Washington State Department of Transportation

Breakout Sessions: People-Centered Analysis and Advisory Group Input

Introduction

WSDOT's I-90 Judkins Park Station – Reconnecting Communities Study Advisory Group gathered for meeting #4 on November 13, 2025. A recording of this meeting on the project webpage: I-90 Judkins Park Station – Reconnecting Communities | WSDOT.

During this meeting, a breakout room activity was used to collect feedback from advisory group members. The breakout room sessions were not recorded to allow participants to speak freely about their experiences. Major themes are captured below.

WSDOT is studying reconfiguring the I-90 ramps at Rainier Avenue South to enhance comfort and lower stress of active transportation users. The project team is evaluating four alternatives. Each alternative is being scored based on how different ramp designs and accompanying design elements (like crossing distance, signal timing, etc.) improve comfort and safety for people who walk, bike or roll. To do this, WSDOT has created "personas" to think about groups of people, developed from assessment of the community and feedback, that have specific experiences.

Personas are not mutually exclusive, and a single person may identify with multiple personas. The study team is utilizing the personas to remain grounded in real experiences and to check if the scoring of alternatives truly reflects how people move and feel in the Judkins Park area.

In meeting #4 of the Advisory Group, members were asked to consider the unique experiences and needs of five different "personas:"

1. A person traveling by cargo e-bike.
2. A group of teens traveling to an after-school program.
3. A person with a visual impairment.
4. A person who uses a mobility assistive device.
5. A person traveling who is an English Language Learner.

The group broke up into facilitated breakout rooms, in which they were asked questions.

Breakout room activity

Advisory group members were asked to join one of six breakout rooms based on their priorities: first discussing the persona about which they felt most strongly, then their second priority persona, and finally their third priority persona. Each discussion round approximately lasted

eight minutes. A facilitator and notetaker were assigned to each room to capture participants' insights about the needs of these community members.

The following summary captures the key themes, concerns and recommendations that emerged from these breakout room discussions.

Room 1

Topic: A person travelling by cargo e-bike

Facilitator: Craig Schoenberg

Themes:

- **Infrastructure and lane design**
  - Support for designated bike lanes, including bike signals and barriers from other vehicles.
  - Support for clear signage and marking, letting people know which group of travelers should be in each lane.
  - Support for more user-friendly curb ramp designs.
- **Safety considerations**
  - Some recently constructed bike lanes are not wide enough for cargo bikes to navigate, resulting in riders needing to use the general-purpose lane, which can irritate vehicle operators.
  - Cargo bikes often carry kids.
  - Rainier Avenue South feels unpleasant and unsafe for all transportation modes.
  - Support for better street lighting.
  - Concerns about the sharpness of turns and having enough time available to make turns.
  - Support for design that encourages people to come to a full stop at intersections and when entering the road.
- **Route selection and connectivity**
  - Support for a protected bike lane between the new light rail station and the nearby Mountains to Sound trail.
  - When choosing a route, a preference for a route with fewer crossings.
  - A preference for a trail that goes through a park.
  - Preference to avoid riding bikes on city roads unless there are a lot of bike protections.
- **Station access and parking**
  - Support for designated rental scooter and bike parking areas to decrease the number of bikes and scooters that are left randomly about.
  - When taking a cargo bike to the train station, there are considerations such as how to lock it up, where to store it or how it might fit in an elevator.
- **Maintenance**
  - Support for keeping landscaping and vegetation clear of travel ways.

Room 2

Topic: A group of pre-teens and teens travelling to an after school program

Facilitator: Amber Stanley

Themes:

- **Situational awareness and behavior**
    - Teens do not always have good situational awareness because they are focused on their friends, headphones, phones or other distractions.
    - Planning should consider that there is no "perfect pedestrian," and teens are often not perfect pedestrians.
    - Becoming independent is an important part of being a teenager. It is great to see people in this area walking around freely and feeling safe, but it is also important to remember that teens may not be as vigilant about safety concerns.
    - Some safety concerns about teen behavior include fights, running across ramps, walking in large groups on narrow sidewalks and too many people riding together on one scooter.
- **Crosswalk design and timing**
    - Wider crosswalks would allow more space for groups of teens who tend to walk four or five across. Greater and more obvious separation would also make it less dangerous, preventing one or two steps from putting someone in the line of traffic.
    - The go/no-go decision for traffic and pedestrians can be challenging. Countdown timers on crosswalks or other tools might encourage teens not to start crossing if there is not enough time to make it across the street.
- **Visibility and wayfinding**
    - Good lighting and visibility are important, including:
        - Flashing signals so it is clear who is present and crossing the street.
        - Signs that give adequate warning about upcoming obstacles such as construction.
        - Clear directions so people know what is in the area and how to get there.
        - Intuitive design so signs are not as necessary to safely navigate the area.
        - Clear sightlines so younger/smaller children can also be seen.
- **Gathering spaces and destinations**
    - Teens will gather at restaurants and food locations, at parks or open spaces or anywhere there is a comfortable nook to gather.
    - Popular gathering spaces for teens in the area include Tosho’s, The Bouldering Project, Amazon Fresh, area schools and the many local services in the area.
    - This is a very active neighborhood.
- **Route selection**
    - Weather may impact which routes teens choose. For example, nicer weather may encourage more bike or scooter use.
    - People may also choose routes based on accessibility, efficiency or even which way is more visually appealing/prettier.
- **Transit and multi-modal connections**
    - Many teens rely on transit.
    - The transit system can be difficult to understand. There could be better ways to make sure people know where stops are located or how to navigate between mobility options.
- **Driver education**

