

John Kane
Ballard - Interbay Northend
Manufacturing Industrial Center

Barbara Culp
Bicycle Association of WA

Julie Humling
Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation

Chuck Ayers
Cascade Bicycle Club

Jeff Riddell
Cornish College of the Arts

David Levinger
Feet First

Scott Rusch
Fred Hutch Cancer
Research Center

Laura Penn
Intiman Theatre

Dave Gering
Manufacturing Industrial Council

Warren Aakervik
North Seattle Industrial Assoc.

David Brown
Pacific Northwest Ballet

Bryce Seidl
Pacific Science Center

Geraldine Poor
Port of Seattle

Chris Bihary
QA Businessowner &
QA Chamber member

Jennifer Lesko
QA Chamber of Commerce

Matthew Long
QA Chamber of Commerce

John Coney
QA Community Council

Matt Roewe
QA/SLU Design Review Bd. &
QACC Land Use Review Com

Ron Wright
QA Soccer Club & Lacrosse Club

Michael Jerrett
Queen Anne Uptown Alliance

Jim Gore
Seattle Biomedical
Research Institute

Robert Nellams
Seattle Center

Kevin Maifeld
Seattle Children's Theatre

Kelly Tweeddale
Seattle Opera

John McNamara
Seattle Repertory Theatre

Bob Grossman
South Lake Union Friends &
Neighbors Community Council

Jessyn Schor
Transportation Choices
Coalition

Ron Hildebrandt
Trident Seafoods

Phil Lane Jr.
United Indian of All Tribes

Don Miles
Urban Designer and
QA Resident

Ada Healey
Vulcan Inc.

September 28, 2006

Mayor Greg Nickels
City of Seattle
City Hall
7th Floor, 600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124-4749

**Subject: Mercer Corridor
Recommendations from the Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee**

Dear Mayor Nickels:

The Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee is pleased to present this **consensus recommendation** to the City of Seattle. This committee represents a broad coalition of neighborhood groups, businesses, art groups, transportation interest groups and institutions that would be affected by improvements in the Mercer Corridor. Committee members and represented organizations are listed to the left.

This group is 100% supportive of the full package of recommendations. The committee agrees that the Mercer Corridor improvements must address the full corridor from Interstate 5 (I-5) to Elliott Avenue W. Two key elements in the Mercer Corridor recommendations are reconnecting the east-west street grid across Aurora Avenue and the establishment of a two-way Mercer Street corridor from I-5 to Elliott Avenue. These elements are part of the package of 28 recommendations.

In addition to the specific project elements, the committee would recommend the consensus-based process as a model for other major projects in the City. Having diverse interests come together, understand the trade-offs involved, and compromise on solutions could improve many projects and speed up the project-delivery time.

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss these adopted recommendations for the entire Mercer transportation corridor and/or the stakeholder process used to develop them. Please contact John Coney to schedule a meeting (e-mail: DJohnConey@aol.com, phone: (206) 283-2049).

Sincerely,

Co-Chairs for the Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee:

John Coney
Queen Anne Community Council

Jessyn Schor
Transportation Choices Coalition

Bob Grossman
South Lake Union Friends &
Neighbors Community Council

In support of the Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee Recommendations

John Kane

Ballard- Interbay Northend Manufacturing
Industrial Center

Warren Aakervik

North Seattle Industrial Assoc.

Michael Jerrett

Queen Anne Uptown Alliance

Barbara Culp

Bicycle Association of Washington

David Brown

Pacific Northwest Ballet

Jim Gore

Seattle Biomedical Research Institute

Julie Humling

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Bryce Seidl

Pacific Science Center

Robert Nellams

Seattle Center

Chuck Ayers

Cascade Bicycle Club

Geraldine Poor

Port of Seattle

Kevin Maifeld

Seattle Children's Theatre

Jeff Riddell

Cornish College of the Arts

Chris Bihary

QA Businessowner &
QA Chamber member

Kelly Tweeddale

Seattle Opera

David Levinger

Feet First

Jennifer Lesko

QA Chamber of Commerce

John McNamara

Seattle Repertory Theatre

Scott Rusch

Fred Hutch Cancer Research Center

Matthew Long

QA Chamber of Commerce

Ron Hildebrandt

Trident Seafoods

Laura Penn

Intiman Theatre

Matt Roewe

QA/SLU Design Review Bd. &
QACC Land Use Review Com

Phil Lane Jr.

