

mercercorridorproject

Frequently Asked Questions

Date developed: 01/25/07

1) What is the status of the Environmental process?

WSDOT and FHWA are reviewing the draft document. Once SDOT receives comments, we will work with WSDOT to incorporate them into a final draft version. Public review should occur in spring, and a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) by the end of Summer 2007.

2) What is the project schedule? When will the project get built?

Pending full funding for the project, our anticipated schedule is as follows (for Mercer and Valley streets):

- a) EA – complete: 3rd Quarter 2007
- b) 60 percent Design: 3rd Quarter 2007
- c) 100 percent Design: 1st Quarter 2008
- d) ROW Acquisition Complete: 3rd Quarter 2008
- e) Start Construction: 1st Quarter 2009
- f) Construction Complete: 1st Quarter 2011

3) How much will the project cost and how will the project be funded?

Current cost estimates range from \$105 to \$130 million. This project received approximately \$30 million as part of the local funding package, Bridging the Gap. SDOT is actively pursuing additional funding through sources, such as the Regional Transportation Improvement District (RTID), which is expected to be voted on in the Fall of 2007, as well as grants, private funding, etc.

4) Does the City Council support the project?

In 2004, City Council released funds to move forward on the two-way Mercer and narrow Valley alternative, and just recently approved \$30M specifically for the project as part of the local funding package, Bridging the Gap.

5) How does the preferred alternative's design fit into the neighborhood plans?

The South Lake Union (SLU) Neighborhood Plan was updated last year and specifically supports a two-way Mercer Corridor.

6) How does the Mercer Corridor project integrate with the Lowered Aurora project and the ultimate removal of Broad St.?

The environmental review and design for Lowered Aurora is part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project. Staff continues to coordinate with the replacement project to ensure designs are compatible.

7) What is the "Interim Broad St. Connection"?

There may be a time lapse between when Lowered Aurora is constructed and when the Mercer Corridor project is completed. Due to the schedule difference, SDOT has developed an "Interim Broad St. Connection". This means that Mercer St. will temporarily reconnect to Broad St. at Ninth Ave. N. This connection will only exist until the Lowered Aurora project is constructed.

Lowered Aurora is not part of the "core" Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project and therefore is not funded. WSDOT and SDOT are committed to seeking additional funding to complete the project.

8) How much property will the City need to acquire in order to construct the project?

The City needs to purchase property along the north side of Mercer St. between Fairview Ave. and Ninth Ave. N. in order to widen the street.

9) When will right-of-way acquisition begin?

SDOT is currently conducting up-front work like ordering title reports, developing property appraisals, and performing environmental site assessments. Fair and equitable compensation offers could potentially start as early as this year, pending the outcome of the environmental process.

10) How will stormwater runoff be managed?

SDOT is working in conjunction with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) to incorporate detention and treatment of stormwater runoff. Sustainable options are also being considered, such as natural drainage features.

11) How is public and stakeholder input used to make decisions?

SDOT values public and stakeholder input to our projects. Public and agency feedback is compiled and carefully considered. Whenever possible, it is incorporated into the project. For example, we have revised the design at the intersection of Mercer and Fairview to make it more convenient for people traveling from Queen Anne to Capitol Hill.

12) Has the City developed a construction plan?

A detailed construction plan will be developed as we move forward with the design phase of the project, however, in general, construction staging is anticipated to be as follows:

- a) Construct the widened portion of Mercer to the north first, leaving eastbound Mercer open to traffic and maintain westbound traffic on Valley;
- b) Open the north half of newly constructed Mercer to eastbound traffic and close and construct south half; maintain westbound traffic on Valley;
- c) Open the new two-way Mercer and close Valley for reconstruction.

13) What is the Mercer Stakeholder Committee?

The Mercer Stakeholder Committee is a community-driven organization that reached consensus on a set of recommendations for the Mercer Street corridor (from Fairview Avenue North to Elliott Avenue West). The Committee includes organizations from South Lake Union and Queen Anne, the Seattle Center and Gates Foundation, and pedestrian, bicycle and freight interests.

14) What are the Mercer Stakeholder Committee's Recommendations?

The committee recommends a two-way Mercer Street from I-5 to Elliott Avenue, along with new and improved connections across Aurora Avenue for cars, trucks, bikes and pedestrians. Their recommendations incorporate the City's Mercer Corridor Project from Fairview to Dexter and Lowered Aurora (part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project), as well as recommends converting Mercer and Roy streets to two-way operation between Fifth and First avenues

15) How is SDOT incorporating the recommendations of the Mercer Stakeholder Committee?

Recommendations of the Committee are being incorporated in the current two-way Mercer project.

One recommendation is to use the parking lane on the south side of Mercer Street as a fourth eastbound lane until Lowered Aurora is constructed. If SDOT decides to construct Mercer with the fourth lane instead of parking, design concepts that conflict would be phased in when the lane converted to parking.