

# June 29 Open House Summary Report

Prepared for:

The Seattle Department of Transportation

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## Introduction

The Mercer Corridor Project, led by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), is being conducted to determine transportation improvements along the Mercer Corridor from I-5 to Dexter Avenue North. The project's purpose is to improve local safety, access, and circulation for vehicles and pedestrians, accommodate economic growth and neighborhood livability within the South Lake Union urban center, and improve the connection from I-5 to and through South Lake Union.

The City of Seattle has identified a preliminary preferred alternative for the Mercer Corridor. As part of the city's efforts to ensure that the preferred alternative provides a balanced approach to accommodate all modes and is designed in a way that is sensitive to the City and neighborhood vision for South Lake Union, a public open house was held to provide information about the Two-way Mercer alternative and to listen to public ideas and concerns regarding how the alternative should "function, look, and feel."

## Notification Process

The City informed the public about the open house through a number of methods, including:

- Mailing a project newsletter to approximately 4,600 addresses within the study area and to all individuals and organizations on the project database
- Promoting the open house on the Mercer Corridor Project website
- Advertising in the *Queen Anne News*
- Emailing invitations to approximately 100 individuals and organizations
- Providing information at Alaskan Way Viaduct public open houses
- Releasing a press advisory about the open house to local media

## Open House

The open house was held on Wednesday, June 29 2005, at:

The South Lake Union Armory  
860 Terry Avenue  
Seattle, Washington

The open house was held from 5:00 – 7:30 p.m. Approximately 55 people attended the open house. In addition to SDOT and Consultant staff, WSDOT and FHWA representatives also attended as observers. The open house consisted of staffed displays, a presentation (held at 5:30 p.m.), and comment tables. Participants were able to talk one on one with project staff, view displays of the alternatives and other project information, and record their comments on provided comment forms. Participants were informed that they could submit oral and written comments at the meeting or submit written comments via email, mail, or fax. Some participants also provided comments and asked questions following the presentation.

## Comment Summary

During the public open house, 7 written comment forms were submitted. In addition, 2 comments were written on sticky notes and posted on project display boards. One comment form was submitted via fax after the open house.

This summary outlines the common issues and themes identified in the submitted comments, as well as a list of some general ideas or recommendations provided in feedback to the alternatives that were presented at the open house. Copies of the public comments are provided in Appendix A of this report.

### ***Bicycles***

Comments about bicycles indicated support for integrating bicycles into the project's design throughout the corridor. Specific comments included:

- Include design elements, such as striping and colored lanes to improve awareness and guide bicyclists
- Fairview, south of Valley, is better for bike lanes than Ninth. Consider intersection design and mode interaction very carefully.

### ***Pedestrians***

Comments about pedestrians indicated support for a pedestrian-friendly Valley and a concern for how pedestrians would use other streets. Specific comments included:

- Make pedestrians needs the forefront of Valley's design
- A crosswalk is needed at Boren – people will want to cross there.

### ***Freight***

Comments about freight communicated the importance of the Mercer Corridor to freight mobility and the need to design the corridor to facilitate freight movement. Specific comments included:

- The area is critical to the connectivity of the Seattle/King County freight system
- Design streets to maintain truck turning capacity, specifically at Mercer and Westlake – need ability to make faster turns without stopping.

### ***Traffic***

Following the presentation, a few participants questioned the ability of the proposed Two-way Mercer to move all of the traffic onto I-5. To them, this is Mercer's primary function. Others supported the overall design and function of Mercer, noting that it must change to serve a new, growing neighborhood:

- How can making a one-way street into a two-way street help move more traffic onto I-5? This should be the focus for Mercer.

- We have an opportunity to create a grand gateway to this neighborhood, as well as downtown and other neighborhoods; It is not just about moving traffic through here.

### ***Other comments***

Attendees made a number of other comments about refining the alternative, including:

- The transition from Mercer to Roy should be done at Taylor or 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue because a transition at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue would result in a “F” Level of Service.
- Close Broad Street and keep westbound traffic on Mercer Street
- Provide better connections to Westlake and Roy
- Keep the idea of environmental sustainability theme as a central part of the design

One participant asked what input the project team was looking for at the open house. The response was that the purpose of the meeting was to get comments on the overall design and function of the Two-way Mercer alternative, including the urban design concepts presented. However, it was also clarified that we will take all comments received under consideration throughout the environmental review. There were also questions about how a final decision would be made. The City and FHWA will make the decision on the preferred alternative based on technical studies, cost and public input.

## Appendix A – Public Comments

- Hooray for more bike lanes, especially connecting S. Lake Union & Seattle Center. Any chance of creating/ extending them along Westlake on one side (or at least improving signs & lane markings) and Eastlake on the other?
- What are the green & pedestrian streets that go N &S from S. Lake Union? Any besides the streetcar streets (Westlake & Terry)?
- We're concerned about the lack of a cross walk at Boren. Don't you think people will try to cross there anyway.
- Bicycle Facilities - at Broad & Ninth Intersection (or any left turn from one "bike arterial" to another) Should consider paint to assist the merge/ weave, i.e., how to get from the right hand bike lane to the left hand turn lane? Much will depend on traffic speed on Valley. If it's going to be fast, this will be tricky.
- This is where some solutions such as a blue bike lane or dashed line might help guide bikes an increase awareness of motorists of the action
- Fairview south of Valley would be a very good candidate for additional bike lanes (better than Ninth in fact, based on need and location).Overall, want to encourage careful consideration of intersection design, where modes go, how they interact.
- Please maintain trucking turning capacity & remember this is a main oversize load route. The design at Mercer& Westlake must be designed for a faster turn built for moving and not stopping and no sharp turns. This is a vital freight mobility area and critical to the whole connectivity of our Seattle/ King County transportation system.
- If the Two-Way Mercer alternative is used, Broad St. should not dead end at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave N. Instead continue Broad St. to Harrison St., providing a semi E-W through street between the Cascade neighborhood & the waterfront
- The transition from Mercer to Roy St. should be done at Taylor or 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, and not 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. A transition at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave would cause the intersections of 5<sup>th</sup> and Mercer to be to LOS F.
- Interim transition to Broad St. looks fine.
- Streetcar needs to extend to U District immediately. It is sucking up valuable new service hours. Remember, if city busses are crowded, you know where to put the blame.
- Close Broad and keep westbound on Mercer.
- Better connections to Westlake & Roy.
- Pedestrian environment on Valley.
- Mitigate impacts on lower Q.A.
- Grade separation at key intersections.
- Good job (so far) of integration of design character consistent with SLU neighborhood plan lines- It looks like it belongs here.
- Good Job- so far so good!
- Think about what it take for you to live in this neighborhood
- Keep the idea of environmental issues of green ideas at the forefront. Pedestrian and bike friendly plus appropriately placed bike lock up stands/ racks.
- Build it now

- Put emphasis on moving the greatest volume of traffic at the greatest speed to and from I-5 and to areas around South Lake Union (Seattle center, Queen Anne, and the new museum sculpture park)