

# Broad Street Vacation

**Edward B. Murray**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Shannon Loew**, Chair

**Ellen Sollod**, Vice Chair

**Brodie Bain**

**Lee Copeland**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Theo Lim**

**Martin Regge**

**John Savo**

**Ross Tilghman**

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## Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair  
Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair  
Brodie Bain  
Lee Copeland  
Rachel Gleeson  
Theo Lim  
Martin Regge (excused at 3:00 pm)  
John Savo (arrive at 10:30 am)  
Ross Tilghman

## Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging

## Project Description

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) proposes vacating approximately 66,811 square feet of Broad Street in the block bounded by Mercer St to the south, Roy St to the north, Dexter Ave N to the west, and 9th Ave N to the east. The irregularly shaped portion of Broad St would be vacated as part of a larger strategy to reconfigure and reconnect the street grid within the framework of the realignment of State Route 99 and related Mercer Street improvements.

SDOT is requesting the vacation of this segment of Broad St as it is no longer needed for any transportation purposes. The resulting vacation and its consolidation with four abutting parcels will allow the City to surplus the expanded property. Proceeds from the sale of this property would fund the partial repayment of a loan for the \$95 million Mercer West project.

SDOT has not proposed specific development for the proposed site. Working with the City's Department of Finance and Administrative Services (FAS), SDOT has developed a series of development alternatives that represent development potential under both the no vacation and vacation alternatives. The scenarios represent development potential allowed for the site under its Seattle Mixed (SM 160/85-240) zoning. The alternatives also represent development constraints for the site that include its location within the Lake Union Seaport Flight Corridor, and its proximity to the large King County sewer facility interceptor that lies approximately 50 feet below grade.

## Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the urban design merit proposal. On July 16, 2015, the SDC postponed a vote on the project and provided the applicant with a request for further information. Following the presentation, public comment and SDC review, the SDC voted, 9-0, to approve the urban design merit for the Broad St. Alley Vacation.

## Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

**November 19, 2015**

**3:30 - 5:00 pm**

### Type

Street Vacation

### Phase

Urban Design Merit

### Previous Reviews

[07/16/15](#)

