

North Aurora Drainage & Sewer Improvements Friends of Green Lake meeting

May 26, 2026

Seattle Public Utilities



City of Seattle

Agenda

- Densmore Basin background, project goals
- Phase 1 findings: SPU Aurora system layout, SDOT alternatives
- Phase 2 introduction: SPU + SDOT shared contract (starting 2026)

Katy Haima, OPCD



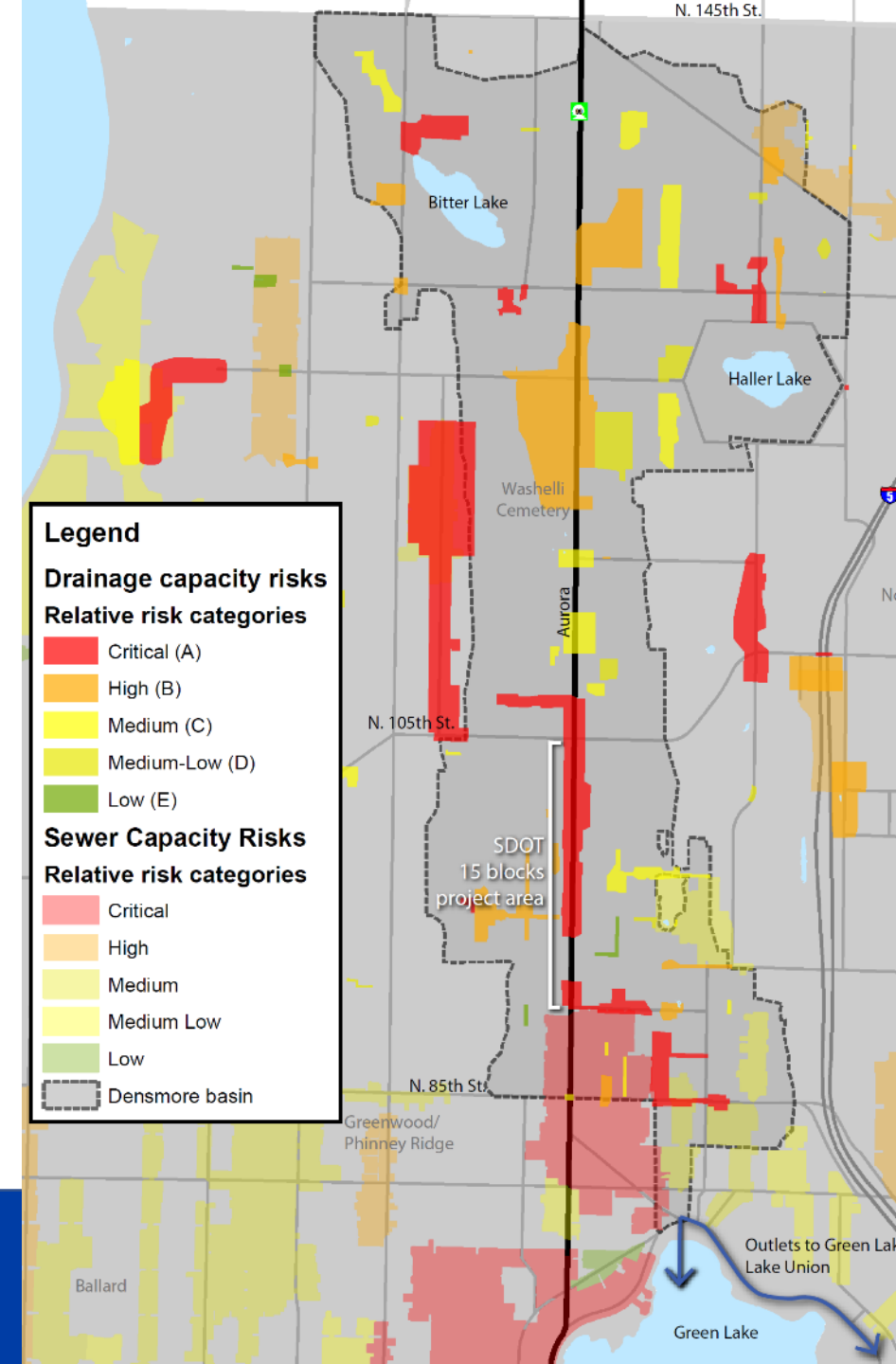
Seattle Public Utilities Strategic Business Plan Focus Areas