United Indian of All Tribes

Don Miles

Urban Designer and QA Resident

Dave Gering

Manufacturing Industrial Council

Ron Wright

QA Soccer Club & Lacrosse Club

Ada Healey

Vulcan Inc.

MERCER CORRIDOR STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION to the SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION *SEPTEMBER 27, 2006*

The **Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee** is an ad-hoc committee with broad community representation from neighborhoods and associations affected by both the Mercer Corridor and Lowered Aurora Avenue projects. It was formed with the intent of reaching consensus agreement on a unified design concept. A list of the groups represented on the Stakeholder Committee is attached.

The Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee's recommendation to SDOT is presented below. The package of recommendations is supported by **ALL** members of the committee. If one or more of these elements cannot be implemented, then some of the groups may no longer support the overall plan. Therefore, as SDOT moves forward with project design and determines that some of these elements are not feasible, it is recommended that SDOT reconvene the Stakeholder Committee to discuss optional treatments or elements that would maintain this broad-based support.

Recommendations

The Mercer Corridor improvements must address the full corridor from Interstate 5 (I-5) to Elliott Avenue W. To maximize benefits to the City's transportation system, all three segments of the project must be completed. Two key elements in the Mercer Corridor plan are reconnecting the east-west street grid across Aurora Avenue and the establishment of a two-way Mercer Street corridor from I-5 to Elliott Avenue.

The Stakeholder Committee's recommendations have been divided into three segments of an integrated corridor plan. These are:

- **Dexter Avenue N to Interstate 5** – This roughly matches the limits of SDOT's Mercer Corridor project.
- **5th Avenue to Dexter Avenue N** – This roughly matches the limits of the Lowered Aurora Avenue project that is proposed as part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement project.
- **5th Avenue to Elliott Avenue.**

The first section defines elements that would affect the entire length of the corridor.

A. Full Corridor (Elliott Avenue to Interstate 5)

- A-1. Implement two-way operations on Mercer Street from I-5 to Elliott Avenue W.** Make improvements as proposed in the Mercer Corridor and Lowered Aurora projects to widen Mercer Street and convert it to two-way operations. Extend two way operations between 5th and 1st Avenues.

- A-2. Construct all three projects—Mercer Corridor, Lowered Aurora and Two-Way Streets west of 5th Avenue—in a sequence that will minimize the overall disruption to the neighborhood.** The Mercer Corridor project should be constructed first so that improvements are in place prior to the Viaduct Construction. Lowered Aurora project should be constructed when Aurora is closed for Viaduct Construction to minimize the disruptions associated with the closure periods. Improvement west of 5th Avenue should be complete concurrent with completion of the Lowered Aurora project.
- A-3. Maintain two major truck streets through the corridor.** The north-south truck street would include 9th Avenue north of Mercer Street connecting to Westlake Avenue N along the west side of Lake Union. A new east-west truck street must also be designated between Interstate 5 and Elliott Avenue W to replace the route lost when Broad Street under Aurora Avenue is eliminated.
- A-4. Accommodate large truck turns at key intersections.** Key intersections where the turning radius should be designed to accommodate large trucks include 5th Avenue N/Mercer Street, 9th Avenue/Mercer Street, and Fairview Avenue/Mercer Street.
- A-5. Develop Construction Management Plan.** Develop a construction management plan to minimize disruptions and impacts to businesses along the corridor. The plan should include a marketing element to enhance visibility of neighborhood businesses and arts/entertainment groups. A framework for the Construction Management Plan is attached.
- A-6. Improve east-west transit connections through corridor.** SDOT should work with Metro Transit to improve east-west transit service.
- A-7. Balance good urban design with transportation improvements.** As part of the transportation improvements, create places that encourage walking and facilitate livability in South Lake Union and Uptown. Encourage urban infill and redevelopment that meets the goals of the center city strategy, urban center concept and neighborhood plans. Upgrade pedestrian-realm elements to include: wider sidewalks with interesting patterns and masonry materials, new street trees, landscape planting buffers adjacent to traffic lanes. Also encourage opportunities for artistic and authentic neighborhood expressions in the form of benches, bike racks, street lighting, signage, banners and other street furniture.

