

University Area Transportation Action Strategy
Appendices

J. Public Involvement Memorandum

University Area Transportation Action Strategy

Public Outreach Memorandum

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PUBLIC OUTREACH

Introduction

The University Area Transportation Action Strategy (Action Strategy) is an update of the 2002 University Area Transportation Study (UATS). The earlier UATS study was supported by a vigorous public outreach program.

The goals of the public involvement activities for the 2007 Action Strategy were to:

- Inform stakeholders about the update.
- Obtain stakeholder input regarding key issues and conditions that they believe have changed since the 2002 plan.
- Build consensus for strategy recommendations
- Identify key issues to consider/resolve before implementation of Action Strategy projects

These goals were accomplished through a comprehensive program of public outreach that included activities such as meetings with organized community groups, a half-day open house, informational materials including hand outs and displays, media contacts, and a project website where interested citizens could log comments and communicate with the project team.

Updating the 2002 Study

The primary purposes of the Action Strategy are to update the UATS work with a horizon year of 2030 (versus 2010), to respond to the new locations for the light rail stations and the continued planning on the SR 520 Replacement Project, and to establish a set of prioritized projects to support a voluntary transportation mitigation payment program.

Public Involvement in the 2002 Study

UATS was supported by five primary public involvement methods. These were:

- Monthly two-hour meetings with the **Project Advisory Committee**, comprised of representatives from the University of Washington, Community Transit, King County Metro, Seattle's Department of Transportation and Strategic Planning Office.
- Monthly working sessions with the **Pedestrian-Bicycle Working Group**, a citizen's committee with a strong interest in walking and biking.
- Monthly meetings with the **UATS Advisory Group**, which was initially the University Community Urban Center (UCUC) Sounding Board. Midway through the study the Sounding Board discontinued its regular meetings but the group continued to meet as the UATS Advisory Group.

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- Two **Public Open Houses**, attended by more than 50 people each) preceded by two Project Newsletters, used to inform citizens about the project and announce the open houses.
- A **Web Site** where all the key products of the study were posted.

These methods formed a starting framework for the Action Strategy outreach activities.

Involving Stakeholders in the Action Strategy

Given that the Action Strategy is an update, rather than a new study, public outreach was primarily concentrated on existing, organized stakeholders.. The project team focused on existing groups, councils, associations and partner agencies and institutions. Interested individuals were also able to communicate with the project team through the project web site, and attendance at project meetings with target groups. Additional, limited outreach also focused on new University of Washington students, as well as several broader public meetings.

Population Characteristics

A review of the census data for the University District Urban Center showed that the population was overwhelmingly (72%) between 18 and 29 years of age, with only 13% over 35. While 40% of households were below the poverty level, this almost certainly represented primarily students, although poverty is reported by household composition, not age. Of the 18,800 people living in the urban center, only 3.5% were considered linguistically isolated, that is they self-reported that they speak English less than “well”; it’s likely that a significant proportion of these individuals were students as well, although language is also reported only in three groups, under 18, between 18 and 64, and over 65. Targeting outreach to the student population was one way to ensure that area residents who were not likely to be otherwise represented by organized neighborhood groups, would also be reached.

Neighborhood Councils, Associations, Chambers of Commerce

The Department of Neighborhoods University District Neighborhood Coordinator supplied a list of all of the community groups in the study area, and helped the project team in making contact with individual groups and working with them. Project staff attended regularly scheduled meetings of several groups, made presentations about the study, distributed materials and invited ideas, questions and comments.

Other External Stakeholders

In addition to community organizations, the project team involved the University of Washington through its Office of Regional Affairs as well as the City/University Community Advisory Committee (CUCAC); King County Metro and Sound Transit through meetings with staff, and a broad range of city staff from different divisions within SDOT as well as the Department of Planning and Development. Outreach to the broader University of Washington community,

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including students and staff, was accomplished through media coverage and emails that included contact information for the project team.

Internal Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders included the City of Seattle Transportation and Planning departments. Project staff met with internal stakeholders in large and small group meetings and individually to work through project issues and recommendations as the work progressed.