    - Teens are new drivers. Using tools that encourage good driving behavior is also important.

Room 3

Topic: A person with visual impairment

Facilitator: Randi Eseltine

Themes:

- **Safety concerns**
    - Freeway ramps on Rainier do not have pedestrian signals and are unsafe to navigate.
    - The Judkins Park station currently feels too dangerous for some users to access by walking due to how the current crossings are set up.
    - "Slow down" signs in bike lanes may be ineffective. Physical cues such as textured or bumpy bike surfaces may be more effective at encouraging users to reduce speed.
    - Planners do not always consider users who have both vision and hearing impairments.
- **Challenges for people with limited field of vision.**
    - Safety and navigation are critical for deaf-blind travelers.

  Some obstacles that exist for people who have a limited field of vision include:
    - Harder to see at night or in low-contrast lighting.
    - Harder to anticipate and navigate for fast-moving travelers on sidewalks, such as people going by on bikes or scooters.
    - Harder to see and navigate around unexpected obstacles, such as bikes or scooters that are left haphazardly in the walkway.
    - Harder to detect who is nearby and may have decreased feelings of personal safety.
- **Tactile wayfinding and navigation**
    - Support for adding detectable tactile trail indicators along the Mountain to Sound trail for navigation and separation from bikes.
    - Support for tactile textures on the ground for navigation.
    - Support for universally accessible wayfinding.
    - Request for corrals to park bikes and scooters, with a cane-detectable boundary.
    - Key elements include seamless connectivity between different modes of transportation, consistently accessible crossing at intersections, clearly defined sidewalks and enhanced tactile methods.
- **Visual and audio needs**
    - Support for good lighting, with consideration for people who have limited fields of vision and illumination to highlight what is directly ahead when traveling along pathways.
    - Support for including high-contrasting colors to delineate spaces for different travel modes and making separations as strong as possible.
    - Visual cues at crossings are important.

    - Audio signals and prompts should be clear, and highway noise can interfere with these cues. Reducing ambient traffic noise, if possible, would improve safety and comfort.
- **Intersection design**
    - Support for all intersections having accessible pedestrian signals and appropriate curb ramp configurations, guiding people directly into the crosswalks.
    - Support for pedestrian-only spaces at the entrance points of the station.
    - Suggestion to look at Vancouver's shared-space design models for inspiration.
- **Route selection and pathway design**
    - Visually impaired users may be more comfortable taking consistent, familiar routes and suggested ways to identify preferred paths with short and direct crossings.
    - Keeping obstacles clear from pathways is important, including poles, columns, utility or signal equipment or abrupt changes in elevation.
    - Adequate width is essential for safety and maneuverability.
    - Buffers between pedestrians, bike lanes and roadways help create a clear separation between the different modes of transportation.

Room 4

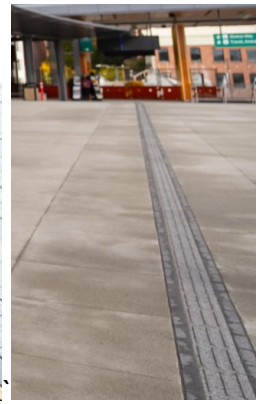
Topic: A person who uses a mobility assistive device

Facilitator: Apri Delchamps

Themes:

- **ADA compliance and accessibility standards**
    - It is important that sidewalks meet ADA compliance, including:
        - Ramps.
        - Cross slope (how steep a sidewalk or curb ramp is)
        - Wide enough walkways.
        - Long enough timers.
        - Appropriate physical barriers.
        - Clear, visible signs/markings.
- **Maintenance and wayfinding**
    - It is important to keep cones and signs up to date and accurate, unlike some areas where it seems the project work is complete, but materials have been left behind.
    - Support for wayfinding, especially maps or signs that do not require using a phone or a QR code and using large fonts and graphics that are easy to see.
    - There are commercial changes south of Massachusetts, and it would be helpful for people to know there are businesses located in with the apartment complexes there.
    - Drainage is an important consideration, so people aren't getting splashed or slipping on ice.
- **Design**
    - Lighting and visibility
    - Good lighting is important.

