

# University Area Transportation Study



City of Seattle  
Strategic Planning Office

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## First Open House Helps Identify Problems and Potential Solutions

More than 45 community leaders and interested residents attended an Open House for the University Area Transportation Study (UATS). The UATS is the City's comprehensive study of transportation issues in the University District and surrounding areas. The Open House was an opportunity for the community to learn about transportation issues in the study area — transit services, pedestrian volumes, bike routes, travel patterns, problem areas, traffic growth trends, and projected household and employment growth. This newsletter is a report back to the community on what we heard at the June Open House.

Most participants felt traffic congestion in the area is getting worse and the data show that average vehicular travel speeds during the PM peak hour are 3 miles per hour on Montlake Blvd. and 6 miles per hour on NE 45<sup>th</sup> St. But the data also show that traffic volumes on those congested streets are not increasing. So what is the cause?

One major cause is that the I-5 and SR-520 freeways are congested much of the day due to regional growth, causing freeway-bound traffic to spillover onto city streets in the University area, clogging and reducing the capacity of the streets. This is one of the most serious problems the study team has identified. Other problems in the area include the lack of dedicated space for pedestrians and bicyclists and slow bus speeds.

A quick summary of what we learned from you is included in this newsletter. If you missed the Open House, the maps and figures presented can be viewed at the UATS web site, along with more study information.

### Contact Information

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Strategic Planning Office**

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[http://www.cityofseattle.net/planning/areawidestudies/  
uats.htm](http://www.cityofseattle.net/planning/areawidestudies/uats.htm)



**November 15,  
2001**

**5 PM to 8 PM**

**Gould Hall Court  
Corner of NE 40th St.  
and University Way**

## Possible Improvements Identified, Now the Hard Part: What Can We Accomplish?

Based on previous studies, a new comprehensive examination of problems in the area, and public input, the project team has identified a wide range of possible transportation improvements. Potential strategies are aimed at improving conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians, transit and carpools, and general purpose traffic. They range from small and simple to big and expensive, and from short- to long-term. Most of the potential improvements are illustrated in this newsletter.

Beginning in September, the project team began the more difficult tasks of evaluating and prioritizing possible improvements and of identifying potential funding strategies. The team will use criteria developed specifically for the University Area to help sort out priorities, recognizing that potential improvements will need to be integrated into the City's overall priorities. This part of the project is made even more challenging by the overall transportation funding shortfall, not just within the City, but regionwide and statewide. Even with major increases in local transportation spending over the last several years, the City has a large backlog of maintenance and safety needs, and only a fraction of the total transportation budget is available for the kinds of mobility improvements identified in this study.

### We Want Your Comments:

At the November Open House, the team will present the full range of potential improvements along with a first "cut" at prioritization and financial strategy. Please attend the Open House, review and comment on materials on the web site, or contact Jon Layzer, the City's project manager, to help us incorporate your suggestions.



