



City of Seattle

# MERCER CORRIDOR WEST PROJECT



Partners: City of Seattle, Washington State Department of Transportation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Puget Sound Regional Council, Transportation Improvement Board

TIGER ID: dcost\_sdott 18921  
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→ Critical east-west “main street” connecting four job centers with over 50,000 current jobs and an additional 38,000 jobs by 2020	
→ Link between Port of Seattle and Interstate system – 70 percent of waterborne imports are bound for Midwest and beyond	
→ Serves the 12 million annual visitors to Seattle Center and 860,000 cruise ship passengers	
→ “Road to Global Health” improves access to rapidly growing life science and global health sector	
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→ Improves mobility by reducing congestion and increasing transportation options, saving over 47,000 hours of travel time annually	
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→ Project is “shovel-ready” and creates over 1,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs	
→ Supports creation of 50,000 new jobs in downtown Seattle and 12,000 jobs in industrial centers	
→ Commitment to build out transportation infrastructure in this corridor has spurred \$741 million of private investment	
→ Creates opportunities for low-income workers and small and disadvantaged businesses	
→ Employment at global health institutions along Mercer Corridor grew over 130 percent in the last eight years	

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→ Integrates innovative and “green” design features	
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→ Part of a major regional infrastructure priority recommended by the Governor, King County Executive and Mayor to replace the aging Alaskan Way Viaduct	
→ Supported and informed by community through neighborhood plans, Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee, and Seattle bicycle and pedestrian master plans	
→ Includes \$32.6 million in private sector contributions and leverages project contributions by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	

## Project Benefits and Readiness

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→ Project is shovel-ready, 90 percent design	
→ Record of Decision (ROD) for the Mercer Underpass, 90 percent of the Mercer West project, was issued August 22, 2011	
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Go to [http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/mercer\\_tiger2.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/mercer_tiger2.htm) for letters of support, video testimonials, maps, regional collaboration documentation, and relevant technical supporting materials.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Mercer Corridor West (Mercer West) project transforms a major east-west arterial bottleneck into an integrated system of freight, transit, pedestrian, bicycle and car improvements that connect four of the Puget Sound’s growth centers to the regional transportation system. It is the second critical phase in the Mercer Corridor project that creates a continuous two-way arterial street from Interstate 5 (I-5) to Elliott Avenue West.

Mercer West will widen Mercer Street between Ninth Avenue North and Fifth Avenue North and replace the State Route 99 (SR 99) Bridge over Mercer Street to provide three lanes in each direction, wider sidewalks, and a bike path. This segment of the project will continue the six-lane cross-section of the Mercer Corridor East phase under SR 99 and replace the winding westbound route now on Broad Street. From Fifth Avenue North to Queen Anne Avenue North, the project will modify signals and channelization to convert the Mercer and Roy street couplet into two-way streets. The project will also reconnect the street grid across Broad Street.

A more efficient street grid with wider sidewalks and a grade-separated bike path reconnect neighborhoods historically bisected by a state highway. The project includes street and sidewalk work recommended in the Seattle pedestrian and bicycle master plans, making walking, biking and riding transit safer and easier for the 78,500 people who live in the area served by the project. These neighborhoods are home to diverse communities as well as global health entities, technology companies, maritime industries, tourism, and the Army National Guard.

Wider sidewalks and new curb ramps benefit seniors

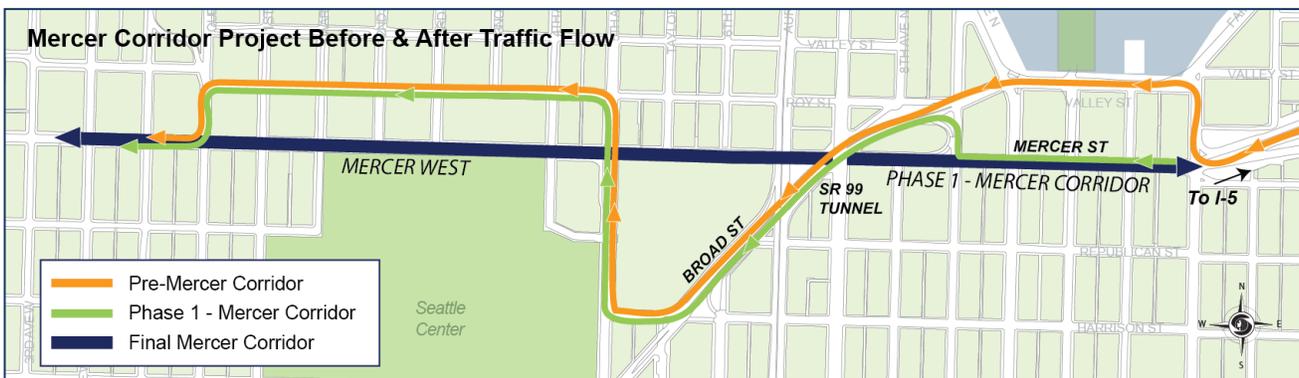
and the disabled, as well as the 12 million annual visitors to the Seattle Center. These improvements also benefit King County’s RapidRide bus rapid transit system.

The Governor, King County Executive, and Seattle Mayor jointly recommended replacing the aging Alaskan Way Viaduct by 2015 with the SR 99 Bored Tunnel. Mercer West is deemed critical to the success of this project. Mercer West will provide passenger and freight traffic exiting from the SR 99 Bored Tunnel with fast access to the Port of Seattle, downtown neighborhoods and Northwest Seattle.

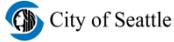
The project includes upgrades to the seismically vulnerable SR 99 Bridge over Mercer Street, which carries more than 86,000 vehicles daily. Utility and stormwater improvements will prevent flooding that has closed this portion of Mercer Street during heavy rains. Columns under SR 99 will be removed, an adjacent intersection will be re-graded, and extra turning movements eliminated, all to improve safety.

The project has a combination of local, state and federal funds. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) and Washington’s Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) have awarded Seattle grants to implement this project. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has provided in-kind support.

Mercer West is a priority for the city, state and region, and has support from residents, businesses, and community groups. It will create 1,000 direct, indirect and induced jobs through its construction. The project also ensures the retention of more than 50,000 existing jobs in the four job centers it connects. These areas are also expected to add over 38,000 jobs, primarily in the high-wage life sciences, global health, and information technology sectors by 2020.



FUNDING PARTNERS



- Lead agency and primary grant recipient, responsible for project design, construction, operations and maintenance.
- Maintains and operates a multi-modal transportation system with a value of \$13 billion.
- Certified Agency since 1973 with a wealth of experience leading large projects and federal grants, including TIGER I. Has technical, financial and legal capacity to complete this TIGER project on time and on budget.
- Awardee of HUD Sustainable Communities Grant.
- \$28.7 million local match contribution.



- Metropolitan Planning Organization and Economic Development District for the central Puget Sound region representing 72 cities, four counties, four port districts, eleven transit agencies, and two Native American tribes.
- Designated a Preferred Sustainable Community by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and awarded a \$5 million Sustainable Communities grant in 2010.
- \$8.2 million STP grant award for design and construction of the Mercer West project.



- Transportation Improvement Board is an independent state agency that distributes and manages street construction and maintenance grants to 320 cities and urban counties throughout Washington State.
- Awarded Seattle \$5 million Urban Arterial Program grant award for safety and mobility improvements on Fifth Avenue North at Mercer, Roy and the re-connected street grid.



- Global family foundation based in Seattle. Invested over \$500 million in design and construction of new headquarters campus located on corridor.
- Provided assistance with utilities work, excavation and environmental remediation that benefit Mercer West project and future completion of foundation’s campus. Built design elements eliminating the need for the City to build new retaining walls along Mercer Street.
- Made project-related sidewalk, streetlight and other improvements along 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Mercer Street.
- Estimated net in-kind contributions to Mercer Corridor West project exceeds \$8.5 million.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS



- Application supported by Governor Christine O. Gregoire.
- Lead agency for Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement project, including SR 99 Bored Tunnel. The North Portal of the tunnel opens immediately south of Mercer Street.
- Closely coordinating with City on design and construction to ensure both projects are completed on time and in most cost-effective manner. Mercer West improvements must be in place prior to opening of tunnel.
- Will shift SR 99 into tunnel allowing three city streets to be reconnected above, removing a barrier and making the neighborhood more livable.



- Privately owned company based in Seattle. Invested more than \$2.2 billion to date in the redevelopment of 60 acres in the South Lake Union neighborhood.
- Provided \$31.5 million in private contributions for completing Mercer Corridor East project.



- Major funding partner on the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project, providing \$300 million for the project, including the North Portal.



- King County Metro (KCM) is Seattle’s major transit provider and is developing a major Bus Rapid Transit RapidRide station on Mercer West.
- Providing ITS improvements, including transit signal priority, signal cabinet and controller upgrades along Mercer West in the Uptown neighborhood.

# thinking **NATIONALLY...**

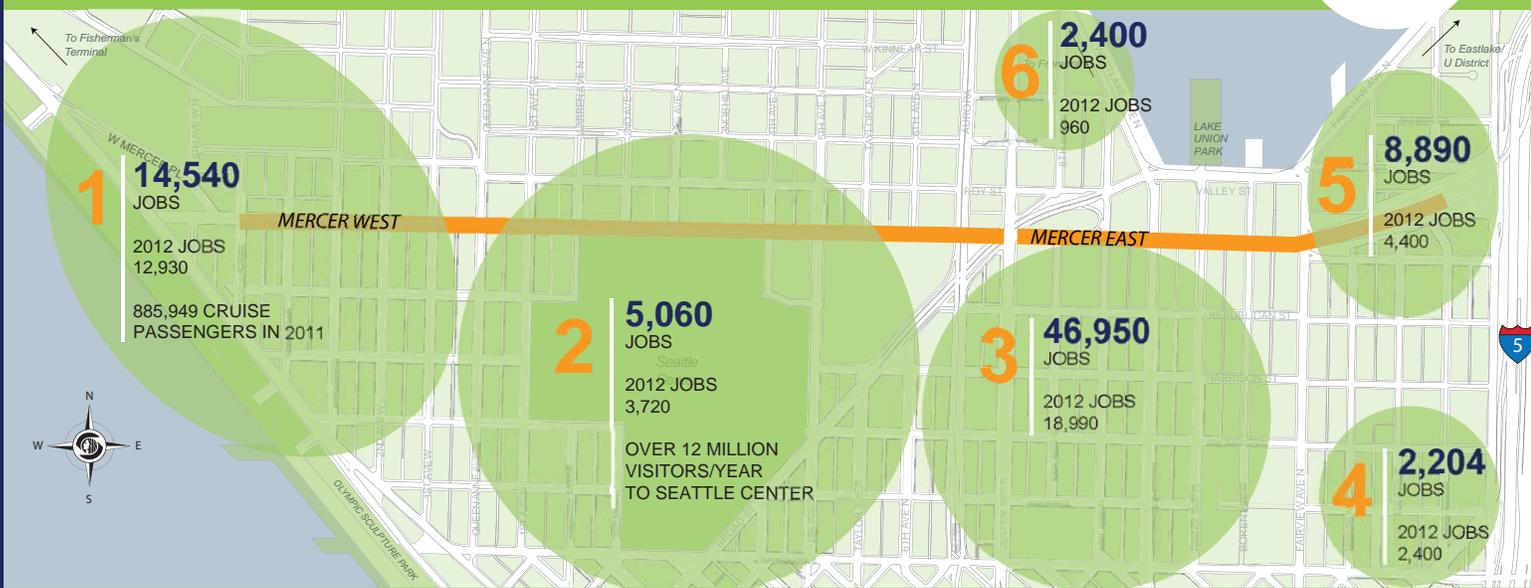


Latitude:	Start Location : 47.62454	End Location: 47.62456
Longitude:	Start Location : 122.33974	End Location: 122.34888

