



NE 8th St

Walking Audits

Informed by our community

Written by Christopher Randels

Photos by Caitlin Whitehead



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Land Acknowledgement | 3 |
| A Letter of Thanks & Hope | 3 |
| Background | 5 |
| Timeline & Outreach | 6 |
| Participants | 7 |
| 15-Minute Cities | 9 |
| Observations | 10 |
| Monday, March 8 th 148 th Ave NE to 156 th Ave NE Healthcare | 11 |
| Wednesday, March 10 th 140 th Ave NE to 143 rd Ave NE Schools | 17 |
| Saturday, March 13 th 156 th Ave NE to Crossroads Park Errands | 23 |
| Appendix | 29 |
| Footnotes | 30 |
| About the Photographer | 30 |
| Data Collection Forms | 31 |

Previous, left: This sidewalk at the intersection of NE 8th St & 148th Ave NE is immediately adjacent to high-speed traffic.

Previous, right: Participants assemble for a group photo before our final walking audit.

Below, left: Our group waits for a walk signal at 140th Ave NE.

Below, right: Several intersections along NE 8th St, like this one at 158th Pl NE, do not have crosswalks on all sides.



Land Acknowledgement

Complete Streets Bellevue acknowledges that our members are on the Indigenous Land of Coast Salish peoples who have reserved treaty rights to this land, which include (but are not limited to) the Duwamish (dx^wdawʔabš) and Snoqualmie Indian Tribe (sduk^walbix^w). We thank these caretakers of this land who have lived, and continue to live, here since time immemorial. We commit to care for this land and center equity at the core of our actions.

A Letter of Thanks & Hope

To Bellevue Transportation staff, city leaders, and our community:

It is no secret that Bellevue is a city that was built for and designed around the personal car. The wide arterials through our Downtown, the sprawling & meandering roads that adorn our subdivisions, and the urban highways connecting us to our region all are remnants of intentional policy decisions that based our city's transportation and land use around every resident owning their very own automobile. For a significant portion of the 20th century, this appeared to be the logical choice - residents would have the freedom to get where they wanted, when they wanted, while supporting the economic growth of the Puget Sound region.

However, our city has since learned that this automobile dependence has come at an immense cost to our environment, our health, and our society. As our planet continues to warm due to rising carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, the link between automobile usage and rising temperatures has become clear as day. In Bellevue, nearly 45% of our emissions come from transportation, and emissions from personal automobiles comprise the largest portion of this sector. Our city, like many others around the country, is facing a road safety crisis unlike anything we've seen - 30 people were seriously injured or killed on Bellevue roads in 2019, the most in more than a decade. Because this traffic violence disproportionately impacts seniors, people with disabilities, and people of color, our current auto-dominated transportation system further perpetuates historical inequities. And it's become abundantly clear how our city's wide roadways impede good urban design & features that could contribute to a unique sense of place and building of community.

Our city's transportation system often gets a bad reputation among regional urbanists and safe streets advocates because people see our roads & communities for what they *are* and not for what they *can be*. People see the legacies of decades of policy choices and not the current actions of city staff and leaders who are working to make the situation better. And there's certainly a lot to be excited about in Bellevue! Between 2017 and 2019, nearly 45 miles of bicycle facilities and over 10 miles of pedestrian facilities were added throughout the city. With dedicated funding from the 2016

Transportation levy and new funds from the Vision Zero and Growth Corridor Bike Network CIP items, these numbers are sure to continue & grow well into the future.

“The lessons learned here must be remembered and applied citywide as soon as possible.”

The existence of this Road Safety Analysis (RSA) report is proof of the meaningful improvements that Bellevue Transportation staff members are undertaking to reduce danger for people using our city’s transportation system. NE 8th St is by far Bellevue’s most dangerous road - three people have died on or at NE 8th St in a 15-month period - and this work that transportation staff are undertaking meets the urgency of this crisis.

Complete Streets Bellevue wants to recognize & thank the staff who are working tirelessly to make our city a better & safer place for us all to get around. We cannot express enough gratitude for the chance to lead this important outreach opportunity, but we hope to repay this generosity by providing valuable community feedback that meaningfully contributes to safer road design. Thanks also go to the over 20 community members, including representatives from organizations like Disability Mobility Initiative, Feet First, and Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association (GRTMA), who shared their values, experiences, and opinions with us. Our organization could not have done this work without you.

This work is invaluable & important, but it must be the first step in a larger transformation of how Bellevue designs its roadways. Community members frequently noted issues that were outside the study area, or shared how the dangers they saw reminded them of conditions in other parts of the city. *NE 8th St is not the only unsafe street in Bellevue* - for this RSA to truly be effective, the lessons learned here must be remembered and applied citywide as soon as possible. Our city’s Vision Zero Strategic Plan rightly recognizes that a systemic approach is required to reach zero deaths and serious injuries by 2030 - and systemic changes, by definition, will require changes to the whole system. We know the process will be long & difficult, but our organization and our members are excited and optimistic for what the future brings.

Our deepest gratitude,





Background

Left: The group for Saturday's Errands walk met under the southern pavilion at Crossroads Park.

Right: NE 8th St and surrounding streets like 156th Ave NE are well-traveled transit corridors.

Timeline & Outreach

The observations collected in this report are the product of several weeks of preparation, planning, advertising, outreach, and collaboration with many organizations & community leaders throughout the Eastside. Shortly after CSB was formally founded in November of 2020, our organization laid groundwork for this project by lobbying Bellevue City Councilmembers to expedite funding for the Vision Zero Tactical Improvement CIP budget item.¹ Bellevue City Council's passage of the 2021-2022 biennium budget and Councilmember Zahn's introduction of an amendment to begin Vision Zero funding in 2021 are what ultimately made this work possible. We'd therefore like to express our deepest gratitude to Council for showing leadership by supporting this crucial funding, and to our community for organizing around this important issue.

On January 29th, Complete Streets Bellevue was contacted by Bellevue Transportation staff to inform us of an upcoming RSA for 116th Ave NE between Main St and NE 12th St (0.75 miles in length). Staff expressed their desire for CSB to lead community walking audits along this corridor. These events would provide the community an opportunity to identify dangers & problems they encounter day-to-day on the corridor, observations that would help ground the engineers and staff members who would later look at the road's safety from a more technical view.

