

## MEMORANDUM

To: Ian Macek, SDOT

From: Tom Brennan, Nelson\Nygaard

Date: November 3, 2017

Subject: Summary of Feedback Received at October 23, 2017, North Downtown Mobility Action Plan Open House

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The purpose of the North Downtown Mobility Action Plan is to support access to and mobility through North Downtown, which includes the Uptown, Belltown, and South Lake Union neighborhoods. This action plan will identify and prioritize transportation improvements for all modes building on existing community plans.

The guiding principles of the North Downtown Mobility Action Plan established by the Arena Community Advisory Committee and the City of Seattle are as follows:

- **Prioritize sustainable transportation options.** Increase accessibility and convenience for people walking, biking, and taking transit to support growth and accommodate Seattle Center events, while reducing automobile trips.
- **Enhance the public realm.** Enhance the public realm to create attractive places to walk, bike, ride transit, and play in North Downtown.
- **Improve connectivity.** Increase connectivity between the North Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.
- **Build on community vision.** Align mobility improvement implementation with community priorities and vision.
- **Increase safety.** Enable safe access for all, regardless of age, ability, or transportation mode choice.

On Monday, October 23, 2017, SDOT hosted an open house from 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Seattle Center Armory Loft. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce community members to the project and solicit feedback on the project's desired outcomes and areas of focus. Nearly 90 members of the public attended.

This memo provides an overview of feedback received at the open house and immediately following through three avenues:

- **Neighborhood Mapping Activity:** At the open house, participants were invited to comment on large printed maps of the Uptown, Belltown, and South Lake Union neighborhoods with stickers, post-it notes, and markers to identify specific places in need of mobility or public realm improvements. Photos of these maps are available in Appendix A.
- **Guiding Principles Activity:** At the open house, participants were asked to help translate each guiding principle (listed above) into a desired outcome by answering the question, "What does this mean to you?" Each guiding principle was printed on a large poster, and participants recorded their responses on large post-it notes. Photos of the guiding principle posters are available in Appendix A.

- **Written Comments:** SDOT received six emails from community members or groups after the open house. This feedback was integrated into this summary, and the letters are available in Appendix B.

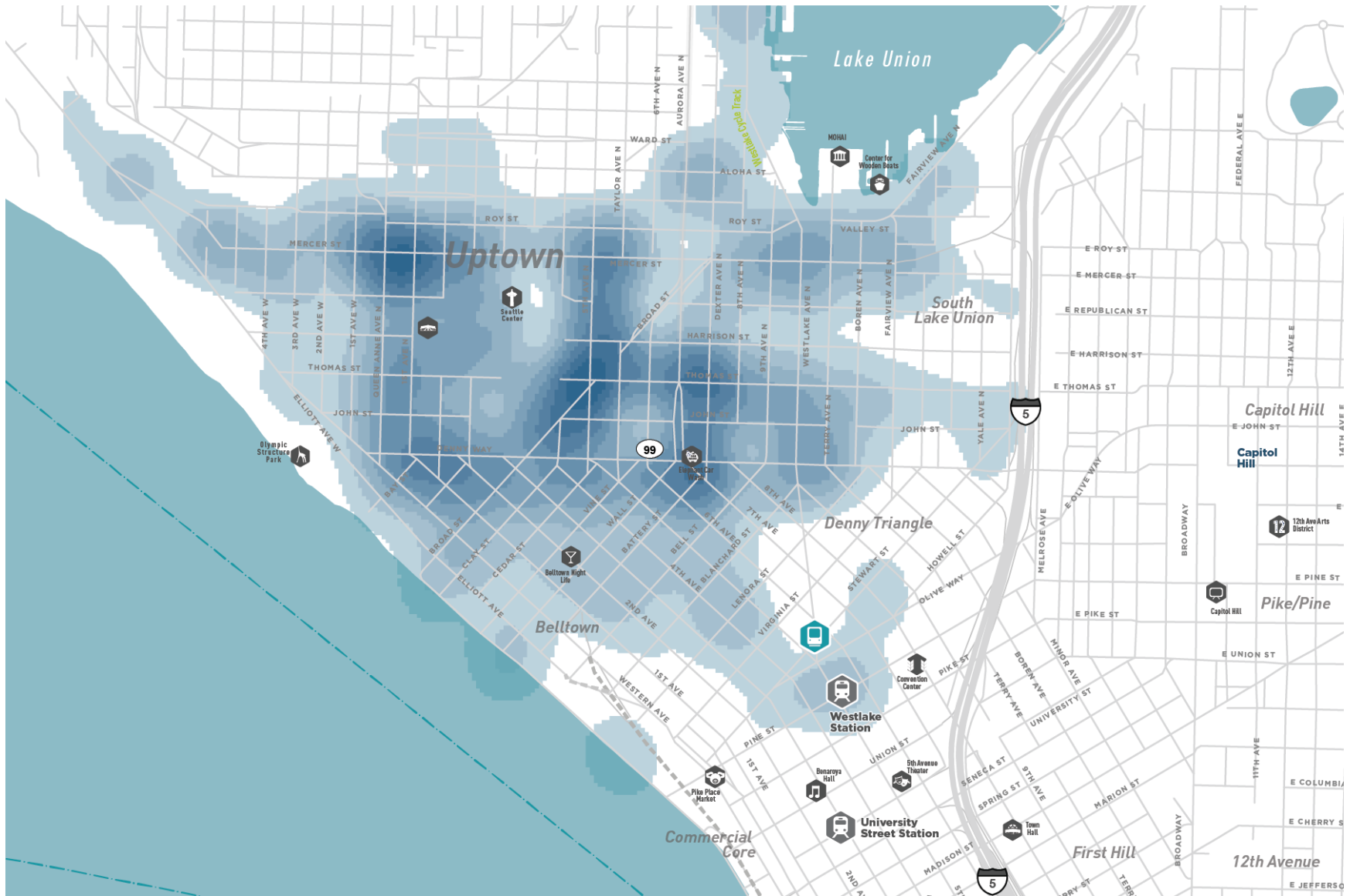
### **Feedback from Neighborhood Mapping Activity**