### Presenters

**Eric Tweit**

SDOT

**Dennis Haskell**

SrG Partnership

**Darby Watson**

SDOT

**Blair Howe**

Kidder Matthews

**Marni Heffron**

Heffron Transportation

### Attendees

**Beverly Barnett**

SDOT

**Lloyd Douglas**

Community Member

**Moira Gray**

SDOT

**Hannah Keyes**

SDOT

**Jordan Kiel**

Community Member

**Steve Lee**

Mayor's Office

**John McMillan**

KPFF

**Dennis Meier**

DPD

**John Pehrson**

Community Member

**Sara Roberts**

KPFF

**Katherine Tassery**

CBO/FAS

**Lish Whitson**

Council Staff

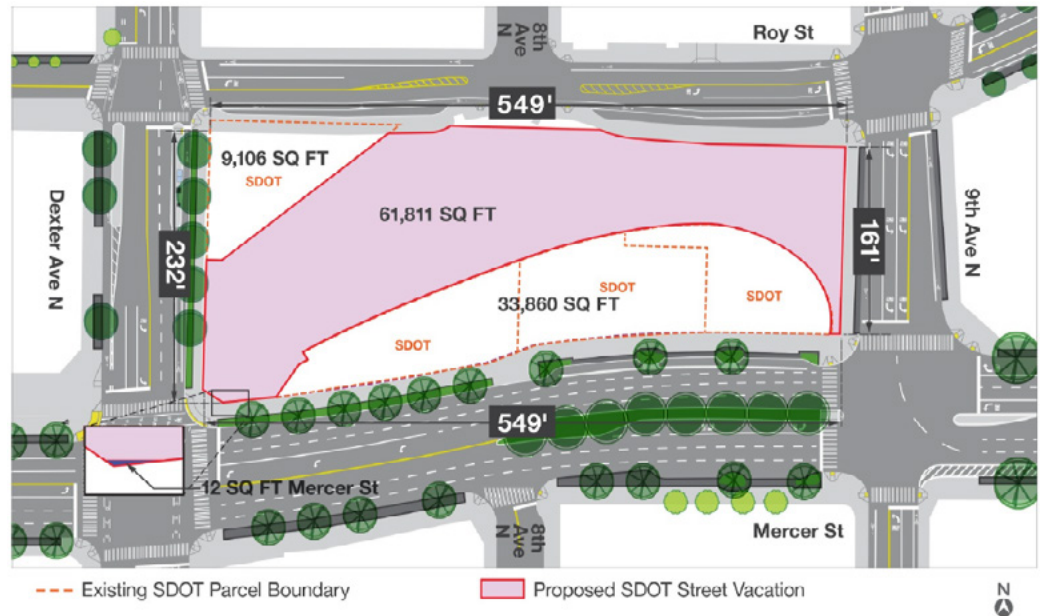


Figure 1: Proposed street vacation boundaries

### Summary of Presentation

The project was presented by Dennis Haskell of SRG Partnership, Marni Heffron of Heffron Transportation, Eric Tweit, and Darby Watson, both of whom work for SDOT. Eric Tweit and Darby Watson provided a brief overview of the project site and existing transportation network. The Broad St. right of way (ROW) vacation would provide an additional 61,811 square feet of developable land on the block bound by Roy Street, Mercer Street, Dexter Ave. N, and 9th Ave. N (see figure 1). The existing transportation network includes bicycle facilities on Roy Street and 9th Avenue, while bicycle facilities and a bus station are located on Dexter Avenue.

The vacation petition is unique in that it is not including concurrent with new development. Rather, a series of development alternatives were presented to show how the site would potentially be developed under both vacation and no vacation scenarios. Each scenario attempts to maximize the development allowed on the project site, while adhering to building setbacks, open space requirements, and height restrictions within the seaport flight corridor, which passes through the northwest corner of the project site. The project team presented the following Scenarios:

**No vacation:** The no vacation scenario includes developing 370,000 sf on two parcels. The first parcel, located northwest of the ROW, includes a non-residential tower measuring 85 feet in height. The second parcel, located southeast of the ROW, includes a 235-foot tall residential tower and 145-foot tall non-residential tower, both of which are located on a podium. 15 percent of the project site is dedicated for open space, which is located along the southwest corner of parcel 2. Under the no vacation scheme, potential site access for parcel 1 would be located along Roy St. while access for parcel 2 would be located at the midblock along Mercer St. Due to existing traffic conditions, neither location provides ideal access to the project site. See figure 2 for more detail.

**Vacation - Single block scenario:** This vacation scenario includes developing 610,000 sf on a single parcel. The proposal would include two towers, a 235-foot tall residential tower on the eastern edge of the parcel and a 160-foot tall non-residential tower on the western edge. 15 percent of the project site is dedication for open space, which is located between the proposed buildings. The proposed open space will provide a visual connection along 8th Avenue. See figure 3 for more detail.

**Vacation – Two-block maximum density:** This scenario includes developing 880,000 sf on two blocks, which are separated by a proposed ROW along 8th Avenue. Each block will include two towers located on a shared podium. The block located to the west of the 8th Avenue ROW will include two towers measuring 155 feet in height, while the block east of the ROW will include two towers measuring 235 feet in height. 15 percent of the developable land on each block will be dedicated to open space. The ROW would measure 40 feet wide and would serve as a pedestrian area while providing a visual connection along 8th Avenue. See figure 4 for more detail.

