



# Community Concerns Report of Beaver Pond Natural Area and 8th Ave NE

Summer - Fall 2024

Beaver Pond Friends and  
Neighbors

October 2024

Prepared by Triangle  
Associates

*This project is funded in part by a Neighborhood Matching Fund award from  
the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.*



**Seattle**  
Neighborhoods

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
What people value about the area .....	2
Key concerns for improving the area.....	2
Overview .....	4
Purpose Statement.....	4
Engagement Goals .....	4
Who Was Involved? .....	4
Community Engagement.....	5
Assessment Interviews .....	5
Engagement Events .....	5
Community Concerns Survey.....	6
Summary of Community Concerns .....	7
People Appreciate Beaver Pond/ 8 <sup>th</sup> Ave NE .....	8
Improving the Beaver Pond Natural Area.....	9
Environment - Habitat for All .....	10
Water & Waste .....	11
Safety & Accessibility.....	12
Land Use & Transportation.....	13
Building Community Capacity .....	14
Moving Forward .....	14
Appendices	
A. Acknowledgments.....	A-1
B. Engagement Flyer.....	B-1
C. Summary of in-person Engagement.....	C-1
D. Survey Promotion Toolkit.....	D-1
E. Community Concerns Survey Questionnaire.....	E-1
F. Survey Responses Grouped by Question.....	F-1

# Executive Summary

In summer 2024, a volunteer group of neighbors named Beaver Pond Friends and Neighbors funded by a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant, gathered information about community concerns from people in the 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/ Beaver Pond Natural Area to inform future plans and projects in this part of Seattle’s Northgate neighborhood, where multifamily development meets a natural area along a corridor that includes both a Safe Routes to Schools route and SDOT-designated neighborhood greenways.

About 200 people shared their insights during four in-person neighborhood events and via a community concerns survey. 28 people signed up to stay informed and get involved in future planning and improvement efforts for the neighborhood. Appendices in this report include more complete details about people’s individual responses, including location-specific information about concerns. This community concerns report summarizes community members insights about

- What people value about their neighborhood
- What people would like to see improved, including where and how issues affect them
- Issues people would like city plans to address, and
- Roles individuals would like to take in creating solutions.

## What people value about the area

### CONNECTION TO NATURE

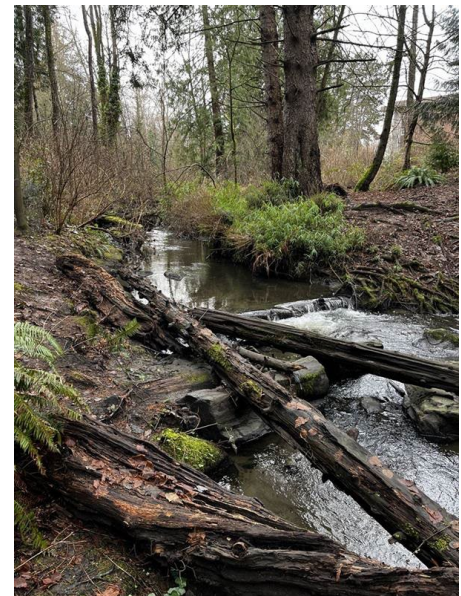
Almost all said they value their connection to nature via the Beaver Pond Natural Area. People enjoy many facets of the green space that allow them to connect with nature in the middle of the busy neighborhood and near their homes.

### CONNECTION TO TRANSIT & NEARBY AMENITIES

A few people mentioned they value proximity to transit and nearby businesses. Several mentioned the value of having the natural area close to the developed area with both being accessible by transit.

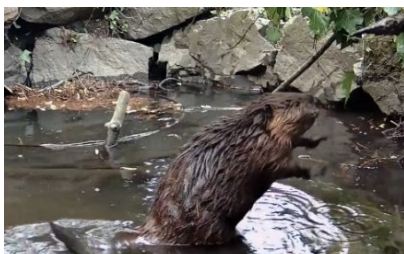
### NOT MUCH

A few said they do not like anything about the area, or that recent changes have made them like it less than they used to.