- Delivering equitable essential services
- Stewarding environment and health
- Empowering our customers, community, and employees
- Strengthening our utility's business practices



SPU Aurora Project Background: The Densmore Basin

- 1,600-acre separated drainage basin, flowing to Lake Union and Green Lake
- Significant gaps in the drainage infrastructure
- Hundreds of acres depend on drainage and sewer mains through the Washelli Cemetery
- Lower portion of the basin is regulated as a creek
- High concentration of capacity risks



SPU Aurora project goals

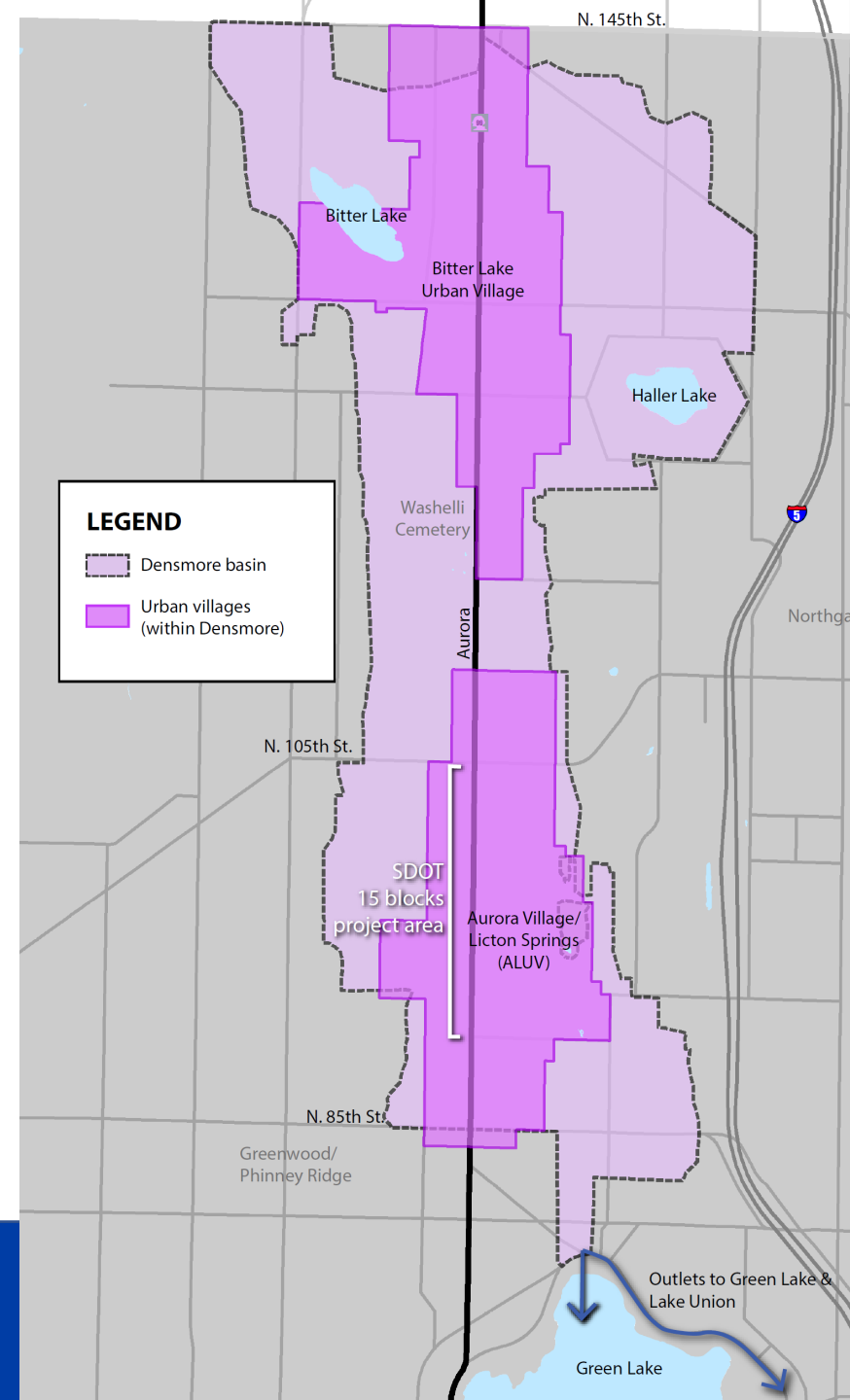
- Increase system capacity to reduce flooding and sewer backups (existing and future)
- Make Aurora into an effective spine for north Seattle drainage, serving future development and extensions onto side streets
- Reduce maintenance risks
- Protect Green Lake and Lake Union
- Be a productive partner to SDOT's project

