeds are a key concern for many community members, especially after a pedestrian was killed on 160<sup>th</sup> between 34<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenues in 2016. We heard requests for sidewalks, better lighting, traffic calming measures, and a reduced speed limit on 160<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Accessing the Burke-Gilman Trail, Transit, and Other Amenities*

Another top priority for interviewees is providing better pedestrian and cyclist access to popular amenities like the shopping center, Burke-Gilman trail, public transit stops, parks, and more. As one interviewee put it, Lake Forest Park's streets should be "the string connecting the pearls." Lake Forest Park's winding streets and hilly topography make this difficult, but it is critical to have designated routes connecting destinations with adequate lighting, pedestrian amenities (such as sidewalks or trails), and carefully considered crosswalks. Lake Forest Park has many cul-de-sacs and dead end streets, such as 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, which may provide opportunities for pedestrian and cyclist trail connections paired with quiet residential streets.

When developing potential solutions, it will be essential to consider accessibility for all – cyclists, kids going to school, individuals with disabilities, etc. It is hard for people in wheelchairs and parents pushing strollers to navigate Lake Forest Park streets, and even if there are sidewalks, many are narrow and hard to maneuver. This should be addressed.

#### *Balancing Different Visions for Lake Forest Park*

Interviewees pointed out that residents have conflicting visions for Lake Forest Park. Some residents were drawn to Lake Forest Park because of the quiet, residential character of its streets. They do not necessarily want sidewalks and streetlights. Other residents want a safe place to walk their dog, ride a bike, or push a stroller, and are comfortable with some change in character if it accomplishes these goals. It will be important to find common ground among these different, equally valid visions.

#### *Traffic Calming*

Most interviewees expressed an interest in implementing traffic calming projects in targeted locations. Some of the ideas mentioned include: reducing speed limits (citywide or in strategic locations), converting two-way streets to one-way streets, chicanes, speed bumps, and blocking off certain streets to through traffic. Further discussion is needed to determine which traffic calming measures are appropriate for specific locations, but traffic calming measures in a general sense were supported.

#### *Respecting the Environment*

A few interviewees mentioned the importance of prioritizing eco-friendly projects. Lake Forest Park has numerous creeks, and future projects should respect the creeks and minimize runoff.