## Key concerns for improving the area

### CARING FOR THE LAND AND WILDLIFE



- People expressed strong desires for the city to take care of the natural areas to make places healthier for people and other living things.
- People see active roles for themselves as partners in helping to repair, improve, and care for the natural areas.

## IMPROVING STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE & CLEANING UP WASTE



- People were frustrated and concerned about:
  - Stormwater flooding
  - Pollutants in runoff
  - Trash from construction
  - Feces
  - Litter
- People want the city to address waste issues and expressed interest in helping via community litter cleanups.
- People hope the city will include stormwater upgrades to mitigate flooding and improve fish passage as part of road/sidewalk improvements.
- They shared specific locations where flooding, puddling, and ice occur during heavy rain/snow.

## IMPROVING SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY & VISIBILITY FOR PEOPLE ON STREETS & TRAILS



- Many expressed feeling unsafe sharing the roadway with vehicles.
- People shared where and how pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is absent or inadequate, especially for vulnerable travelers.
- Several reported seeing vehicles involved in near misses or collisions.
- Others shared concerns about personal safety, drug use, assault, harassment, and property crime.

## REDUCING NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION, TRAFFIC & PARKING



- Many residents are frustrated with construction impacts.
  - Short-term = blocking roadway, parking, noise, litter, and runoff.
  - Long-term = perceiving construction as over-development that causes displacement and worsens problems of insufficient pedestrian infrastructure, parking, and vehicle capacity.
- Speed and volume of traffic is a frequent safety concern on the narrow-shared roadways.
- Parking is a big issue for many:
  - Lack of parking
  - Dangers and frustration caused by improper parking
  - Lack of parking enforcement

*This project is funded in part by a Neighborhood Matching Fund award from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.*



# Overview

## Purpose Statement

In the summer of 2024, the dedicated volunteer group Beaver Pond Friends and Neighbors (BPFN) and the consulting firm Triangle Associates (collectively the “project team”) conducted engagement in the Northgate neighborhood of Seattle, Washington. Their goal was to better understand the issues that community members are facing in the built and natural environments along 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE to inform local city planning. BPFN aimed to broaden the network of Northgate neighbors aware of and engaged in these concerns and efforts. The project was funded in part by a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. The 501(c)(3) nonprofit volunteer organization Thornton Creek Alliance provided matching funds and served as fiscal sponsor for the grant.

## Engagement Goals

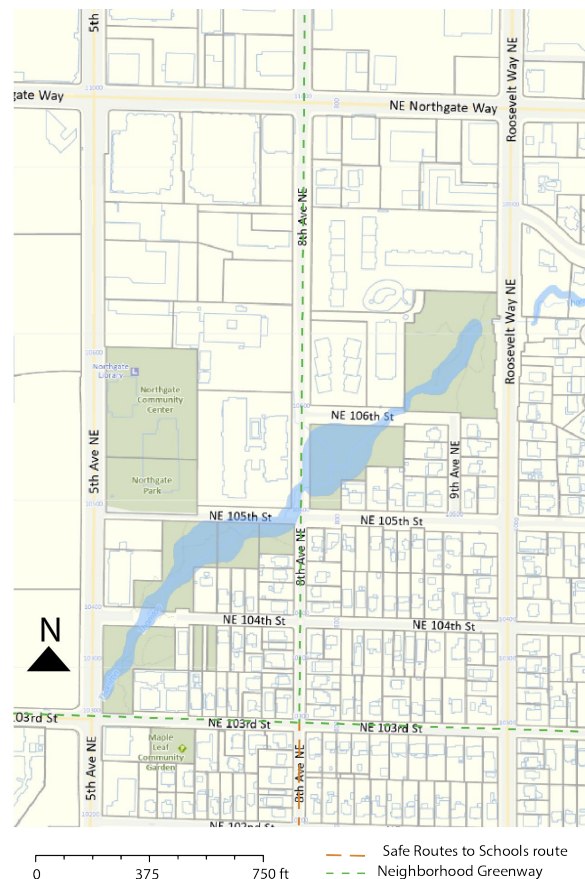
The project team identified three goals to guide their engagement:

1. Hear the experiences and perceptions of people who use the area.
2. Understand areas of concern, themes, and locations where infrastructure and environmental issues occur.
3. Identify key issues for the area that if addressed could make a better experience for all in the 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/Beaver Pond Natural Area.