Melissa Santos/Axios



Densmore basin urban centers

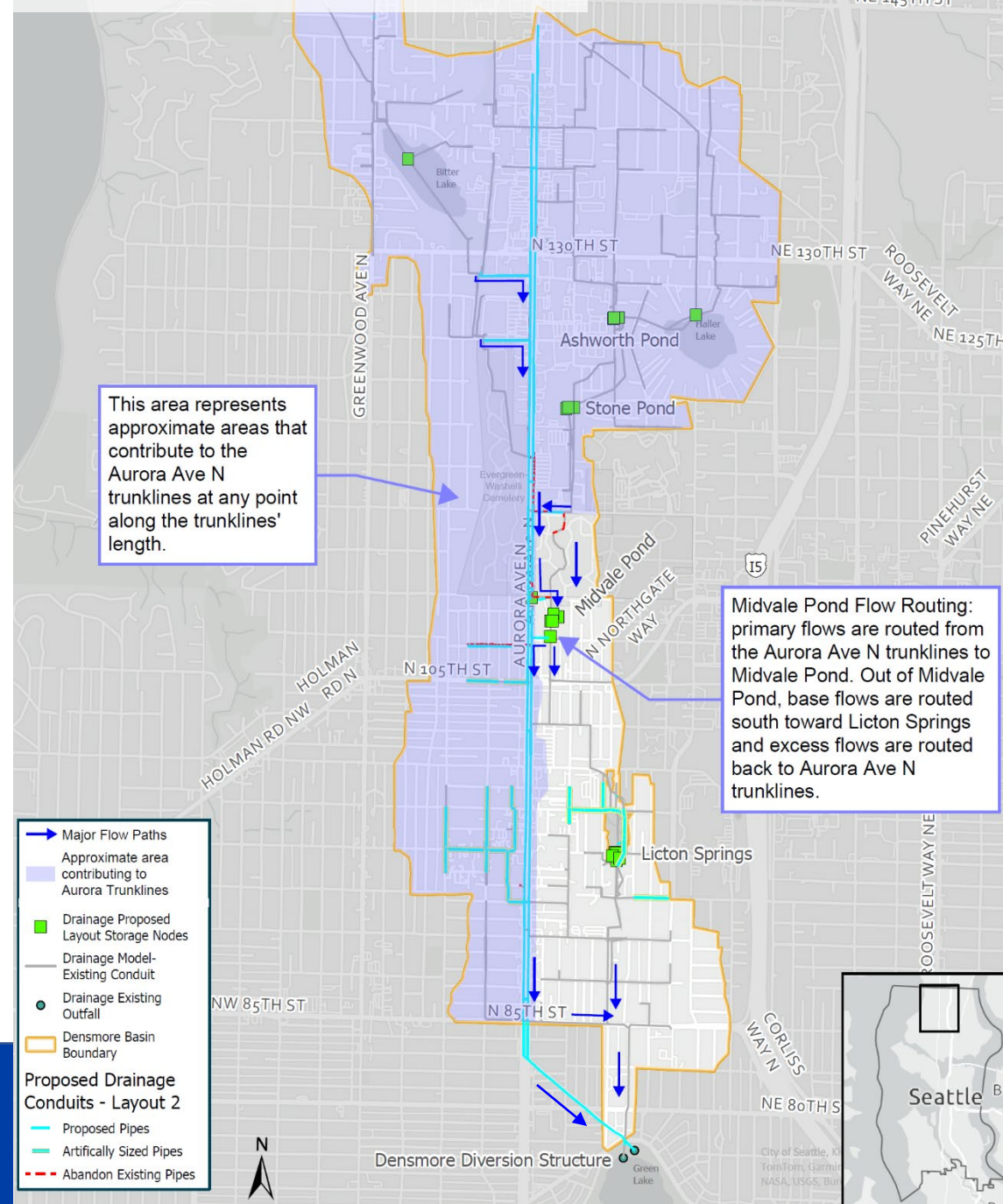
- Aurora Village/Licton Springs and Bitter Lake
- Increased development of large apartment buildings, expansion of bus rapid transit
- Auto-oriented commercial areas with persistent crime and street disorder challenges
- Community priorities include safer pedestrian environment, hubs of neighborhood commercial services, more open space and plantings