The project team compiled and analyzed the map-based feedback by transportation mode or public realm improvement, highlighting the specific mobility issues and opportunities cited most frequently in participant responses.

Preliminary geographic distribution of neighborhood-based mapping activity comments is illustrated in the map in Figure 1. Darker areas indicate a higher volume of comments. The distribution of feedback themes by mode are shown in Figures 2 through 5. All comments can be viewed in Appendix B or online via this interactive map: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1SaC1IDFOuy1FFs39WFNZLWTs2qXLnP-i>.

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Figure 1 Neighborhood Mapping Activity – All Comments





## Bicycling

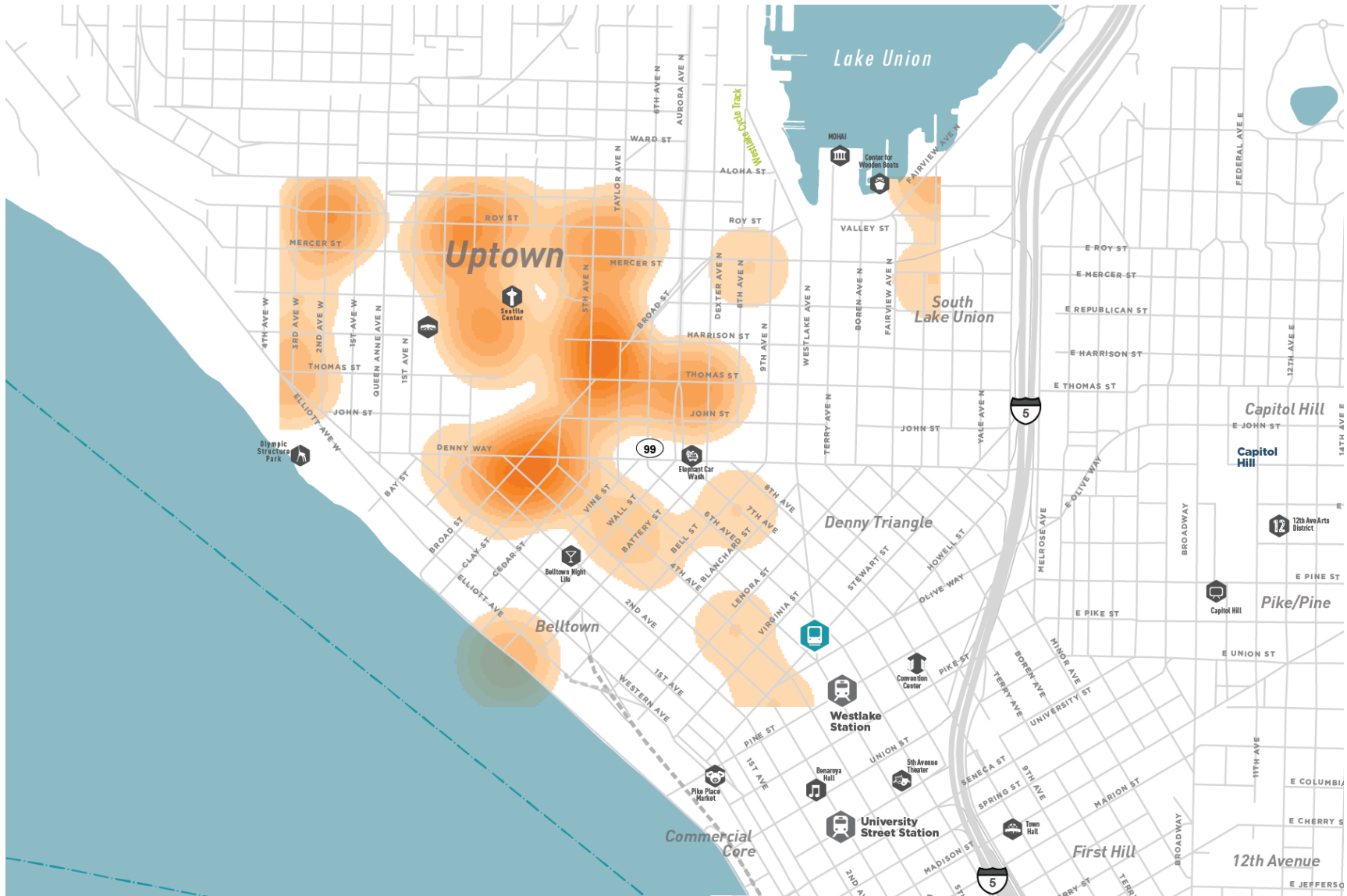
The most frequent comment from participants regarding bicycling in North Downtown was for better bicycling connections to, from, and through the area. Comments cited the lack of connectivity between protected bikeways in the area. Participants most frequently requested the following bikeway improvements:

- Provide more east-west connections and protected bikeways between Uptown, and South Lake Union and Capitol Hill. Once the SR 99 tunnel opens and Thomas St is reconnected, it should serve as the primary east/west pedestrian and bike connection from South Lake Union to the waterfront.
- Install a protected bike lane on Broad St to complete the connections from the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave protected bike lane (PBL) and Thomas St to the waterfront and Elliott Bay Trail.
- Improve the Roy St PBL by continuing the facility west of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, upgrading to a fully protected bike lane with buffers, and adding bike boxes to make the connection between the Roy St and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave bikeways easier.
- Continue the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave PBL further south of Republican, connecting at least to Thomas St.
- Improve the bicycle connections along 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave both north and south of Seattle Center. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave could be a north/south bikeway connection across Seattle Center connecting the PBLs on Roy St and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave through Belltown.
- Upgrade the bike lanes on Queen Anne and 1<sup>st</sup> Aves to fully protected bike lanes with bus bulbs to accommodate the Rapid Ride stops.
- Create an east/west bikeway connection along Republican St and August Wilson Way to the 5<sup>th</sup> Ave PBL.
- Install a two-way protected bike lane along 4<sup>th</sup> Ave to connect downtown and Seattle Center.
- Install bikeway improvements along 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave N to enhance the bicycling connection to the Thomas St pedestrian/bike bridge.

The map in Figure 2 illustrates the geographic distribution of bicycling comments. Darker areas indicate a higher volume of comments. Overall, 45 comments were specifically related to bicycling.

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Figure 2 Neighborhood Mapping Activity Comments – Bicycling-Related Comments





### Placemaking and Wayfinding

There were 29 comments regarding placemaking issues and opportunities, including the following frequent requests:

- Develop Thomas Street as a green street that prioritizes pedestrians and bikes over vehicle traffic.
- Retrofit the Battery Street tunnel into an active public space or park once the SR 99 tunnel opens.
- Make Denny Way in the vicinity of Aurora and Dexter Aves more people-oriented, beautiful, and green.
- Include a high-quality plaza and a safe, activated transit waiting area at the SR 99 northend tunnel portal.
- Install traffic calming Queen Anne Ave as vehicles regularly speed through the neighborhood commercial district.
- Improve lighting in the vicinity of Battery St to create a safe, all-hours walking connection between Uptown, Belltown, and Downtown.
- Activate the street and public realm, particularly near clusters of local businesses in Uptown, Belltown, and South Lake Union, with pre-/post-work event opportunities to reduce peak traffic.