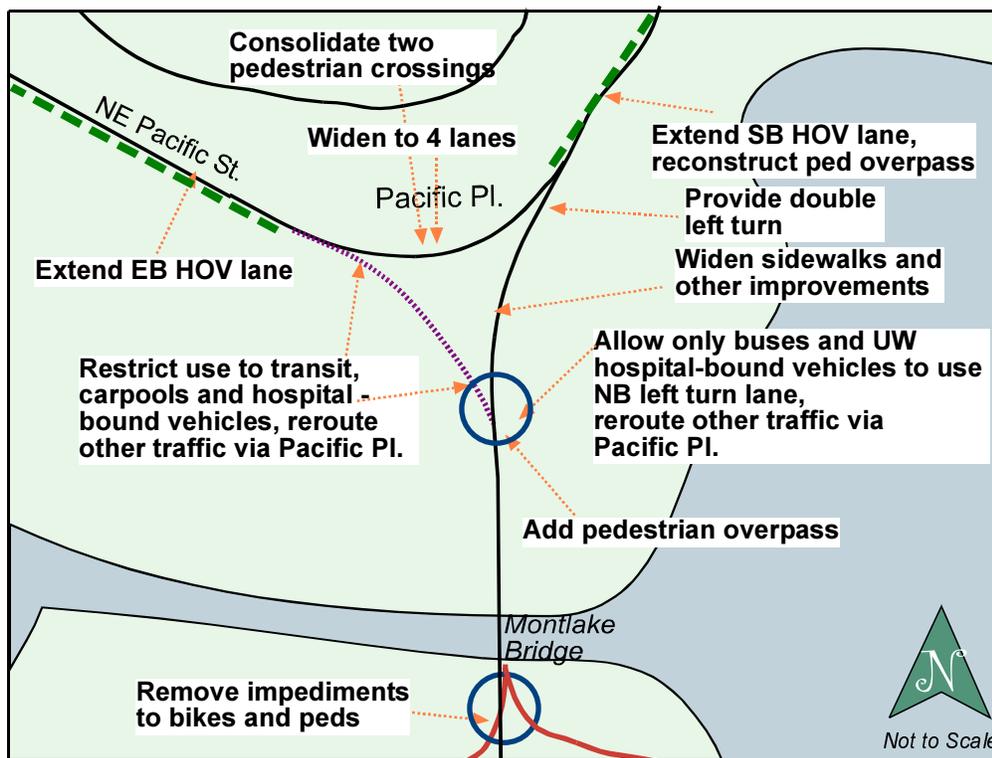
# Transportation Improvement

Eastlake Ave./  
Campus  
Parkway/ NE  
40th St.  
Corridors

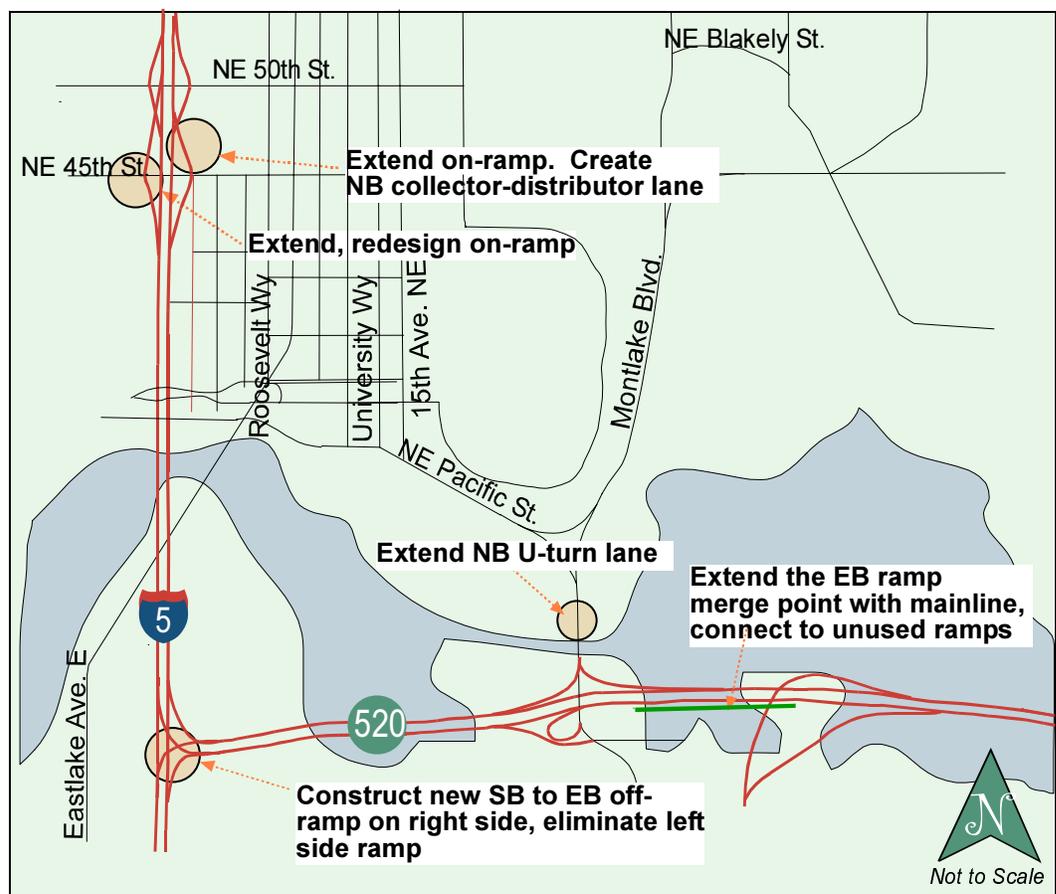


Major East/  
West Access  
Corridors  
Major North/  