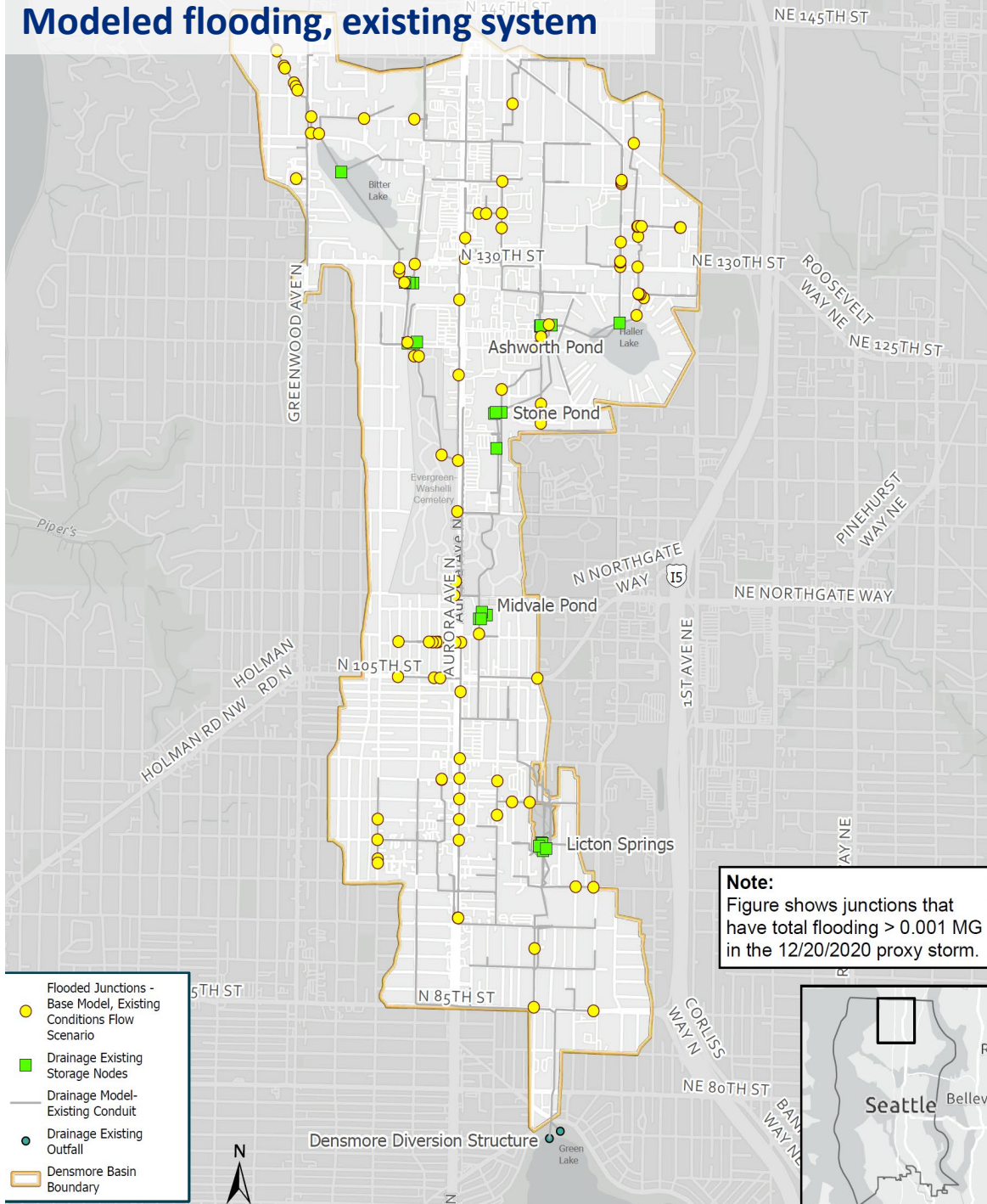
SPU Planning Phase 1: Findings

- Add continuous drainage trunk lines down both sides of Aurora, filling system gaps
- Upsize drainage and sewer pipes in the lower basin to increase capacity
- Address maintenance challenges
 - Reroute drainage and sewer out of the cemetery
 - Separate stormwater flows from creek flows
- An improved drainage system increases peak flow to the basin's outfall