## Who Was Involved?

Community outreach had a focal area of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE corridor, including the Beaver Pond Natural Area. The site boundaries are NE Northgate Way to NE 103<sup>rd</sup> St and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave NE to Roosevelt Way NE. Neighbors located within the project site were prioritized for engagement, and expanded efforts included the 5-10 block radius around the site.

In the study area map shown in Figure 1, parcels shown in green comprise the Beaver Pond Natural Area. Dashed lines show where 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a designated Safe Routes to Schools route (orange) and where 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 103<sup>rd</sup> street are designated Seattle Neighborhood Greenways (green).



**Figure 1 - Map of 8th Ave NE/Beaver Pond study area showing Beaver Pond Natural Area, and designated Neighborhood Greenways and Safe Route to School.**

## Community Engagement

The project team developed a community engagement plan to guide outreach work, goals and outcomes, methods, and feedback tracking. By following equitable community engagement principles and best practices, the project team aimed to explore community members' concerns in the project site, particularly, affected communities and those who have been historically overlooked and underrepresented in public processes.

### Assessment Interviews

Community engagement is most successful when the impacted communities themselves shape the engagement strategy. To these ends, the project team talked with key people connected to neighboring groups, places, and organizations. Interviewees included members of local nonprofits, apartment residences, and city agencies. Through these interviews, the project team identified potential outreach partners and community engagement opportunities and provided interviewees with information on the project.

### Engagement Events

As a result of assessment interviews, the project team identified several engagement strategies. They worked with local outreach partners to spread the word via a promotional toolkit providing flyers, and language for social media posts, email, and live announcements and engaged with community members via in person conversations and mapping activities at community events and a community concerns survey available online or on paper. (See Appendices B-D).



Figure 2 – Tabling at Enclave Apartments’ Luau event.



Figure 3 – Tabling at Annual Anniversary Party at Northgate Community Center.