Internal Technical Team

The role of the Technical Team was to:

- Provide input on critical issues at the beginning of the project, including goals and assumptions
- Assist in developing performance measures and evaluation criteria
- Assist in developing and reviewing existing and future conditions
- Assist in developing recommended improvements and establishing priorities
- Provide formal technical review of key work products

The Technical Team met with staff individually and in small groups on an as-needed basis as the work progresses, and as a larger group at key milestones.

Members were:

- Allen , Dave: SDOT Major Projects, liaison to WSDOT
- Bender, Jeff: SDOT Transit Planning, Liaison to King County Metro
- Blanco, Reiner: SDOT Traffic Management
- Chow, Calvin: SDOT Major Projects, liaison to Sound Transit
- Emery, Adiam and Garcia, Enrique: SDOT Traffic Signals
- Gotterer, Liz: King County Metro
- Hennelly, Barry: SDOT Transit Project Development
- Hoyt, Megan: SDOT Pedestrian/Bike program
- Korpi, Luke: SDOT Neighborhood Traffic Engineering
- Krawczyk ,Tracy: SDOT Planning Program Manager
- Shaw, John: DPD Development Review
- Vijarro, David: SDOT Roadway Design

Core Policy Team

The role of the core policy team was to provide high level policy, outreach, budget direction and oversight. The team met at major milestones.

Members were:

- Krawczyk ,Tracy: Planning Program Manager
- Northey, Lise: Resource Development Manager
- Sanchez, Susan: Policy and Planning Division Manager
- Wentz, Wayne: City Traffic Engineer

Figure 1.1 Handout for Initial Meetings, page 1 of 3



UNIVERSITY AREA **Q AND A**

TRANSPORTATION ACTION STRATEGY

WHAT IS THE TRANSPORTATION ACTION STRATEGY?

SDOT is undertaking a 12-month transportation planning study to update the 2002 University Area Transportation Study (UATS), which will be called *University Area Transportation Action Strategy*.

The *Transportation Action Strategy* will adopt the *Goals* established in the UATS:

- To build on existing planning to provide a comprehensive, multimodal transportation plan for the area, and
- To serve as a blueprint for financing and prioritizing capital improvements in the University Area for the next 25 years.



WHAT ARE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE STUDY AREA?

The study area covers neighborhoods commonly referred to as University District, Montlake, University Heights and Ravenna.

WHY AN UPDATE?

The UATS was a pilot study and the recommended projects were evaluated against 2010 and 2020 growth forecasts. Reasons for an update include:

- The need to extend the planning timeframe to the year 2030 in order to create a development mitigation payment program, which will assist in implementation of identified capital projects.
- Sound Transit preferred alignment for North Link light rail has two stations in the University District, which are different from those assumed in the original UATS.
- The Washington State Department of Transportation has made additional progress toward selecting a preferred alternative for the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.

Figure 1.2 Handout for Initial Meetings, page 2 of 3

WHAT MAJOR ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE INITIAL STUDY?

The attached map summarizes the transportation problems identified in the University Area.

Following are some of the public comments received during the UATS study:

- Add a continuous turn lane to 65th; drivers currently try to operate like there are two lanes in each direction.
- Improving the north end of the U Bridge is great. Keep thinking, you are not done yet.
- Fixing the bus flow on NE 45th Street is an excellent idea.
- Increasing mobility, convenience and safety for pedestrians and bikes is highest priority.
- A bike lane and traffic calming on 20th Ave between NE 50th and Ravenna Boulevard is vital. The current traffic situation is hazardous and nearly untenable for bikes.
- Connecting Burke Gilman to the U Village via NE 47th Street is good but makes much more sense if a stairwell is built along NE 47th Street right-of-way up to 21st Ave NE.
- Pedestrian and bike access over I-5 is needed; widen NE 50th Street.

The UATS report is on-line at: www.seattle.gov/transportation/ppmp_uats_home.htm

A link to the new website for the UATAS, currently under construction, will be available shortly from the address above.

WHAT NEXT?

The work starting now (January 2007), will update the 'Existing Conditions' report to reflect new data and already completed projects, prepare new travel forecasts for the year 2030, review the transportation problems and proposed solutions previously identified. Upon review and comment by the community, SDOT will prepare an updated project list, establish priorities and explore funding options.

