

## Future Vision

A future project, under evaluation within the Urban Mobility Plan and SDOT's Partnership with WSDOT and King County for the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement, will continue two-way Mercer across Aurora Avenue to Seattle Center and Uptown. This is currently included under all options for replacement of the viaduct. The strategies also include creating additional crossings of Aurora to reconnect South Lake Union and Queen Anne/Uptown which will relieve some of the traffic pressures on Mercer - providing further overall travel benefits. Completing Two-way Mercer from Fairview to Dexter is a necessary first, and major, step toward implementing the vision supported by residents, business, and other neighborhood organizations in South Lake Union and Queen Anne, as well as freight, bicycle and pedestrian advocates.

## Project Costs and Funding

The estimated cost of the project is \$192.9 million, which takes into account the nearly finalized design and up-to-date land acquisition costs. While the city has \$8.4 million set aside, it will seek \$51.7 million from federal and state governments, obtain \$26 million for utility relocation, and use existing parking and employment taxes (which can only be used for major transportation projects) to secure \$70.6 million from bonds. The remaining \$36.2 million will come from private sector contributions from the surrounding neighborhood. No funds from the *Bridging the Gap* transportation levy will be diverted from intended roads, trails, bridges or sidewalks to support this project.

## Other Proposals

Through the decades, the city has evaluated many proposals for the Mercer Corridor. Among solutions offered were an elevated freeway, a "cut and cover" tunnel, and a sunken roadway. A Schell administration plan from the mid 1990s known as "Alternative A" is sometimes erroneously cited as a low-cost way to fix the Mercer Corridor. The concept was evaluated in 2004 and was eliminated from further consideration because it failed to create a more direct connection from I-5 into and through South Lake Union, and did not improve local access and circulation. Moreover, it left roadway safety issues unresolved, failed to accommodate neighborhood growth and livability, and made no improvements for pedestrians or bicyclists over current conditions.

## More Information to Come

Additional analysis will be available to the public when SDOT releases the Mercer Corridor Project's Environmental Assessment. This comprehensive overview will cover a broad range of topics such as transportation outcomes, air quality, noise, water concerns and local cultural impacts. The Transportation Discipline Report, which was released early to accommodate council deliberations, is part of this assessment document. SDOT is continuing its design work, to include finalizing a six- or seven-lane configuration, and is undertaking additional traffic flow studies to ensure that the final design fully addresses the needs of the Mercer Corridor.



## A Long-awaited Solution for the Mercer Mess

### The Mercer Corridor Project

The Mercer Corridor has been a problematic roadway system for Seattle since the 1950s. With numerous studies and rejected proposals, generations of city leaders have wrestled for more than fifty years to resolve the traffic congestion problem known as the "Mercer Mess." Thanks to a proposal by Mayor Nickels and an 8-1 vote by the Seattle City Council, the city is taking decisive steps to clean up this persistent traffic problem using a multi-modal approach.



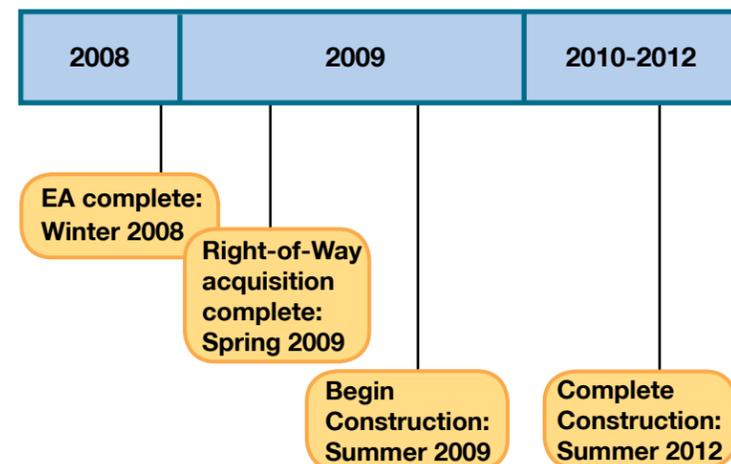
### Improvements Offered

The Mercer Corridor Project, as designed by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), improves the streets of South Lake Union for those who drive, move freight, take transit, ride a bike or walk. It widens Mercer Street between I-5 and Dexter Avenue N to accommodate three lanes of travel in each direction, on-street parking, wide sidewalks and a median with left-turn lanes. Valley Street will be narrowed to a two-lane, two-way street that compliments the new Lake Union Park, offers easy access to the new streetcar and provides a bike- and pedestrian-friendly environment. The work also allows upgrading of all area utilities and converts car-focused roads to neighborhood-oriented boulevards.