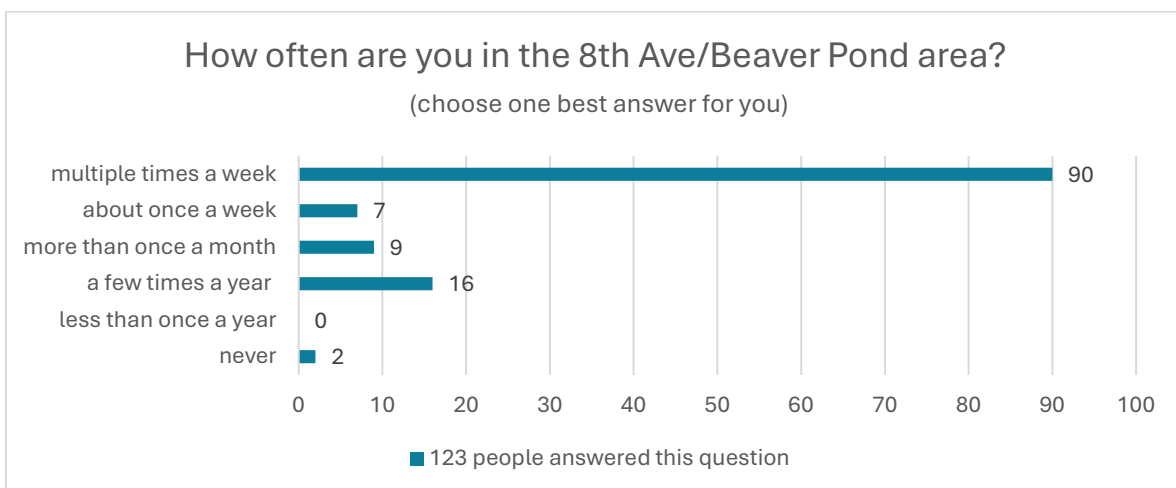
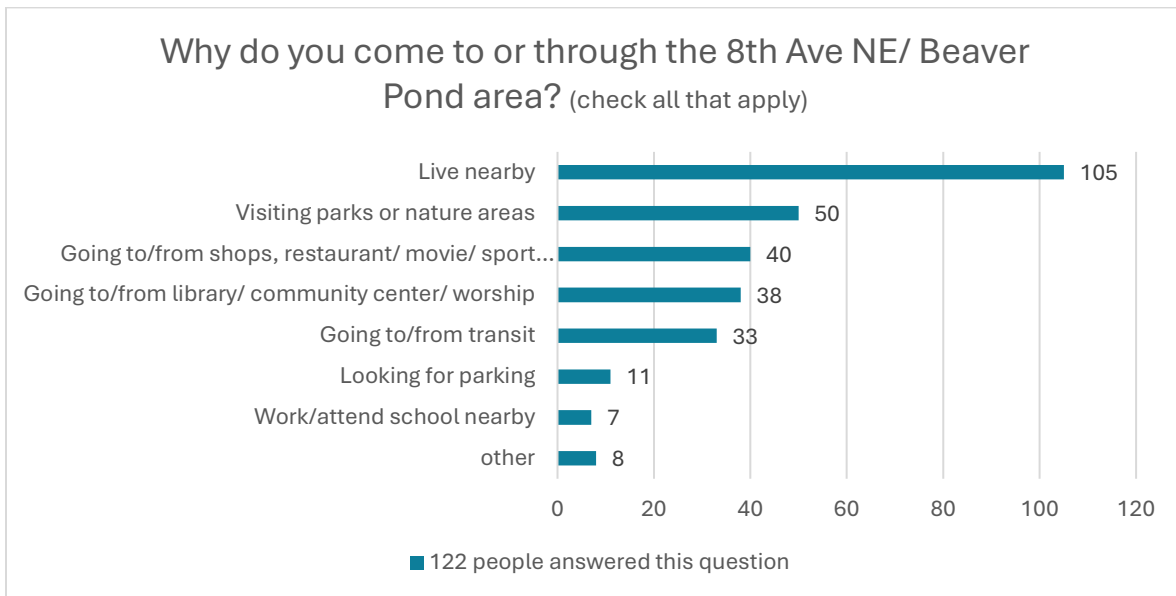
Event	Date & Time	Outreach Partner	Location	People Engaged
<b>Summer Hawaiian Luau</b>	June 28, 5 – 8 pm	Thrive Communities	<i>Enclave Apartments Resident Lounge</i>	~30 adults
<b>18<sup>th</sup> Annual Anniversary Party</b>	July 12 5 – 7:30 pm	Northgate Community Center	<i>Northgate Community Center</i>	~25 adults ~20 kids
<b>Maple Leaf Summer Social</b>	July 17 5:30–8:30 pm	Maple Leaf Community Council	<i>Maple Leaf Reservoir Park</i>	2 adults
<b>Annual Neighbor Night Out</b>	Aug. 6 5 – 7 pm	N/A	<i>Northgate 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE neighborhood</i>	~20 adults

Table 1 - Events attended to talk with community members about their ideas and concerns for the area.

## Community Concerns Survey

The Community Concerns survey was designed by the project team to collect community input from people who are interested in the area and want to convey their concerns and insights to city agencies. The survey was open from July 12 to Sept 3, 2024, and was available online and on paper.