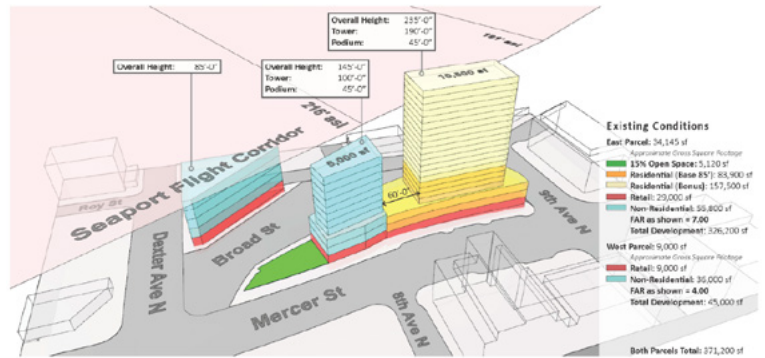


Figure 2: No vacation scenario

**Vacation - Two -block market response 1:** This scenario includes developing 770,000 sf on two blocks. A proposed ROW along 8th Ave. separates the two blocks. Unlike the two-block maximum density proposal, this scenario is a response to current market trends. The block east of the ROW includes a residential tower with ground floor retail as well as a second tower that will include a mix of residential and hotel space, both of which measure 235-feet in height. The block west of the ROW will include a 105-foot tall non-residential building. 15 percent of the developable land on each block will be dedicated to open space. The ROW would measure 40 feet wide and would serve as a pedestrian area while providing a visual connection along 8th Avenue. See figure 5 for more detail.

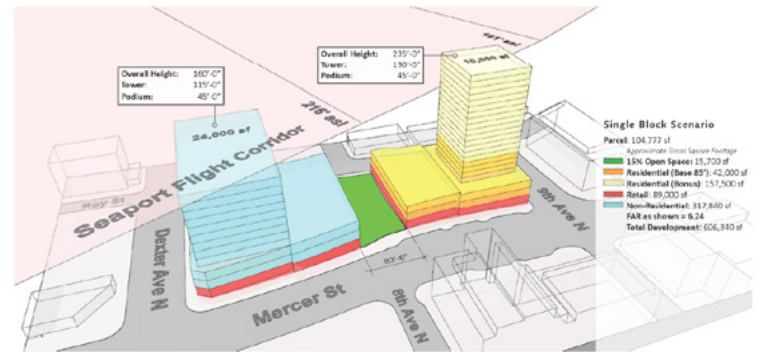


Figure 3: Vacation - single block scenario

**Vacation – Two-block market response 2:** This scenario includes developing 800,000 sf on two blocks. A proposed ROW along 8th Ave. will separate the two blocks. Similar to the response 1 proposal, this scenario will also include a residential tower with ground floor retail as well as a second tower that will include a mix of residential and hotel space, both measuring 235-feet in height, on the block located east of the ROW. The block west of the ROW will include a non-residential tower measuring 160 feet in height. 15 percent of the developable land on each block will be dedicated to open space. The ROW would measure 40 feet wide and would serve as a pedestrian area while providing a visual connection along 8th Avenue. See figure 6 for more detail.