There were 12 comments regarding wayfinding issues at specific locations throughout North Downtown. Specifically, participants requested the following:

- Establish arts and cultural district wayfinding throughout Belltown, Uptown, and Seattle Center.
- Improve bicycle route wayfinding at the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave and Denny Way. It's unclear where to continue if riding a bicycle north along 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave.
- Improve wayfinding along a route between the waterfront and Seattle Center. Enhance the Lake2Bay walking route.

Due to the smaller volume of comments regarding placemaking and wayfinding, maps were not generated for these topics.



## Driving

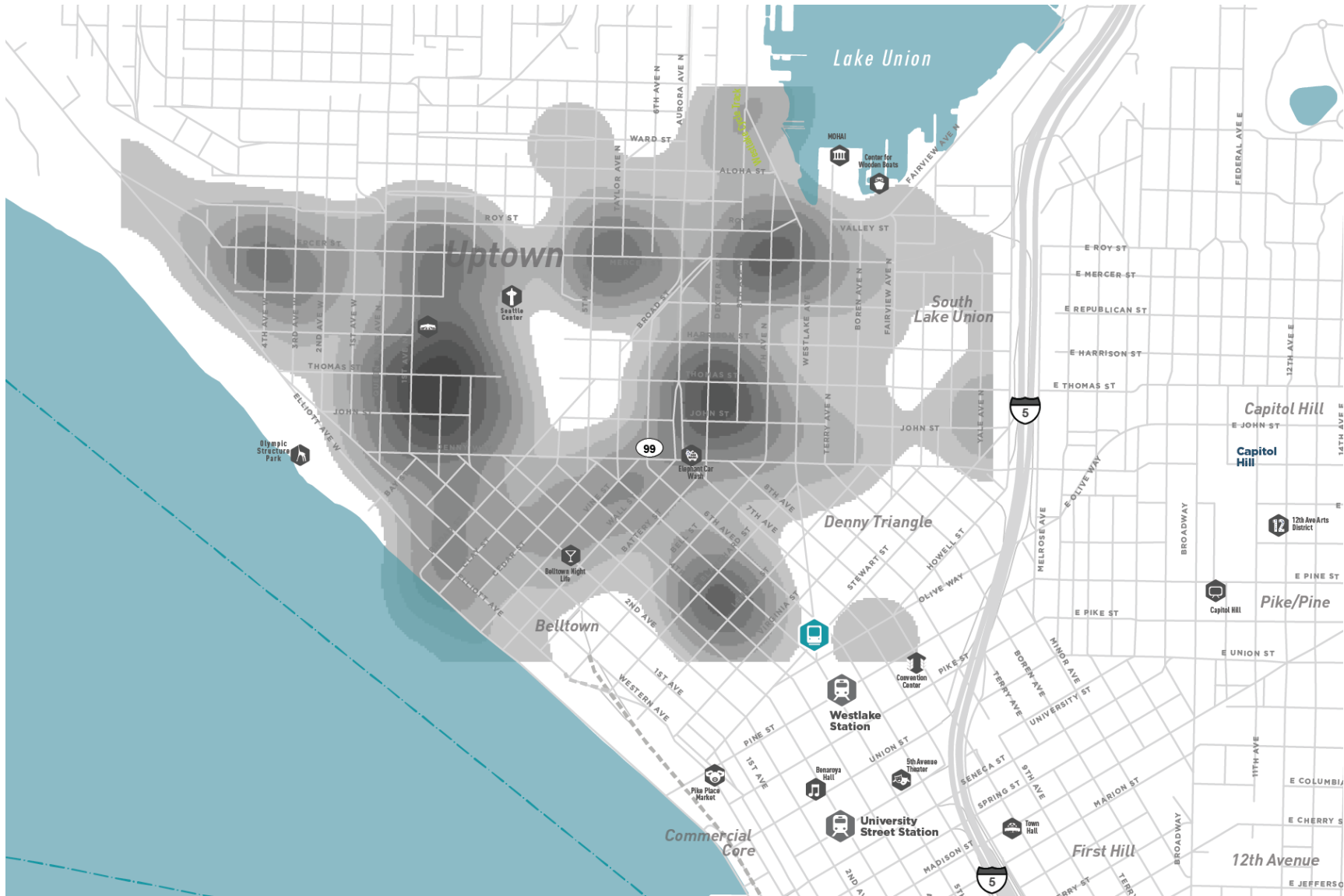
A total of 68 comments were related to driving or traffic. Most feedback focused on congestion, traffic calming, signal timing on Mercer St, rideshare pick-up and drop-off zones, and “Don’t Block the Box” enforcement. Specific improvements frequently requested included the following:

- Calm traffic along Queen Anne Ave and 1st Ave N.
- Increase the legibility of the 1st Ave N and Denny Way intersection.
- Create designated rideshare pick-up and drop-off zones, including geo-fences/pin-snap locations in the rideshare apps. Enforce non-compliance when rideshares block a bike lane, double park, or drop-off at an unsafe location.
- Increase enforcement (or consider a physical improvement) to prevent cars from driving along the length of Bell St. The current turn restriction signs are not enough.
- Revisit the residential parking (RPZ) program in the Uptown residential neighborhood.
- Install traffic calming, particularly diverters, along Thomas St in South Lake Union to reduce vehicle volumes.
- Increase “Don’t Block the Box” enforcement, especially along Taylor Ave, Roy St, Westlake Ave, Mercer St, and Dexter Ave. Use traffic officers during rush hour at the following intersections: Dexter/Mercer, Dexter/Roy, 9th/Mercer, Westlake/Mercer, and Westlake/Roy.
- Consider signals at Warren Ave and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave N onto Mercer to make turns easier.
- Separate pedestrian and turning movements at Queen Anne Ave to Mercer St to prevent traffic congestion.
- Improve the turn from Mercer St to Mercer Pl; it is dangerous as large vehicles regularly cross the center line.
- Enforce yielding by turning vehicles from Denny to pedestrians crossing 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N.
- Address congestion along Denny Way in the vicinity of SR 99 and Dexter Ave.

Figure 3 illustrates the geographic distribution of driving-related comments. Darker areas indicate a higher volume of comments. Comments about driving are spread more evenly across the study area than for other modes.

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Figure 3 Neighborhood Mapping Activity Comments – Map of Driving-Related Comments







## Walking

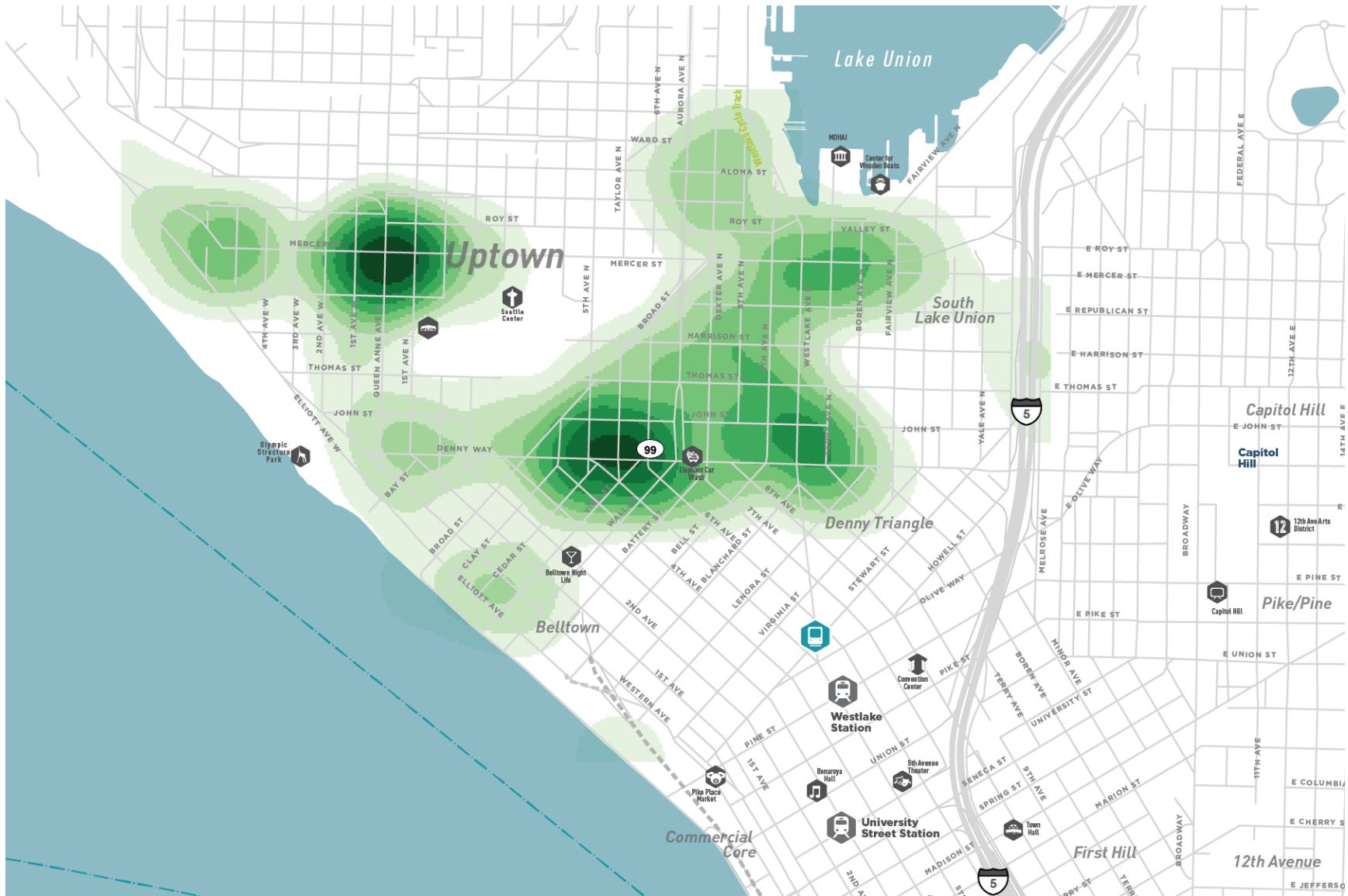
Comments regarding walking were largely focused on the difficulty crossing Mercer St, construction impeding walking paths, and the need for improved crossings throughout the study area. Participants frequently requested the following improvements:

- Prioritize pedestrian crossings of Mercer St. The adaptive signal timing causes long pedestrian wait times. Provide a default walk phases with every signal phase and more frequent walk phases of longer duration.
- Improve pedestrian crossing—including striped crosswalks, smaller/tighter intersections, and signal improvements—at the following intersections:
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Ave/Cedar St/Denny St – Install a crosswalk on the east side of 5<sup>th</sup> across Denny, and make intersection improvements to prioritize pedestrians.
  - Denny Way/Broad St – Improve pedestrian connections across Denny.
  - Broad St/4<sup>th</sup> Ave – Create a more pedestrian-friendly crossing to the Space Needle.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Ave/Denny Way – Reducing turning radii, which is currently very wide and allows vehicles to turn at high speeds; few vehicles yield to pedestrians crossing 1<sup>st</sup> in the crosswalk. Add a crosswalk across Denny on the west side of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N.
  - Queen Anne Ave/Denny Way – Add a crosswalk across Denny on the east side of Queen Anne Ave so that people don't have to cross three streets to cross Denny.
  - Thomas St crossings of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N and Queen Anne Ave – Stripe crosswalks across arterials at Thomas leading to the pedestrian overpass.
  - Queen Anne Ave/Mercer St – Install an all-walk phase/pedestrian scramble. Restripe crosswalk. Reduce many pedestrian/vehicle conflicts at this intersection.
  - Aurora Ave/Denny Way – Prioritize pedestrians at this intersection. Consolidate SR 99 on-ramps and slip lanes.
- Repair curbs along 4<sup>th</sup> Ave south of Mercer St.
- Enforce maintenance of pedestrian clear zones during construction.
- Prioritize pedestrian access to the future transit hub at Aurora Ave and Harrison St.
- Maintain pedestrian priority of Thomas St.
- Develop a better walking connection between South Lake Union and Capitol Hill.

The map in Figure 4 illustrates the geographic distribution of walking comments.

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Figure 4 Neighborhood Mapping Activity Comments – Map of Walking-Related Comments