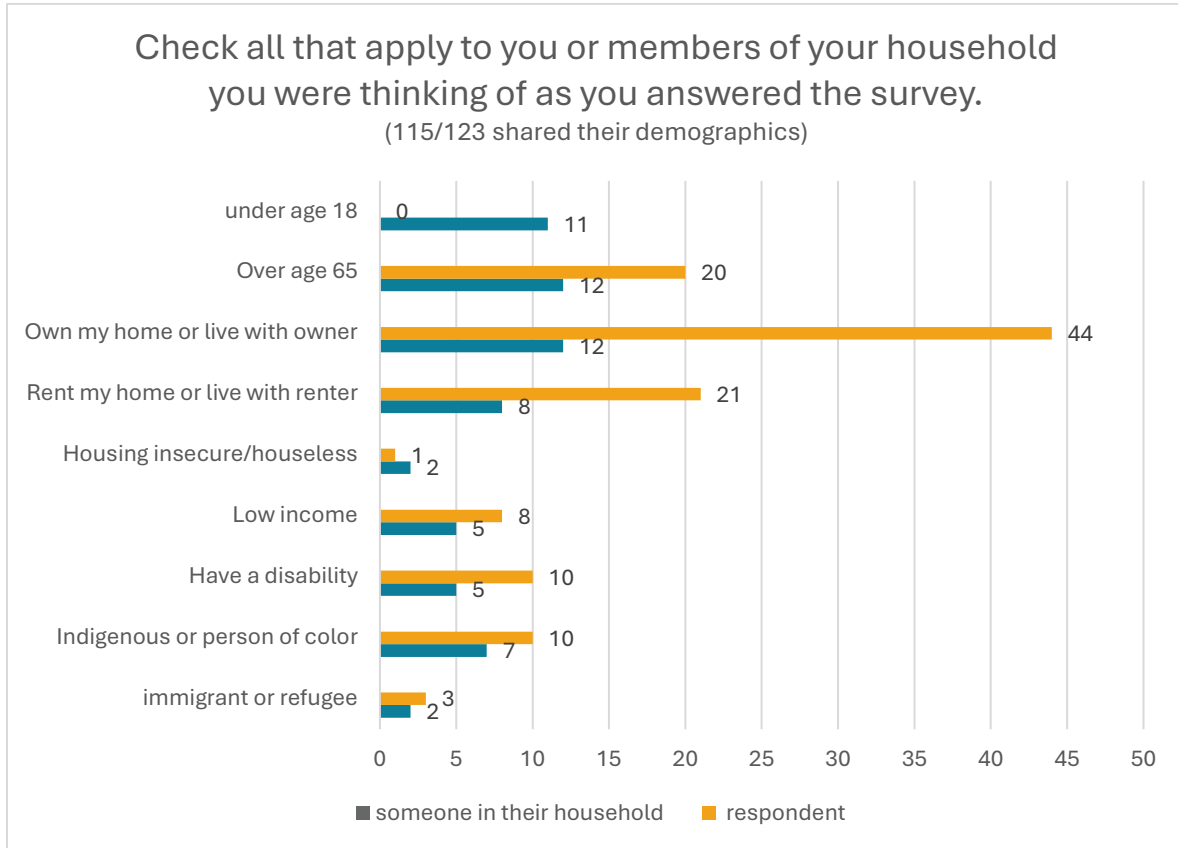
123 people submitted responses. Nearby residents were strongly represented with 105 identified as living nearby and 90 said they are in the project area multiple times a week. Of the 18 who did not identify as living nearby, 12 bike, walk, or run in the area and nine drive/ride in cars either to visit the natural area or on their way to other nearby places. See charts below.



Respondents had the option of sharing their demographic information. Of those who shared their demographics, all speak English at home, with 8 households also speaking another language at home – 4 Spanish, 1 Turkish, 1 Chinese, 1 Korean, 1 Portuguese. The project team did not meet

their goal of connecting with a community partner to help reach speakers of another language, so the survey was only offered in English. See the graph below for further demographic information.

Responses to this voluntary survey do not represent a statistical sample. The survey should neither be generalized as a community-wide sample nor as a representation of views of people sharing specific demographic characteristics or identities.



## Summary of Community Concerns

The following summary includes quotes and counts from survey responses but also reflects the themes the project team heard from people in person as well. Ideas and concerns shared in person aligned closely with ideas and concerns shared via the survey. Detailed notes on in-person events and a qualitative summary of what we heard from people in person are available in Appendix C – Summary of In-Person Engagement.

Specific responses in the survey data contain more location-specific information that may be informative for city agencies as they make plans to improve the area. To dig deeper into the details of specific suggestions and locations of concerns, please examine the full set of survey responses. Data is available in two formats:

- Appendix F – Survey Responses Grouped by Question
- Raw Survey Results spreadsheet



## People Appreciate Beaver Pond/ 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

Almost all said they value their connection to nature via the Beaver Pond Natural Area. People enjoy many facets of the green space that allow them to connect with nature in the middle of the busy neighborhood and near their homes highlighting the wildlife, the water, the trees, the trails, the shade, and the calm.

