



## Improving access for North Seattle

In January 2009 a bored tunnel alternative was recommended as the replacement for the Alaskan Way Viaduct between S. King Street and the Battery Street Tunnel. This alternative would maintain a vital route for people and goods through downtown while improving the environment of the waterfront and opening it up for other public uses. The bored tunnel could also be built while SR 99 remains open to traffic, thereby minimizing construction impacts to businesses and the traveling public. A second Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement that analyzes the bored tunnel alternative will be published for public review in fall 2010.

The projects included in this recommendation are designed to work together to replace the different functions of the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The proposed bored tunnel would have the capacity to accommodate trips through downtown on SR 99, which currently total more than 60,000 each day. For the rest of today's viaduct users, there would be a number of options.

Drivers would be able to access the downtown street grid using ramps at either end of the tunnel and then choose among a variety of routes to connect to their destination, including the new Alaskan Way surface street along the waterfront. In addition, travelers would have numerous transit options, including additional peak-period transit service to downtown.

### Using the bored tunnel

The proposed bored tunnel would maintain an efficient route through downtown, helping people and goods from north Seattle easily access the stadiums, SODO and Duwamish industrial areas, and destinations south of Seattle such as Sea-Tac International Airport.

The tunnel's north end (or portal) would be near Harrison Street between Sixth Avenue N. and Aurora Avenue N. At this location, the tunnel would surface and connect to Aurora Avenue N. (SR 99). Drivers from

Fremont, Green Lake and other northern neighborhoods would access the tunnel from Aurora Avenue N., while drivers from Magnolia, Ballard and other northwestern neighborhoods would access the tunnel via an improved, two-way Mercer Street and an on-ramp at a new Sixth Avenue N. between Harrison Street and Mercer Street.



*North portal design concept with curved Sixth Avenue N. We are also studying a straight Sixth Avenue N. option.*

## Using the new Alaskan Way

Drivers would also have the option of using the new Alaskan Way surface street for trips to or through downtown Seattle. Drivers from northwestern neighborhoods and industrial centers would be able to access Alaskan Way using a new arterial street connecting to Elliott and Western avenues, replacing the function of the existing SR 99 ramps. This new connection over the railroad tracks would take drivers along the waterfront in the footprint of the former viaduct. Drivers would be able to access downtown from any number of streets as well as continue on a direct connection to SR 99 near the stadiums. The signals on Alaskan Way would provide safe, managed pedestrian crossings and be timed to move traffic efficiently.

## Improving connections and access along the waterfront

The new Alaskan Way would be a “complete street” – one that accommodates pedestrian, bicycle, and freight movements as well as general traffic. It would have two lanes in each direction plus turn lanes, and an additional lane in each direction south of Columbia Street to accommodate ferry traffic. Signalized intersections and left turn lanes would provide numerous entry points into downtown. A new north-south bicycle route along the waterfront would connect to existing trails such as the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail.

## Improving transit access to downtown

As part of the bored tunnel recommendation, King County, with the support of the Seattle City Council, is seeking new funding sources to invest in expanded transit service to downtown, which would make transit a more viable alternative for downtown workers. This includes enhanced Ballard/Uptown and Aurora Avenue RapidRide bus service for frequent service to downtown with easy connections to light rail, West Seattle RapidRide, and other transit routes, as well as improvements to peak express service from the north.

We are also designing the bored tunnel’s portal areas to improve transit access and reliability. For example, the north portal area includes a new Aurora Avenue N. surface street between Denny Way and Harrison Street that would have transit lanes and transit stops with access to and from both sides of Aurora Avenue N.



Early concept of Alaskan Way connection to Elliott and Western avenues.



Early concept for new Alaskan Way. (Brick paving is a placeholder, not a design).



North portal design concept looking north. (Sixth Avenue N. curved option).



Two-way Mercer Street.

## Summary of Improvements

**New Elliott and Western Avenue connection:** With a new grade-separated connection over the railroad tracks, Elliott Avenue would flow directly to the new Alaskan Way, providing an efficient route through downtown and more options to get into downtown.

**Proposed SR 99 bored tunnel:** The bored tunnel would be an efficient bypass through downtown to the stadiums, southwest Seattle, and the airport.