Seattle is an international gateway for United States trade, sitting at the crossroads of I-5 and I-405. It also ties the nation's rail network, serving the BNSF and UP railroads.

- Sixth largest container port in the U.S. handling two million containers (2011).
- Seattle ranks eighth in the U.S in containerized exports by volume and ninth by value, with exports totaling \$8.6 billion in 2011.
- Approximately 70 percent of imports are bound for national markets.
- Home to the North Pacific fishing fleet, which catches and processes about 60 percent of the seafood produced in the U.S.
- Mercer West will save trucks traveling from Interstate 5 and SR 99 will save 8 to 25 minutes.
- Closer to Asia and Alaska than any other U.S. seaport.

# acting Locally



## Estimated Job Growth Along Mercer Corridor by 2020

### 1

#### Port of Seattle

F5 Networks Headquarters  
Amgen  
Real Networks  
Big Fish Games  
Columbia Hospitality  
Holland American Line  
Omeros  
Cell Therapeutics Inc.  
Pacific Market International  
ClearChannel  
Emeritus

### 2

#### The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Seattle Center

(Space Needle, Pacific Science Center, McCaw Hall/Seattle Opera, Key Arena, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Repertory Theatre, EMP/Science Fiction Museum, Intiman Theatre, Seattle Children's Theatre, The Children's Museum, Dale Chihuly Glass Museum, KEXP, Center House, Seattle Monorail)  
Fisher Broadcasting  
KCTS  
Pacific Biomarkers

### 3

#### Amazon.com

UW Medicine  
Group Health Coop. Headquarters  
Sellen Construction  
Seattle Times Company  
Microsoft  
King Broadcasting/BELO  
PATH  
Tommy Bahama  
Institute for Systems Biology  
Seattle BioMed  
Seattle Children's Research Institute

### 4

PEMCO Insurance  
Skanska  
Wunderman  
REI  
NBBJ Architects  
Sightlife

### 5

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Cntr.  
Seattle Cancer Care Alliance  
ZymoGenetics/Bristol Meyers Squibb  
Dendreon  
Puget Sound Blood Center  
Nanostring Technologies  
Novo Nordisk

### 6

Attachmate/WRQ  
Associated General Contractors  
Q13 Fox Broadcasting  
Battelle  
Westlake Steps

**ESTIMATED 2020 TOTAL JOBS: 81,700**

**ESTIMATED 2012 TOTAL JOBS: 43,400**

**GRANT FUNDS AND SOURCES**

**TIGER IV Request**

The City of Seattle is requesting \$14 million in TIGER IV funding, approximately 17 percent of the estimated construction costs. The City of Seattle has already secured funding for all other phases of the project. The \$14 million TIGER IV grant request is the last funding element needed to complete the project.

<b>Cost Estimate (in millions)</b>	<b>\$98.0</b>	<b>Secured Revenues (in millions)</b>	<b>\$84.0</b>
Design	\$13.8	Grants	\$13.2
Right-of-Way	\$2.8	Utilities	\$9.5
Construction	\$81.4	City of Seattle	\$28.7
		Private Contributions	\$32.6
		<b>TIGER IV</b>	<b>\$14.0</b>

**ECONOMIC COMPETIVENESS**

Seattle has long been famous for its airplanes, coffee and software that have transformed the world. Today, it is home to some of the fastest growing global brands in Internet commerce, health sciences, and global philanthropy.

Seattle anchors a growing economy of global health, international trade and software development that will contribute to the nation’s long-term economic productivity. It is home to the United States’ sixth largest seaport and sixth largest cruise ship port. Seattle is homeport of the Pacific Northwest fishing fleet.

Downtown Seattle is the area’s economic fulcrum, home to 220,000 existing jobs. It is expected to add 50,000 new jobs by 2031. Mercer West is critical to retaining existing jobs and attracting new jobs by maintaining both north-south and east-west access. Mercer West connects three PSRC-designated growth centers: Ballard/Interbay, Uptown, and South Lake Union.

These centers currently have over 50,000 existing jobs and are expected to add 38,000 new jobs by 2031, primarily in the high-wage life sciences, global health and information technology sectors.

**PORT OF SEATTLE – 2011**

- Over two million containers – sixth in the nation
- 886,000 cruise ship passengers – sixth in the nation
- 5.5 million tons of grain
- \$4.3 billion in annual revenue



- 21,700 direct jobs
- 194,000 direct and indirect jobs in Washington State

**The project reduces the travel time for commuters traveling from South Lake Union through Mercer West between 11 to 36 minutes during the PM peak.**

Mercer West also serves as a vital international trade and transportation route, receiving and distributing goods and passengers via roadway, water, rail and air to international ports of call, Alaska and throughout the rest of the United States. Improving Mercer West will increase the long-term efficiency, reliability, cost competitiveness and sustainability of moving both workers and goods. Trucks traveling from I-5 and SR 99 to the Port of Seattle’s facilities in Ballard/Interbay will save

8 to 25 minutes each morning.

**Faster travel times in the corridor will result in a total freight travel time savings of \$19 million to \$50 million over 25 years.**

**International Trade**

Seattle is a major contributor to the national economy through international trade. The Port of Seattle has multiple facilities and activities that rely on the Mercer Corridor, including the Maritime Industrial Center and Fishermen’s Terminal in north Seattle, fishing and cargo activities at Terminal 91 (T91), and two cruise ship berths.

Congestion from the current one-way Mercer has led to slower freight traffic, which adds travel time and cost in moving freight. Because about 70 percent of the Port’s inbound cargo is discretionary, it is critical that Mercer West be completed and that congestion is reduced to keep it the chosen port of call for shippers.

The Port of Seattle is the sixth largest container port in the United States, the 57<sup>th</sup> largest in the world, handling over two million containers in 2011 and generating over 56,250 jobs in Washington State. This number does not include the many “related jobs” outside the transportation sector that rely on Port of Seattle facilities in industries as diverse as aerospace, agriculture, retail, seafood, industrial machinery and fashion and apparel.

The Port of Seattle’s economic impact is not limited to Washington State. It is a vital link in the nation’s economic infrastructure. Manufacturers and farmers across the country depend on the Puget Sound gateway to get their goods to market and to access global supply chains.

**Around 70 percent of imports through Seattle are bound for destinations beyond the Pacific Northwest.**

The port is also one of the nation’s premier export gateways. Seattle ranks eighth in containerized exports by volume and ninth by value, with exports totaling \$8.6 billion in 2011. As an essential component of the SR 99 Bored Tunnel, the Mercer West project is a critical piece of the long-term freight mobility plan to keep this cargo moving to overseas markets.

**Maritime & Manufacturing Industry**

Mercer West directly links the maritime industries along Elliott Bay, Shilshole Bay and the Lake Union Ship Canal with the SR 99 Bored Tunnel and I-5, which in turn connects to Interstate 90 (I-90). Maritime

industries rely heavily on direct and timely movement of their goods.



The Ballard-Interbay Northend Manufacturing/ Industrial Center (BINMIC) in northwest Seattle, which relies on this corridor to access highways, is comprised of 654 businesses that employ more than 14,000 workers. This area is expected to add 2,000 jobs by 2024, each with an average wage of \$70,700 annually, creating an economic benefit of over \$141 million in annual wages.

Mercer West is a primary freight corridor for one of the U.S. fishing industry’s most important industrial districts.

**Seattle is the home of the North Pacific fishing fleet, which catches and processes about 60 percent of the seafood produced by the U.S. each year.**

Most of these vessels are moored at three key Port of Seattle properties that depend on Mercer West:

- Fishermen’s Terminal and the Maritime Industrial Center provide moorage for more than 700 commercial fishing and workboats throughout the year. The facility is also the center of a thriving commercial district that includes shops, restaurants, banks and marine brokerage houses.
- T91 is home to the large catcher-processor fleets and the cold storage facilities used for the freezing, processing and distribution of the catch. Fourteen factory trawler and mother ships home port at T91 along with tug vessels and other maritime industry sectors.

In addition to its vital role in the nation's seafood supply chain, the fishing industry located along the Mercer Corridor generates a significant regional economic impact. Fishing activity at Fishermen's Terminal, T91 and the Maritime Industrial Center generated 14,972 total jobs statewide. Of this total 5,607 are direct jobs that earned \$823.5 million in wages and salaries.

## Tourism

Tourism is the largest and fastest-growing economic sector in the world, involving one in 12 jobs worldwide. Domestic and international travelers generate more than \$700 billion to the nation's economy supporting more than 10 million direct and indirect jobs. It plays a major role in the Puget Sound economy creating more jobs in the region than any other sector -- more than 108,000.

Seattle's Convention and Visitors Bureau estimates that in 2011 almost 10 million people visited Seattle and King County, resulting in 51,000 jobs and \$2.3 billion in earnings. These visitors are estimated to have spent almost \$6 billion and provided over \$460 million in state and local tax revenue.