South Access  
Corridors

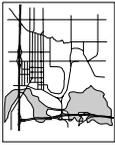
# Concepts to be Evaluated



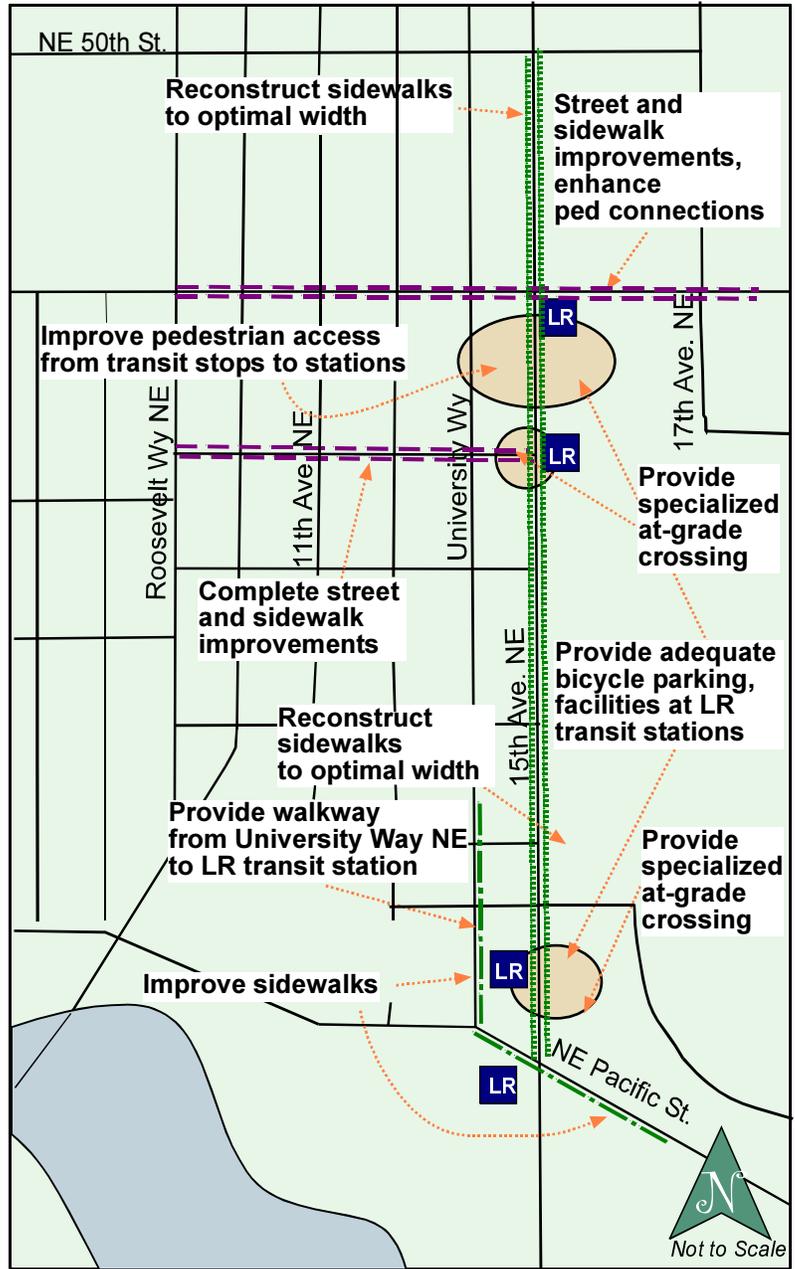
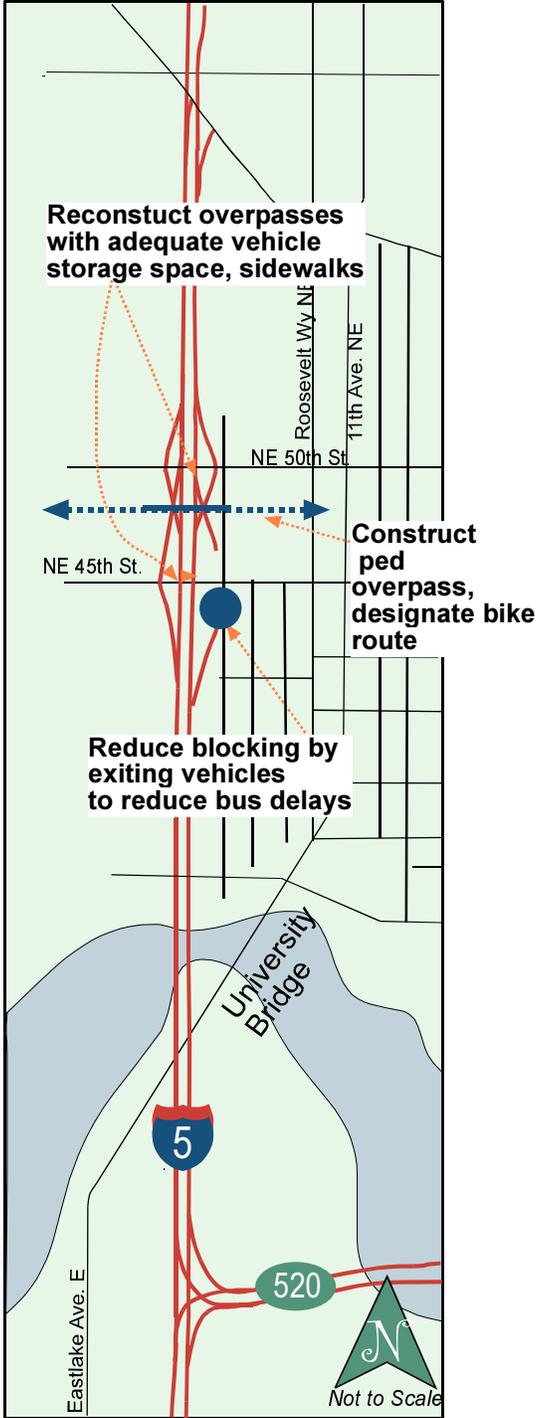
Montlake Blvd/  
Pacific Street  
Corridors