## Transit

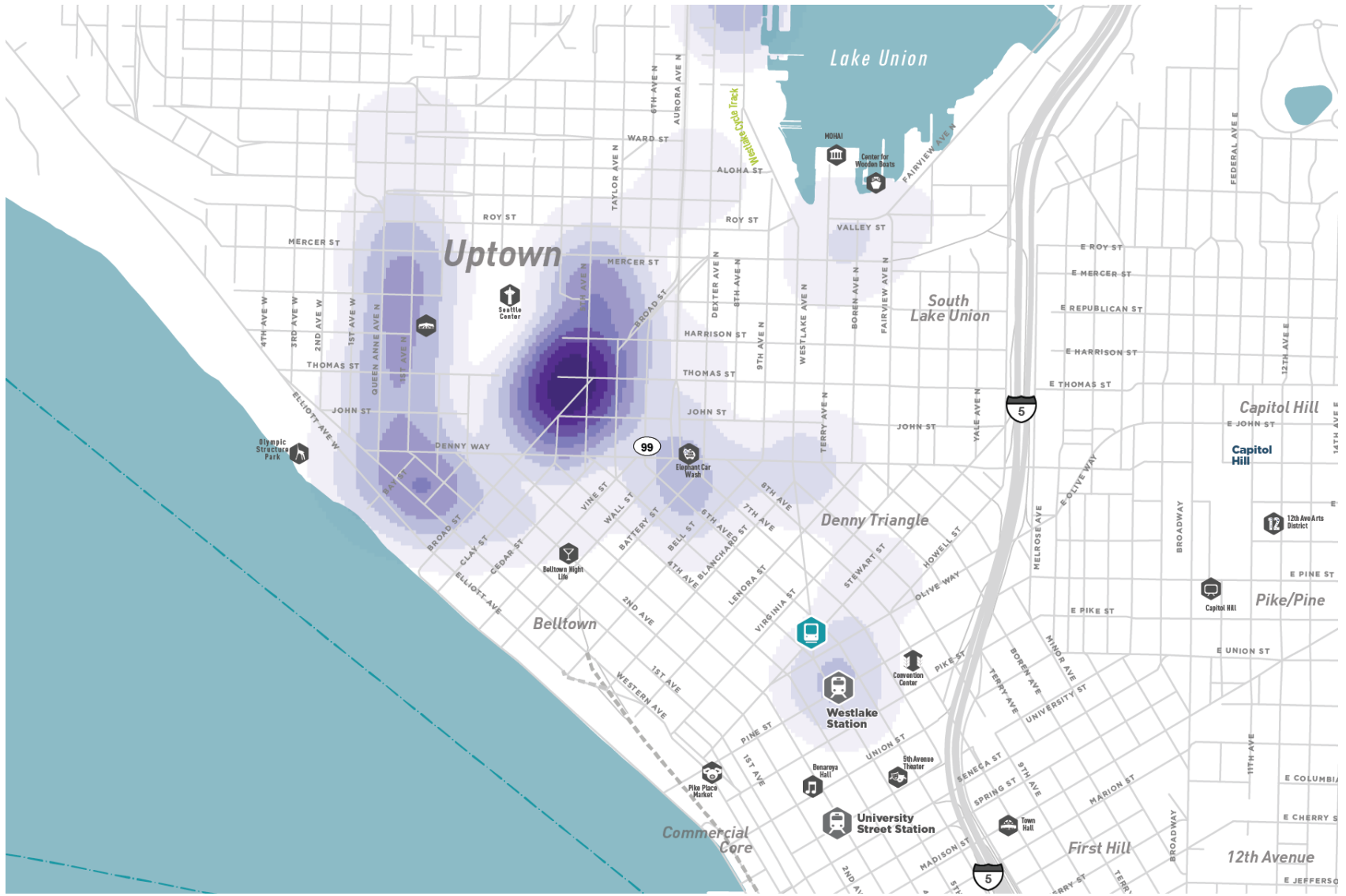
Transit issues and opportunities were noted in 75 comments. Improvements to the Monorail were frequently cited, as were requests to expedite light rail through Sound Transit 3. Other frequent comments included requests for more reliable transit on 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Aurora transit hub improvements, extension of the Center City Streetcar up 1<sup>st</sup> Ave to Seattle Center, and overall service improvements along Denny, Mercer, and the waterfront.

- Improve the Monorail with ORCA card payment integration and better navigation and connection between Monorail and LINK light rail at Westlake, including a faster Monorail elevator.
- Provide more east/west transit service on Denny or Harrison. More than just Route 8 is needed.
- Provide temporary transit lanes during large events. Remove the parking along Mercer and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N to accommodate transit-only lanes during events.
- Address frequent bus delays at Denny Way and Queen Anne Ave due to congestion at peak hour.
- Develop an Aurora transit hub.
- Create more space for buses at Aurora Ave/Denny Way/Battery St by wrapping the bus lane around the block instead of cutting through the block.
- Install more transit signal priority features for Route 8, including transit lanes on Denny Way.
- Provide more reliable transit service along 5<sup>th</sup> Ave N.
- Provide transit service along the waterfront.
- Add a commuter rail stop near Thomas St pedestrian overpass.
- Connect the streetcar from downtown to Seattle Center by continuing up 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N. Connect the streetcar to the future Seattle Center light rail station.
- Accelerate the construction and opening of the Seattle Center ST3 station.

