

Broad Street Vacation

Edward B. Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Interim Director, OPCD

Shannon Loew, Chair

Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Laura Haddad

Theo Lim

John Savo

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Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair
Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Ben de Rubertis
Laura Haddad
Theo Lim
John Savo

Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson

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 owned by SDOT 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 represents 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

At this meeting, the SDC did not vote to approve the proposed Public Benefit package. The SDC requested that SDOT further development the package including completion of the ROW design guidelines and more specifics about when and how the proposed public benefit package would be implemented.

Recusals and Disclosures

Thaddeus Egging recused himself. He is an employee of KPFF, the engineering firm working on this project.

April 7, 2016

11:00 - 1:00 pm

Type

Vacation

Phase

Public Benefit

Previous Reviews

09/19/15, 07/16/15

Project Team Present

Lyle Bicknell

OPCD

Susan McLaughlin

SDOT

Eric Tweit

SDOT

Attendees

Beverly Barnett

SDOT

Lloyd Douglas

SLUCC

John McMillan

KPFF

John Pehrson

SLUCC

Steven Shain

OPCD

Summary of Presentation

Lyle Bicknell, of Seattle’s Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD), and Susan McLaughlin and Eric Tweit, of SDOT presented the project. Eric Tweit provided an overview and site context for the project, while Susan McLaughlin provided background information as it relates to the area surrounding the project site. The project site is included in the 2010 South Lake Union Urban Design Framework, which recognizes 8th Ave as key Pedestrian Street between Westlake Ave and Roy St. The Urban Design Framework recommends enhancing the pedestrian experience through the design of wide sidewalks, slow vehicular speeds, and landscaping (see figures 1 & 2).