HOW CAN I BE INVOLVED?

Please contact Casey Hildreth at casey.hildreth@seattle.gov (or telephone 206/233-3780) to be added to the project mailing list or to request a presentation to your group.

STUDY TEAM

Tracy Krawczyk, SDOT Planning Manager, 733-9329
Tony Mazzella, SDOT UATAS project manager, 684-0811, Tony.Mazella@seattle.gov
Casey Hildreth, SDOT UATAS assistant project manager, 233-3780
Tom Noguchi, Mirai Transportation Planning & Engineering, 425-820-0100
Mary Jo Porter, The Underhill Company, 206-726-7906

Figure 2 Article in UW Daily

Year-long U-District study seeks community input

May 1, 2007

By Arla Shephard

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is asking students to start thinking about the future. That is, the future of transportation in and around the University District. To leave comments for SDOT, visit its Web site, or e-mail Casey Hildreth at casey.hildreth@seattle.gov

SDOT is seeking to further improve transit in the area with the University Area Transportation Action Strategy (UATAS), a 12-month planning study of the U-District, and is asking the University community, particularly students, for their input. “Traditionally, it’s hard to get students involved in the more mundane things that happen in the city,” said Casey Hildreth, associate planner for the Policy and Planning division of SDOT. “They’re [at school] for four years and move on, but the student population itself will always be there, and they represent a huge portion of who uses the transportation in the area.” Students, more so than any other community in Seattle, ride bikes, walk to school or take the bus, Hildreth said. “In this unique way, their perspective is more important than anyone else in the city,” he said.

SDOT is beginning the process of updating their 2002 University Area Transportation Study (UATS), to reflect the changes made in the last five years and to better sketch out a “comprehensive, multimodal transportation plan for the area,” that will hopefully serve as an outline for any changes that will be made over the next 25 years, according to the UATAS Web site.

Specifically, the new plan will be updated to account for the alignment of the proposed University Link, a mass transit light rail system that will have stations in Capitol Hill and at the UW near Husky Stadium. The link is scheduled to be finished in the year 2030. The original 2002 plan outlined the need for improvements to bicycle and pedestrian paths as well as roadways, including improving bus flow in certain areas and adding more High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. This movement toward greener modes of transportation will continue in the new study, as Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels has called for greater city-wide awareness of global climate issues.

“The reality of global climate change is urgent,” Nickels said in a press release last year. “The stakes are high — locally and globally — and we need to act. As a city government, we’ve already cut our greenhouse gas emissions by more than 60 percent, compared to 1990 levels. But it’s not enough — we need to work together as a community to set responsible limits on global warming pollution.”

Senior Hannah Dewey, a member of the UW’s Earth Club and a bicycle commuter from Lake City, agreed that changes need to be made to make way for a cleaner Seattle, including the addition of more bike lanes and improvements to Seattle’s mass transit system. “Cars are the second-leading producer of CO2 emissions and, as a daily commuter and someone who has drastically limited my car usage, I can say I feel unsafe daily biking to and from school due to the lack of bike lanes,” Dewey said in an e-mail. Dewey also cited personal experience with the dangers of cycling. “I personally have been hit twice by a car and many of my friends have been hospitalized from being hit by cars while biking,” she said. “It is crucial to Seattle’s development towards being a green city to add more bike lanes and transform our citizens into fit people who we can use as a leading force [for] larger issues, like renewable energy and sustainable food systems.” Comments like Dewey’s are what Hildreth and SDOT want to hear.

“Even if it’s something simple like ‘I have a hard time getting to the IMA’ or ‘I commute from Ballard on a bus and it’s impossible to get to school,’ we want to hear it,” Hildreth said. “We’re talking about a larger legacy to leave behind for future generations. If we don’t hear from students who walk to school or those who bike, we’ll only get more of the status quo.”

Figure 3 Article in North Seattle Herald

www.northseattleherald-outlook.com

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2007

North Seattle HERALD-OUTLOOK

SERVING THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF NORTH SEATTLE SINCE 1922

Library speaks volumes about racism

AS#1/Pinehurst school promotes equality in classroom

BY CHANEL MERRITT

Equality is an important aspiration for any school. Families, staff and community members at Alternative School No. 1-Pinehurst (AS#1) took the goal a step further and opened an anti-racist library last spring in hopes of spreading awareness of racism and resistance to racism.