Ramp Storage  
Expansion (SR-520  
and I-5)



# Transportation Improvement

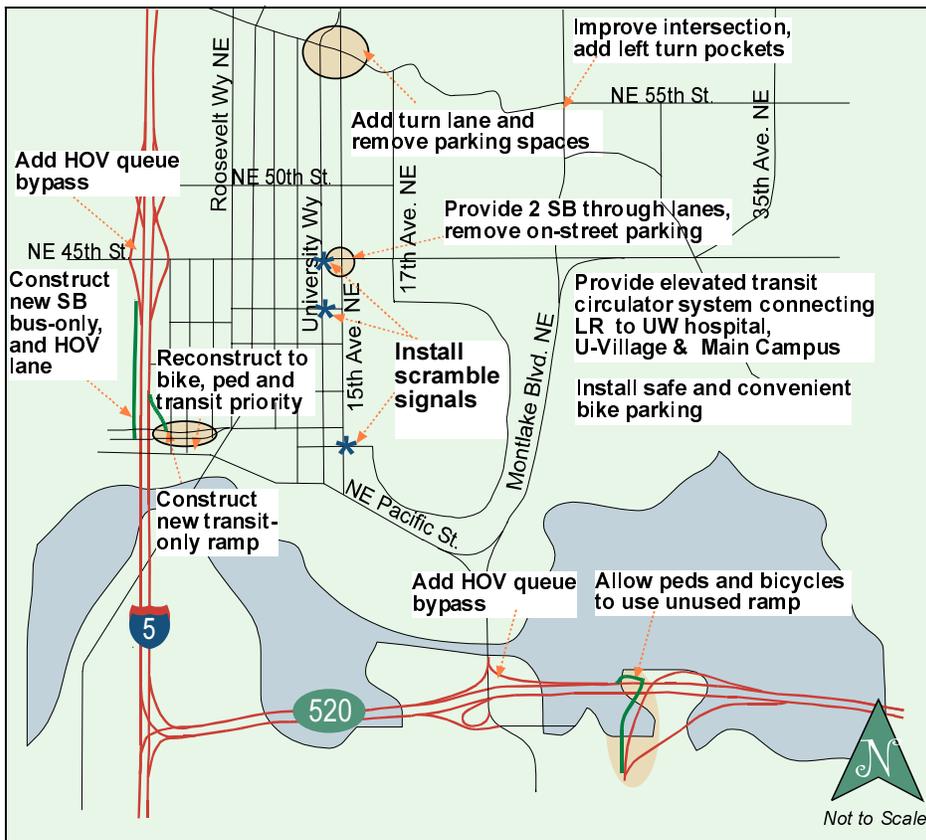
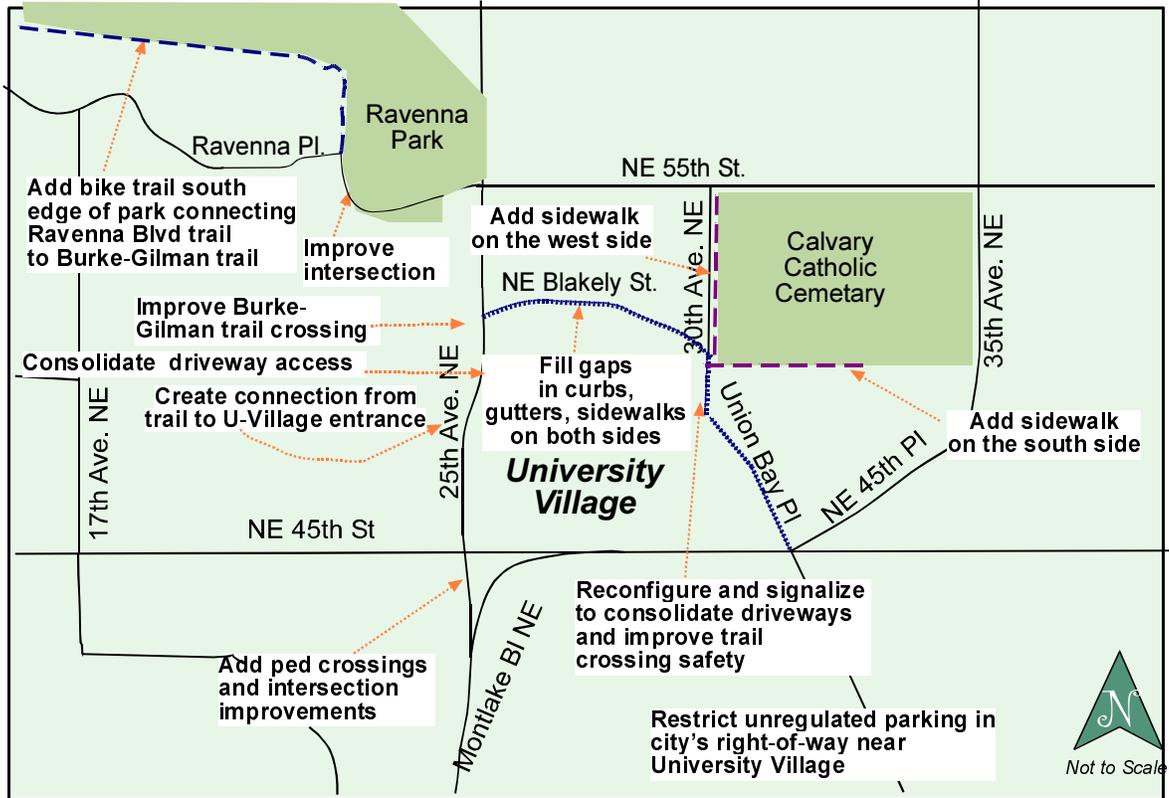