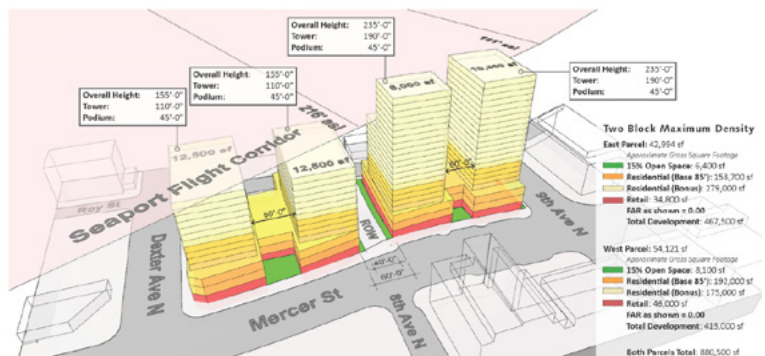


Figure 4: Vacation - two-block maximum density scenario

In all of the two-block scenarios, 8th Avenue N would be established through a surface dedication between Mercer and Roy Streets, with up to 6 feet below the surface reserved for right of way purposes (see figure 7). All vacation scenarios also include two options for site access. The first option assumes two curb cuts along Roy St, one between Dexter Avenue N and 8th Avenue and the other between 9th and 8th Avenue. The second option, which is not required, includes an entrance along the 8th Ave. ROW at Roy St and a secondary exit only along Mercer near the proposed 8th Avenue right of