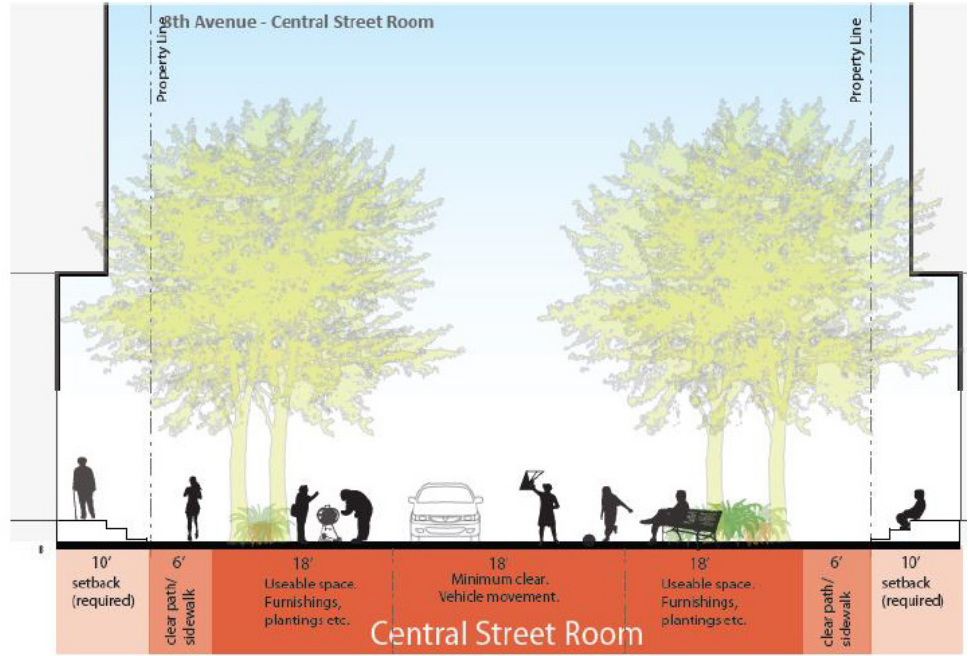


Figure 1: Example of pedestrian enhanced street

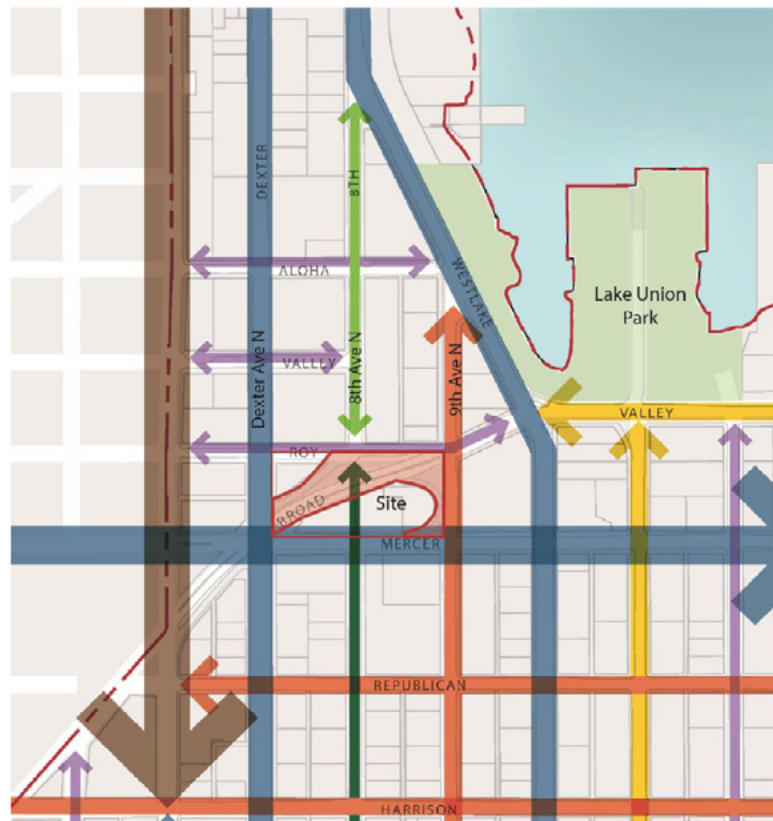


Figure 2: Existing street network. 8th Ave is designated as a green street.

As part of this proposal, 8th Avenue N between Mercer and Roy would be dedicated at the surface and would extend approximately 6 feet below grade to accommodate utilities. The remaining portion of 8th Avenue below grade would not be dedicated, which would allow for a uniform underground garage. This ROW dedication would result in the creation of two development sites.

In order to preserve the pedestrian nature of the proposed 8th Ave ROW, the project team proposed design guidelines to be implemented during future development of the site. The guidelines addressed specific elements including pedestrian sightlines, design materials, pedestrian scaled lighting, accessibility, landscaping, and location of social gathering spaces. Guidelines specified that there not be a through vehicular connection, limiting vehicle use to special use events and occasional loading.

After reviewing the proposed design guidelines for the 8th Ave N ROW, Eric Tweit presented the following public benefits for the street vacation petition:

- 8th Ave N ROW
- 8th Ave improvements
- Roy St improvements
- 9th Ave improvements
- Transit Hub

8th Ave N ROW

The 8th Ave N ROW will extend through the site between Mercer St and Roy St. The pedestrian only ROW, which will re-establish the street grid, will be 40 feet wide and include a 10-foot easement on either side. Improvements within the newly created ROW will be implemented and maintained by adjacent developers.