Outreach began in earnest to advertise our organization's original event planned for Saturday, February 20th along the corridor, but city staff informed us on February 9th that they would be shifting the RSA's focus from 116th Ave NE to NE 8th St between 140th Ave NE and 164th Ave NE (1.5 miles in length). Our organization was able to pivot quickly by cancelling our original event and expanding it to three shorter walks in March, both to allow people more opportunities to participate and to split the now longer corridor into smaller, more manageable segments. Additionally, feedback from a core team of passionate CSB members led to the addition of a thematic element to each walk that would ground our group's observations and feedback. By taking advantage of features & establishments along particular sections of the corridor, our group was able to direct conversations around concrete problems and barriers that people would face as they go about their day-to-day lives while walking, biking, rolling, or taking transit on the corridor. The chosen themes and event details are below:

- ▶ Monday, March 8th, 6:00 - 7:00 pm - Healthcare - 148th Ave NE to 156th Ave NE
- ▶ Wednesday, March 10th, 3:00 - 4:00 pm - Schools - 140th Ave NE to 143rd Ave NE
- ▶ Saturday, March 13th, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm - Errands - 156th Ave NE to Crossroads Park

Once dates were chosen and routes were decided, our organization's leaders worked to advertise the events through multiple formats throughout the community. Outreach included:

- ▶ Regular posts on CSB's social media pages (Facebook & Twitter)
- ▶ Information in CSB's regular newsletters
- ▶ Signs along the study corridor with registration link
- ▶ Publicized through street advocacy orgs & their newsletters (Feet First, Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association, Cascade Bicycle Club)
- ▶ Contacts and/or meetings with environmental, safety, and equity organizations:
 - 4Tomorrow
 - 350 Eastside
 - Cascade Bicycle Club
 - Chinese Information & Services Center (CISC)
 - Congregations for the Homeless
 - Disability Mobility Initiative
 - Eastside for All
 - Feet First
 - Greater Redmond Transportation Management Association (GRTMA)
 - Indian Association of Western Washington (IAWW)
 - Indivisible Eastside
 - Transit Riders Union

Although there is more outreach our organization could have conducted in-person to support more input from diverse communities (more information in the *Participants* section below), our leadership team appreciates how our wide net enabled us to capture perspectives from residents & community leaders with diverse perspectives & backgrounds.

Participants

Our organization counted 25 attendees across all three events, with three people attending more than one walking audit. Monday's evening walk was the most well-attended, with nine community members participating (including two representatives from GRTMA). Both Wednesday and Saturday's events were attended by eight people; on Wednesday, our group was joined by representatives from Disability Mobility Initiative and Feet First, and Bellevue City Councilmember Janice Zahn joined our group's final event on Saturday.

Although formal demographic & geographic data was not collected, anecdotally participants stemmed from all corners of Bellevue - from Newport Hills to Crossroads to Downtown and many more neighborhoods in



Left: Our group assembles near the Bellevue Aquatic Center before we embarked on our Wednesday walk, *Schools*. Members of several community organizations, like 350 Eastside, Eastside DSA, and Indivisible Eastside, attended at least one walk.

between. Several participants also had advocacy experience in other different but adjacent progressive policy areas (e.g. environmental stewardship, racial justice, etc.) and were interested in the intersections between their respective fields and safe streets advocacy. This diversity of perspectives enriched our observations and helped ensure we thought about our observations from multiple angles of impact.

One caveat of our findings is that participants across the three walking audits were not demographically representative of Bellevue's diversity. Although 50% of Bellevue's population is nonwhite, the overwhelming majority of participants across all three audits were white. As noted in the previous section, CSB reached out to several organizations and groups which directly serve Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) groups and other communities that have historically left out of transportation decisions. Several legitimate concerns were raised surrounding the risk of in-person gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as immediate economic challenges & hardships these communities were facing as a result of pandemic shutdowns.

Our organization recognizes the challenges present in this unique moment in history and will continue to build authentic relationships with these groups so that we can support their missions and visions for a safe, sustainable, and equitable Bellevue. As our society comes out on the other side of the COVID-19 crisis, our organization looks forward to initiating in-person engagement that meets underserved communities where they are at and truly centers their voices as we build a better transportation system that works for all of us.

15-Minute Cities

In addition to noting safety issues and collecting feedback on the corridor, our organization saw these audits as a unique opportunity to educate community members on the policy intersections between planning, land use, and transportation. Recently, the “15-Minute City” paradigm has gathered salience amongst the general public - the idea that day-to-day basic needs (grocery stores, doctors’ offices, employment centers, recreational opportunities, etc.) should be accessible to residents within a 15-minute trip by walking, biking, or taking transit. This vision is achieved through a combination of robust & connected pedestrian, cyclist, and transit networks alongside dense land uses to facilitate proximity of diverse destination types.

The term has even become popular with several Bellevue City Councilmembers, which suggests that this paradigm will inform their deliberations around land use and transportation going forward. Because of the concept’s importance in local discourse, our organization felt it prudent to ground each of our events’ discussions in a brief introduction of the concept, its benefits to safety, sustainability, and equity, and how our efforts facilitated but one part of a larger, planning-oriented equation that needs to be addressed to realize the concept’s vision. Our organization encouraged interested participants to continue to follow local transportation issues, but also advocated that they focus attention & support on the broader land use reform required to make Bellevue a true 15-Minute City.



Left: Participants rest & discuss what they’ve seen at the intersection of NE 8th St & 156th Ave NE. Crossroads is a dense, mixed-use neighborhood with nearby access to shops, schools, parks, and residences. Safe & protected infrastructure for people walking, biking, and rolling would help unlock this neighborhood’s potential to be a true 15-Minute City. However, Bellevue must ensure that these improvements do not lead to gentrification that displaces low-income or minority communities.



Observations

Left: Our group crosses the intersection of NE 8th St & 158th Pl NE during the final walking audit, *Errands*.

Right: We took some time while waiting for the walk signal at 148th Ave NE to discuss signal & crosswalk timing.

Monday, March 8th

148th Ave NE to 156th Ave NE

Healthcare

Our group gathered shortly before 6:00 pm at the northeast corner of NE 8th St & 156th Ave NE. This particular corner serves not just an entryway to the densest portion of the Crossroads neighborhood, but rather is also home to a local branch of the Washington State Department of Social & Human Services (DSHS). In addition to other topics, DSHS branches provide information for those seeking behavioral health, long-term caretaking, and food assistance services. Since this walking audit was themed around the experience of local residents accessing their day-to-day healthcare needs, the Crossroads DSHS branch was an ideal starting point for our group's discussion.