B. Dexter Avenue N to Interstate 5 (Mercer Corridor Project)

- B-1. Widen Mercer Street for two-way operations.** The section of Mercer Street between Dexter Avenue and Fairview Avenue should be widened to accommodate three through lanes in each direction, left turn lanes, and curb-lane parking. Additional lanes may be needed at the intersection with Fairview Avenue N.
- B-2. Maintain east-west truck route during construction.** If the Mercer Corridor project is constructed prior to the Lowered Aurora project, then an interim east-west truck route to Elliott Avenue must be maintained. This route would be in addition to the Westlake Avenue route to provide redundancy.
- B-3. Delay curb bulb installation on south side of Mercer Street.** Until Harrison Street and Thomas Street are connected across Lowered Aurora, do not install curb bulbs along the south curb of Mercer Street between Dexter Avenue and Fairview Avenue. This will provide SDOT with flexibility to prohibit parking and use the eastbound curb lane for through traffic if needed during Viaduct Construction.

- B-4. Install curb bulbs and parking on south side of Mercer Street after Harrison and Thomas Street are connected across Aurora Avenue.** After the Lowered Aurora project is complete, the curb bulbs on the south side of Mercer Street should be installed.
- B-5. Provide turning radius for WB-67 truck at Mercer Street/9th Avenue.** Provide a turning radius for a WB-67 truck on the northeast corner of the Mercer Street/9th Avenue intersection. This radius would accommodate the westbound-to-northbound right turn movement where two major truck streets would meet. Set back stop bar for the southbound left turn movement from 9th Avenue to eastbound Mercer Street. This will further enhance turning space for large trucks.
- B-6. Install signal at Republican Street/Eastlake Avenue.** This signal will encourage use of Republican Street to access Capitol Hill.
- B-7. Maintain connection to Mercer Street east of Fairview Avenue.** Maintain this connection, which is an eastbound-only street exiting the Mercer Street/Fairview Avenue intersection.
- B-8. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility to and through the South Lake Union neighborhood.** The following enhancements are recommended:
- **Enhance streetscape/pedestrian experience on Valley Street.** Emphasize building setback, landscaping and art between South Lake Union Park and Seattle Center. Incorporate elements from the "Potlatch Trail Art Plan" into the streetscape along this linkage. Encourage use of Valley Street as the primary east-west bicycle route.
 - **Emphasize Dexter Avenue as the primary bicycle route between South Lake Union and downtown.** If Dexter Avenue is used as a detour route during construction of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and/or Lowered Aurora projects, then on-street parking may need to be removed to optimize motor vehicle and bicycle mobility.
 - **Enhance the connection between the Valley Street bicycle trail and Dexter Avenue.** (The current proposal also includes on-street bike lanes on Valley/Roy Street connecting South Lake Union and Dexter Avenue.) Consider wider sidewalks along the south side of Valley/Roy Street between Westlake Avenue and Dexter Avenue to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians.
 - **Provide wider sidewalk on the east side of Dexter Avenue** between Roy Street and Mercer Street to accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians.
 - **Provide protected westbound left turn phasing at Dexter Avenue/Roy Street intersection** for on-street bicyclists that choose to ride in traffic. Provide bicycle activation for this movement.
 - **Provide bicycle lanes on 9th Avenue south of Valley Street.** Bicycle lanes should be provided south of Valley Street. Due to right-of-way limitations, they may not be feasible between Valley Street and Westlake Avenue N.
 - **Install pedestrian "countdown" signals** on Mercer Street at Fairview Avenue, Westlake Avenue, 9th Avenue, and Dexter Avenue. These signal heads inform pedestrians with the time remaining on the "walk" signal.