"The necessity for an anti-racist resource collection at AS#1 grows from our recognition of the reality that racism permeates every situation, including our school, coupled with AS#1's stated commitment to equality as an overarching goal," said Leslie Morishita in an e-mail.

Morishita has been involved with the planning of the library since its inception two and a half years ago and is a parent of two fourth-graders at the school.

Not a typical collection

The anti-racist library, which is part of the regular K-8 school library, contains books, DVDs, CDs, periodicals and curriculum guides aimed at the teaching and learning of racist issues and resistance, according to

Projects to reduce traffic along N.E. 45th

Some community members think improvements will make traffic worse

BY JENA VUULSTEKE

Congestion along the Northeast 45th Street corridor through the University District was the focus of a public hearing Nov. 19.

Two Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) planners led the meeting, which was attended by about 15 people, including members of the Greater University Chamber of Commerce and The Ave Group, in addition to local residents.

Officials were seeking input on two proposed transportation projects, and they got an earful.

A BAT lane

The first proposal — designed to reduce congestion along Northeast 45th between the Ave (University Way Northeast) and Interstate 5 — would entail removing the center left-turn lane to make room for a Business Access and Transit-only (BAT) lane to run westbound from the Ave to Seventh Avenue Northeast.

Officials contend congestion in this area will only worsen with time.

"One of the things that we see with the future conditions is that by adding a BAT lane we're getting higher travel speeds," said transportation consultant John Davies. "We [would be] moving cars through the area at a reasonable speed, as opposed to a plodded, congested speed."

Some community members, however, argue that adding a BAT lane would also take away the ability to make left-hand turns and result in increased traffic on cross streets like Northeast 43rd and 47th streets.

"I think you're going to create lots of spillover traffic," said Matt Fox, president of the University District Community Council. "Two rights don't make a wrong, but I guess a right, a left and a left make a left? What happens to every other corridor?"

While SDOT officials continued to state that spillover traffic was necessary to reduce congestion, the community members who spoke remain skeptical.

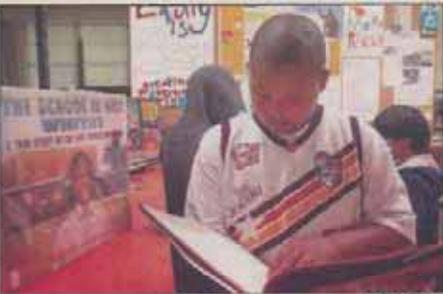
Lane removal

The second project discussed at the hearing called for the removal of the westbound (traveling east) lane for slower traffic along the Northeast 45th viaduct.

The plan was intended to increase safety and room for the pedestrian; however, a decrease in lanes would undoubtedly cause an increase in traffic.

SDOT officials presented an alternative design that would retain both lanes and focus on building the walking trail underneath.

"The idea is that if you are [walking east-bound] on the construction, you would leave the sidewalk and go underneath the bridge



photography: Engman

AS#1 eighth-grader Teair Brown browses through a book in the school's anti-racist library.

Broadview branch to start next chapter

The third incarnation of the Broadview Library (at left), 1275 Greenwood Ave. N., is set to open at noon on Dec. 8 after a nearly year-and-a-half-long renovation that doubles the size of the previous branch.

The library now boasts a collection of 66,000 books and materials, two entrances, two public meeting rooms, a pneumatic checkout counter and storage-retrieval platters that funnel rainwater from the metal roof, through pillars and into planters on the ground.

Also, about 85 percent of the old building's "vibe" has been reused, mostly in the older portion of the library.

photography: Engman



The Broadview Library's three librarians (children's, teen and adult) are returning to the branch, led by new branch manager Lisa Sokarskaya (far right). Artist Martin Oliver's three original log-cabin wood carvings and one silk-screen print also will be brought back. New art pieces, by Theresa Betty, include "Hanging Veil" (near right).

The Seattle Public Library's Lala the book fairy will visit Broadview-Thompson Elementary School on Tuesday, Dec. 4, and Northgate Elementary School on Thursday, Dec. 6, to promote the branch's reopening.