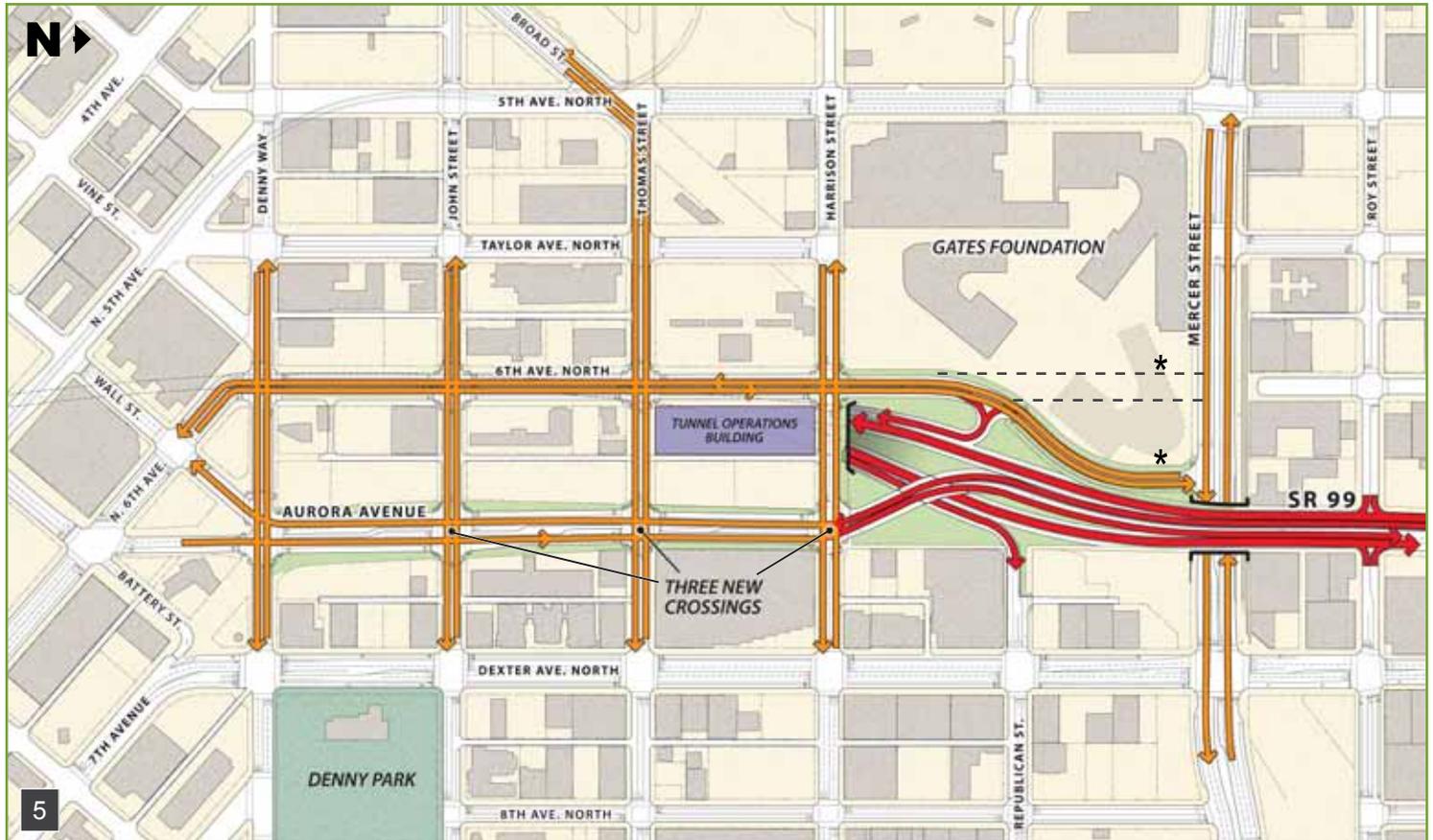
**New transit options:** New RapidRide service for Ballard/Uptown and Aurora Avenue will provide fast, frequent service to downtown with easy connections to the Sound Transit Link light rail system. The County is seeking funding to further enhance this service.

**Improved street connections:** At the tunnel's north portal, John, Thomas, and Harrison streets would reconnect across Aurora Avenue N., improving access between the Lower Queen Anne and South Lake Union neighborhoods, as well as to and from SR 99 (see back for detailed graphic).

**Two-Way Mercer Street:** This corridor between Elliott Avenue and I-5 will give northwest Seattle access to and from the proposed bored tunnel.

## Reconnecting neighborhoods

An integral feature of the bored tunnel's north portal is that it would reconnect the street grid and improve access between neighborhoods. The tunnel's north portal area includes new connections across Aurora Avenue for John, Thomas and Harrison streets. This would provide several new east-west routes between the South Lake Union and Lower Queen Anne neighborhoods, improving access to destinations such as Seattle Center. These streets would include new sidewalks and bicycle route improvements.



North portal design concept showing access to and from the bored tunnel and new street connections across Aurora Avenue. Analysis of both a curved and straight option for Sixth Avenue N. will be included in the second Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The curved option is shown and the straight option is dashed on the above graphic.\*

### For more information

Visit the website at [www.alaskanwayviaduct.org](http://www.alaskanwayviaduct.org)

Call the hotline at 1-888-AWV-LINE

Send an e-mail to [viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:viaduct@wsdot.wa.gov)

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