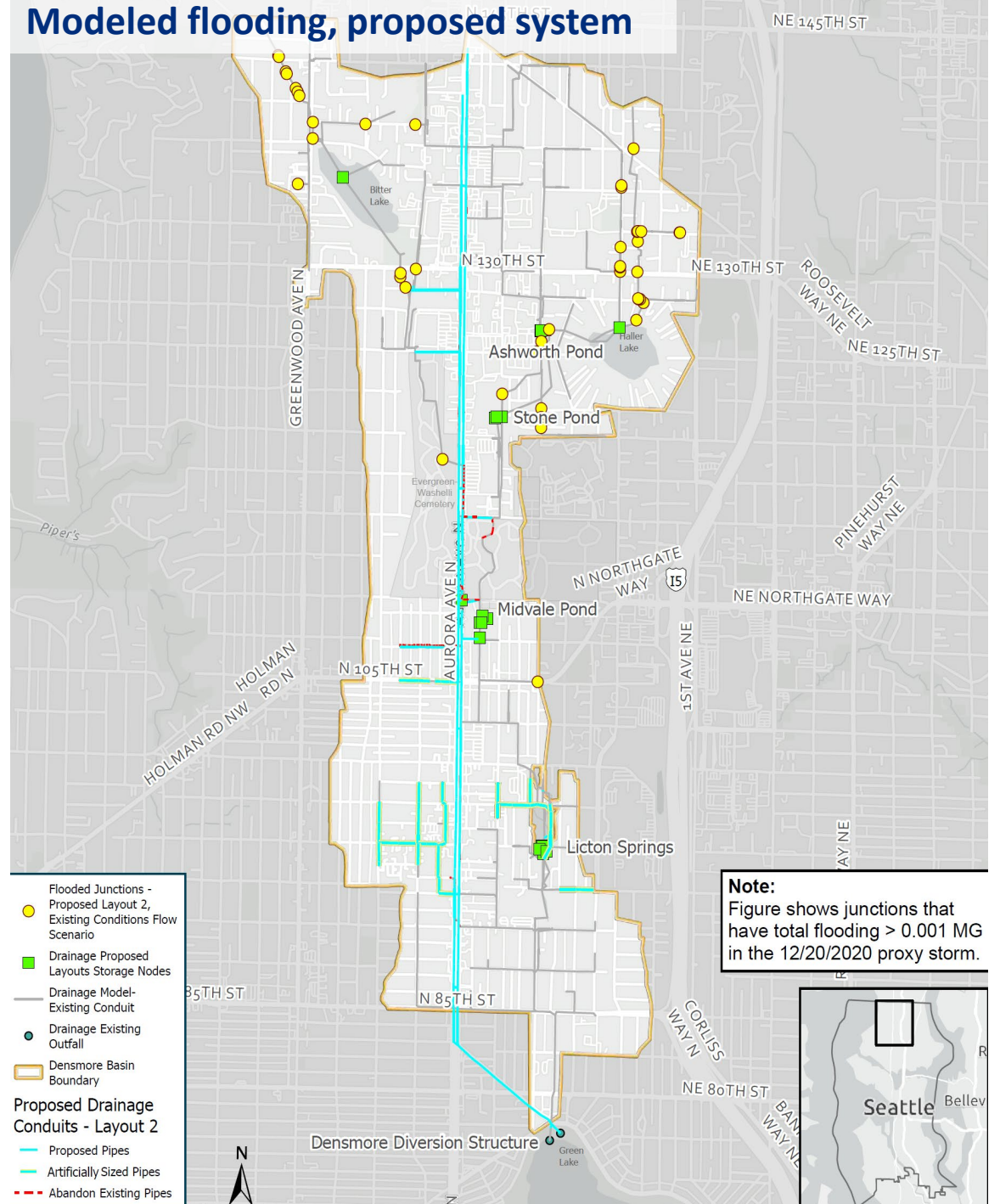
Proposed drainage layout #2



Modeled flooding, existing system



Modeled flooding, proposed system



Risks of downstream impacts

- Densmore drains to Lake Union, Green Lake, and the University combined sewer (depending on flow rate)
- Without mitigation, Densmore improvements would increase flows Green Lake and University CSO.
- In any option, SPU/SDOT will need to provide additional water quality treatment (regional or distributed)

Densmore outflow scenarios

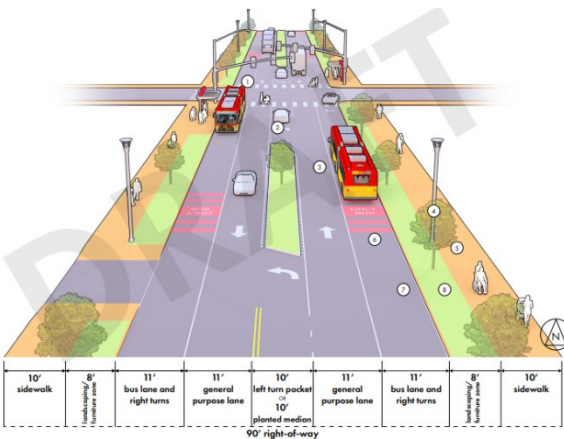


SDOT Aurora Corridor Planning Phase 1: Draft Ideas

Study Segments North of Green Lake (90' ROW)