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Figure 4 Materials for University District Street Fair

City of Seattle

SDOT
Seattle Department of Transportation

University Street Fair 2007

Study Area Comments

Grab your dots and place them within the issue boxes that you consider to be the highest priority for the study area.

Don't see your highest priority below? Grab a stickie, describe your issue, and place it on the study area map in the appropriate location.

**University Area
Transportation Action Strategy**

NE 65th St

Study Area

35th Ave NE

Ship Canal

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Actual Imagery Data courtesy 1999
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North end of University Bridge

Better Connection over I-5 for pedestrians and bikers

Traffic calming on Roosevelt/11th/12th - perhaps making them two-way streets

Extending "The Ave" treatment north of 50th St.

Faster, More Reliable Buses through University District to Wallingford, Fremont and Ballard

New Bike Lanes and Wider Sidewalks in Roosevelt Business District

Better Transit and Pedestrian Facilities to University Village, East of Campus Area

Later and Earlier Crossings of Arterial Streets along Burke-Gilman Trail

Brooklyn Ave as Pedestrian and Bicycle oriented "Green" Street

Maritime Bridge area

"No need to address climate change through sustainable transportation"

"Cars are never going away and we have to accommodate them"

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First Round of Questions

The first round of outreach focused on a set of questions designed to elicit comments regarding transportation issues, past successes, current problems, implementation issues, and communications.

Study Background – Previous Work

- Are you familiar with the University Area Transportation Study that was completed in 2002? And if so, do you have any general comments you'd like to make about it, what worked, what didn't work in either the process or the results?

Transportation Issues in the University Area

- Off the top of your head, what are the most critical transportation problems in the University area?
- Thinking about new projects in the last several years, where do you think they're working well and where are they not? Then prompt with a list:
 - Improvements on the Ave; Repaving NE 50th; Repaving NE 65th; 4-way stop at 15th and Ravenna.
- Are there other projects like this you'd like to see
- Thinking about different modes, what's working well and where are there problems?
 - Pedestrians; Cyclists; Transit; Freight; Cars; Parking
- Thinking about different places, what's working well and where are there problems? Use a map and go through different areas.
- Are there transportation hot spots or projects you think the update should stay away from? Examples: Changes to the Montlake Bridge

Implementing projects

- In planning, designing and implementing projects, the City will be working with WSDOT, Metro and Sound Transit. Do you have any comments on the plans and projects of these other agencies and where or on what, specifically, the City needs to work with them?
- Some projects will be implemented in cooperation with developers, specifically by requiring new developments to incorporate transportation improvements. Do you have any comments or ideas about how best to work with developers and what their role should be?

Consulting the community

- Who or which groups do you think need to be consulted during the plan update? What do you think are the best ways to involve them?
 - Meeting of community groups; One-on-one conversations; Website, mailings, other
- What's the best way to stay in touch with you and what kind of information would you like to see, would you like to meet again, do you need any briefings on specific issues... and so on.

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First Round Results

Community members, business owners, partner agency staff, and internal staff responded to the initial outreach with a broad range of perspectives, ideas, comments and recommendations.

Community Groups were focused strongly on bikes and pedestrians. They want safe routes for walking and biking within the study area and connections over the University Bridge to downtown. They want bike lanes, bike streets, and bike priority. They want wider sidewalks, more trees, and safe crossings. They love the idea of a bike/ped bridge over I-5. They commented that the study area is affected by through traffic from adjacent areas, including from Sand Point Way with Children's Hospital and Magnuson Park, and from Wallingford. They're interested in the Link stations and want good access to and from the stations, without more traffic. Particular hot spots mentioned repeatedly were the north end of the University Bridge and 45th from I-5 all the way to Sand Point Way.

University of Washington: The University's biggest concern was how circulation will work around the Montlake/Pacific/Pacific Place intersection once the Link station is built, with the added complications of a possible SR-520 interchange. UW was looking for major improvements or changes that move cars and buses, provide room for bus layover, provide a completely protected crossing for pedestrians between the station and the campus, all without interfering with cyclists on the Burke Gilman trail. UW suggested changes in Pacific Place and would like to see the street lowered to create a level plaza for pedestrians. UW staff feel that the UW's transportation management program is working extremely well, with drive alone trips well below the caps. Parking lot utilization is also down, but the University needs more parking in some areas while there is a surplus east of Montlake.