- **Evaluate potential pedestrian crossing of Mercer Street at Boren Avenue N.** A signalized crossing at this location should be considered if the signal can be coordinated with other signals in the corridor and it would not adversely affect through traffic flow on the corridor.
- **Provide wayfinding for pedestrians and bicyclists.** Signage should be provided to direct pedestrians and bicyclists to the best route to cross Aurora Avenue between South Lake Union Park and the Seattle Center.

C. 5th Avenue N to Dexter Avenue N (Lowered Aurora Project)

- C-1. Widen Mercer Street for two-way operations.** The section of Mercer Street between 5th Avenue and Dexter Avenue should be widened to accommodate three through lanes in each direction and left turn lanes.
- C-2. Construct two new crossings of Aurora Avenue at Harrison and Thomas Streets.** This is the most important element of the Lowered Aurora project for the Stakeholder Committee. If these elements are not feasible or would be delayed substantially, then new alternatives for crossing Aurora Avenue should be considered. One of the crossings should be designed to accommodate potential future streetcar service (such service would be a future project and is not a part of these recommendations.)
- C-3. Eliminate Broad Street connection between Valley Street and Harrison Street.** Broad Street between Valley Street and Harrison Street should be eliminated as part of the Lowered Aurora project if the cross-Aurora connections are made at Thomas and Harrison Street, and if Mercer Street west of 5th Avenue is converted to two-way operation.
- C-4. Provide two westbound lanes on Harrison Street.** Restrict parking on the north side of Harrison Street between 9th Avenue and 5th Avenue during the PM peak periods to create two westbound lanes for accessing the new Seattle Center garage.
- C-5. Construct 6th Avenue N between Harrison and Roy Streets.** After Broad Street is vacated, construct a new street along the 6th Avenue N alignment between Harrison and Roy Streets. Its intersection with Mercer Street should be at grade and controlled by a traffic signal. If needed to enhance traffic flow along Mercer Street or to prevent queuing between Roy and Mercer Street, some turns could be prohibited. If 6th Avenue N is extended between Mercer and Harrison Street, it will have the following characteristics consistent with City of Seattle Ordinance 121879 adopted August 16, 2005:
- 6th Avenue will be a "neighborhood" arterial street providing one of a number of options for traffic traveling to or through the area.
 - The design of 6th Avenue will reflect the City's land use planning goals and objectives to transform South Lake Union and Uptown urban centers into denser, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, well served by transit.
 - The design of 6th Avenue will allow for accommodation of a skybridge structure over 6th Avenue, to connect the Gates Foundation development that would be bisected by the proposed 6th Avenue extension.

- A maximum of four through travel lanes total (two northbound and two southbound) will be provided on 6th Avenue between Mercer Street and Harrison Street. Left turn pockets may be included at intersections.

C-6. Install traffic signal at Mercer Street/Taylor Avenue. Evaluate the potential to install a traffic signal at Taylor Avenue that would be coordinated with signals at 5th and 6th Avenues. This signal would facilitate access to Queen Anne Hill for motor vehicles and to Roy Street for bicyclists. If possible, access to the Gates Foundation Parking Garage could be provided from the south leg of this signalized intersection. If needed to facilitate traffic flow along Mercer Street, some turns at the intersection could be prohibited.