Mercer West also serves as a primary access route to the nation's sixth largest cruise port, the Port of Seattle's cruise terminals at Smith Cove and the Bell Street Pier. It leads all U.S. cruise homeports on the West Coast in passenger volume and number of ship calls, and the Port of Seattle expects 202 cruise ship visits and more than 860,000 passengers in 2012.



Seattle is the homeport for most of these vessels, amplifying the economic impact of the region's cruise activity. This means cruise lines buy from local suppliers to provision their ships. In addition, retailers,

hotels, restaurants and other businesses that rely on tourism benefit when passengers begin and end their voyage in Seattle. Currently, the cruise business is responsible for more than 4,300 jobs and \$416 million in annual business revenue -- \$2.1 million each time a ship docks in Seattle.

Nearly all traffic going between Sea-Tac Airport and northwest Seattle, including travelers to the cruise ship terminals, will need to use the SR 99 Bored Tunnel and Mercer West.



Located alongside the Mercer West project, Seattle Center has served as a cultural and civic gathering place at the core of the Puget Sound region since its beginning 50 years ago. The 74-acre Seattle Center campus is home to iconic landmarks such as the Space Needle and EMP Museum as well as more than 30 cultural, educational, sports and entertainment organizations presenting nearly 5,000 events annually. Many of the 12 million visits to Seattle Center each year travel along or across Mercer West. These visits generate \$1.15 billion in business activity and \$387 million in labor income for King County.

## Life Sciences and Global Health

Anchored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, PATH and the University of Washington (UW) Medicine's South Lake Union Campus, the Mercer Corridor is often referred to as the "Road to Global Health."

UW Medicine's newly expanded biotechnology and medical research hub in South Lake Union has grown to include two new lab buildings. The campus now houses over 600 scientists engaged in cutting edge research. The UW is the nation's No. 1 ranked primary care medical school in the country while its bio-

medical/bio-engineering and bio-statistics programs are ranked fifth and third respectively.

**Since 1974, UW has received more federal research funding than any other American public university.**

In 2010, UW received over \$570 million in research funding from the National Institutes of Health, third in the nation. UW plans to add another 420,000 square feet of research space and hire an additional 1,400 people.

"South Lake Union is key to UW Medicine's ability to lead a significant portion of the nation's biomedical research enterprise well into the 21st Century. The opportunities for research collaboration across organizational and disciplinary lines are already enormous here, and the future holds much promise for UW Medicine to develop new interdisciplinary initiatives."

*Dr. Paul Ramsey,  
Dean of the UW School of Medicine and  
Vice President for Medical Affairs*

More than a decade ago, the City made a commitment to improve the infrastructure in this neighborhood to promote the growth of the global health and life science industries. Today, the list of global health, life sciences and bio-technology firms, foundations and institutes located along the Mercer Corridor is long and varied. Only Geneva, Switzerland and Atlanta, Ga., have a greater concentration of global health organizations in such a defined geographic area. Between 2004 and 2010, employment at South Lake Union's major global health institutions grew over 130 percent. These businesses and institutions invested approximately \$741 million in their global health ventures between 2009 and 2010.

There are an estimated 10,500 global health and life sciences jobs in South Lake Union and Uptown. With an average annual wage of \$56,000, these jobs result in almost \$800 million in direct labor income.

The Washington State Department of Commerce recognized the importance of the South Lake Union area by designating the area as one of 12 Innovative Partnership Zones (IPZs) statewide. The Global Health IPZ is a unique economic development effort that partners research, workforce training and private sector organizations in close geographic proximity to promote collaboration in a research based effort that will lead to new technologies, marketable products, company formation and job creation. These efforts bring together industry and the community to develop new paths to innovation.

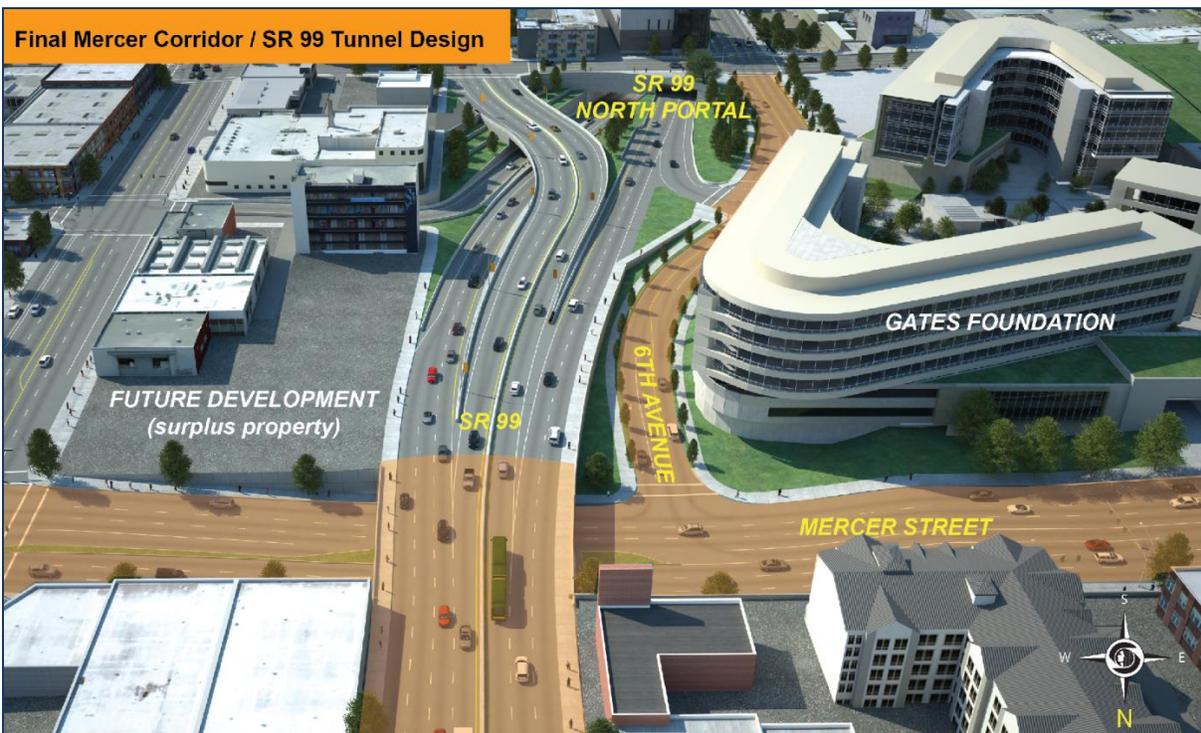
**Life Science and Global Health Institutions**

- Battelle Seattle Research Center
- Institute for Systems Biology
- Integrated Diagnostics
- Etubics
- Pacific Biomarkers
- Seattle Biomedical Research Institute
- Group Health Cooperative
- Cell Therapeutics Inc.
- PATH
- Washington Global Health Alliance
- Institute for Health Metrics & Evaluation
- Seattle Children's Research Institute
- Group Health Research Institute
- Sightlife
- Novo Nordisk
- Seattle Cancer Care Alliance
- Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center
- Gilead Science
- Omeros
- Zymogenetics

**Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**

A key project partner in Mercer West is [the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#). The Foundation was deliberate in siting its world headquarters: “For our permanent home, the Gates family chose a location in the heart of Seattle, next to Seattle Center. With the first phase completed in spring 2011, the campus reflects our values in its design, commitment to sustainability, and connection to the community.” The Foundation invested over \$500 million in design and construction of its new headquarters. Currently the Foundation employs 1,500 individuals and will add another 750 when it completes the next phase of its construction.

With this significant investment, the Foundation worked closely with the City to coordinate on the development and build-out of Mercer West. As part of an agreement [Ordinance 123418](#), the Gates Foundation provided utilities work, consulted closely on the design of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, contributed construction of design elements in the building of their new campus that eliminates the need for the City to build new retaining walls along the project, and are currently excavating the second phase of their campus, which is critical to building the southbound on-ramp for the SR 99 Bored Tunnel.



**SR 99 Bored Tunnel Project – North Portal Access**

Timely completion of Mercer West is crucial to the success of the SR 99 Bored Tunnel Project, a tolled facility. The tunnel’s north end will be just south of Mercer Street. As a new two-way corridor, Mercer Street will be a primary route for drivers from northwest Seattle neighborhoods to access the tunnel. Mercer West improvements will also provide a direct route from SR 99 to Ballard and Interbay, the heart of Seattle’s maritime industry. Over \$80 million of goods travel along SR 99 and I-5 each year with SR 99 carrying 20 to 25 percent of traffic traveling through downtown. Mercer West construction is scheduled to begin in late 2012 and be completed by the middle of 2015. During construction, the SR 99 Bridge over Mercer Street will be widened and Broad Street will be closed allowing WSDOT to connect the SR 99 Bored Tunnel to the SR 99 mainline and ramps to surrounding streets. If Mercer West work is delayed, it could significantly impact the design, construction completion schedule and cost of the tunnel project as well as WSDOT’s ability to keep traffic moving on SR 99 and I-5 during construction. It is vital that Mercer West obtain full funding and remain on schedule, so the access it will provide is available for the SR 99 Bored Tunnel’s late 2015 opening.

**Companies Headquartered in the Mercer Corridor**

Because of the city’s commitment to build out this critical transportation infrastructure, many national and international businesses and non-profits have chosen to headquarter their organizations in and around the Mercer Corridor. This creates critical mass, enticing even more organizations to come here to grow their businesses and create jobs. Today, institutions and companies that call this area of Seattle home include:

- **Amazon.com:** As the world’s largest on-line retailer, Amazon.com has located its corporate headquarters of eleven sustainable, energy-efficient buildings along the Mercer Corridor, employing about 15,000. It recently announced an expansion that will add an estimated 19,000 jobs to its Seattle payroll.
- **The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation:** With over 1,500 individuals employed, and another 750 planned, the Gates Foundation chose South Lake Union as its headquarters to drive its mission of enhancing health care and reducing extreme poverty across the globe.
- **PATH:** Employing over 900 nationwide and with offices in 34 cities in 23 countries, PATH opened its new headquarters in this neighborhood in 2010. PATH seeks to improve the health of people around the world by advancing technologies, strengthening systems, and encouraging healthy behaviors.
- **Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center:** The Center, a worldwide leader in cancer research, occupies a 15 acre campus adjacent to the Mercer Corridor. They recently acquired 177,000 square feet to expand their campus.
- **RealNetworks:** A pioneer in Internet media delivery, RealNetworks employs over 1,500 employees worldwide.
- **Big Fish Games:** With over 400 employees located at its Seattle headquarters, Big Fish Games has become a leader in Internet software and games.