I-5 Crossing Improvements

Light Rail Station Area Improvements

# Concepts to be Evaluated

## University Village Area Access



## Transit Access, Spot Improvements and Traffic Signal Modification

## What we learned from you at the Open House

The City and consultant team will seriously consider the comment received and will try to develop a transportation plan that reflects and balances community desires.

### Key points heard at the Open House include:

- ◆ Change the auto-dominated culture.
- ◆ Allow bicyclists to use the unused overpass that crosses SR 520.
- ◆ Consider a transit-only lane and BAT (Business Access/Transit) lane on NE 45<sup>th</sup> Street (but expressed concern about what would happen to traffic which is already heavily congested in the corridor).
- ◆ Improve the I-5/SR 520 interchange so south-bound I-5 left lanes will not block through-traffic at the Ship Canal bridge.
- ◆ Construct a pedestrian/bicycle overpass over I-5 at NE 47<sup>th</sup> Street connecting the University area with the Wallingford area.
- ◆ Make traffic signals more pedestrian friendly – shorter signal cycle lengths would reduce pedestrian delays at intersections.
- ◆ Consider providing a “scramble walk” intersection where cars stop in all directions and all pedestrians cross at the same time.

### Written suggestion highlights:

- ◆ Focus on the mobility of people rather than the mobility of cars.
- ◆ Concentrate on converting existing signals to transit-preemption operation.
- ◆ Promote the efficiency of dedicated HOV lanes to SOV drivers.
- ◆ Provide more open lanes for transit.
- ◆ Make the area easier and more convenient to walk, bicycle, or use the bus.
- ◆ Place an emphasis on making the signals move buses, bicyclists and pedestrians more efficiently.
- ◆ Eliminate pedestrian pushbuttons (where they no longer activate a walk signal during the day).
- ◆ Provide disincentives to SOV.
- ◆ Create bus-only lanes.
- ◆ Curb bulbs are needed on University Way NE, 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, NE 45<sup>th</sup> St, and NE Campus Parkway.
- ◆ Traffic lights are not needed as they make walking and riding a bike less convenient.

## What is the University Area Transportation Study?

The City of Seattle is developing a transportation plan for the neighborhoods in and around the University District, including Montlake, University Heights, and Ravenna. The study area stretches from I-5 to 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and from NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street to the Ship Canal including the Montlake interchange on SR-520. The City is identifying new improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and autos, as well as programs to reduce travel demand. The results will provide direction to the City, other public agencies, and private developers to improve the university area transportation system for the next 10 years and beyond. For more information contact the Project Manager Jon Layzer. (Contact information on page 1.)

### Study Timeline