A few people mentioned the proximity to transit and nearby businesses. Several mentioned the value of having the natural area close to the developed area with both being accessible by transit. A few said they do not like anything about the area, or that recent changes have made them like it less than they used to.

### What We Heard:

- ... Once in a while when I'm walking through one of the natural areas, there will be a lull in traffic, and I'll suddenly hear the creek, and something transformative happens. I start seeing everything around me and can feel my blood pressure drop.
- It's a way to walk from where I live to transit while avoiding busy Northgate Way.
- It's quiet, it's green, it's peaceful, I like the birds.
- Green space keeps my neighborhood cooler with water and shade trees, as well as more beautiful, more enjoyable to live and walk there, and access to view wildlife and seasonal changes.
- Close to transit, feels like nature in the middle of the city
- We like that's it's a natural area/park and it's directly across the street from the building our condo is in. . . . It was one of the things that helped us decide to buy and live here.



**Figure 4 - "What do you like about the area?"**  
Larger words appeared more frequently in survey responses. Image created via [WordItOut.com](http://WordItOut.com)



**Figure 5 – South fork of Thornton Creek flowing through Beaver Pond Natural Area.**



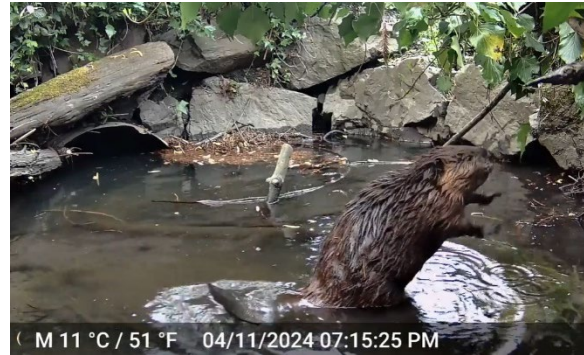
## Environment - Habitat for All

People expressed strong desires for the city to take care of the natural areas to make places healthier for people and other living things.

More than any other issue in the survey, people see active roles for themselves as partners in helping to repair, improve, and care for the natural areas.

### What We Heard:

- *...I've seen otters, owls, coyotes, mergansers, herons, cutthroat trout...over the years, but there's a clear decline...*
- *I just want to be sure the city has a good plan for protecting the wetland as population density increases.*
- *The [construction] noise is hard on the wildlife and I have seen a beaver killed by a car.*
- *Along 8th Ave I see at least 5 different invasive plant species ...*
- *I'm concerned how [litter] is affecting the habitat of animals ... I would like to be a part of a group that can act as better stewards of this area.*



**Figure 8 - Local beaver spotted via wildlife camera, April 2024. Image: Don McCall**



**Figure 9 - Local cutthroat trout spotted via GoPro video, June 2024. Image: Don McCall**

Environment - Habitat	I've seen this here	This issue affects me	City plans should address this	I want to help improve this	I'm not concerned
Natural area trails/ access for people	50	51	74	27	8
Salmon passage/ fish habitat	20	17	79	23	14
Beavers, birds, and other wildlife	50	29	69	32	10
Care/health of plants and trees	37	36	79	30	9
Invasive species	39	23	67	27	7
Other (environmental)	8	6	20	8	20

**Table 2 - Counts of survey responses weighing in about habitat and stewardship of the area for people, plants, and animals show a strong preference for city plans to address these issues and people's willingness to help make it happen.**

## Water & Waste

People were frustrated and concerned about:

- stormwater flooding
- pollutants in runoff
- litter
- trash from construction debris
- feces

People want the city to address waste issues. Many also express interest in helping via community litter cleanups.

People hope the city will include stormwater upgrades to mitigate flooding and improve fish passage as part of road/sidewalk improvements. Many shared specific locations where flooding, puddling, and ice occur during heavy rain/snow.