- **PEMCO Insurance:** As the Northwest’s largest personal-lines insurer, PEMCO employs 650 people in their South Lake Union headquarters.

**Mercer Corridor East Update**

Mercer West completes the transformation of the Mercer Corridor. The first phase, Mercer East, was the second TIGER I project in the nation to break ground.

Mercer East is on-time and on-budget. During the past year, Stage One construction has been completed, which included building new traffic lanes and sidewalks on the north side of Mercer Street and replacement of the Ninth Avenue North sewer main.

Stage Two construction is currently underway on the south side of Mercer Street and is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2012 allowing the entire two-way Mercer Street open to traffic. This includes the reconfiguration of the ramps to I-5 and installation of new signals, signage, streetlights and Intelligent Transportation Systems along Mercer Street.



Robbie Phillips, Community Relations Manager  
Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center

**LIVABILITY**

The Mercer Corridor, locally known as “The Mercer Mess,” has been a major bottleneck in the Seattle area for over 60 years. The full corridor is utilized by 70,000 vehicles (100,000 people) each day and its impacts on the region are staggering. Congestion backs onto I-5 and hinders access to multiple neighborhoods. The current connection across SR 99 is inhospitable to pedestrians and bicycles and does not accommodate westbound traffic. The one-way design is a physical barrier that inhibits use of transit, walking and bicycling. It also reduces accessibility for persons with disabilities, senior citizens and those who do not drive.

**Mercer West Saves Time & Money**

Mercer West will reduce travel times by up to 28 minutes for commuters and others who use the corridor, including the 12 million annual visitors to Seattle Center, creating a benefit of more than \$360 million over 25 years.

**Seattle has among the highest fuel costs in the nation, and Mercer West will result in a projected savings in fuel usage worth almost \$80 million over 25 years.**

Enhanced sidewalks and a bike path under the SR 99 Bridge will provide viable alternatives to the automobile within the South Lake Union and Uptown neighborhoods for accessing jobs, shops, transit options and cultural and recreational venues.

**AM PEAK TIME**

Direction of Travel	w/o Mercer Corridor (in minutes)	w/ Mercer Corridor (in minutes)
I-5 to Elliott Ave W	34	9
Elliott Ave W to I-5	10	7

**PM PEAK TIME**

Direction of Travel	w/o Mercer Corridor (in minutes)	w/ Mercer Corridor (in minutes)
I-5 to Elliott Ave W	38	10
Elliott Ave W to I-5	17	11

**Quality of Life Improvements**

- Improves 16 sidewalk block faces
- Changes existing 4-foot sidewalks to 8-foot sidewalks
- Provides planting strips/street trees/buffer of six-feet
- Includes 10-foot bike path
- Creates continuous east-west bikeway from east side of South Lake Union to west side of Uptown

**Access to Housing**

City of Seattle voters have a long history of supporting affordable housing development and preservation by their approval of five ballot measures since 1981. In November 2009, Seattle voters overwhelmingly approved a seven year, \$145 million renewal of the Seattle Housing Levy. Over two-thirds of levy funding is dedicated to the Rental Production & Preservation program, which provides affordable rental housing. At least 60 percent of these funds go towards serving households with an income below 30 percent of median income.

Within the neighborhoods served by Mercer West there are over 2,650 subsidized rental housing units, over half of which are dedicated to households earning up to 30 percent of median income.

**Mercer West serves over 10 percent of the city’s subsidized rental housing units.**

Nineteen of the subsidized rental housing projects in these neighborhoods include apartments for special needs populations, such as the chronically mentally ill, the physically-disabled or senior citizens.

The City has an affordable housing incentive zoning program that enables developers to build extra floor area above a base height, or floor area ration, when affordable housing is provided. This incentive is currently available in most downtown zones, all mid-rise zones and part of South Lake Union.

The area served by Mercer West is projected to grow by about 18,000 households by 2024. Numerous local and national apartment developers have projects under construction or planned for the area including: Vulcan

Inc, Equity Residential, Holland Residential, Essex Property Trust, Avalon Bay Communities and Greystar Real Estate Partners of Charleston, S.C., which manages the largest multifamily portfolio in the country. Currently there are 1,500 units under construction and another 2,600 units planned for the area for a total pipeline of more than 4,000 units.

Within South Lake Union, which was previously projected to add 8,000 units between 2004 and 2024, growth in housing has been very robust, with 3,100 housing units built since 2000, including 770 units currently under construction.



Development capacity will grow even more with the finalization of the South Lake Union rezone. Seattle's Department of Planning and Development has assumed as a part of the rezone that South Lake Union will add a total of 12,000 new housing units between 2011 and 2031. The rezone will also extend the incentive zoning program, including affordable housing provisions, over all of the South Lake Union neighborhood.

**The Mercer West Community**

Mercer West provides safe, reliable access to a large area with a population of 78,500, about 13 percent of Seattle's total population. The area includes six existing urban communities, defined in the Seattle Comprehensive Plan. These communities have a mix of housing, jobs and educational opportunities. Seattle's Comprehensive Plan projects that these communities will take 38 percent of Seattle's housing growth, about 18,000 units. Recent PSRC regional growth targets, as identified in their *Vision2040* planning document, increase the number of projected households to about 27,000. Cumulatively these increases will boost housing density from 20 households per acre to 39 units per acre, improving the efficiency of existing and future public works investments.

Mercer West will improve access to a diverse set of educational opportunities located within the area it serves. These include the UW School of Medicine, Seattle Pacific University, Cornish College, Antioch University and the Art Institute of Seattle.

Mercer West is critical to the prosperity of downtown Seattle, the major city in King County, which has been designated by the State of Washington as an economically distressed county. Downtown provides 220,000 jobs to people from throughout the Puget Sound, down from 245,000 before the recession. This drop occurred despite the tremendous growth of employment in South Lake Union.

**This area is used by commuters, tourists and residents, with a transportation network that currently relies heavily on automobile use.**



**Improved Bicycle and Pedestrian Access**

A critical priority for the City and the thousands of constituents who weighed in on the development of this project was improving the transportation network for pedestrians and bicycles. The Mercer West project includes one mile of new bike lanes or pathways, 16 block faces of improved and widened sidewalks, improved pedestrian crossings at 15 intersections, improved street and pedestrian lighting, newly designed bus rapid transit connections and landscaping. Under the SR 99 Bridge, the project will widen sidewalks from four-foot sidewalks next to traffic to eight-foot sidewalks with a six-foot buffer and a ten-foot bike path.

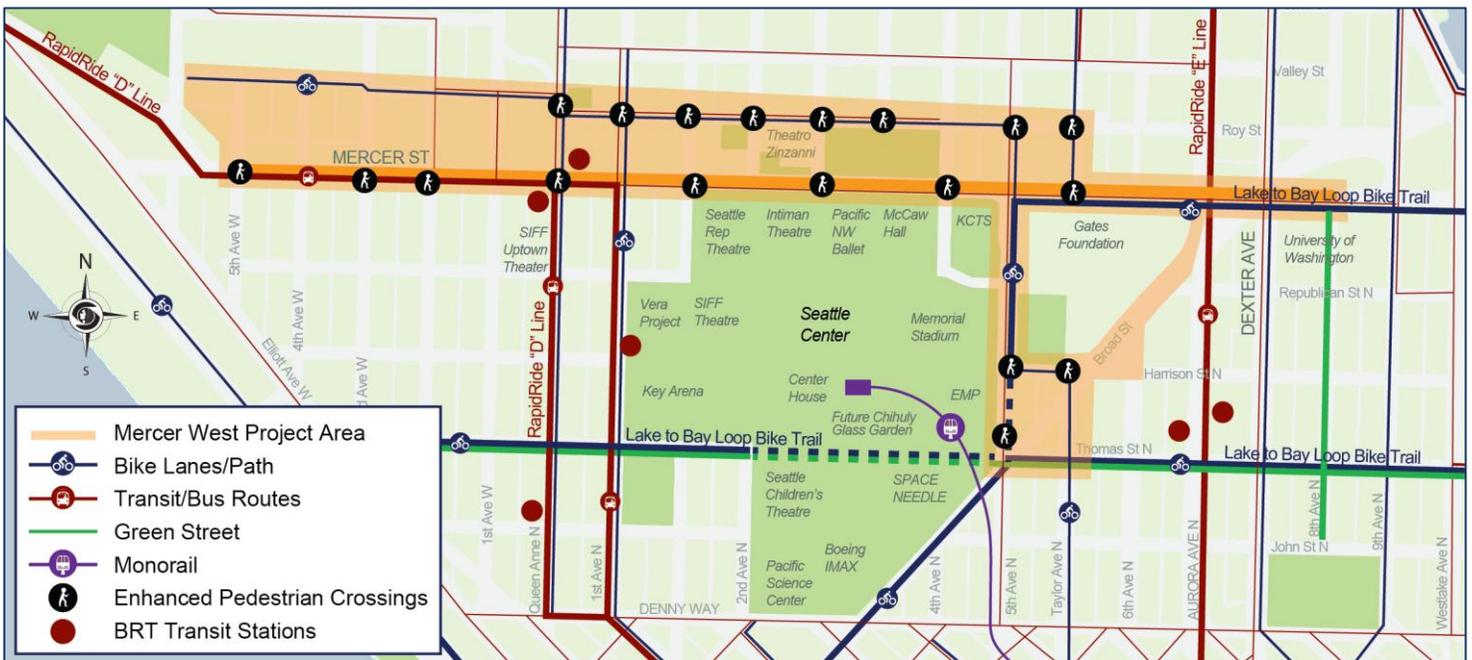
The new bike lanes will connect to Seattle's regional bicycle network in the northwest part of the city, linking Lake Union Park, Seattle Center, Myrtle Edwards Park, and Kinneer Park.

Mercer Corridor improvements will provide neighborhoods west of SR 99 with improved connections to the Burke-Gilman Trail, taking cyclists

to Redmond, the site of Microsoft's main campus and beyond. These improvements are recommended in both the [Seattle Bicycle Master Plan](#) and the [Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan](#).

"Along with the much-needed infrastructure and safety improvements for all modes of transportation, the Mercer West project will result in a reduction in vehicle miles traveled in the downtown core and South Lake Union, and will integrate best practices for sustainable and environmentally-friendly design."