Sound Transit: Like the UW, Sound Transit was focused on ways to make the Montlake/Pacific/Pacific Place intersection work, and how to get people safely between the station, the main campus and the medical center. They also discussed options for Pacific Place but noted the complications of the grade changes and the clearance height needed for trolley bus wires. They would like to see the parking lot entrance/exit that functions as one leg of the intersection at Pacific Place and Montlake closed.

King County Metro: Metro's future service plans are not expected to change a great deal until the Brooklyn light rail station opens. Then, Metro may truncate routes going downtown, add new service focused on the stations, and close some bus stops while possibly preserving the curb space for layovers. Metro will not operate any significant service along Montlake as its configured now 'because the buses just sit there.'

SDOT staff highlighted the major problem areas which include:

- NE 45th between I-5 and Sand Point Way, including congestion and ROW limitations affecting all modes.
- NE 45th, 7th and I-5 and the impossible conditions for peds, bikes and cars.
- NE 50th, traffic congestion.

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- Burke Gilman trail: capacity, bike/ped conflicts, speeding bikes, and dangerous street crossings.
- North end of University Bridge, conflicts for all modes.
- Roosevelt/12th: one-way couplet vs. 2-way, vis-a-vis bikes, peds, business district and traffic capacity.
- Ballard to U. District BUDTI project (bus improvements).
- Transit speed and reliability throughout the study area and bus layover space.
- Parking, code changes, and perception vs. reality regarding parking availability.
- Pacific, Montlake and Pacific Place: issues for all modes, 21,000 station users, possible SR-520 interchange.
- 55th and Ravenna crossing conflicts.
- University Village area, future expansion impacts, and particularly problems on Blakely and on 25th.
- “Lower” 40th and “upper” 40th.
- Integrating bike, ped and transit improvements from modal plans into subarea plans.

Improvement Concepts and Draft Prioritized Concept List

As improvement concepts for the Action Strategy were developed and prioritized, the study team continued to work with both internal and external stakeholders issue-by-issue and project-by-project where appropriate, and with broader outreach as appropriate. Groups that had been contacted earlier were contacted again with emails and phone calls; project staff met with those stakeholders who desired it.