Left: Event facilitator Chris Randels explains the format of the feedback questionnaires before the walk begins. For the materials used for each walk, please consult the Appendix.

To ground our observations in the real-world issues that people might encounter as they're walking, biking, or taking transit, participants shared stories of navigating to healthcare appointments without a car. Several group members had never traveled to such appointments without an automobile, and those that had encountered difficulties that made the trips unsafe or stressful. One participant from Redmond noted the challenges in relying on public transportation to get to appointments on time - because her route required a transfer that could have been missed if the first bus was even a couple of minutes late, she was required to leave much earlier for her appointment than she would've needed to by car. Another participant, an avid cyclist, noted the general lack of safe cycling infrastructure near the Overlake Hospital campus. He felt comfortable riding to his appointment because he is young, healthy, and

an experienced rider, but we noted how the lack of safe infrastructure can preclude people who don't fulfill these criteria from feeling comfortable or safe riding to such appointments. Another participant shared experiences of her low-vision friend, who was not in attendance but had had dangerous encounters with cars nearly colliding with her in crosswalks in the Crossroads neighborhood. These examples served as sobering reminders that we need walking, biking, and transit infrastructure that 1) provides as much convenience as possible relative to that of the automobile, and 2) is safe enough to be used by people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

A cacophony of vehicle noises was a loyal backdrop to our group's walk throughout the evening. During our pre-walk discussion, several participants found it hard to hear other speakers, and people often had to repeat their points during the walk to make sure they were heard by the group. The noise was very clearly due to the road design of NE 8th St and 156th Ave NE - because each were five lanes wide with speed limits of 35 and 30 mph respectively, the rush of vehicles constantly moving at speeds often higher than those posted was a source of great discomfort. One participant used an app on her phone to measure the decibel level as we started our walk westward along the north side of NE 8th St and recorded a value of 86 dB. This is very close to noise levels that, with prolonged exposure, can cause hearing damage.²

Also immediately evident on this section of roadway were the lack of safe & protected bicycle facilities, meaning we encountered several cyclists who were required to share the limited sidewalk space with pedestrians. In addition to creating unsafe conflict points between pedestrians and cyclists, sidewalk riding creates more dangerous conflict points with cars at driveways. Several driveways along the route already had limited visibility due to limited lighting (more evident as the evening progressed), vegetation, signage, or other obstructions, but this danger is often not as pronounced for pedestrians because they are moving at slower speeds and more likely to be seen by drivers. Because cyclists are often traveling at faster speeds, it is more readily possible that cars pulling out of driveways might not see them until it is too late. Placing safe & protected bicycle facilities on the roadway would therefore have numerous benefits: such facilities would 1) reduce conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists, 2) provide more time for cyclists to be seen by drivers, since the former group would now be more visible in the roadway, and 3) reduce street noise by decreasing both the available vehicle lanes (decreasing traffic and therefore traffic noise) and naturally calming the roadway to encourage lower speeds.

As we continued westward along the north side of the roadway, we noticed a couple of points where overhanging vegetation could provide discomfort or obstructions for pedestrians. Immediately west of 153rd Pl NE, one group member noted the spiny leaves of some Oregon grape plants were overhanging



Far Left: Overgrown vegetation overhangs the sidewalk by approximately 2 feet and is at face-level for most adults. Low-vision pedestrians might run into these obstructions without seeing them.

Left: Our group, even walking just two abreast, occupied the entire sidewalk and made it difficult for other sidewalk users to pass us.

the sidewalk. At another point west of 151st Pl NE, the tops of some cypress shrubs had grown such that portions above approximately five feet high were overhanging the sidewalk by two feet or more. Although both occurrences could be avoided by pedestrians moving to the other side of the sidewalk, these issues serve to reduce the effective width of the sidewalk, which can cause difficulties when multiple people are walking together. These issues could be solved through multiple methods, including 1) regular maintenance of vegetation to ensure it doesn't obstruct the sidewalk, and 2) choosing native vegetation that will require less maintenance and present fewer sharp edges that could injure pedestrians.

From the onset of our walk, our group had noticed how the sidewalk's narrowness (approximately 6 feet) would create difficulties when pedestrians heading in opposite directions would need to pass each other (especially in the socially-distant times of COVID-19). However, the conflict became most pronounced when, as we neared 148th Ave, a jogger heading in the opposite direction was required to head several feet into the roadway to maintain a safe distance from our group. Although he was running in the direction of oncoming traffic and thus was able to safely assess for himself that there was no danger in doing so, the fact that he would not have been able to safely pass our group without doing so speaks to the importance of having wide enough pedestrian facilities to accommodate bidirectional flow. The time where social distancing is required will soon be gone, but many sidewalks in Bellevue, including the ones on this portion of NE 8th St, are currently not wide enough to accommodate comfortable passing under even normal circumstances.

In addition to highlighting the importance of sidewalk width for pedestrian comfort, this walk also displayed how wide vegetative buffers can contribute to a safer walking & rolling experience. Heading westward from 156th Ave NE, we noticed how the buffer decreased in width from 2 feet to 1 foot to entirely

disappearing as our group approached 148th Ave NE. Although the lack of a buffer near 148th Ave enables a wider sidewalk, it leaves pedestrians immediately beside cars that are often reaching their highest speeds as they reach the bottom of a large hill. If larger vehicles have objects that extend slightly beyond the roadway (e.g. mirrors from trucks or buses), it's possible that pedestrians walking with traffic could be hit without seeing any danger coming. Additionally, our group saw how vegetative buffers really only provide protection if they are filled with vegetation; in several sections where the buffer was only one foot wide, there was no vegetation present and/or soil had been stripped away from the area, creating an uneven surface with the rest of the sidewalk. This uneven surface presents a legitimate stumbling hazard for pedestrians, who at best might end up with scraped hands and at worst could fall into high-speed traffic. Regular maintenance of these buffers, planting & maintaining native vegetation that provides actual protection for pedestrians, and (if possible) widening these buffers to increase the distance between pedestrians and vehicular traffic would all work to improve safety.