    - Support for sidewalks with grooves that mark the path and run the full length of the sidewalk. Photos below were shared as examples:



    - Support for more Rainier crossings with signals so people don't have to travel as far down the street before they have an opportunity to get to the other side.
    - It is important that people know where they can cross the street.
- **Parking and drop-off areas**
    - Support for increased parking of Rainier Avenue South for residents and their families, friends or car services as part high density buildings– areas where residents can safely get in and out of vehicles without blocking traffic.
    - Rest areas and amenities
    - Support for increased seating along Rainier, giving people a place to rest along this long street.
- **Key destinations and other insights**
    - Some destinations in the area include the museum, community center, pickleball courts, restaurants and other food stops.
    - Small children and pets also live and play in this area.

Room 5

Topic: A person traveling who does not speak English as their first language

Facilitator: Fred Young

Themes:

- **Different groups of English language learners**
    - We identified 2 primary groups of English language learners:
        - There are people learning English who live in, or frequent the study area.
        - There are people learning English who are visiting from overseas.
        - There may be groups.
    - Each of these groups have different needs in terms of navigating.
- **Transit accessibility**
    - Transit is a great option because it is intuitive and easy to use.
- **Signage and wayfinding design**
    - Clarity of information, remove redundant information: It is important to have good signage, with fewer words and more graphics or universal symbols that cross

language barriers and a clear design for wayfinding. Too many signs in one place can be confusing for everyone.
    - Consistent wayfinding system is important for all people to access information. Using consistent color and symbols on maps and signs help users identify and follow a route.
    - Large transit system maps, with landmarks help people orient themselves.
    - Legibility of the built environment is helpful to identify appropriate crossing locations, and other features like bike lanes, transit stops, and bus lanes. Standard materials and details contribute to legibility.
    - Landmarks help with navigation.
    - Technology is helpful but can't be the only solution. A phone app is not always a helpful tool for wayfinding. Having physical timetables or maps can be really helpful for English-language learners and older adults.
    - Sometimes digital resources, like QR code maps, are helpful because links can go to translated pages.
- **Information access and placement**
    - Providing wayfinding information in predictable locations improves accessibility and usability for all.
    - It might be helpful to have an information booth or a location that makes it easy to find out where to find information about the area.
- **Key destinations**
    - Northwest African American Museum and schools are important destinations in the area. There will likely be a lot of people renting rooms for soccer/the World Cup.
- **Route selection**
    - People tend to choose routes that are the shortest and safest. When there are conflicts, like a lot of cars, people may choose to take a different way.
- **Intersectionality considerations**
    - It is important to consider that English-language learners may also be elderly or have other accessibility challenges.

Room 6

Topic: Other considerations (wild card)

Facilitator: Scott Sawyer

Themes:

- **Pedestrian behavior considerations**
    - There are no "perfect" pedestrians, and people do not always follow the rules.
    - It will be nice if people are encouraged to take transit or find other ways to get to where they need to go, rather than causing congestion in the neighborhood.
- **Lighting improvements**
    - Support for improved lighting.
    - The new housing buildings are taller and cast shadows.
    - It gets dark early in the winter.
- **Crossing safety and signage**

    - Clear signs would be useful to help people know where they can cross Rainier Avenue South.
    - It is important to consider that Rainier Avenue South is an important route for many people.
- **Neighborhood growth and development**
    - There is a lot of new commercial space opening up with new apartments in the area.

Other personas to consider

- **People experiencing homelessness**
    - It is important to consider safety regarding the population of people who are homeless in the area.
    - There are several centers in the area that provide services.
    - The homeless population includes youth or other groups who may be in the area for services, as well as those who live in the large encampment area in the neighborhood.
    - People may not be looking at signs or watching traffic.
    - Homeless people are our neighbors, too. How can we create space that is safe for them?
    - There are also people who are spending time in the area and may be preying on a vulnerable population, for example, selling drugs.
    - Shelter areas that protect crossings should be safe for pedestrians, without inviting people to linger, which could encourage people to cross in other places.
- **Other active users**
    - Rollerbladers and skaters use the parks and travel around in this area.
- **Children and youth safety**
    - There are a lot of young kids playing in this area, and many of them may be unsupervised.
    - There is an elementary and a middle school in the area.
    - Kids are shorter and might not be as visible.
    - Kids may be on bikes or scooters.
- **Older adults**
    - Older citizens should be considered when designing this area.
    - There are active senior community centers at South Massachusetts Street and 23rd Avenue South and north of South Jackson Street, off of 23rd Avenue South.
    - Fast-moving traffic can be dangerous for people who may not be able to move as quickly.
- **Workers and visitors**
    - There are people who do not live in the area who may not have access to transit.
    - People who are working in the area may be walking around to find lunch or other services around their working hours.
    - There are people who work in the neighborhood who need to park their cars, and parking is limited, especially for people who have to be parked all day and do not qualify for local, residential parking permits.