A narrowed Valley Street compliments the new Lake Union Park and improves pedestrian access.

## Mercer Corridor Project Timeline



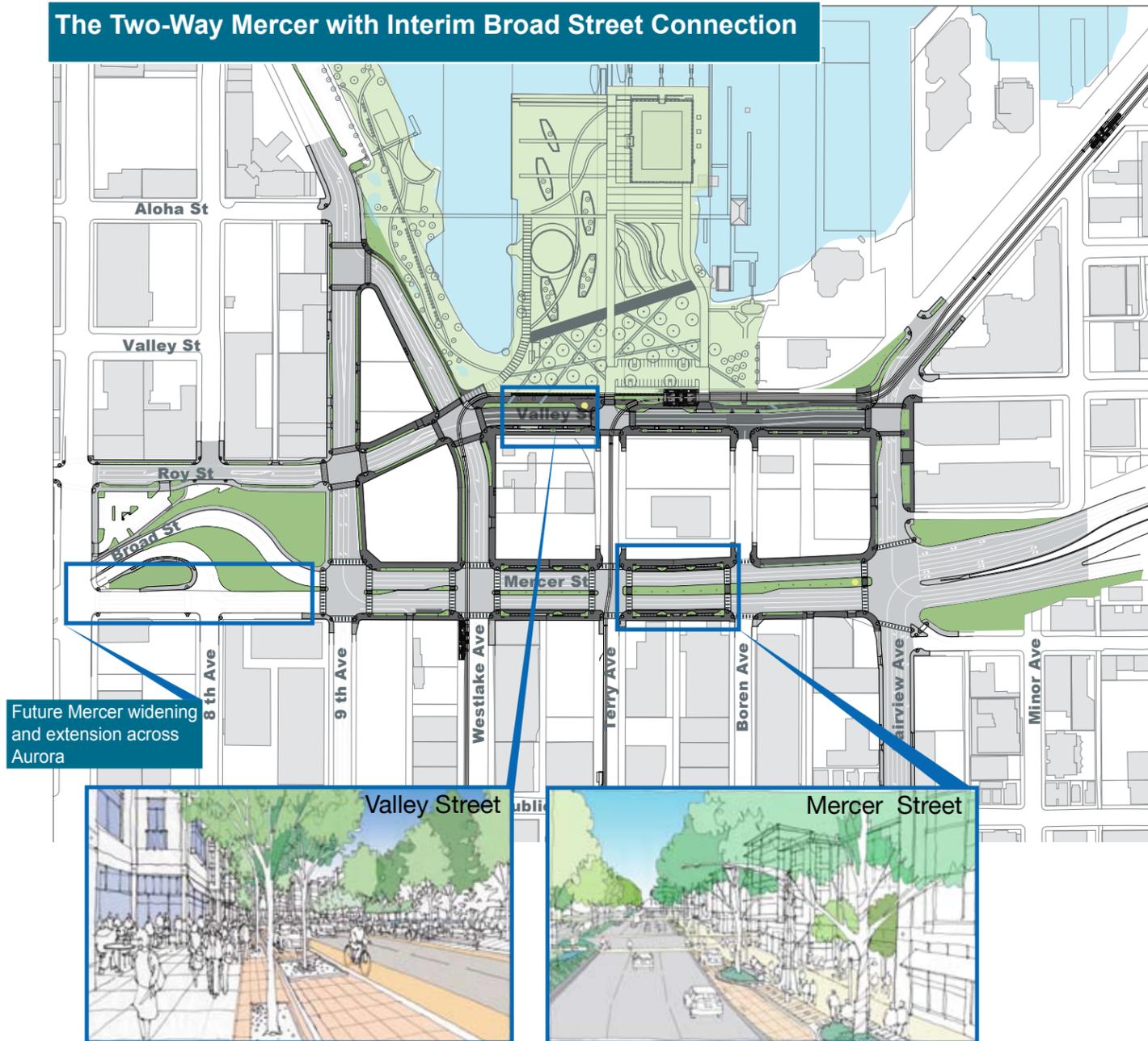
### Need more information?