*Chuck Ayers, Executive Director  
Cascade Bicycle Club*



**Connections to Existing Transportation Modes and Infrastructure**

Mercer West improves a major east-west, cross-town arterial connection and a major north-south highway connection between the entire Puget Sound region and downtown Seattle. The project enhances connections for: the interstate and state highway system; streetcar, monorail, and light rail; Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), local and express bus service; bicycle and pedestrian paths; and air travel.

**Local Bus Service:** Mercer West is served by seven high ridership bus routes, including Route 8, which provides east-west service from northwest Seattle’s maritime industrial area directly to the city’s most demographically and economically diverse areas. It is the seventh highest-ridership bus route in King County with about 8,700 boardings on an average weekday.

**Bus Rapid Transit:** The project area includes two FTA-funded “RapidRide” BRT lines, which will provide more frequent, reliable service than other routes. Two RapidRide stations will be located on Mercer West and will have new, more attractive shelters and other amenities such as electronic real-time bus arrival information. Mercer West will also improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to three additional stations.

**Streetcar, Monorail and Light Rail:** The project is integrated with the FTA-funded South Lake Union Streetcar, the Seattle Center Monorail, and the Sound Transit Link Light Rail system – which provides service to Sea-Tac airport, the Duwamish Manufacturing Center and downtown Seattle. By 2023 light rail will be

expanded to First Hill / Capitol Hill, UW, Northgate, Bellevue and Overlake. Light rail currently serves over 23,600 riders daily. The Streetcar, opened in 2007 and supported by private sector investments in the South Lake Union neighborhood, has exceeded ridership estimates by 30 percent and serves 750,000 riders annually. The Seattle Center Monorail has been in operation since the 1962 World’s Fair and carries approximately 1.5 million riders every year.

**Highway Connections:** The Mercer Corridor serves as both the off-ramp and the on-ramp to I-5, the main interstate highway on the West Coast running from Canada to Mexico. The project will provide improved connections to SR 99 – the only other north-south highway through Seattle, ensuring system continuity.

Together, I-5 and SR 99 carry over \$80 billion in goods through Seattle each year. These two highways link to regional east-west connections of statewide and national significance: State Route 520 (to the UW main campus and Microsoft’s campus in Redmond) and I-90, the northernmost coast-to-coast interstate.

**Air Travel:** Mercer West improves access to the Kenmore Air Harbor on Lake Union, from which seaplanes serving communities throughout Washington and Canada arrive and depart. By direct access to I-5, SR 99, bus routes and light rail, and as a critical link in the SR 99 Bored Tunnel, Mercer West maintains connections and travel time for those traveling between northwest Seattle and south Seattle and Sea-Tac airport, Washington state’s primary commercial service airport, serving over 31 million passengers annually. It is the 17<sup>th</sup> busiest passenger airport in the nation.



John Coney: Co-President of Uptown Urban Center Alliance, Resident

**Access to Quality of Life Amenities**

The Seattle Center campus attracts visitors from across the city and region. Cultural amenities include: Bagley Wright Theatre, INTIMAN Theatre, Key Arena, McCaw Hall, Experience Music Project, Space Needle, Pacific Science Center, Seattle Children’s Theatre, Center House, the Children’s Museum, Pacific Northwest Ballet and the Seattle Repertory Theater.

Many of these venues include evening and night performances, with busy sidewalk activity well after dark. Mercer West includes improvements that encourage walking by making it safer and more enjoyable. It will also provide a significance link in the Lake to Bay Loop Trail connecting Lake Union Park, Seattle Center, and Elliott Bay.

## State / Regional and Local Planning

In 1998, community members along the Mercer Corridor developed neighborhood plans for both Uptown and South Lake Union. These neighborhood land-use and transportation plans both identified improvements of the Mercer Corridor and connections across SR 99 as a top priority to improve the livability of their communities.

The 2001 Nisqually Earthquake caused federal, state, regional and local leaders to prioritize replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct which incurred significant seismic damage. During development of alternatives for its replacement, the City and State identified improved connections to and across SR 99 at Mercer Street as an integral part of any replacement alternative.

Mercer West is part of a multi-billion dollar set of transportation investments, including the downtown tunnel that replaces the Alaskan Way Viaduct.



The design of Mercer West has been developed through a transportation planning process coordinated with land-use decisions. This involved a variety of community stakeholders beginning with the South Lake Union Transportation Study in 2004. The study developed a package of transportation improvements for the South Lake Union area, with broad support from a diverse group of neighborhood, business and community representatives.

During the planning process an independent Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee, comprised of 42 individuals meeting 15 times, reached consensus on a package of recommendations for the Mercer Corridor.

Mercer West meets and exceeds the recommendations of the Stakeholder Committee, to ensure the project:

- provides and supports more convenient transportation options;
- manages congestion;
- improves accessibility for those who are unable to or choose not to drive; and,
- promotes vibrant, livable, walkable mixed-use communities, such as South Lake Union, and Uptown, within easy access to the downtown core.

Mercer West is integrated into and consistent with local, regional and state plans. The bike path along Mercer implements recommendations of Seattle's Bicycle Master Plan. High priority locations identified in the Pedestrian Master Plan are included in the project.

The project also makes improvements to a Priority Bus Corridor as recommended in Seattle's Transit Master Plan. It provides the opportunity to expand high capacity transit between Uptown and South Lake Union as identified in the Transit Master Plan and the voter approved Sound Transit Two (ST2) plan.

Mercer West is included in PSRC's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Transportation 2040 and in both the Regional and State Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP and STIP). The Puget Sound region has recognized the significance of Mercer West to the success of our regional growth strategy with \$8.2 million of PSRC managed federal Surface Transportation Program funds.

"TIGER funding will ensure the Mercer Corridor West project is completed in a timely manner, facilitating economic growth and prosperity for the Puget Sound region, the State of Washington and the entire nation."

*Bob Drewel, Executive Director, Puget Sound Regional Council*

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

**Air Quality and Climate Protection**

The City has made reducing emissions pollution a central unifying goal in its land-use and transportation strategies. Guided by its Climate Action Plan, Seattle is a recognized leader on environmental issues, showing the world that it's possible to grow economically while shrinking the city's carbon footprint.



Mercer West continues that commitment. The project will substantially reduce vehicle emissions compared to either doing nothing or making

limited traffic reconfigurations to remake Mercer Street into a four-lane, two-way street. Mercer West will reduce daily vehicle-miles travelled by 5,000 and, by 2040, will save 1.2 million minutes of travel, 21 million gallons of gasoline, 618,000 tons of criteria pollutants and 191,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions compared to a benchmark of the status quo.

**By 2024, multi-modal transportation improvements along Mercer West will result in 80,000 more trips per day walking, biking or taking the bus, rather than driving an automobile. This will result in a reduction in energy use of 10 million gallons of gasoline and a reduction of more than 85,000 tons of CO2 emissions annually.**

Environmental priorities are a driving factor in regional growth plans. Seattle is committed to creating more walkable, vibrant and less car-dependent neighborhoods that will effectively absorb growth rather than spreading to the suburbs and beyond. Seattle's Comprehensive Plan identifies 38 urban centers that can support greater density, six of which are in the Mercer Corridor. South Lake Union is Seattle's fastest growing regional center.

**By 2020, it will be the home to over 62,000 jobs and by 2031, 12,000 housing units, making it Seattle's second most dense neighborhood, rivaling downtown Seattle, with 35 housing units/acre and 180 jobs/acre.**

**A New Way of Thinking**

From sidewalks that retain water to streets that look like urban forests, Mercer West is a showcase of innovation that helps our environment.

- Thomas Street will be transformed by the City's "Green Streets" program which uses plants, trees and other natural features to treat stormwater and improve air quality.
- More than 50 deciduous trees will be added along with continuous planting strips, reducing the effective impervious area. This includes four blocks of Mercer Street near SR 99 that have no trees today.
- Greenscaping will reduce impervious area by 5,000 square feet, even with the widening of Mercer Street to accommodate additional lanes, sidewalks, and a bike path.
- The reinforced wall along the north side of Mercer includes vine planters providing "green" walls, contributing to urban biomass, vegetation and eye-pleasing visuals.
- Dirt fill excavated from the adjacent North Portal of the SR 99 Bored Tunnel project will be used to fill the Broad Street underpass, reducing truck traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Instead of traditional asphalt, Mercer West will be paved with concrete, which in addition to reducing maintenance costs, reduces rolling resistance, thereby increasing fuel economy.
- The project will include LED street lights and traffic lights.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems will manage traffic and provide real-time information for maximum efficiency.

**STATE OF GOOD REPAIR**

Mercer West involves complete street improvements including new roadway, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, curb ramps, traffic signals, pedestrian and street lighting and updated drainage and utility facilities. Mercer Street was constructed 60 years ago – and is now 20 years beyond the intended pavement design life. Sidewalks are inadequate, signal equipment is obsolete, drainage facilities have insufficient capacity, and utility infrastructure is old and at risk.

Mercer West will build 16 blocks of new or improved sidewalks. Construction on Mercer Street will use concrete pavement instead of asphalt for long-term durability. Concrete also has reduced rolling resistance, thereby increasing fuel economy. Improved drainage features, including updated stormwater inlets, will prevent flooding on Mercer Street, which occurs during heavy rainfall.

**Fixing and Improving the SR 99 Bridge**

More than 86,000 vehicles a day pass over the SR 99 Bridge that crosses over Mercer Street and will connect the SR 99 corridor to the new SR 99 Bored Tunnel and downtown. The 60-year old bridge and retaining walls supporting it do not meet seismic code requirements. Mercer West will replace the bridge, bring all structures up to code and increase vertical clearance to meet current design standards for freight. New, pre-stressed concrete girders in the superstructure will be more durable than the existing cast-in-place bridge. New bridge foundations will provide more flexibility if additional utility trenching is needed in the future. New barriers and railings will be included in the project, meeting pedestrian safety requirements.

The north wall supporting private buildings and the SR 99 Bridge along Mercer Street, which is considered at risk of damage during an earthquake, will be upgraded to current seismic code requirements, adding years of usable life to the structure. This repair and re-use is much more financially and environmentally sustainable than a full replacement.