Figure 5 illustrates the geographic distribution of transit comments. Darker areas indicate a higher volume of comments. Corridors with notable clusters of transit comments include Queen Anne Ave, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N, and 5<sup>th</sup> Ave at Thomas Street.

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Figure 5 Neighborhood Mapping Activity Comments – Map of Transit-Related Comments



## Hot Spot Locations

Based on the trends in feedback received at the open house, several hot spots or areas of focus for improvement emerged. Much of the feedback pointed to improvements in the following areas:

- Signal timing and improved pedestrian crossings along **Mercer St**
  - In particular, the intersections of Queen Anne, 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Taylor Ave, and Mercer St
- Prioritizing bicycling and walking along **Thomas Street**
  - In particular, the quality of the connection between Seattle Center and the Thomas Street pedestrian overpass and the future connection to South Lake Union
- Traffic calming and improved pedestrian crossings of **1<sup>st</sup> Ave N and Queen Anne Ave**
  - In particular, the intersections of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N and Queen Anne Ave and Denny Way as well as the future street concepts for Thomas St and Republican St
- Improved connection between the **Monorail** and the Downtown Transit Tunnel at Westlake
- Improved **bikeway connections** between Roy St, 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Broad St, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave
  - In particular, the installation of a protected bike lane on Broad and connectivity across the Seattle Center campus along 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave (north/south), August Wilson Way/Republican St, and Thomas St (east/west)
- Creation of the **Aurora transit hub** at the northend SR 99 portal including the future Harrison St transitway
  - In particular, improvements to the current transit functions at the Denny Way/Battery St/Aurora Ave intersection
- Improving the pedestrian experience along and crossing **Denny Way** particularly at Cedar St/5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Aurora Ave, and Dexter Ave
- Transit service and bikeway connections along **5<sup>th</sup> Ave** as well as pedestrian crossings at Harrison St and Thomas St once the SR 99 tunnel opens
- **“Don’t Block the Box” enforcement**, especially along Taylor Ave, Roy St, Westlake Ave, Mercer St, and Dexter Ave
- Establishing **designated rideshare pick-up and drop-off** zones and the creation of mobility hubs throughout North Downtown

## Suggested Locations for Community Workshop Walking and Bicycling Tours

The November 18, 2017, Community Workshop for the North Downtown Mobility Action Plan will include walking and biking tours. The purpose of these tours is to establish a baseline understanding of the hot spots where improvements are most needed and to collaborate in thinking about specific designs and improvements at these locations. The hot spots cited above could be destinations or areas of focus for the Community Workshop walking and bicycling tours; these will be discussed with SDOT and community members to make a final decision about the approach for the workshop.

## Feedback on Guiding Principles

The following bullets summarize the feedback received on the guiding principles identified in the neighborhoods’ memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the arena development team. This feedback will be shaped into desired outcomes that will inform the project evaluation framework of the North Downtown Mobility Action Plan.





5. **Increase safety**

- The ability to walk at any hour safely, including well-lit streets and sidewalks
- Safe, continuous, and connected bike network
- Pedestrian safety at crossings and signalized intersections—long waits at traffic signals have led to frequent jaywalking
- Traffic calming, keeping Thomas Street as a green street
- Traffic control officers and more enforcement of “block the box” and helmet laws for cyclists
- Better separation of modes (e.g., curbs between bike lanes and car lanes)
- Homeless encampments on Denny are perceived as a safety issue

**Other Feedback**

SDOT received six emails from community members or groups after the open house (see Appendix B). The comments reiterate many of the themes expressed at the kickoff meeting, including:

- Improving monorail or adding another “people mover”
- The need for east-west bus service (for example between Mercer and South Lake Union)
- Connecting existing and planned bicycle routes
- On-street parking supply and parking enforcement
- Prioritizing pedestrian crossings through all-way walk (for example at the intersection of Roy Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue) or other improvements

New ideas from the letters included recognizing 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, Mercer Street, and Denny as freight streets; planning for Expedia’s move to the edge of the study area; and involving the Port of Seattle as a key stakeholder in the planning process.

SDOT also received a one-page summary of desired bike improvements from Cascade Bicycle Club and Seattle Neighborhood Greenways, which highlights potential bicycle connections to and around Seattle Center. This summary can be found in Appendix C.