The intersection of NE 8th St & 148th Ave NE served not just as the halfway mark for our journey, but also as a nexus of several larger issues surrounding walkability and safety on this corridor. Because this intersection is a meeting point of two major vehicular thoroughfares, signal times are structured to maximize vehicular throughput. This comes at the cost of pedestrians' time, since they must often wait several minutes through the complete signal cycle before they receive permission to cross. Additionally, pressing the beg button even a few seconds after the vehicle traffic going in the same direction has been given a green light will often not grant pedestrians a walk signal, even if there is enough time in the cycle for a pedestrian to safely cross. Finally,

crossing the multiple lanes of 148th Ave NE illustrated to our group how, once pedestrians are given the walk signal, we are not given enough time to cross comfortably or safely - all of our group was still tens of feet from the opposite sidewalk when the signal count reached zero. Although this intersection does see significant vehicle traffic, this should not negate the importance of or overly inconvenience the several pedestrians we saw along our walk who were traveling in all directions. This intersection has several establishments, including reproductive healthcare, a supplement store, a podiatrist, and many others, that can provide important healthcare services to local residents - readjusting signal and crosswalk timing to be more comfortable and accommodating for people of all mobility levels should therefore be a priority for improvements to this corridor.

Left: Portions of the buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway were void of vegetation and soil, which created lips in the sidewalk that people could easily trip over. With cars frequently traveling in excess of 40 mph on this corridor, tripping into the roadway would be a dangerous safety hazard.

Our group congregated at the northwest corner of the intersection to discuss what we had observed thus far. Because of the overall hostility of the corridor towards pedestrians, our group discussed the role that private partnerships can play in improving neighborhood walkability. Although outside the scope of this Road Safety Analysis, several group members noted how a walkway between the residential properties on the north side of NE 8th St could provide a safer & more secluded alternative that would protect people from the noise and danger of the roadway. Additionally, participants noticed the lack of pedestrian connections between the sidewalk and the plaza on the northwest corner; people accessing these establishments would need to either cut through dirt and vegetation or travel further westwards to enter at the driveway and then double back to their destination. Although our group is by no means composed of experts in land use policy, all group members supported finding ways to incentivize developers and private property owners to improve pedestrian connections on or between their properties.



As we crossed to the south side of NE 8th St to head eastwards back to our starting point, a group member commented on her experiences seeing buses on the Rapid Ride B Line often having to stop twice at the intersection - once at a red light at the intersection, and once again if there was a passenger to pick up or drop off at the bus stop. The participant noted it might improve transit travel times to locate the bus stop before the intersection. Although King County Metro has found that, generally, bus stops after an intersection will improve traffic times,³ it is possible that this intersection may prove

Left: The intersection of NE 8th St & 148th Ave NE as viewed from the NW bus stop. Each side of this intersection is several lanes wide, which increases crossing time for pedestrians.

to be an exception. Regardless, there are numerous changes that can be made to improve the reliability and comfort of transit use. For example, our group noticed that the stops on each side of 148th Ave NE only had a seat wide enough for one person - making this into a bench would enable more people to sit while waiting for their bus. Additionally, reconfiguring the intersection to use transit signal priority technology would improve transit speed and reliability but may negatively impact pedestrian mobility. Central to our group's discussion was the



Left: Public art installations like this one were well-liked by event participants. Long-time residents of Bellevue noted how these were created in the 1990s – perhaps it's time for a new artistic program to add vibrancy and placemaking features to our roadways?

difficulty striking a balance between multiple stakeholder interests, but we all agreed that much more can be done to improve the quality of this intersection for those outside of cars.

The south side of this portion of NE 8th St presented very similar challenges to those we encountered on the north side. Sidewalks remained narrow through the whole length of the corridor, a narrow (but grassy) vegetative buffer provided minimal protection from the high-speed roadway next to us, and visibility at each driveway was relatively limited. However, this side of the roadway appeared darker than the north side, and this didn't seem solely attributable to the fact that it was later in the evening. Several women in our group noted that they would not feel safe walking on this corridor alone during the night and would want to walk on the north side instead. However, this choice is not readily available to residents on the south side of the road, because there is no marked crosswalk linking the two sides of the road outside of the intersections at 148th Ave NE and 156th Ave NE. This means that this half-mile long section of the NE 8th St corridor does not have a marked or signalized midblock crossing to provide a safe route for pedestrians wanting to access the opposite side of the street. At best, this can lead to pedestrians needing to take circuitous routes to access a destination just across the street, and at worst can lead to people needing to unsafely cross five lanes of high-speed vehicular traffic. Our group supported adding multiple mid-block crossings throughout this segment to facilitate safe connections between neighborhoods and destinations on opposite sides of the street.

As our walk came to an end at the southwest corner of NE 8th St & 156th Ave NE, several group members shared parting words of praise for several artistic elements we found along the corridor. Back in the 1990s, local schoolchildren were asked to paint ceramic tiles that were incorporated at several locations

along NE 8th St. Nearly all group members expressed appreciation at how these artworks provided colorful character and a sense of place to a corridor that was otherwise lacking one in spite of being so well-traversed by local residents. Our group also appreciated the similar artistic display present at that southwest corridor, but noted how benches or other comfortable seating arrangements would've made the experience more pleasant and provided a nice resting point for people who were tired after traversing the steep hill.

Ultimately, our group was not surprised by the poor conditions we observed for people walking, biking, and taking transit throughout this segment. However, several participants were surprised at the number of people traversing the corridor outside of cars *in spite of* the current travel experience being uncomfortable or unsafe at several points. Although the risky nature of these current journeys is harrowing, our group chose to focus our parting words on the optimistic fact that, by improving the safety & comfort of this corridor, city staff can encourage more non-motorized transportation that supports our environmental stewardship and Vision Zero goals.

Wednesday, March 10th

140th Ave NE to 143rd Ave NE

Schools

Because we wanted a location that would be easily accessible for participants arriving by car or by transit, we selected the Bellevue Aquatic Center on 143rd Ave NE to be the meeting place for our second walking audit. Our organization structured this walk to examine the real-world issues that children and their parents might encounter as they are walking, biking, or taking transit to school. Two schools are present at 143rd Ave NE (Stevenson Elementary School & Odle Middle School) alongside several apartment complexes to the east and west, so this portion of the corridor was an ideal location to adopt this theme.