### What We Heard:

- *When it rains there is water everywhere, streets and the bridge flood. Makes it dangerous without sidewalks*
- *Lack of sufficient drainage... leading to puddles and ice buildup... Dangerous and inconvenient...*
- *Rain water...flooded our houses due to insufficient drainage on Roosevelt*
- *...Everywhere in the creek, drainages, and paths, there is plastic...*
- *...litter in the water, a gross film on the top of the water, often oil spots on the top*



**Figure 10 - 8th Ave NE flooded by winter rain.**  
Image: submitted via survey



**Figure 11 - Otter swims among litter, Beaver Pond Natural Area, June 2024.**  
Image: Don McCall via wildlife camera



**Figure 12 - Litter collects in Tributary J, January 2024.** Image: Cheryl Klotz

<b>Water &amp; Waste</b>	I've seen this here	This issue affects me	City plans should address this	I want to help improve this	I'm not concerned
Litter	61	46	73	28	4
Contaminated water runoff	34	31	85	15	7
Flooding across roadway	33	30	62	10	29
Puddles and other standing water	31	27	57	10	29

**Table 3 - Counts of survey responses weighing in about litter and stormwater management.**

## Safety & Accessibility

Many expressed feeling unsafe on roads and gave specific examples of where and how pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is absent or inadequate, especially for vulnerable travelers. Others shared concerns about personal safety, drug use, assault, harassment, and property crime.

### What We Heard:

- *I've seen collisions and near hits of pedestrians...*
- *We need sidewalks in this area and the overgrown foliage should be pared back...*
- *I am afraid to walk late in the evening because the cars are reckless and there is no place for pedestrians to walk*
- *...construction often has half the street blocked off and the pieces of sidewalk that do exist, without providing a safe space for pedestrians.*
- *For safety in the natural area, make better paths and boardwalks...*
- *I'm disabled, I can walk but I would like to see more places to stop and rest. More seating.*



**Figure 13 - People walking, biking, and using mobility devices on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave share the narrow roadway with vehicles.** Image: submitted via survey, blurred for privacy

<b>Safety/ Accessibility</b>	I've seen this here	This issue affects me	City plans should address this	I want to help improve this	I'm not concerned
People & vehicles sharing the road	70	74	80	16	8
Spaces to walk/bike/roll safely	54	68	89	18	8
Accessibility for people with mobility devices, other disabilities	47	30	83	17	7
Clear sightlines, visibility to see/be seen	55	57	79	13	12
Lighting	29	32	56	12	25
Feeling uneasy about personal safety	49	52	50	13	28
Wish I felt more community connection with my neighbors	30	40	29	17	33
Other (safety/accessibility)	13	15	18	8	22

**Table 4 - Counts of survey responses weighing in on safety and accessibility.**

## Land Use & Transportation

Many residents are frustrated with construction impacts for short-term reasons (noise, parking, litter/runoff, blocking roadway) and long-term reasons (see construction as overdevelopment that causes displacement and worsens problems of insufficient pedestrian infrastructure, parking, and vehicle capacity).

Parking is a big issue for many, including lack of parking, dangers caused by improper parking, and lack of parking enforcement.

### What We Heard:

- *On this very narrow Greenway Street, there are constantly delivery and other service vehicles clogging the roadway.... It is very dangerous...*
- *Traffic should be routed on the arterials, Roosevelt and Northgate. Adding dead ends, natural deterrents to driving to 8th would help*
- *Parking restrictions are not enforced...*
- *... many small businesses...have been forced to close shop in the wake of building new apartments in their place...*
- *... way too many buildings being developed and not enough parking or sidewalks to accommodate... cars and people...*



**Figure 14 - Sharing the road is hard. 8th Ave NE is a narrow street with many competing uses.**

*Image: Kay Landolt*



**Figure 15 - Parking in no parking zones is common. Image: Cheryl Klotz**

<b>Land Use &amp; Transportation</b>	<b>I've seen this here</b>	<b>This issue affects me</b>	<b>City plans should address this</b>	<b>I want to help improve this</b>	<b>I'm not concerned</b>
Issues about housing	39	40	61	9	16
Issues about businesses	27	25	44	4	29
Issues about community spaces	34	38	64	13	21
Issues about construction	53	56	68	11	16
Speeding, increased traffic	62	61	76	10	12
Hard for cars to get through	48	49	54	12	24
Concerns about parking	56	52	58	7	22
Other (Land Use/ Transportation)	15	13	19	8	16

**Table 5 - Counts of survey responses weighing in on Land Use and Transportation.**

## Building Community Capacity

This summer's efforts to gather community concerns to present in this report to city agencies are early steps on a multi-year campaign to get neighbors involved in and advocating for the changes they would like to see and working together alongside city agencies to shape the neighborhood.