**Critical Utilities Upgrades**

**Water:** Mercer West will replace two vital 20-inch diameter cast iron water pipes. These mains run east-west in Mercer Street and north-south in Dexter Avenue North. The mains were originally constructed in 1912 and segments were replaced in 1958, all of which were constructed with lead joints, a brittle connection that is susceptible to leakage as they age. During an earthquake, they are prone to increased leakage, at a minimum, or complete failure. The water mains will be replaced with new corrosion protected ductile iron mains with an expected lifespan in excess of 100 years.

**Sewer:** An existing double-barreled combined sewer siphon system, currently 30 to 40 percent blocked with sediment, will be replaced with a gravity concrete sewer, reducing maintenance and access costs. The new pipe has a 100 year design life.

**Stormwater:** The existing stormwater system does not meet current flow control or water quality standards. Storm drainage facilities (inlets, catch basins, and storm drain pipes) throughout the project area, many of which are over 60 years old, will be replaced with ductile iron pipe with a life expectancy of 100 years or more, meeting current drainage codes. The number of inlets and catch basins will be increased to prevent flooding under the SR 99 Bridge and decrease the spread of stormwater flow into the roadway during large storms. With these improvements, the city will be able to meet or exceed EPA's water quality discharge standards.

**Power:** As part of Phase II campus construction, Gates Foundation is undergrounding two transmission lines which will connect Seattle City Light's Broad Street Substation to their Canal and University substations, providing reliability, capacity and operational flexibility throughout Seattle City Light's service territory. These transmission circuits are critical to maintaining proper transmission load-flow within the Western Transmission Grid connecting WA, OR, ID, UT, MT, WY, CO, AZ, NM, NV, CA, and Canada.

**SAFETY**

The project will reduce conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists by eliminating the five extra turns that westbound traffic must make to travel through the corridor today and eliminating dual right-turn lanes at three locations. The project will make pedestrian crossing safety improvements at 15 intersections and provide 14 blocks of bikeways, reducing the number of vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle collisions in the corridor. Access for all will be enhanced with 85 new or upgraded curb ramps.

More than 12 million visitors travel to the Seattle Center annually, many crossing Mercer Street to reach the campus from adjacent neighborhoods and parking garages. The project will add one new traffic signal and new marked crosswalks to improve these connections.

The sidewalks on Mercer West under the SR 99 Bridge will be widened to provide comfortable space for pedestrians and bicycles with a landscaped buffer from traffic. Pedestrian lights will be installed. The center columns under the SR 99 Bridge will be removed, improving the sight-distances and reducing the potential for collisions. It also creates a well-lit and more visually pleasing driving, biking and walking experience. In addition, the project will seismically upgrade the walls along the north side of Mercer Street. The railings at the tops of these walls will be revised to current code requirements, increasing pedestrian safety at these areas.

New traffic signs, signals and markings along Mercer and surrounding streets will be deployed. The new systems will be linked to Seattle’s state-

of-the-art traffic management center, helping to reduce congestion, increase safety and allow SDOT to more rapidly respond to incidents. Conversion of Mercer and Roy streets to two-way operation will reduce vehicle speeds and make circulation more intuitive for drivers, reducing the potential for wrong-way or out-of-the-way travel. The intersection at Dexter Avenue North will be re-graded to provide adequate stopping-sight distance.

Over 350 collisions occurred during the three-year period from 2007 to 2009 in the Mercer West Corridor. Using the USDOT recommended methodology, the project’s safety improvements and reduction in vehicle miles of travel will reduce the number of collisions for a net benefit of \$24 million over 25 years.

**JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC STIMULUS**

Mercer West provides a significant return on both short and long term investments. It is currently at the 90 percent design stage, construction procurement is scheduled to go to advertisement in the third quarter 2012 (assuming award of TIGER IV grant funds), and construction will lead to over 1,000 jobs. It will help retain jobs today and in the future by maintaining and improving access to maritime activities, educational opportunities and Seattle’s rapidly growing global health, life science and technology employers. The project also provides mobility and livability benefits over the long-term that will lead to economic growth in the Puget Sound region, the State of Washington and benefit the economic health of the country.

**Direct/Indirect Job Creation**

Over 1,000 jobs would be created by Mercer West construction (based on The Executive Office of the President, Council of Economic Advisers methodology cited in the TIGER IV NOFA):

Estimates of Jobs Created by Mercer West	Number of Jobs
Direct & Indirect Jobs	709
Induced Jobs	349
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>1,048</b>

“Years after a huge political and cultural battle over whether to convert a worn-down part of town into a sort of loft for the creative class ... an early verdict is in on South Lake Union. It worked. In terms of jobs, it has worked spectacularly. It’s exceeding even the optimistic claims made years ago by its most starry-eyed promoters.”

*Danny Westneat, Seattle Times, Aug. 27, 2011*

**Supports Job Creation**

The Mercer Corridor spans two population and employment growth centers (South Lake Union and Uptown), as identified by the Puget Sound region’s award-winning plan for urban growth, *Vision 2040*. In one of these neighborhoods, South Lake Union, over 38,000 new jobs are expected to be added by 2031. Many of these jobs are in the life sciences sector, which has an average salary in Seattle of \$76,700 per year. The Mercer Corridor also provides improved access to other growth centers, supporting the creation of 50,000 new jobs in downtown Seattle and 12,000 new jobs in the industrial centers.

**Supports Job Retention**

One of the most effective strategies for maintaining jobs, both during the current economic situation and in the future, is to focus on what the region already has: one of the nation’s fastest growing hubs of global health and bio-tech, a thriving information technology and life sciences community, and robust manufacturing and trade industries. The multi-modal transportation improvements of Mercer West will make getting to work easier for the 50,000 employees within the four regional centers directly served by the project as well as making freight deliveries more efficient. Many of these jobs are concentrated in economic clusters crucial to the success of the Puget Sound region’s *Regional Economic Strategy*, including Logistics and International Trade, Information Technology, Life Sciences and Tourism.

In addition to the four centers directly served, Mercer West maintains and improves access to downtown Seattle, the largest employment center in the Pacific Northwest with 220,000 jobs, by providing access to/from the SR 99 Bored Tunnel and replacing the SR 99 Bridge over Mercer Street. In addition, it ensures that the \$80 billion in goods that travel through Seattle on SR 99 and I-5 each year get to their destination in a timely manner.

Growth in this area has already begun due to the City’s commitment to building out infrastructure in this corridor. Between 2004 and 2010, employment at global health institutions along the Mercer Corridor grew over 130 percent.

Transactions/Events completed or underway since 2010:

- Completion of Phase I of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation headquarters
- PATH opens new headquarters
- Institute for Systems Biology leased 140,000 sq ft space for new headquarters and R&D facility
- Gilead moves into new 115,000 sq ft R&D space
- Puget Sound Blood Center leased 45,000 sq ft space
- Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center acquired 177,000 sq ft to expand campus



As the hub for innovation in life sciences and global health, the Mercer West area has attracted many start-up firms because of the opportunities for collaboration

with the UW, Gates Foundation, Amgen and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, among others. A robust multi-modal transportation system, provided by Mercer West, is viewed as critical by these entities to maintain this collaborative atmosphere, which is important to the success of these small, collaborative firms.

This project also improves access for employees and freight to maritime and manufacturing centers in Seattle’s Duwamish and BINMIC – the largest concentration of industrial jobs in the state of Washington. Together these centers currently contain over 80,000 jobs. Many of these jobs are in the high-paying maritime sector, where the average wage is over \$70,000 a year. In total, the Mercer Corridor project will help Seattle retain over 300,000 jobs.

**Promotes Business Opportunities**

Seattle’s investment in transportation and other infrastructure within the centers served by Mercer West has spurred private investment.

**In 2009 and 2010, global health ventures in South Lake Union invested approximately \$741 million.**

Mercer West will improve access to a large number of life science and global health start-ups that locate within Uptown and South Lake Union. Since 2003, a single privately-held investment firm located in South Lake Union, the Accelerator Corporation, has invested in 12 start-up companies.

In 2005, the State of Washington created the Life Sciences Discovery Fund, which is also located in South Lake Union. Since its inception the fund has awarded 51 grants totaling \$87.6 million. In 2010, the State of Washington also created the Washington Global Health Fund (WGHF) to finance promising ideas, foster new global health technologies, and create jobs.

This project will also help foster business opportunities for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) firms. A number of new ICT start-ups and subsidiaries of larger firms have located in South Lake Union, Uptown and Ballard/Interbay. These firms are drawn by Seattle’s educated workforce, the livability of the neighborhoods, and the synergy of being located near major research institutions and technology leaders. An example is Big Fish Games, today a leading provider of games for the mobile device market. It was founded by a former executive at RealNetworks in 2002 and is still located in the Ballard/Interbay neighborhood. Today their games are sold in 150 countries.

**Construction Job Creation and Training**

Construction of Mercer West will provide over 700 short-term jobs in the construction trades and for suppliers. The construction trades have been particularly hard hit in the Seattle area with 40 percent unemployment.

The City of Seattle is committed to increasing training and apprenticeship opportunities in the construction industry and recognizes that a diverse and well-trained workforce is critical to the economy as well as the social vitality of the region.

“There is 40 percent unemployment in the King County construction industry – an historic high.”

*Lee Newgent,  
King County Building and Construction Trades*

**Apprenticeship:** The City requires the use of apprentice labor on construction projects estimated to cost \$1 million or greater. Contractors must ensure that up to 15 percent of the total contract labor hours are worked by apprentices enrolled in an approved or recognized apprenticeship program.

**Race and Social Justice Initiative:** Through the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative, Seattle has implemented a contracting equity program and a new women and minority-owned businesses (WMBE) Inclusion Plan, which will be used as part of the Mercer West contracting process

**Opportunities for Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise:** SDOT will work with the Turner School of Construction prior to and during bidding to empower minority, women and disadvantaged and small construction firms to become more competitive by developing or improving their business operations and by providing access to contracts with private and public owners, developers, and prime contractors.





Michael Hall: President of CRH Construction

Seattle is committed to increasing small business participation in City contracting opportunities.

[Ordinance 119603](#)

encourages

City departments to use affirmative efforts to solicit the participation of WMBEs in all competitive contracting opportunities. The new [Executive Order 2010-05](#) requires departments to increase contracting with WMBEs by expanding outreach efforts, creating new opportunities, and establishing direct accountability. In addition, SDOT teaches construction contracting processes at the Turner School.

**Use of Community-Based Organizations:** The City participates in many community partnerships. They include organizations like: Tabor 100, The Community Coalition for Contracts and Jobs, The National Association for Minority Contractors and the Greater Seattle Chamber's multicultural business arm, the Urban Enterprise Center. These partnerships are focused on outreach to local businesses to provide information on up-coming projects and contract opportunities.

