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mercer corridor project

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A SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2009

We are holding a Public Hearing and Open House on January 13, 2009 to provide information about the project and give you the opportunity to comment on the EA.

The hearing will be January 13, 2009 from 4-7 p.m. at the South Lake Union Armory, 860 Terry Avenue North.

Environmental Assessment Available for Review

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has released the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Mercer Corridor Project for public for review and comment. The EA describes the project, its benefits and impacts. SDOT welcomes your comments on the information contained in the EA. The comment period lasts from December 30, 2008 to February 13, 2009. Read on to learn more about the project and the ways you can give us comments.

What is the Mercer Corridor Project?

The Mercer Corridor has been a problematic roadway system for Seattle since the 1950s. As seen by numerous studies and rejected proposals, generations of city leaders have wrestled to resolve the traffic problem known as the "Mercer Mess." The Mercer Corridor Project, as designed by the 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 complements the new Lake Union Park, offers easy access to adjacent properties and provides a bike- and pedestrian-friendly environment. The work also includes upgrading of all area utilities.

What are the project's benefits?

The project will improve traffic flow from I-5 into South Lake Union and neighborhoods to the west, while at the same time better accommodating local access and circulation around South Lake Union. It also increases roadway safety, provides a more-direct freight route and makes more efficient use of the neighborhood street grid. This enhanced Mercer Corridor will additionally facilitate neighborhood development and livability, better protect pedestrians and bicyclists, and strengthen transit connections. Some of the benefits include:

- Provide a more direct route from I-5 to South Lake Union, Seattle Center, SR99 (Aurora), Interbay and Ballard
- Improve a key alternative route in preparation for removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct
- Remove barriers, such as turn restrictions, and making it easier to get around by car, truck, foot, or bike
- Support transit use through convenient pedestrian access and a street network that allows east-west transit service
- Connect bicyclists from Fairview Avenue to Dexter Avenue with new lanes on Valley and Roy streets
- Construct more than 30 blocks of sidewalks



mercer corridor project

Public Hearing and Open House
January 13, 2009
4 - 7 p.m.

South Lake Union Armory
860 Terry Avenue North
Seattle, Washington



You're Invited!
Join us at a public hearing and open house on January 13, 2009



What are the project's effects?

As with any large construction project, there are some potential effects and trade-offs that need to be considered. A two-way Mercer requires more space in order to accommodate three lanes in each direction. New signals and pedestrian crossings that provide for improved access within the neighborhood and improved mobility and safety for pedestrians contribute to a vibrant and livable neighborhood, but they negatively effect some travel times. Some of the project's other effects include:

- Increased noise and dust levels during construction
- Remove an historic structure, the McKay Pacific Building
- Relocate five businesses from properties that need to be acquired in order to widen Mercer
- Some increase to travel times (due to new left turn movements and increased demand, as well as the limited capacity of I-5 on-ramps)

A number of measures will be taken to minimize any effects as specified in the Environmental Commitment list in the EA.

Building a Two-Way Mercer

What's been happening: In 2006, the City Council adopted, and voters approved, Bridging the Gap. This initiative provided \$30 million for the Mercer Corridor Project, and allowed SDOT to continue design work and begin right-of-way acquisition during 2007 and 2008. On May 12, 2008, the Seattle City Council voted to continue work on the project, making it possible to complete the environmental documentation, final design, and continue right-of-way acquisition. In November 2008, the City Council approved an additional \$30 million to continue with right-of-way acquisition.

What's next: Environmental review, final design, and right-of-way acquisition will be completed by Spring 2009. Construction is scheduled to begin the Summer of 2009, pending additional construction funding authorization from City Council. If construction begins on time, we expect 2-way Mercer to be operational by Summer 2011, with Valley Street reconstruction completed by Summer 2012.

How can you receive additional information or comment on the EA?

In addition to attending the Hearing/Open House, you can review and comment on the EA in a number of ways:

- To learn more about the project or to request a CD, please contact Angela Brady, SDOT project manager at (206) 684-3115 or via e-mail at: MercerEA@seattle.gov
- Download the EA and send comments from the project web site: www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_mercer.htm
- Review the EA at the Seattle Public Library Downtown or Queen Anne Branch and fax or mail us your comments: Seattle Municipal Tower, 700 5th Avenue, PO Box 34996, Seattle, WA 98124-4996 Fax: (206) 615-0899

All comments must be received or postmarked by February 13, 2009.

EA Hearing and Open House

January 13, 2009 4 – 7 p.m.

South Lake Union Armory
860 Terry Ave. N., Seattle

Please join us to review and comment on the Mercer Corridor Project Environmental Assessment. You can provide written or oral comments.

The Armory is served by Metro bus routes 17 and 70 and by the South Lake Union Streetcar. The Armory is ADA accessible.

Si necesita informacion acerca del proyecto de mejoras del Corredor de la calle Mercer en espanol, marque el (206) 684-7623 y oprima el cero para dejar un mensaje.

Persons with disabilities may request this information be prepared and supplied in alternative formats by calling Angela Brady, the project manager, at (206) 684-3115. Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may call the City's TTY Line, (206) 615-0467.

Mercer Corridor Project Timeline