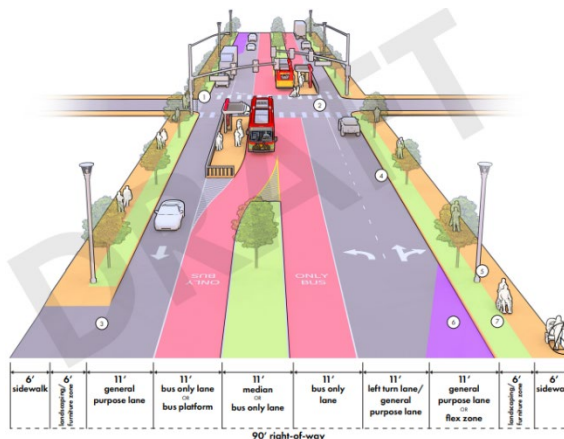
Walkable Boulevard

Provides wide sidewalks and safer crossings to improve pedestrian comfort, increase accessibility, and create opportunities for street activation with curbside bus lanes in each direction.



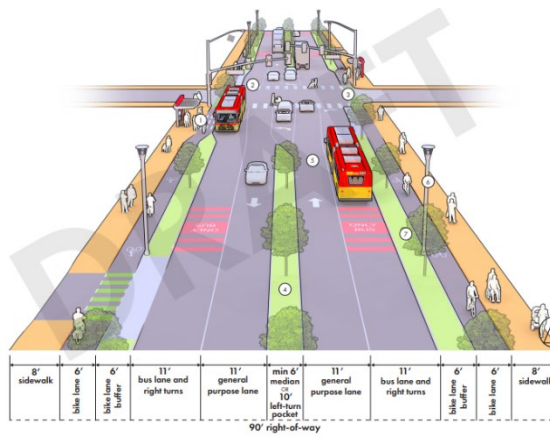
Center-Running Bus Lanes

Includes center-running bus only lanes to provide the highest level of transit service and limit conflict between buses and other vehicular traffic.



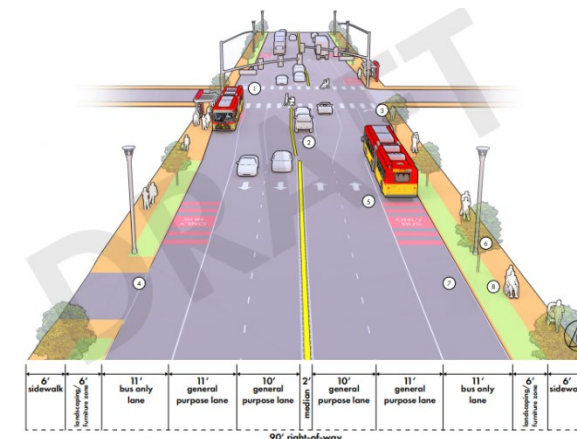
Bike Connection

Installs protected bike lanes in both directions to improve access and safety for people biking with curbside bus lanes in each direction.



Maintain Vehicle Capacity

Maintains two general purpose travel lanes with curbside bus lanes in each direction (only applies north of Green Lake).



Phase 2: Joint SDOT/SPU/OPCD planning

Program Activity	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030 & Beyond
SPU Drainage & Sewer Study		Phase 1			Phase 2 Aurora design: Mobility, drainage & sewer				
SDOT Corridor Planning Study	Phase 1				Phase 2 Aurora design: Mobility, drainage & sewer				
Joint Community Engagement					Community Advisory Group			Construction communications	
OPCD Community Action Plan				Scoping	Draft Plan	Final plan & implementation			
Permitting & State Approvals									
Capital Project (Phased)							Design		Construction