**Ensuring Workers are Safe and Treated Fairly:** The City requires that the prevailing wage rate be paid to all employees working on its construction projects. On construction projects that receive federal funding, the City monitors all prevailing wage requirements for that project in accordance with state and federal laws. The City will enforce both federal and state prevailing wages and fringe benefits (see [agency certification](#)). When the federal and state wage rates differ, the higher wage rate will be required. Seattle already has an on-the-job training program aimed at developing trainees from disadvantaged populations to journeyman status. Training and promotions of members of certain minority groups and women is a primary objective of this program.

**Consistent with Nation's Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity Laws:** Seattle vigorously enforces social

equity requirements and equitable contracting practices in our construction contracts. The city will require that minority business enterprises be afforded the full opportunity to submit bids. No businesses, employees or potential employees will be discriminated against because of race, creed, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status or the presence of any physical, sensory or mental disability.

Funding for this project is provided in part by FHWA, through WSDOT. WSDOT has a [federally approved plan for the utilization of disadvantaged business enterprises \(DBE\)](#). As required by law, Seattle will submit its engineer's estimate to WSDOT prior to advertising. WSDOT will establish a goal for DBE utilization for the Mercer Corridor Project based on an analysis of the availability of ready and eligible firms. The goal will become a condition of contract award.

**INNOVATION**

Mercer West contains innovative approaches to funding, community partnerships, traffic management, street design and sustainability.

**Green Streets and Construction Techniques**

The City will green six blocks of Mercer Street with continuous planting strips, street trees and vine-covered retaining walls, including the north wall under the SR 99 Bridge adjacent to Mercer Street. Innovative Silva Cells will be placed under the pavement to support large, healthy trees and protect sidewalks and streets from root damage. An irrigation system with an evapo-transmitter will minimize water usage.

Contract specifications encourage the salvage and reuse of onsite materials and use of offsite recycled materials. Dirt fill excavated from the North Portal of the SR 99 Bored Tunnel construction will be used to fill the Broad Street Underpass, reducing truck traffic and greenhouse gas emissions.

**Intelligent Transportation Systems**

The project includes ITS investments to support active traffic management. It will install variable message signs, closed circuit television equipment, signal detection, and new pedestrian countdown signals. ITS elements will be connected to Seattle's

state-of-the-art Traffic Management Center to allow for optimal traffic flow and provide real-time information to the public.

### Lighting Innovations

Low-energy street lighting that meets the Dark Skies Initiative is incorporated in the project. All new street lights, pedestrian lights, and traffic signals will use longer lasting, cost-effective LED technology. This is the first arterial in the city to receive this type of lighting.

### Community Partnerships

Mercer West is the final product of a unique partnership between the SDOT, WSDOT, Port of Seattle, community groups and business interests. By actively engaging neighborhoods along the Mercer Corridor, the project has generated wide support. The project also includes an innovative partnership with the Gates Foundation, which has contributed approximately \$8.5 million in enhancements.

### Smart Growth

The Mercer Corridor project is part of Seattle's Center City Strategy, combining economic growth and livable neighborhoods with sustainable transportation alternatives to decrease traffic congestion, encouraging urban density as an alternative to suburban sprawl. The strategy recognizes the importance of creating a multimodal system that allows Seattle to grow sustainably. Mercer West is focused on building a livable, walkable, 24/7 community, with excellent access to the rest of the metropolitan area, connecting the maritime and trade industries, the Seattle Center, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the economic engine of South Lake Union, including Amazon.com.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Mercer West is the result of a strong collaboration among a broad range of government, business, and community participants.

### Community Collaboration

After forty years of failed attempts to find a solution to the "Mercer Mess," the City took a new perspective on the corridor, starting with neighborhood plans under the State Growth Management Act and plans to

replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct. The City initiated a coordinated planning process that involved a variety of community stakeholders and the State's Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project team.

As a result of public and stakeholder input, technical analysis and guidance from the Seattle City Council, the Two-Way Mercer Alternative was identified as the City's preferred alternative in 2004. During the planning and design process, an independent Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee, comprised of 42 individuals meeting 15 times, reached consensus on a package of recommendations for the Mercer Corridor.

Mercer West is an important part of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan which calls for a sustainable transportation system to support increased density in 38 urban centers, including South Lake Union and Uptown. Puget Sound Regional Council considers South Lake Union and Uptown regional growth centers.

### Regional Priority

In January 2009, the Governor, the King County Executive, and the Mayor of Seattle agreed with the Alaskan Way Viaduct Stakeholders Advisory Committee and announced their recommendation to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct with the SR 99 Bored Tunnel and other city street improvements. Mercer West was considered a key component of the tunnel recommendation, providing a critical connection to northwest Seattle neighborhoods and integrating the tunnel into the city's transportation system. The design has been carefully coordinated with WSDOT, Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Center, the Department of Planning and Development, King County Metro, the Port of Seattle, UW and other public agencies that supported this project.

### Neighborhood & Business Support

The Seattle Center Master Plan calls making connections to the growing neighborhoods on the Center's edges. Mercer West will enhance these connections along Mercer Street and Fifth Avenue North. More than 50 local businesses and community members have signed [letters of support](#).

**READINESS TO PROCEED AND NEPA**

**Project Schedule**

The Mercer West project is at 90 percent design. The construction contract is scheduled to be advertised in the third quarter of 2012. SDOT has developed a detailed plan for construction of the project.

**Environmental Approvals**

The SR 99 Bridge underpass (Dexter Avenue North to Fifth Avenue North), which constitutes 90 percent of the Mercer West budget, is included in the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project EIS and subsequent Record of Decision issued on August 22, 2011. Environmental discipline reports have been completed for the remaining Fifth W to Fifth N segment. SDOT will also submit an Environmental Classification Summary to FHWA by March 31 and final approval – a Documented Categorical Exclusion – is expected in May. The project will construct the transition between the East and West phases (Dexter Avenue North to Ninth Avenue North), which is covered in the Mercer Corridor East phase Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impacts, May 2009.

**Legislative Approvals**

The City Council has voted [numerous times](#) to continue to advance Mercer West. In November 2011, the Council approved a CIP Budget for Mercer West that had a \$21 million funding gap, and indicated their intent to approve the project for construction once a full funding plan is in place. Since the City budget was adopted, SDOT has identified \$7 million in other funding sources, a TIB grant and cost savings, and will

fill the budget gap with the requested TIGER IV grant.

**State and Local Planning**

Mercer West is the result of a thorough planning process which began with community members developing neighborhood plans for Uptown and South Lake Union that identified improvements to the Mercer Corridor and connections to SR 99 as a top priority.

**South Lake Union Transportation Study:** In 2004, the current plan for an improved two-way Mercer corridor was identified as a critical element of the South Lake Union Transportation Study, a subarea transportation plan for the South Lake Union regional growth center. Study recommendations were developed with broad support from a diverse group of neighborhood, business and community representatives.

**Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee:** During the planning process, an independent Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee comprised of 42 individuals met a total of 15 times. The committee reached consensus on a package of recommendations for the Mercer Corridor aimed at providing and supporting more convenient transportation options, managing congestion, improving accessibility for those who are unable to or choose not to drive, and building a vibrant, livable, walkable mixed-use community. Mercer West meets and exceeds the recommendations of the Stakeholder Committee. It includes improvements identified in the City of Seattle’s city-wide transportation planning documents.

**Mercer West Project Timeline**



**Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans:** The multi-use pathway that is part of the project implements a recommendation of Seattle’s Bicycle Master Plan. Pedestrian improvements address high priority locations identified in Seattle’s Pedestrian Master Plan.

**Transit Master Plan:** The project also makes improvements recommended in Seattle’s Transit Master Plan for one of its Priority Bus Corridors. Mercer West also improves the environment for implementation of a potential future high capacity transit connection between Uptown and South Lake Union that is identified in the Transit Master Plan.

**Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Agreement:** Mercer West is part of a multi-billion dollar set of transportation investments, including the SR 99 Bored Tunnel, to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct. It, along with other projects, including the Spokane Street Viaduct, State Route 519 and the East Marginal Way Grade Separation, will improve linkages to the Port of Seattle, Seattle’s industrial centers and the nation’s transportation network.

**Regional:** Mercer West is included in PSRC’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan *Transportation 2040* and in both the Regional and State Transportation Improvement Programs. The Puget Sound region has recognized the significance of Mercer West to the success of our regional growth strategy with \$8.2 million of PSRC managed federal Surface Transportation Program funds.

**Financial Feasibility**

This \$14 million TIGER IV grant request represents the final funding for Mercer West, allowing Seattle to proceed to construction. All TIGER IV funds will be used on the construction phase of the project.

Seattle’s goal is to obligate funds quickly in order to allow the project to be advertised for construction in the third quarter of 2012. This means an early start to this major capital project, reducing construction cost and getting construction workers on the job quickly. The TIGER IV grant leverages \$80.4 million in secured funding, over \$75 million of which is non-federal. \$28.7 million will come from municipal bonds that will be repaid using proceeds of the city’s commercial parking tax which was implemented as part of the [Bridging the Gap](#) transportation funding package, approved by City

Council and Seattle’s voters in 2006. Parking tax revenues have been steadily growing, despite the economic downturn, and are a very stable source of revenue. In addition, private contributions from surplus property sales will make up an additional 33 percent of the funding. These funds are included in the City’s adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP). A small portion of the funding will also come from Seattle’s public utilities and is directly tied to relocating utilities for the project.

Seattle has secured \$8.2 million in regional competitive Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds from the PSRC for this major regional transportation improvement. Mercer West was one of the highest ranked roadway improvements project in the Puget Sound region in PSRC’s 2009 STP/CMAQ competition.

The Washington State Transportation Strategic Investment Board (TIB) also recognized the statewide significance of the project by awarding the project a \$5 million grant in 2011.