C-7. Provide safe and attractive pedestrian connection under Aurora Avenue at Mercer Street. Provide a 20-foot wide sidewalk for joint-use by bicyclists and pedestrians. The following features should be considered by the Lowered Aurora design team:

- Evaluate raising the elevation of the ped/bike way on Mercer Street under lowered Aurora to reduce the grade for bicyclists. Desired minimum clearance for ped/bike way would be 12 feet to allow for potential emergency vehicle access. Evaluate difference in grade, aesthetic and personal safety perception if clearance were 10 feet.
- Do not provide on-street parking on Mercer Street between Dexter Avenue and 5th Avenue. Use excess right-of-way (if any) to enhance the ped/bike walkway with landscape and art treatments.
- Enhance personal safety of the ped/bike way under Aurora with adequate lighting and by not creating "sleeping or hiding" spaces in the abutment structure.
- Pursue public art for the ped/bike way on Mercer Street under Aurora and integrate the art with lighting and landscaping.
- Minimize crossing conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians, particularly at intersections and transition points. Evaluate whether bikes should be located along the building side or the curb side of the walkway, which would depend, in part, on whether adjacent buildings have pedestrian entrances to the sidewalk area.
- Maximize safety for bicyclists traveling counter to vehicle flow direction. For example, at the intersection of Mercer Street/Taylor Avenue where motorists approaching the intersection on Taylor Avenue would need to look east to approaching vehicles, and may miss a bicyclist approaching from the west. Consider using side streets such as 6th Avenue or Taylor Avenue for bicycle connections to Roy Street west of Aurora.

C-8. Consider future pedestrian overpass of Aurora Avenue at or north of Valley Street.

- C-9. Evaluate potential use and function of Broad Street and Taylor Avenue southwest of Harrison Street.** The ability to vacate these streets and consolidate properties may depend on the public utilities located below the streets (particularly high voltage power to adjacent substation). If the properties cannot be consolidated, consider enhancing the unused right of way for pedestrian/open space use.

D. 5th Avenue to Elliott Avenue W

- D-1. Convert both Mercer Street and Roy Street to two-way operations west of 5th Avenue.** SDOT should create a separate improvement project that would convert both Mercer and Roy Streets west of 5th Avenue to two-way operations. This change should occur simultaneously with the improvements associated with the Lowered Aurora project. Key features that should be considered in such a project are:

- To the extent possible, incorporate the policies and intent of the adopted *Seattle Center Theatre District Plan*.
- Allow passenger drop-off and pick-up on Mercer Street adjacent to the Theater District.
- Limit left turn opportunities on Mercer Street between 1st and 5th Avenue to those that facilitate access to the Mercer Garage. Provide signalized control of these left turn movements.
- Retain as much on-street parking on Mercer Street and Roy Street as possible. If parking restrictions are required to accommodate turn lanes and bike lanes, then consider short-term parking opportunities during daytime hours in the nearby Mercer Garage.
- Evaluate pedestrian improvement needs along West Mercer Place between 4th Avenue W and Elliott Avenue W.

- D-2. Use/modify police control before and after events to better manage event traffic.** Key locations where police control and turn restrictions may be required after events are at Mercer Street/5th Avenue, Mercer Street/Mercer Garage egress driveways, and the Republican Street, Harrison Street, and 5th Avenue egress driveways from the new Seattle Center 5th Avenue Parking Garage.

- D-3. Enhance motorist wayfinding to and from Seattle Center.** Install new signs (or relocate existing signs) to direct motorist to the Seattle Center parking. Add signs directing Seattle Center patrons back to SR 99 via two-way Roy Street.

- D-4. Install bike lanes in both directions on Roy Street.** If Mercer Street and Roy Street are converted to two-way streets west of Mercer Street, then install bike lanes in both directions on Roy Street. Connect these to Mercer Street at 6th Avenue or Taylor Avenue to minimize conflicts with motor vehicles.