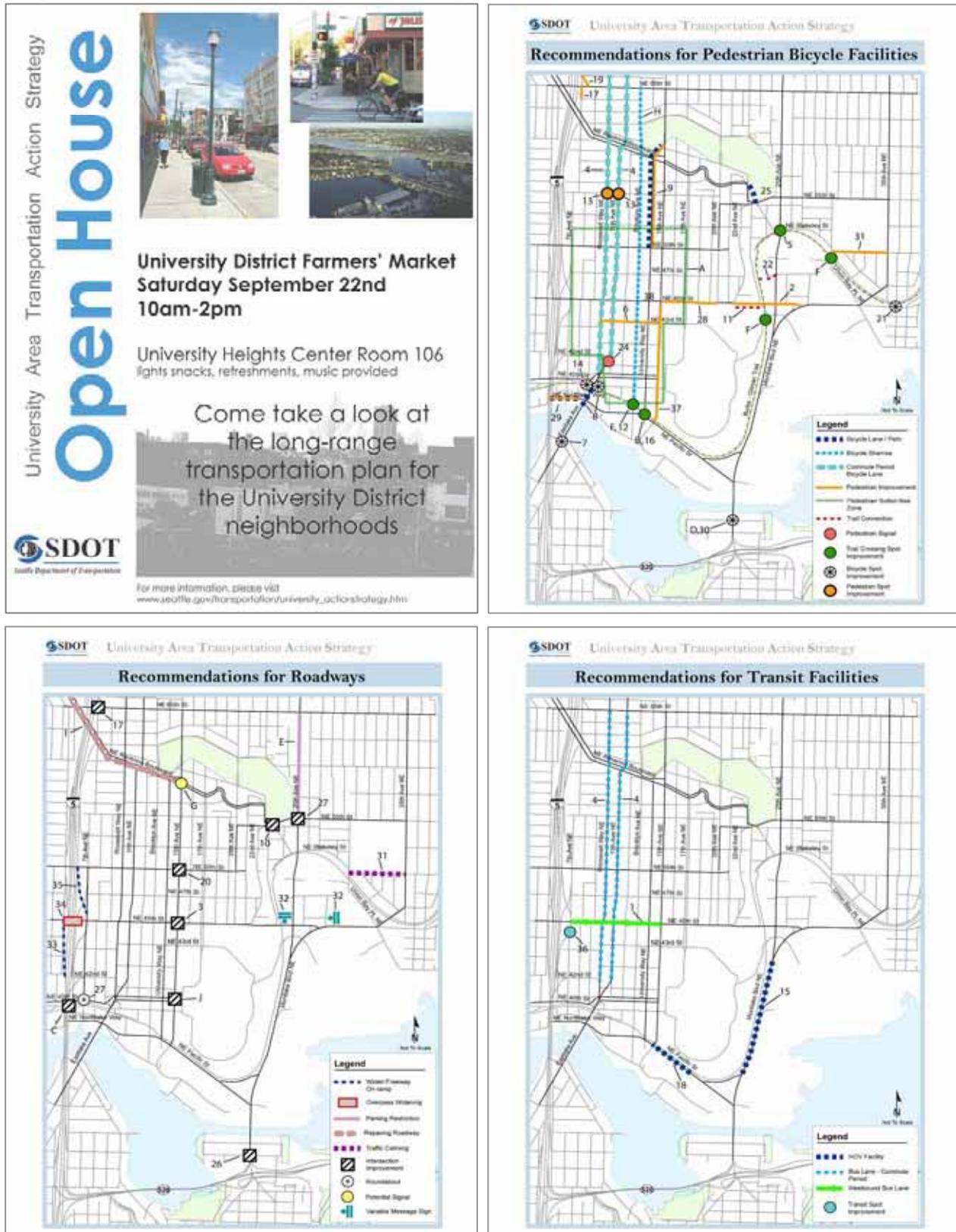
Community Open House

In addition to the ongoing outreach to identified stakeholders, a public open house was held to ensure that individuals from the broadest community, whether they were affiliated with a group or simply interested citizens, had a chance to review the project work and comment on draft improvements concepts. The Open House was held on Saturday, September 22, 2007, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the University Heights Center, adjacent to the University District Farmer’s Market which operated on that day.

Notification was accomplished via the website, emails with flyers to identified stakeholders, and phone calls. On the day of the open house, flyers were handed out at the entrances to the farmer’s market and people were encouraged to drop into the open house.

Materials: Materials at the open house included display boards, a handout with an overview of the Action Strategy, draft project sheets available for reference use, and response forms/surveys attendees were asked to complete and leave behind.

Figure 5. Boards from the September 2007 Open House



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Project Website

The project website was developed early in the project, and maintained throughout. The website provided an introduction to the study and posted study documents including the project sheets for the proposed actions. Visitors to the website were invited to comment, and many did so. Those who submitted an email address were added to the electronic mailing list.

Website Comments

Walking and Bicycling: More walking/bike paths completely separated from traffic. Riders don't feel safe in traffic and would like traffic-separated bike routes. Convert some north/south and east/west streets to ped/bike only to create a network, with parking lots at the entrances for residents of those streets, and more plantings to reduce run-off. Brooklyn, 15th, Montlake, Boyer need marked bike lanes. Sidewalks in the business district are too narrow for the volumes of pedestrians. There needs to be mid-block pathways and better night lighting. Green lights need to be longer for pedestrians north/south across Pacific. Remove walk buttons on signals and give pedestrians the walk signal with every light. The Burke-Gilman Trail should be widened and vehicles better controlled where the trail crosses streets.

Transit: UW's athletic center needs better transit connections. Better bus connections to the new Husky Stadium light rail station. Better bus connections to U. Village. Close University Way to cars and keep it for buses and bikes/ped only.

Vehicles: Many streets are in poor repair, as they are elsewhere in the city. Charge tolls to drive.