Several participants were parents of either currently or formerly school-aged children, so our discussions mostly revolved around how their children got to school and if they (the parents) were comfortable with their children walking or biking to school by themselves. Most parents present drove their children to



Left: Children approach the unsignalized intersection near Odle Middle School. Although outside the study area, Bellevue must incorporate walkability assessments and concerns into all planning decisions.

school, noting the lack of safe pedestrian and cycling infrastructure near their homes in south and east Bellevue to be an impeding factor. One participant did live nearby and felt comfortable with her children walking the short distance to school, but only if she accompanied them. Although our meeting location was well removed from NE 8th St and thus outside the RSA study area, several group members lamented how the approach to Odle Middle School on 143rd Ave NE was car-centric. During our approximately 15 minute conversation in front of the Aquatic Center, we saw several pedestrians wait at a marked but unsignalized crosswalk while cars drove through and rarely yielded the right of way. Our group observed this behavior at 3:00 pm on a Wednesday during COVID-19 and the era of remote schooling; when this area is dense with car traffic (at school day's end or after events at the Aquatic Center), it's likely that this experience is more pronounced and uncomfortable. This speaks to the larger importance of, when funding permits, not merely focusing on the RSA study area, but rather also examining how facilities interact with the larger multi-modal network.

At the conclusion of our discussion, our group walked northwards along 143rd Ave NE to arrive at the southeast corner of NE 8th St & 143rd Ave NE. Immediately evident at this location was the lack of a crosswalk on the west side of the intersection. This means that pedestrians at the northwest corner of the intersection who need to access the southwest corner (or vice versa) are required to cross three crosswalks, adding time and distance to their journey. An addition of a crosswalk on this side of the intersection would be a straightforward fix to meaningfully improve the pedestrian experience. One participant noted how a crosswalk on the west side of the intersection would enable students accessing the school from the north side of NE 8th St to cross on to the west side of 143rd Ave NE, the side of the road students need to be on to access Odle Middle School. Providing a signalized crosswalk here would therefore offer an alternative to the previously mentioned unsignalized

crosswalk near the Bellevue Aquatic Center, which must be used by pedestrians on the east side of 143rd Ave NE to access the school and aquatic center.

One participant at this walk was mobility-challenged and required a cane to be able to accompany us. Her presence was important, because it illustrated at intersections how signal timing is currently structured to accommodate only able-bodied adults. Crossing to the north side of NE 8th St at 143rd Ave, for example, was a stressful endeavor, as our group was still two lanes removed from the other side of the street when the countdown timer reached zero. Because this intersection will be regularly used by large groups of schoolchildren of all sizes, ages, and abilities when COVID-19 restrictions end, the timing given to pedestrians to cross safely should be substantially increased.



Left: The vegetative buffer in front of Stevenson Elementary School was several feet wide, providing substantial protection from automobile traffic. Our group would have felt safer if this level of protection was present on the entire corridor.

On a positive note, our group was very impressed with the pedestrian infrastructure present immediately in front of Stevenson Elementary School. The sidewalk felt wide enough for our whole group to remain close to each other while still allowing people traveling in the opposite direction to pass us. Additionally, there was an incredibly wide vegetative buffer that was filled with aesthetically-pleasing ornamental plants and appeared to be regularly maintained. One participant praised the dedicated & comfortable pedestrian infrastructure that was present from the westbound B Line 143rd Ave transit stop to the school's front door. However, this level of pedestrian safety is only provided *immediately* in front of Stevenson Elementary - as soon as we crossed



Left: A pedestrian enters the grass to pass our group as we walk westwards towards 140th Ave NE. Wider sidewalks would provide safe distances for pedestrians to pass each other, especially because of COVID-19 concerns.

the property line on to the Montessori School to the west, the sidewalk & vegetative buffer both narrowed to levels that were uncomfortable for our group and passersby. Additionally, our group noted how visitors walking or rolling to either the Montessori School or the Asia Pacific Language School do not have a dedicated sidewalk - students would need to walk along the driveways and through parking spaces to access the front door. Although our group recognized that the latter two schools were private institutions (in contrast to Stevenson Elementary, a public school) and how there might be different regulations around walkability as a result, we wondered whether it would be possible to incentivize or require private property owners to factor walkability in their site designs.

For the remaining stretch of our walk on the north side of NE 8th St, our group only had a very narrow vegetative buffer to protect us from cars speeding by. Similar to our first walking audit, noise from traffic was very loud and made it difficult for our group to hear each other as we discussed the issues we saw. Because this section of NE 8th St is five lanes wide and the posted speed limit is 35 mph, consistent & loud traffic noise is baked into the road design. Our group supported repurposing a traffic lane to support dedicated transit or bicycle infrastructure - this would serve the twofold purpose of improving the reliability of transit/biking on this corridor while providing natural road narrowing and calming effects. Short of that, our group supported widening the vegetative buffer to at least offer more distance between pedestrians and vehicles. Our group was torn on whether to change the vegetation present from grass to shrubbery or other ornamentals, similar to the sidewalk section immediately in front of Stevenson Elementary - some group members appreciated the beauty and protection such landscaping would provide, but other participants noted the logistical difficulties that would be involved to regularly maintain new

vegetation. Ultimately, widening the vegetative buffer and planting low-maintenance ornamental plants would go a long way to improving pedestrian safety and comfort.

Before our group reached the northeast corner of NE 8th St & 140th Ave NE, we came across a portion of the sidewalk that was incredibly washed out by wet soil. Although not as high a priority as other items noted on our walk, repairing this portion of the sidewalk (or encouraging the private property owner to do so, if necessary) would improve the approach to the intersection for the dozens of couples, families, and students our group saw while walking this section of the corridor.

The intersection of NE 8th St & 140th Ave NE was also a challenging one for our group to cross safely. Crosswalk timing for each direction we utilized (the north, west, and south crosswalks) was significantly shorter than what our group needed. Most egregious was the western crosswalk, which required our group to cross 6 lanes of traffic and left our mobility-impaired participant literally halfway in the street when the crosswalk timing reached zero. Not every person using these crosswalks will face the same mobility issues as us, but we saw several families with strollers, couples, and elderly people using the intersection as they accessed the local businesses & apartments present at all corners. Reconfiguring this intersection to have longer crosswalk timing will more readily accommodate people of all mobility levels and circumstances. Additionally, cycle times at this intersection were long in order to accommodate significant vehicle traffic from both NE 8th St and 140th Ave NE. Our group acknowledged the importance in supporting vehicle throughput, but we pondered whether giving pedestrians priority at this intersection (e.g. through Leading Pedestrian Interval technology) or making the cycle more responsive to



Left: Most of our group was still tens of feet removed from the other side of the crosswalk when the timer reached zero. Because this intersection is used by families, seniors, and people of different mobility levels, these crosswalk times should be lengthened to safely accommodate more people.

pedestrian presence would be possible. For example, similar to other intersections in Bellevue, if a pedestrian does not press the beg button within the first few seconds of the traffic cycle, they will often be made to wait until the next cycle - even if there would have been enough time for the pedestrian to cross. Retooling the cycle time to more flexibly accommodate people crossing would go a long way to improving the experience for pedestrians on this well-traversed corridor.