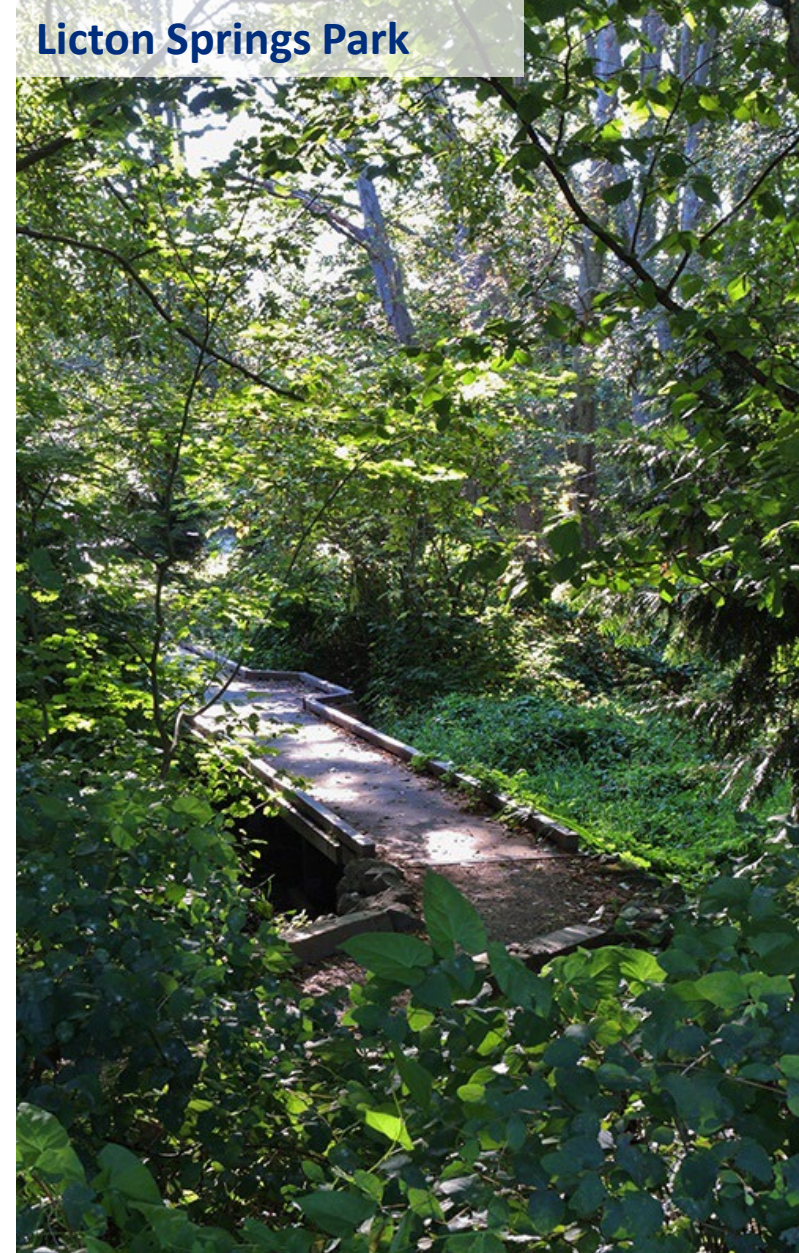
Phase 2: SDOT Scope Highlights

- Analysis to better understand tradeoffs and network impacts of roadway concepts, especially lane reductions
- Inclusive community engagement coordinated with partner agencies, community advisory group
- Complete alternatives analysis to identify a preferred corridor design
- Develop environmental permitting strategy, project phasing plan, and preliminary designs and estimates (~10% level)



Phase 2: SPU Scope Highlights

- Improve and expand drainage/sewer models
- Define and narrow options for flow control and water quality treatment
- Refine system layouts to reflect SDOT preferred alternative
- Documentation, cost estimates to 10% design level
- Coordinate with King County East Ship Canal combined sewer planning



Flow control/water quality options to evaluate in Phase 2

- Retrofitting existing ponds (Ashworth, Stone, Midvale) for increased capacity, WQ treatment
- Building new ponds or stormwater parks
- Retrofitting the Densmore pump station and force main for increased capacity
- Removing flow from the system through GSI and/or UIC facilities
- Refining management of Green Lake water level (paired with WQ treatment)
- Permeable asphalt overlays (for WQ treatment)
- Combinations...



Questions/comments?

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