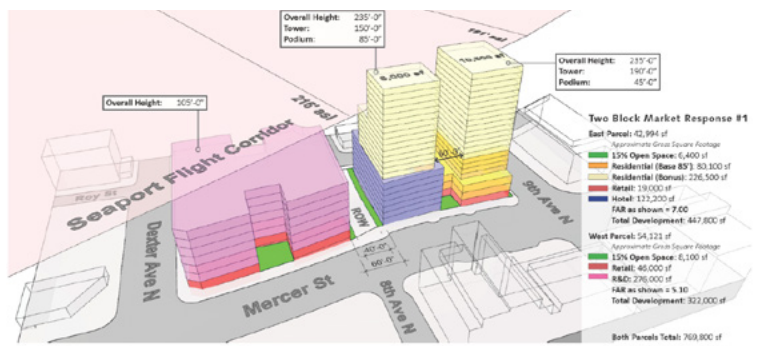


Figure 5: Vacation two-block market response 1 scenario

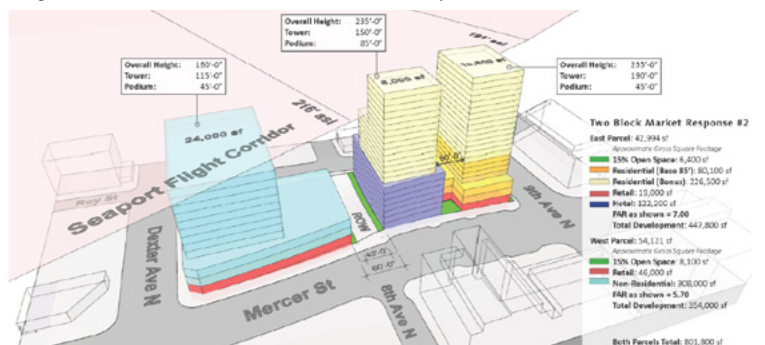


Figure 6: Vacation two-block market response 2 scenario

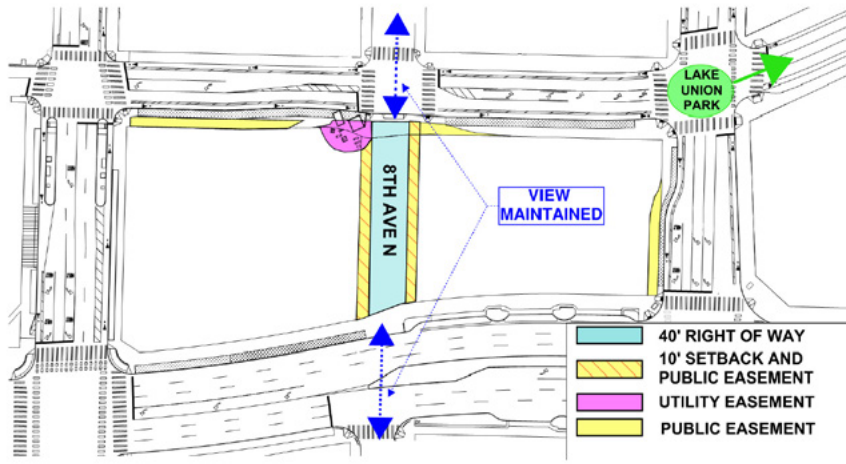


Figure 7: Proposed open space plan

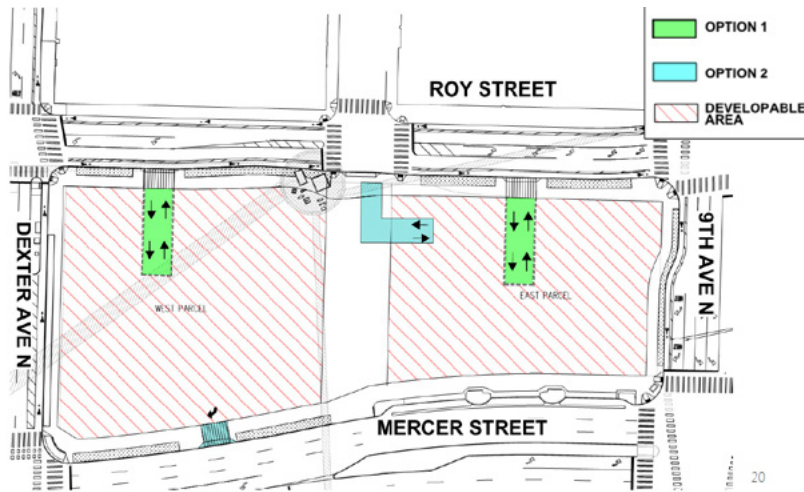


Figure 8: Proposed vehicular site access with vacation

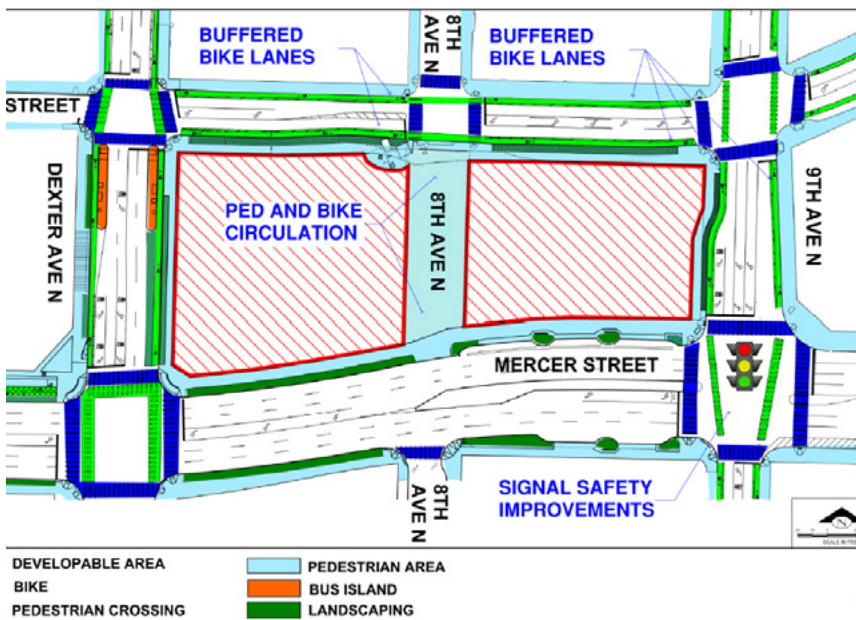


Figure 9: Proposed pedestrian and bicycle circulation with vacation

way. In all scenarios, a continuous garage floor plate would be provided. See figure 8 for more detail.

The proposed vacation would enhance the transportation network within the area by providing open bus islands and additional landscaping along Dexter Avenue. The vacation would also allow for additional bicycle enhancements along Dexter Ave, 9th Ave, and Roy Street as well as street enhancements along Roy Street and 9th Avenue. Parking would be eliminated along Roy Street to accommodate wider bicycle lanes. The vacation would support the city and South Lake Union (SLU) neighborhood goals of increasing connectivity within the downtown area.