The survey was designed not only to gather information about what people care about, but also to invite people to get involved in future efforts to address their concerns. People indicated which issues they want to help improve, ways they would like to help, skills and resources they want to share, and issues they would like to be contacted about in the future.

In total, 28 people signed up to be invited to future conversations and/or get involved in future steps to improve their neighborhood. Not only did people offer to show up for local litter clean up and invasive plant removal work parties, but they also offered their skills in lobbying, grant writing, blogging, and community organizing, and their expertise as architects, planners, policymakers, interpreters, artists, photographers, writers, and as local experts about their neighborhood. People offered to spread the word in their networks and to engage in upcoming conversations with city agencies about future planning for the Northgate Neighborhood and the 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/ Beaver Pond corridor.

## Moving Forward

### Next steps in progress

- BPFN will send this report with appendices and engagement data to Office of Planning & Community Development (OPCD), Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON).
- BPFN will share this Community Concerns Report with outreach partners, community members, and whoever asked to receive the report.
- BPFN will share volunteers' contact information with the agencies and organizations doing related work in the areas of each person's chosen interests. (OPCD, SDOT, DON, Thornton Creek Alliance (TCA), and potentially, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways)
- Around November 2024, SDOT will conduct walk-and-talk tours of a few sites in the Northgate area if the City of Seattle Transportation Levy passes. We hope SDOT will choose the 8<sup>th</sup> Ave NE/ Beaver Pond corridor as a walking tour site.
- In early 2025, OPCD plans to release the draft Northgate Urban Center 20-year plan for public comment.

### Recommended next steps

- Using the survey response data to create a map showing exact locations of concern.
- SDOT and OPCD connect with individuals who want to get involved in next steps.
- BPFN and TCA connect with people who offered to help to figure out next steps.

If you would like to get involved in these or other efforts, please contact Thornton Creek Alliance via TCA president, Ruth Williams [ruthalice@comcast.net](mailto:ruthalice@comcast.net).

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Acknowledgments

Thank you to the following people who contributed materially to making this grant work and informing its outcome. We recognize all of them for their time and efforts.

**Beaver Pond Friends and Neighbors (BPFN):** John Lombard, Jeff Laufle, Kay Landolt, Dai Toyama

**Thornton Creek Alliance (TCA):** Ruth Williams, Gary Olson, Dan Keefe.

Also, special thanks to Don McCall for wildlife photography.

**Triangle Associates:** Cheryl Klotz, Kim Zamora Delgado, Bert Hopkins, Sophie Glass

**Seattle Department of Neighborhoods:** Karen Selander, Osbaldo Hernandez, Sonny Nguyen.

This work was made possible by a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant.

**Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT):** Howard Wu, Ian Macek, Sarah Saviskas, Drew Junkuntz

**Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR):** David Graves, Kevin Bergsrud

**Seattle Public Utilities (SPU):** Miles Mayhew, Dave LaClergue

**Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD):** Erica Bush, Jesse London, Amy Nguyen

**Seva Workshop:** Radhika Nair, Lisa Johnson

We also thank King County Councilmember Rod Dembowski for his encouragement in getting this community effort off the ground.

In addition, we would like to thank our Assessment interviewees, community outreach partners, event hosts, and the approximately 200 people who shared their ideas and concerns with us via the Community Concerns survey and at in person at events throughout the summer.

## In Memoriam: John Lombard

On August 28, 2024, we suddenly and tragically lost a linchpin contributor to this work with the passing of John Lombard, a member of BPFN, a TCA board member, and a front-row neighbor along the 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue area of concern. John was a dedicated and energetic community leader on many fronts. His insights and his drive were major factors in the success of numerous efforts, and we will sorely miss him. We dedicate this report to him.



**Seattle  
Neighborhoods**

*This project is funded in part by a Neighborhood Matching Fund award from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.*