Attachments:

- List of Stakeholders
- Framework for Construction Management Plan

Two-way Mercer & Partially Lowered Aurora Potential Construction Mitigation September 27, 2006

When construction begins on either the two-way Mercer or partially lowered Aurora project, it will be necessary to address impacts to surrounding businesses/chambers, the Seattle Center arts/entertainment organizations, freight/industrial businesses, and local community. The construction transportation management plans for each project will incorporate elements to help with construction traffic impacts within the South Lake Union, lower Queen Anne and Seattle Center areas.

Recommendations:

1. Establish a “Construction Coordination Committee” comprised of Seattle Center arts and entertainment organizations, Queen Anne, and South Lake Union representatives. This committee will meet on a regular basis with SDOT/WSDOT regarding pre-construction development & project phasing/during construction coordination/& post-construction efforts.
2. SDOT/WSDOT will work with the “Construction Coordination Committee” in the development of a plan to minimize the construction impacts of transportation corridor improvements that could include some of the following items:
 - Provide additional transit service, especially in the lower Queen Anne and Seattle Center area.
 - Augment event traffic management (more police/traffic controls).
 - Provide assistance to local businesses in providing commute trip reduction measures, and other ways of encouraging transit usage.
 - Include requirements for maintaining access to venues and businesses in construction contract documents.
 - Provide real-time and advance-notice information on traffic movement, detour routes, and other choices for access.
 - Develop a “communications plan” that informs patrons, businesses, employees, and local residents of alternative route options.
 - Incorporate public education measures and creative marketing ideas that promote access and attractiveness of venues/businesses during construction.
 - Promote the option and consider incentives of using the Seattle Center Monorail and downtown parking to access venues at Seattle Center and lower QA businesses.

- Establish a SDOT/WSDOT construction “hot-line” for persons and organizations to call. Establish a goal for when hot-line inquiries will be addressed.
- Define appropriate freight routes that could accommodate large trucks (WB-67).

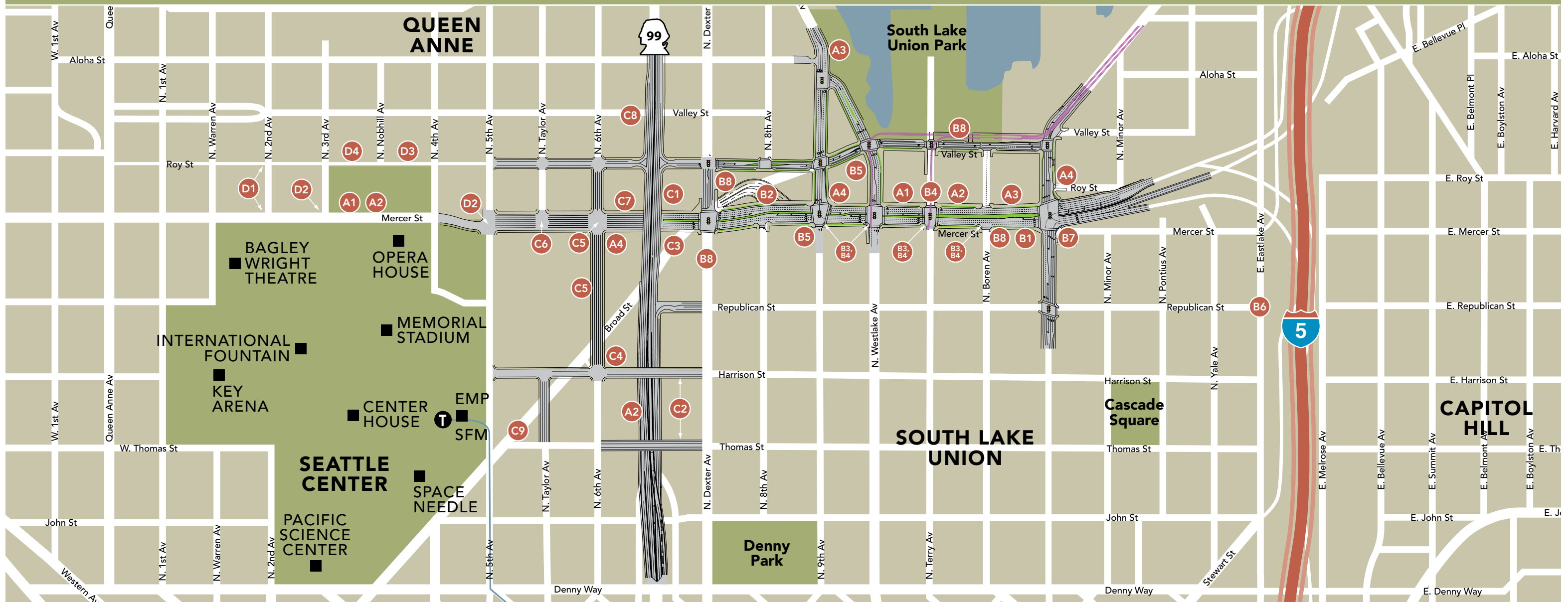
As the construction mitigation plans are developed, the projects will work closely with community groups, businesses, and Seattle Center to identify specific needs for access and travel. Proposed mitigation measures will be shared with the community prior to implementation.