Participants were able to share two additional pieces of information on this intersection based on their prior experiences. One participant noted how she had had close run-ins with vehicles that were using the turn lane on NE 8th St (from eastbound NE 8th St onto 140th Ave NE southbound) - cars are encouraged to travel quickly through the intersection and make their turn without accounting for if there are pedestrians in the southern crosswalk. Similarly, people crossing southbound in the western crosswalk will not be visible to cars turning right on southbound 140th Ave NE, since the view of their approach is often blocked by cars waiting at the light. When right-turning cars speed to the intersection and pull slightly into the crosswalk to gain visibility for oncoming traffic, it's possible for pedestrians or cyclists using the crosswalk to be hit and pushed into traffic. Removing this turn lane, or instituting a "no right on red" policy, would mitigate both of these issues, since cars would often need to come to a complete stop behind the intersection before proceeding into pedestrian space. Additionally, the mobility-impaired participant noted the presence of storm drain gratings at both the northeast and southwest corners of the intersection, immediately adjacent to the ADA accessible ramps to the sidewalk. She noted that it would be really easy for canes or other mobility aids to get stuck in these gratings, creating a stressful & dangerous situation for the disabled.

Although likely outside the scope of this RSA, a group member noted how the design of the RapidRide bus stops did little to protect transit users from rain and wind as they waited for their bus. Another noted how she often saw buses need to stop twice at the intersection - once for a red light, and then once again at the stop after the light if there were passengers to be picked up or dropped off. She noted that placing the transit stops before the intersection may lead to faster transit times. The infrastructure around the intersection would need to be heavily modified to accommodate this, but perhaps the intersection (and the NE 8th St corridor at large) could be further studied to investigate into which approach provides better & more reliable transit times.

Before walking along the south side of NE 8th St to return to our starting point, group members did find a couple of features which they felt contributed to a positive pedestrian experience. One participant noted how the regular presence of a food truck on the northeast corner of the intersection provided both delicious food and creative character to this otherwise drab location. Another noted how the transit map at the eastbound Rapid Ride B Line stop at NE 8th St & 140th Ave NE was very detailed and easy-to-understand. Because we will need people to switch from driving to transit in order to meet our environmental stewardship and safety goals, making our transit system easier to understand will make the overall experience more pleasant and approachable.

Similar to the north side of NE 8th St, our return walk on the south side of the street had a narrow sidewalk and an even narrower vegetative buffer. This pathway was not wide enough for our group to comfortably stay together, nor would it have been wide enough for people to pass our group comfortably without going into the street. Additionally, the lack of bicycle facilities on the roadway itself means that cyclists often share limited sidewalk space with pedestrians, which contributes to conflicts. Moving cyclists to a dedicated & protected space on the roadway while giving pedestrians a wider sidewalk would contribute to calmer & safer road conditions for all travelers.

Since most in our group were familiar with this section of the NE 8th St corridor, most participants were not surprised by the conditions we witnessed. Over the course of our walk, we saw several dozen families, children, and elderly people (many from communities of color who were walking and biking on this stretch of the corridor. In spite of the high number of pedestrians, this street remains primarily designed for cars - one participant who lives nearby noted how in pre-COVID times, cars would frequently line up in the eastbound right lane of NE 8th St as they waited to turn into Odle Middle School to drop or pick up their children. With safe & protected pedestrian, cycling, and transit infrastructure, we can create a neighborhood that allows children to access their educational institutions safely & independently. This would reduce automobile traffic on this corridor and make this road safer & greener for everyone.

Saturday, March 13th

156th Ave NE to Crossroads Park

Errands

Crossroads Park on a lively & packed Saturday morning served as an excellent meeting place for our organization's final walking audit. During preparations, our group observed over one hundred children, families, and seniors enjoying the beautiful weather with strolls & bike rides in & near the park. The park is immediately adjacent to numerous neighborhoods, businesses, community centers, and religious institutions - which means that nonmotorized connections to link all these amenities with each other should be a priority to make this neighborhood liveable, walkable, and safe. Because of this neighborhood's density and access to goods & services, we structured our feedback around the experiences of local residents who will be walking, biking, and taking transit to access local businesses and meet their day-to-day needs.

This event's pre-walk discussion was the most varied and detailed - our group spent nearly 40 minutes talking about our experiences walking, biking, and taking transit to run errands in our region and brainstormed ideas to help make the experience safer and more convenient. Although several people present were regular bikers in the city, many still expressed reservations about the quality of facilities the city has built. One participant noted her reticence biking on the road unless protected bike lanes were present throughout her whole trip. Several other participants echoed that sentiment and added that Bellevue's bike

and sidewalk networks are very patchwork in design. One participant noted how, on his walk to the event, the sidewalk on the opposite side of the street stopped and started two separate times in a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile stretch. In the stretch of NE 8th St that our group was analyzing that day, painted 5' bike lanes would disappear and transform into an additional traffic lane as one went west. Because of a lack of connectivity, already meager infrastructure is made worse when it's not built to completion. Our group was lucky enough to have Bellevue City Councilmember Janice Zahn present, who was able to receive these experiences and noted how Bellevue is working through a network approach to build out its sidewalk and bicycle networks. However, she noted that the city certainly has a long way to go before these networks are completed.

After significant delay due to a long (but thorough) conversation with participants, our group departed from the southern pavilion at Crossroads Park and walked westwards along the north side of NE 8th St. As soon as our group left the park's property, there was immediate discomfort in both the width of the sidewalk and its distance to the roadway. Along this portion of the roadway, there was no protective vegetative buffer between the sidewalk and roadway, although the aforementioned painted bike lane did provide some removal from passing cars. Notably absent from this stretch of NE 8th St was significant traffic noise, primarily due to fewer traffic lanes (three instead of five like on other sections of NE 8th St) and a lower speed limit (30 mph instead of 35 mph). This portion of NE 8th St shows what our organization's suggestions from previous walking audits around repurposing traffic lanes and lowering speed limits can create in terms of reduced harmful ambient noise.