To learn more about the project, please contact Angela Brady, SDOT project manager:

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More information about the project is available at: [www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp\\_mercer.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_mercer.htm)

## The Two-Way Mercer with Interim Broad Street Connection



### Project Benefits

The project will improve traffic flow from I-5 into South Lake Union and neighborhoods to the west and north, while at the same time better accommodating local access and circulation around South Lake Union. This is especially important given that traffic models estimate traffic volumes will grow by more than one percent per year through 2030. It also increases roadway safety, allows smoother freight movement and expands the street network's capacity. This enhanced Mercer Corridor will also facilitate neighborhood livability, better accommodate pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and strengthen transit connections.

### Moving forward to improve mobility and livability

South Lake Union is growing and SDOT is developing the transportation network needed to keep the neighborhood moving. The goals of the project are to:

- Improve the regional connection from I-5 into South Lake Union and neighborhoods to the west and north
- Enhance access, circulation, and safety for all transportation modes within South Lake Union
- Accommodate economic development and support neighborhood livability



A more direct route on a Two-Way Mercer improves westbound travel times and provides better freight access.

### A Two-Way Mercer is vital to improving mobility

Two-way Mercer will improve mobility for those who drive, move freight, take transit, ride their bike or walk. The project keeps people and goods moving by:

- Providing a more direct route from I-5 to the Seattle Center, SR99 (Aurora), Interbay and Ballard
- Improving a key alternative route during Alaskan Way Viaduct construction
- Improving westbound travel time from I-5 to Seattle Center and Queen Anne
- Removing barriers, such as turn restrictions, and making it easier to get around by car, truck, foot, or bike
- Supporting transit use through convenient pedestrian access and a street network that allows east-west transit service
- Connecting bicyclists from Eastlake Avenue to Dexter Avenue with new lanes on Valley and Roy streets
- Constructing 32 blocks of new sidewalk

### A Two-Way Mercer is vital to a livable South Lake Union

It is equally important for the project's design to support livability. SDOT hosted a series of urban design workshops to involve stakeholders in developing design themes, principles and concepts. Stakeholders made it clear the project should contribute to a sustainable neighborhood that reflects the area's maritime and industrial history and connects with the new Lake Union Park. The design concepts improve livability by:

- Transforming Mercer Street into a two-way boulevard, with large trees of various species forming "green fingers" that bulb out into the street
- Providing a wide, "wet median" that creates a natural drainage swale for street run-off and opportunities for public art
- Including unique light fixtures and benches to establish a bold and distinctive street for both pedestrians and vehicles
- Reinventing Valley Street as a small scale, two-lane esplanade with bicycle lanes on either side
- Incorporating lush planting areas to complement and extend the new Lake Union Park into the neighborhood

### Travel Times

The Mercer Corridor Project improves travel times for most directions with the exception of slightly poorer eastbound times. Eastbound travel times will increase because a two-way Mercer Street will allow left-turns by westbound traffic as well as provide more time for pedestrians to cross. The limited capacity of the single on-ramp lane to I-5 ultimately prevents moving eastbound traffic more rapidly. Meanwhile, the project resolves the convoluted westbound route from I-5 via Fairview, Valley and Broad streets by providing a direct route on a two-way Mercer Street. This will enhance travel times in the westbound direction and reduce back-ups onto I-5. When completed, the two-way Mercer boulevard and complete neighborhood street network will provide reasonable city traffic speeds, allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to safely share the roadway.



New pedestrian and bicycle access and connections will improve mobility and safety and provide for a multimodal neighborhood.