8th Ave N improvements

Street improvements will occur north of the project site along 8th

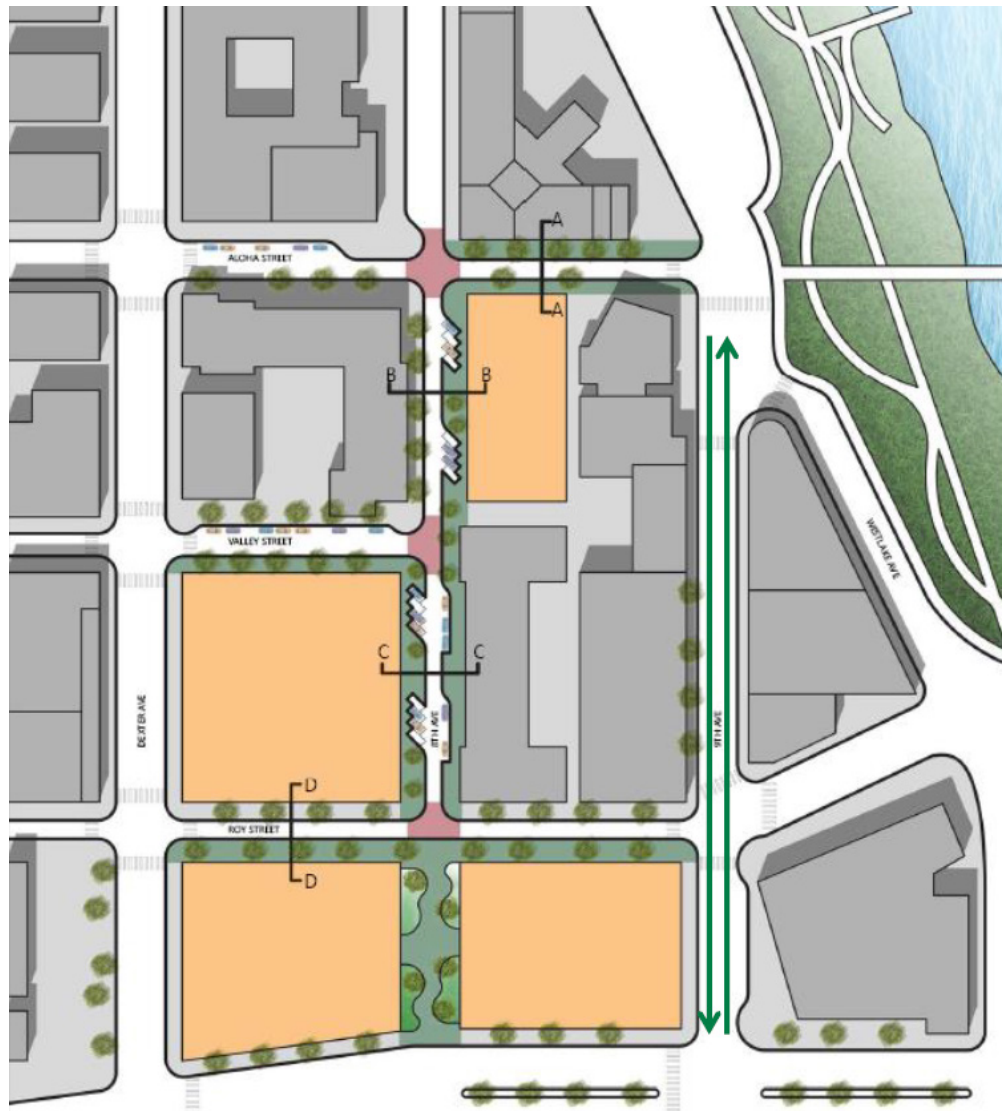


Figure 3: Proposed street concept plan



Figure 4: Proposed 8th Ave street concept

Ave N between Roy St and Aloha St. Improvements include wide sidewalks, pedestrian oriented sidewalks, and curbed streets with angled and parallel vehicular parking (see figures 3 & 4).

Roy St improvements

Improvements include a protected bicycle lane and additional landscaped areas along the street frontage.

9th Ave improvements

Street improvements include a buffer between existing bicycle and vehicular lanes along 9th Ave N between Mercer St and Roy St, additional protected bicycle lanes on 9th Ave N between Roy St and Aloha St, and an easement for a future southbound right-turn lane onto Mercer St.

Transit Hub

The project team has proposed to develop and implement a plan for a new transit hub along Aurora Ave N between Thomas St and Harrison St.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT, believes the street concept plan proposal, which have proved to be a major asset in shaping areas in SLU, is well designed. Ms. Barnett stated that SDOT is going to need more clarification as to who is taking ownership for implementing specific elements. Ms. Barnett believes there may be an issue with the 8th Ave N ROW proposal. She understands that recreating the grid is a good thing, but questions whether council will view this as a public benefit. Ms. Barnett also questions the limitations and conditions of the restrictions placed on the ROW through design guidelines. She encouraged the design team to continue answering questions addressing limitations on property acquisitions, contributions, and ownership.

Public Comments

John Pehrson, of the Southlake Union Community Council (SLUCC), stated the SLUCC is the agency that represents the community. SLUCC reviewed the extensively, but has not reviewed the proposal from today's meeting. Mr. Pehrson mentioned that SLUCC's priorities include creating meaningful and thoughtful open space over and above what is required by code. The SLUCC endorses changes occurring around the block such as bicycle lanes, and encourage the creation of more public ROW. Mr. Pehrson stated that they are not interested in having another transit plan. Rather, SLUCC would like to see project proposals for the transit hub such as site selection and improving surrounding streets.

Lloyd Douglas, of Southlake Union Community Council (SLUCC), stated that on 8th Ave was designed to facilitate residential development, which did not come to fruition. Mr. Douglas mentioned that SLUCC members had previously discussed how to make the area near 8th Ave N and Mercer St more accessible to pedestrians. More Douglas then stated that if a pedestrian crossing along Mercer does not occur, then the dedicated ROW will appear to be a closed campus that is not easily accessible to the public. Mr. Douglas mentioned the SLUCC is not in support of the plan as of yet.

Mark (last name not provided), Citizen, commended the project team for providing a detailed plan. He stated that his company had just finished street improvements for a residential complex near 8th Ave N and are interested to see how it will connect with other proposals along 8th Ave N. He is encouraged to see the re-establishment of a pedestrian ROW through the project site. He believes the pedestrian crossing will provide a great connection and is in support of the proposed element.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- 8th Ave guidelines and pedestrian crossing
- Offsite improvements
- Onsite and bike improvements
- Benefit, adequacy, and implementation plan

8th Ave guidelines and pedestrian crossing

The SDC stressed the importance of having ROW design guidelines in place to address future development of the site. Commissioners agreed having a mid-block pedestrian crossing at Mercer St is paramount in creating a space that is open to the public. The Commission agreed the proposed public ROW along 8th Ave N was critical to the public benefit package and recommended the project team provide programming and site furnishings that reflect the needs of the surrounding community. If the commission is going to accept the 8th Avenue N improvements as public benefit, they will have to be designed to both exceed street improvement requirements and that provides a clear benefit to the public and not feel or function like an extension of the private developments that abut this portion of 8th Avenue N.

Offsite improvements

The Commission appreciated the proposed pedestrian and streetscape improvement plans for the surrounding area as well as the turning lane onto Mercer St and implementation plan for a transit hub along Aurora Ave N.

Bicycle improvements

SDOT had originally proposed a bicycle lane along Roy Street. However, due to potential conflicts with traffic exiting on Roy at the vacation site, the commission supports the continuation of the bicycle route on Mercer east of Dexter and along the vacation site.

Benefit, adequacy, and implementation plan

The Commission requested further clarity regarding the implementation strategy. Commissioners agreed any future development would need to be reviewed by the full commission to see how the right of way improvements proposed here and as reflected in the related guidelines are being implemented.

Action

The SDC did not take an action on the proposed public benefit package for the Broad Street Vacation. The SDC requested further clarification of the proposed design guidelines and public benefit implementation strategies.