Left: Our group stops at the site of a pedestrian fatality in November 2020 and reflects on the road design elements that contributed to this collision. The nearest marked & signalized crosswalks were several hundred feet away – an added distance that can be inaccessible for mobility-challenged residents.

Our group took time to stop at the 16000 block of NE 8th St to examine the conditions which led to a pedestrian fatality in November 2020.⁴ A 92-year-old

gentleman was walking home and had nearly crossed the street when a driver collided with him. Members of our group noted how the nearest marked crosswalk was several hundred feet away from the collision location. The 16000 block of NE 8th St contains the Maurice G. Elbert House, a senior living facility that the gentleman was likely trying to access. Navigating to a marked crosswalk would've added an additional 1000 feet to his journey, which can be prohibitive for somebody with low mobility. Several members of the group expressed how they themselves would feel comfortable crossing at this intersection because of the high visibility to vehicles in both directions. All participants agreed that, for the number of businesses and establishments located on this portion of the corridor, there should be more marked and/or signalized crosswalks for pedestrians to use.

One participant was recovering from knee surgery from earlier in the week and accompanied our group in a wheelchair. Her presence pointed out several mobility challenges that our group may not have noticed without her. For example, a wide hole in the sidewalk just to the west of the Maurice G. Elbert House served as a difficult obstacle to go around due to the sidewalk's narrow width. Portions of this sidewalk were also terribly cracked and damaged, with uneven paving attempting to fix the issues but ultimately making the experience more dangerous. For those travelling on foot, this section of the sidewalk also had substantial overhanging vegetation about 4.5 feet above the sidewalk, meaning that the effective width of the already narrow sidewalk was even further reduced. Pedestrians must either nearly enter the roadway or duck down several feet to avoid it, and people with low vision may not see the obstacles until it is too late.

Our group elected to cross to the south side of NE 8th St at 158th Pl NE (the intersection in front of the US Postal Service branch). However, this intersection only has crosswalks on three sides - there is no crosswalk on the eastern side of the intersection, and as if to add insult to injury, there is an additional road sign reminding pedestrians to not cross in this direction. For people to the northeast of the intersection who need to access a business to the southeast, they would therefore need to use three crosswalks, which adds significant time and distance to a trip (especially for the mobility-challenged). Additionally, although signal cycles



Left: The eastern side of the intersection of NE 8th & 158th Pl NE is currently lacking a crosswalk. If people approaching from the east need to cross and then double back slightly to reach their destination, this adds time & distance to their trip.



Left: Nearly every driveway along this section of the corridor has a corresponding bump in the sidewalk that was most pronounced closest to the roadway but decreased as one moved away. This added bump has the consequence of making half of the sidewalk less accessible for people who are biking or rolling.

were more bearable at this intersection than others that our group has examined, our group found that we were still not given enough time to cross NE 8th St safely. By this point, the road had returned to its default five-lane width alongside the corresponding traffic noise, and our group found ourselves still caught in the intersection by the time the countdown timer had reached zero. Our group noticed that this intersection used leading pedestrian interval (LPI) technology when crossing in the southbound direction, which is something participants liked and agreed should be implemented at all intersections in Bellevue.

Once on the south side of NE 8th St, our group continued westwards toward 156th Ave NE, passing by several businesses and their respective driveways. One issue that became apparent very quickly is how at each business's driveway, a sharp incline was created at each intersection of the crosswalk - that is to say, portions of the sidewalk close to the roadway would dip sharply down at each driveway, and then rise sharply back up on the opposite side. This effect was less pronounced on portions of the sidewalk further away from the roadway, but this essentially reduced the effective width of the sidewalk to less than half, since the inclines would either be uncomfortable or insurmountable for people in wheelchairs. These bumps also impact bicycle riders (of which our group saw several) who are forced to ride on the sidewalk due to the lack of protected facilities on the roadway. In addition to the dangers arising from conflicts with pedestrians, these bumps are easily missed and can be dangerous when approached at high speeds, especially since this portion of the sidewalk is narrow and immediately adjacent to the roadway with no vegetative buffer. One group member noted sidewalk designs in the Netherlands and how intersections with driveways would keep the sidewalk level, rather than lowering the



Left: This bus shelter at the NW corner of NE 8th St & 158th Pl NE had no walls to protect patrons from the wind, is heavily graffitied, and does not include a bench. Although likely not under Bellevue's jurisdiction, improving this bus shelter would greatly better the transit experience for riders who regularly use this stop.

sidewalk to the level of the roadway. Using this approach at these driveways would create a natural calming effect for drivers while reducing accessibility issues for people walking, biking, and rolling.

The intersection of NE 8th St and 156th Ave NE, like other intersections our organization has examined over the course of these walks, experienced several problems that limited pedestrian accessibility. Although our group observed that some directions of this intersection had LPI technology, its use appeared inconsistent and dependent upon the direction one was traveling. Additionally, the amount of time to cross was still too short for our group to safely reach the other side. One member of the group noted how the audio signals to inform people with low-vision when it was safe to cross appeared inconsistent in both tone and loudness, but another participant noted how that might in part be due to allowing a person to differentiate which direction is safe to cross. Our group would need more experience in ADA-compliance related to audio signals at intersections in order to make an accurate judgement, but safe & clear audio signaling at this intersection and others is perhaps something that transportation staff should review.

After our group crossed to the north side of NE 8th St, we noted that the pedestrian experience became much safer and more comfortable. This side of the street had a sidewalk which was divided from the road by a vegetative buffer with tall trees that provided true separation from high-speed traffic. This side of the roadway also did not contain as many driveways, and the one that was present was substantially more accessible for wheelchair users. However, at the northwest corner of the intersection of NE 8th St & 158th Pl NE, there is a dilapidated bus shelter that contains no benches and is very poorly maintained. This bus stop is served by the 221 and provides good access to Crossroads Mall, so restoring this shelter to good condition and adding a bench or other seating

accommodations to make the waiting experience more comfortable should be a high priority.