Timeframe

SDOT and WSDOT are analyzing the overall plan for managing traffic for the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project, and expect to have draft information by the end of the year. We will be working with the affected neighborhoods in 2007 and following years as construction approaches and phasing

SDOT will develop construction phasing and management plans for the Mercer Corridor through the environmental review and design phase. We will be working with the affected neighborhoods and stakeholders in 2007, as the construction phasing and traffic management plans are developed.

Mercer Corridor Stakeholder Committee Recommendations



A FULL CORRIDOR (Elliott Avenue to Interstate 5)

- A1 Implement two-way operations on Mercer Street from I-5 to Elliott Avenue W.
- A2 Construct all three projects Mercer Corridor, Lowered Aurora and Two-Way Streets west of 5th Avenue.
- A3 Maintain two major freight streets through the corridor.
- A4 Accommodate large trucks at key intersections.
- A5 Develop Construction Management Plan.
- A6 Improve east-west transit connections through corridor. SDOT should work with Metro Transit to improve east-west transit service.
- A7 Balance good urban design with transportation improvements.

B DEXTER AVENUE N TO INTERSTATE 5 (Mercer Corridor Project)

- B1 Widen Mercer Street for two-way operations.
- B2 Maintain east-west truck route during construction.
- B3 Delay curb bulb installation on south side of Mercer Street.
- B4 Install curb bulbs and parking on south side of Mercer Street after Harrison and Thomas Street are connected across Aurora Avenue.
- B5 Provide turning radius for WB-67 truck at Mercer Street/9th Avenue.
- B6 Install signal at Republican Street/Eastlake Avenue.
- B7 Maintain connection to Mercer Street east of Fairview Avenue.
- B8 Enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility to and through the South Lake Union neighborhood.

C 5TH AVENUE N TO DEXTER AVENUE N (Lowered Aurora Project)

- C1 Widen Mercer Street for two-way operation.
- C2 Construct two new crossings of Aurora Avenue at Harrison and Thomas Streets.
- C3 Eliminate Broad Street connection between Valley Street and Harrison Street.
- C4 Provide two westbound lanes on Harrison Street.
- C5 Construct 6th Avenue N between Harrison and Roy Streets.
- C6 Install traffic signal at Mercer Street/Taylor Avenue.
- C7 Provide safe and attractive pedestrian connection under Aurora Avenue at Mercer Street.
- C8 Consider future pedestrian overpass of Aurora Avenue at or north of Valley Street.
- C9 Evaluate potential use and function of Broad Street and Taylor Avenue southwest of Harrison Street.

D 5TH AVENUE TO ELLIOTT AVENUE W

- D1 Convert both Mercer Street and Roy Street to two-way operations west of 5th Avenue.
- D2 Use/modify police control before and after events to better manage event traffic.
- D3 Enhance motorist wayfinding to and from Seattle Center.
- D4 Install bike lanes in both directions on Roy Street.