Marni Heffron voiced her concern with placing a pedestrian controlled crossing signal at the intersection of 8th Avenue and Mercer St. In order to accommodate for pedestrian safety at the crosswalk, vehicles would need to stop 100 feet prior to the intersection, which could cause traffic to back up beyond the Dexter Ave. and Mercer St. intersection.

Because the vacation is unique in that a specific development is not being approved, the design team has proposed a set of public realm design guidelines to be used when the site is developed in the future; the City's design guidelines for private development would also apply. The proposed guidelines will address site lines, landscaping, street furniture, paving material, public art, and lighting along the 8th Ave. ROW as well as addressing infrastructure improvements along Roy Street, 9th Avenue, and Dexter Avenue (see figure 9).

**Agency Comments**

**Beverly Barnett**, of SDOT, stated that, even though this is an SDOT proposal, it is still her job to analyze the project as she would for other street vacation petitions. She claimed that, because this is not a standard proposal, it is important for everyone to understand the proposal well enough in order to properly present it in front of council. After today's presentation, Ms. Barnett believes there is a much clearer picture of what the vacation and no vacation schemes will look like. Ms. Barnett stated she understands much more about this unique proposal and recommends the SDC approve urban design merit.

**Lish Whitson**, with Council Central Staff, said he could answer questions anyone might have about the council's green sheet and funding sources for studying this site.

### Public Comments

**John Pehrson**, SLU community council, believes the project should not interfere further with Mercer St. by adding a mid-block crossing, which, he claims, would not be effective. Mr. Pierson stated that transportation near 9th Avenue and Mercer St. in South Lake Union is a big challenge. With the vacation approval, Mr. Pierson said there would be an opportunity to create more public ROW, which is rare in Seattle. He said the SLU community has voiced their priorities to SDOT regarding public benefit, which revolve around transportation issues. Mr. Pierson said there are plenty of transportation issues in the area surrounding Broad St. that could be considered public benefit.

### Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Circulation
- Utilities
- Light, air, and open space
- Design guidelines
- Green sheet

#### *Circulation*

The Commission appreciated the level of detail regarding building massing within each scenario, but questioned how the project design will invite pedestrians into the space. Commissioners recommended the guidelines include an additional ROW along 8th Avenue through the project site in order to create a greater sense of connectivity. The SDC encouraged the design team to incorporate a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Mercer Street and 8th Avenue and also recommended that option 2 for vehicular access be removed from the plan.

#### *Utilities*

There were no issues with Utilities.

#### *Open space*

The Commission agrees that open space guidelines should regulate the relationship designated open space has within the public realm. Detail should be given to the location of open space so that it does not feel like an afterthought. Commissioners also agree guidelines should address the building's form as to let an adequate amount of light and air into the designated open space and 8th Ave. ROW.

#### *Design guidelines*

The commission will review in detail a set of design guidelines prior to council's approval of the project.

#### *Green sheet*

Although they recognize the opportunity to maximize the value of the site, which will provided funding for MercerWest project, The Commission encouraged the design team to consider balancing the value of the property with meeting community needs by thinking about design options that incorporate affordable housing, capital facilities, and open space in order to strengthen the surrounding community.

### Action

SDC thanked the project team for the urban design merit presentation. The Commission particularly appreciated the level of detail provided for the market study analysis as well as key urban design merit criteria. The Commission voted to approve the urban design merit, 9 to 0, with the following conditions:

1. Develop a detailed plan for providing a pedestrian crossing at the intersection of 8th Avenue and Mercer Street
2. The commission does not support the use of the 8th Ave N right of way for vehicular access to or around the site
3. Prior to council approval, the design team shall develop design guidelines for SDC review

In addition, the SDC also makes the following recommendations:

1. Consider qualities of open space in in the design guidelines as it relates to the public realm
2. Establish Roy St. as the preferred point of site access for vehicles
3. Address equity and affordability while developing planning and design guidelines