For the final leg of our journey, our group again crossed southbound at the intersection of NE 8th St & 158th Pl NE, but this time we proceeded eastwards on the south side of the roadway to return to Crossroads Park. Again, the sidewalk on this side of the street was immediately adjacent to the roadway, with no protection offered from cars traveling 35 mph or greater. Several driveways along this stretch also contained several bumps which impeded accessibility - the person accompanying us in a wheelchair was stuck at several points and needed to back up and try again in order to traverse some driveways. Additionally, the bus stop immediately southeast of the intersection was surrounded on three sides by large privet bushes, which prevent bus drivers from readily seeing people waiting at the transit stop and vice versa. To complete our round-trip walk, our group crossed northwards at the signalized crosswalk in front of Crossroads Park. Participants appreciated the safety provided by the flashing lights and audio signals and wished there were more crosswalks with these facilities along the corridor.

The unideal conditions for people walking, biking, and rolling along this corridor were not surprising to our group, nor was the number of people we witnessed who were using these facilities anyway. Because Crossroads is a dense neighborhood with a diverse mix of businesses, residences, and neighborhoods, all participants agreed that further investments in walkable & bikeable infrastructure that is safe for people of all ages & abilities should be a priority for city leaders.



Left: Our group crosses a marked & signalized crosswalk in front of Crossroads Park. For the number of businesses & residences on this corridor, more crosswalks like these should be added to improve pedestrian safety.



Appendix

Left: Good girl Deedee enjoys a well-earned rest in the grass after our group's Wednesday walk.

Right: Despite lacking bicycle facilities throughout the majority of this corridor, our groups saw several people using bikes to get around.

Footnotes

- 1) <https://completestreetsbellevue.org/2020/11/24/cm-zahn-introduces-budget-amendment-to-fast-track-vision-zero-funding/>
- 2) <https://www.asha.org/public/hearing/loud-noise-dangers/>
- 3) <https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/metro/about/planning/speed-reliability-toolbox.pdf>
- 4) <https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/police-investigate-fatal-collision-involving-car-pedestrian/L67C4QLB75HGPAKBINKGNWB4LE/>

Photographer Bio: Caitlin Whitehead

Caitlin Whitehead is a former resident of Bellevue & a professionally-trained illustrator. Graduating from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) in March 2015, she works in both digital and traditional media to create colorful & vibrant pieces. Her primary body of work is in a pattern style she calls "myrn," which incorporates colorful shapes to create implied lines. She lives in Shoreline with her partners and three cats.

Visit her website, magpyecat.square.site to see her work & side projects.





March 8th – Health Name: _____

15-Minute City:

A community where life's daily necessities (groceries, healthcare, community services, workplaces, etc.) can be accessed within a 15-minute trip by walking, biking, transit, or other non-automobile mode of transportation.

Things to Think About Today:

Intersections & Signals

Do you have enough time to cross at intersections? How long do you have to wait for a walk signal? Are pedestrians prioritized in the signal cycle?

Crosswalks

Are crosswalks clearly painted and marked? Do you feel visible in and approaching the crosswalk? Do drivers give you space?

Driveways

Do you feel visible as you approach a driveway? Do drivers look at you before exiting?

Drivers

How fast are drivers navigating the road? Do you hear any loud drivers? Any risky behaviors or unsafe maneuvers?

Lighting

How well-lit is the corridor? Are key conflict points illuminated to avoid potential collisions? Would you feel safe walking the corridor by yourself at night?

Transit Access

Is accessing the bus stops easy and intuitive? Is there enough space for riders to wait and pedestrians to pass?

People

How are people currently using the road today? What types of people do you see navigating the sidewalks (families, elderly, children), and how are they getting around (walking, biking, scooter)?

What infrastructure & behavior prevents people from accessing their healthcare needs by walking, biking, and transit on NE 8th St?



March 10th - School Name: _____

15-Minute City:

A community where life's daily necessities (groceries, healthcare, schools, workplaces, etc.) can be accessed within a 15-minute trip by walking, biking, transit, or other non-automobile mode of transportation.

Things to Think About Today:

Intersections & Signals

Would groups of kids have enough time to cross at signals? How long do you have to wait for a walk signal? Are pedestrians prioritized in the signal cycle? Are signals ADA-accessible?

Crosswalks

Are there crosswalks present in all directions? Do you feel visible in and approaching the crosswalk? Do drivers give you space?

Sidewalks

Is there enough space for kids to walk in groups? Is there protection from the roadway (through space, vegetation, etc.)? Are the sidewalks well maintained (not bumpy, dirty, no overhanging vegetation)?

Drivers

How fast are drivers navigating the road? Do you hear any loud drivers? Any risky behaviors or unsafe maneuvers?

Transit Access

Is accessing the bus stops easy and intuitive? Is there enough space for groups to wait and other pedestrians to pass?

People

How are people currently using the road today? What types of people do you see navigating the sidewalks (families, elderly, children), and how are they getting around (walking, biking, scooter)?

Comfort

How loud is the hum of traffic? Are there enough signs to make wayfinding easy? Are there pleasing things to look at while you're walking?

What infrastructure & behavior prevents kids from safely being able to walk, bike, and take transit on NE 8th St? What would make you (parents) feel safer about having your child walk, bike, and take transit to school?



March 13th - Errands

Name: _____

15-Minute City:

A community where life's daily necessities (groceries, healthcare, schools, workplaces, etc.) can be accessed within a 15-minute trip by walking, biking, transit, or other non-automobile mode of transportation.

Things to Think About Today:

Intersections & Signals

How long do you have to wait for a walk signal? Are pedestrians prioritized in the signal cycle? Are signals ADA-accessible? Are groups/mobility-impaired people given enough time to cross safely?

Crosswalks

Do you feel visible in all crosswalks? Do drivers give you space as you cross? Are there enough crosswalks available to access destinations?

Sidewalks

Is there enough space for people to comfortably pass each other? Is there protection from the roadway (through space, vegetation, etc.)? Are the sidewalks well maintained (not bumpy or dirty, no overhanging vegetation)?

Drivers

How fast are drivers navigating the road? Do you hear any loud drivers? Any risky behaviors or unsafe maneuvers?

Driveways

Do drivers look at you and give you space when crossing? Is there safe & comfortable pedestrian access to businesses from the sidewalk? Are "dips" in the sidewalk accessible and comfortable?

People

How are people currently using the road today? What types of people do you see navigating the sidewalks (families, elderly, children), and how are they getting around (walking, biking, scooter)?

Comfort

How loud is the hum of traffic? Are there enough signs to make wayfinding easy? Are there pleasing things to look at while you're walking?

What infrastructure & behavior prevents you from safely being able to walk, bike, and take transit on NE 8th St? What factors make it difficult to complete errands on this street without a car?



Thank you!