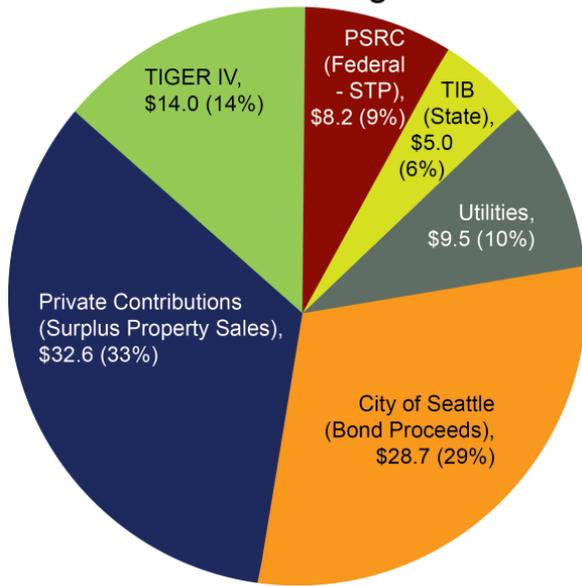
Cost Estimate (in \$ millions)	
Design	\$13.8
Right-of-Way	\$2.8
Construction	\$81.4
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$98.0</b>

Revenues (in \$ millions)	
<b>Secured Revenue</b>	
PSRC (Federal - STP)	\$8.2
TIB (State)	\$5.0
Utilities	\$9.5
City of Seattle (Bond Proceeds)	\$28.7
Private Contributions (Surplus Property Sales)	\$32.6
<b>Total Secured Revenue</b>	<b>\$84.0</b>

<b>TIGER IV</b>	<b>\$14.0</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$98.0</b>

Replacing or upgrading infrastructure in the corridor will reduce long-term operations and maintenance costs. These savings will offset the cost of new infrastructure provided in the corridor, such as ITS components. Seattle’s *Bridging the Gap* transportation funding package provides a stable source of funding for maintenance of Seattle’s transportation infrastructure.

### Mercer West Funding



Seattle is a proven manager of federal grant funds. SDOT has been authorized by WSDOT to serve as a Certified Agency (CA) since 1973, allowing it to develop, advertise, award and manage its own projects. SDOT is the oldest and largest CA in the State of Washington. In this capacity, Seattle has also served as CA for smaller agencies and non-profits, assisting them to deliver projects. As a recipient of a previous TIGER I grant as well as ARRA funding from a number of federal agencies, Seattle has put together a citywide accountability and reporting structure overseen by the Mayor of Seattle and City Council to assure the proper use of these federal funds.

#### Technical Feasibility

The cost estimate for Mercer West is based on the 90 percent design that was completed on March 2, 2012. The estimate includes contingencies of 10 percent for design changes and 20 percent for construction change orders. These are appropriately sized contingencies for a project at 90 percent design. Escalation is included in the cost estimate, assuming four percent annual inflation to the mid-point of construction. The following technical reports support the design:

- Transportation discipline reports for Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement Project and the Mercer West Two-way Conversion;
- Hazardous Materials discipline reports for both projects;
- Civil Design Memorandum, February 4, 2011;
- Structural Design Memorandum, February 4, 2011;
- Geotechnical Engineering Report (90 percent Design), February 10, 2012;
- Stormwater Technical Memorandum (90 percent Design), March 2, 2012; and,
- Preliminary Bridge Plan under review by WSDOT; expect final approval by May 2012.

Mercer West will be advertised for construction in August 2012. The city plans to provide an eight-week period for contractors to put together their bid packages. By moving forward with the project as soon as possible, Seattle expects to receive competitive bids in the current economic climate.

Seattle has the expertise and experience to manage Mercer West and fulfill all federal requirements. SDOT has designed and constructed a number of large capital projects, including the West Seattle Bridge (\$226 million), Spokane Street Viaduct project (\$181 million), South Lake Union Streetcar (\$52 million) and Mercer East (\$172 million) – currently under construction.

**SUMMARY OF BENEFIT-COST ANALYSIS**

<i>Quantitative Benefits</i>		<i>Net Present Value</i>	
Long-Term Criteria	3% Discount Rate	7% Discount Rate	
Travel Time Saving - Truck	35,297,482	23,622,503	
<b>Economic Competitiveness</b>	<b>\$35,297,482</b>	<b>\$23,622,503</b>	
Travel Time Saving - Auto	\$256,001,894	\$171,326,829	
Fuel Consumption Saving	56,571,552	37,859,972	
Annual Health Benefit	\$10,046,098	\$6,723,255	
<b>Livability</b>	<b>\$322,619,544</b>	<b>\$215,910,056</b>	
CO2 Emission Saving	4,062,187	2,615,684	
NOX and VOC Saving	1,324,815	886,620	
<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>\$5,387,002</b>	<b>\$3,502,304</b>	
LED Street Lights Saving	3,650,290	2,442,922	
Water and Sewer Utility O&M Savings	720,000	720,000	
Roadway O&M Savings	203,249	152,340	
Bridge O&M Savings	55,855	31,356	
<b>State of Good Repair</b>	<b>\$4,629,394</b>	<b>\$3,346,618</b>	
<b>Safety</b>	<b>\$16,732,058</b>	<b>\$11,183,955</b>	
<b>Cost of Congestion During Construction</b>	<b>-\$7,022,477</b>	<b>-\$7,022,477</b>	
<b>Total Quantitative Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 377,643,003</b>	<b>\$ 250,542,959</b>	

*Qualitative Benefits*

**Long-Term Criteria**

**Economic Competitiveness**

In a 2011 report, economist Paul Sommers noted that between 2004 and 2010, the real estate development activities in Seattle’s South Lake Union neighborhood surpassed earlier projections. The assessed value of buildings constructed since 2004 is nearly \$1.4 billion, in part because of Seattle’s investment in transportation infrastructure such as the South Lake Union Streetcar and Mercer Corridor Project. This magnitude of construction and economic activity results in an average of \$9 million per year in additional tax revenues to the City of Seattle.

Analysis done recently for Seattle’s Department of Planning and Development estimates \$6.1 billion in new construction will occur in South Lake Union over the next 25 years through the new rezoning discussed in the application. It is estimated that this level of growth would produce construction and economic activity benefits of between \$73 million and \$142 million in additional tax revenues for the City of Seattle and King County over 25 years (using the 3% and 7% discount rates). Seattle has not included any of these potential benefits, despite the Mercer West project being a mitigation measure for the transportation impacts of the South Lake Union rezone.

As stated in the Livability section below, an average 20% reduction in vehicles miles traveled (VMT) can be attributed to complete, compact, and connected development. A portion of the economic benefits of this compact development because of reductions in overall fuel costs could reasonably be expected to accrue to the Mercer West project due to its pivotal nature for transportation access in the neighborhood.

## Qualitative Benefits

### Livability

Sidewalks and other pedestrian infrastructure in the Mercer West corridor are substandard. A narrow sidewalk underneath the SR 99 Bridge discourages walking and does not meet minimum ADA standards. Curb ramps at a number of intersections do not meet current standards.

The project will widen 4-foot sidewalks to 8-foot wide. It will build or improve 16 block faces of sidewalk and improve crossing at 15 intersections. Access for all will be enhanced with 85 new or upgraded curb ramps.

These pedestrian improvements enhance walking as a travel option for 10,500 residents and 38,000 employees. They also serve 12 million visitors per year to the Seattle Center.

Mercer West does not have delineated lanes or paths for bicycles. Project builds 1,200-foot, 10-foot wide separated bike path under the SR 99 Bridge and on Fifth Avenue North. It also installs Install bike lanes on Roy Street from Fifth Avenue North to Fifth Avenue West. This improves bicycle safety, encourages mode shift and improves access for 10,500 residents and 38,000 employees.

An average 20% reduction in vehicles miles traveled (VMT) can be attributed to complete, compact, and connected development (Urban Land Institute Study - Brandes et al, 2010). The City of Seattle is undertaking a rezone of the South Lake Union urban center to increase height and density and create an even more compact community, increasing job density over 100 jobs per acre. The Mercer West project is an important project for mitigating the impacts of this new growth. The VMT saving included in the detailed cost-benefit analysis from the project's travel modeling do not assume this new growth because the upzone proposal has not received final adoption by the City Council. A portion of the livability benefits of this compact development could reasonably be expected to accrue to the Mercer West project due to its pivotal nature for transportation access in the neighborhood.

### Sustainability

The Mercer Corridor is a one-way couplet that requires a circuitous and time-consuming west bound movement for transit. In addition, the traffic congestion along in the corridor makes transit unreliable. These problems have limited King County Metro's ability to provide efficient transit service linking these growing communities.

The Mercer West project is built to accommodate buses and resolves the efficiency problems, providing the opportunity to establish a new transit corridor between Ballard, Uptown and Downtown. Seattle and Sound Transit have reached agreement to begin a planning study to look at potential high capacity transit alternatives for this corridor.

As stated above in the Livability section, an average 20% reduction in vehicles miles traveled (VMT) can be attributed to complete, compact and connected development. A portion of the sustainability benefits of this compact development because of emissions reductions could reasonably be expected to accrue to the Mercer West project due to its pivotal nature for transportation access in the neighborhood.

### Job Creation and Economic Stimulus

As mentioned in the Economic Competitiveness section above, an analysis done recently for Seattle estimates \$6.1 billion in new construction will occur in South Lake Union over the next 25 years through the new rezone of South Lake Union. Many new construction jobs will be created by this growth, both to build the private development and to build the public infrastructure (e.g. new electrical power substation) to support the new growth. One reason for the rapid growth in the South Lake Union area has been Seattle's commitment to completing necessary transportation infrastructure. It is also a pivotal mitigation measure for the transportation impacts of this growth. Seattle has not attempted to ascertain how many of these construction jobs would be attributable to the completion of the Mercer West project. However, it is reasonable to assume that there is a job creation benefit to the project.

**CHANGES FROM PRE-APPLICATION**

<i>Field</i>	<i>Change</i>
Project Name	MERCER CORRIDOR WEST PROJECT
TIGER Funds Requested	<b>\$14,000,000</b>
Non-Federal Funds Committed	\$75,800,000
Total Project Cost	\$98,000,000

**NOTE: Total Project Costs Updated with 90% design; added utility relocation costs that were previously accounted for separately.**

**FEDERAL WAGE RATE CERTIFICATION**



**City of Seattle**

Seattle Department of Transportation

Peter Hahn, Director

**CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL WAGE RATE REQUIREMENTS**

I certify that the City of Seattle Department of Transportation will comply with the Federal wage rate requirements of subchapter IV of chapter 31, title 40 of the United States Code, as required by the FY 2011 Continuing Appropriations Act.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Hahn", written over a horizontal line.

Peter Hahn  
Director  
Seattle Department of Transportation



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