

# Chapter 4 Project Description

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## What is the SR 519 Phase 2 project?

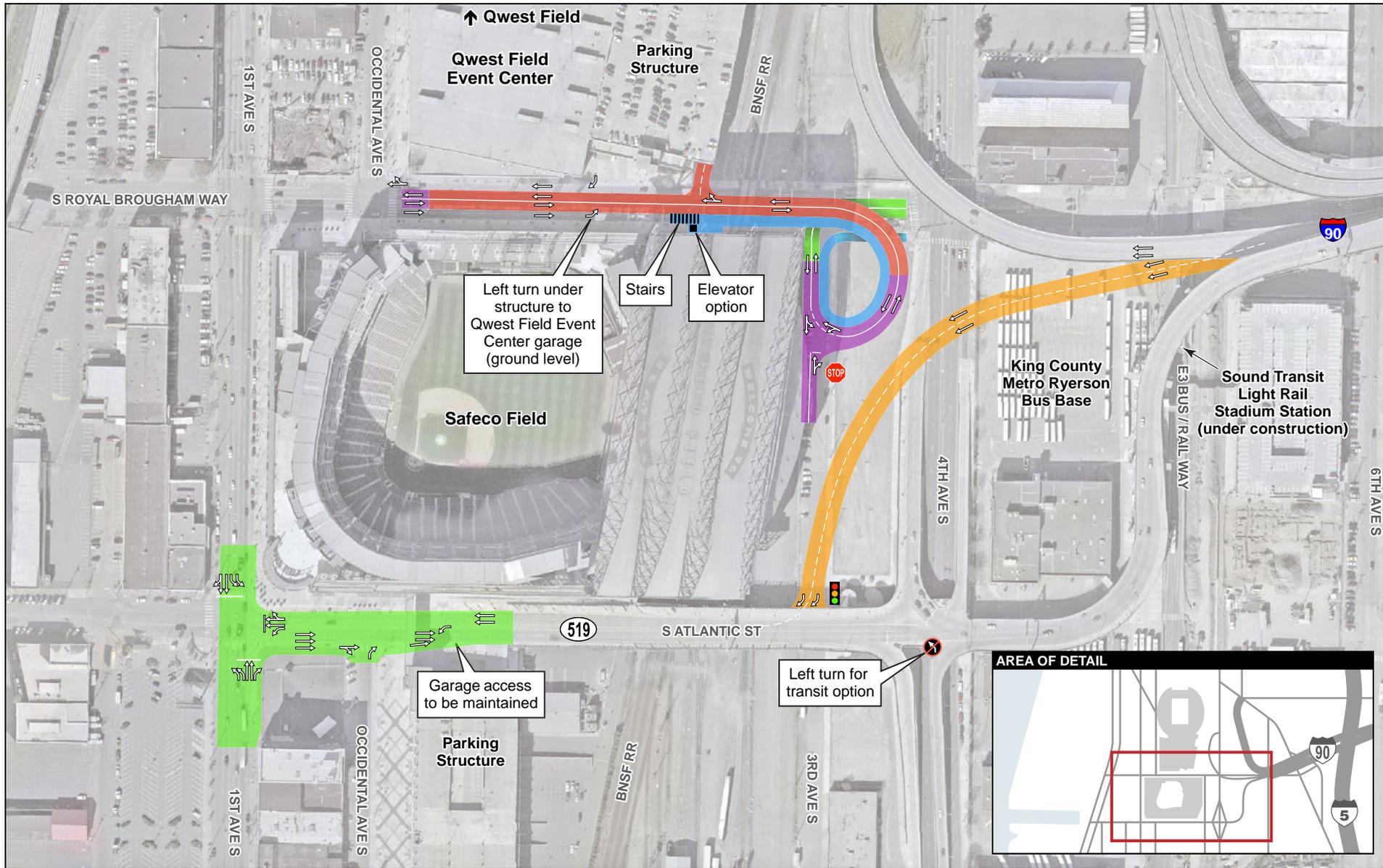
The SR 519 Phase 2 project is the Build Alternative. It is intended to meet current and future traffic demands through 2030. It will build a new westbound off-ramp from I-90 to the South Atlantic Street overpass and provide surface improvements at the intersection of First Avenue South and South Atlantic Street to accommodate expected future traffic demand. A grade-separated crossing over the railroad tracks at South Royal Brougham Way will also be built. The improvements are described in more detail below and are illustrated on Exhibit 4-1. Exhibit 4-2 compares the current westbound traffic flow that is expected after the project becomes operational. All proposed improvements will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The next three paragraphs briefly describe the components of the project.

**I-90 Off-Ramp to South Atlantic Street.** A new two-lane elevated ramp connection will be built from westbound I-90 to terminate at a signalized T-intersection on the South Atlantic Street railroad overpass. The new South Atlantic Street connection will serve westbound freeway traffic exiting I-90 and I-5.

The new ramp will be entirely elevated, passing over Fourth Avenue South and Third Avenue South and connecting to the north side of the South Atlantic Street overpass southeast of Safeco Field. Exiting northbound I-5 traffic will be routed to South Atlantic Street, while exiting southbound I-5 traffic will have the option of using either the new off-ramp to South Atlantic Street or the existing I-90 off-ramp to Fourth Avenue South.



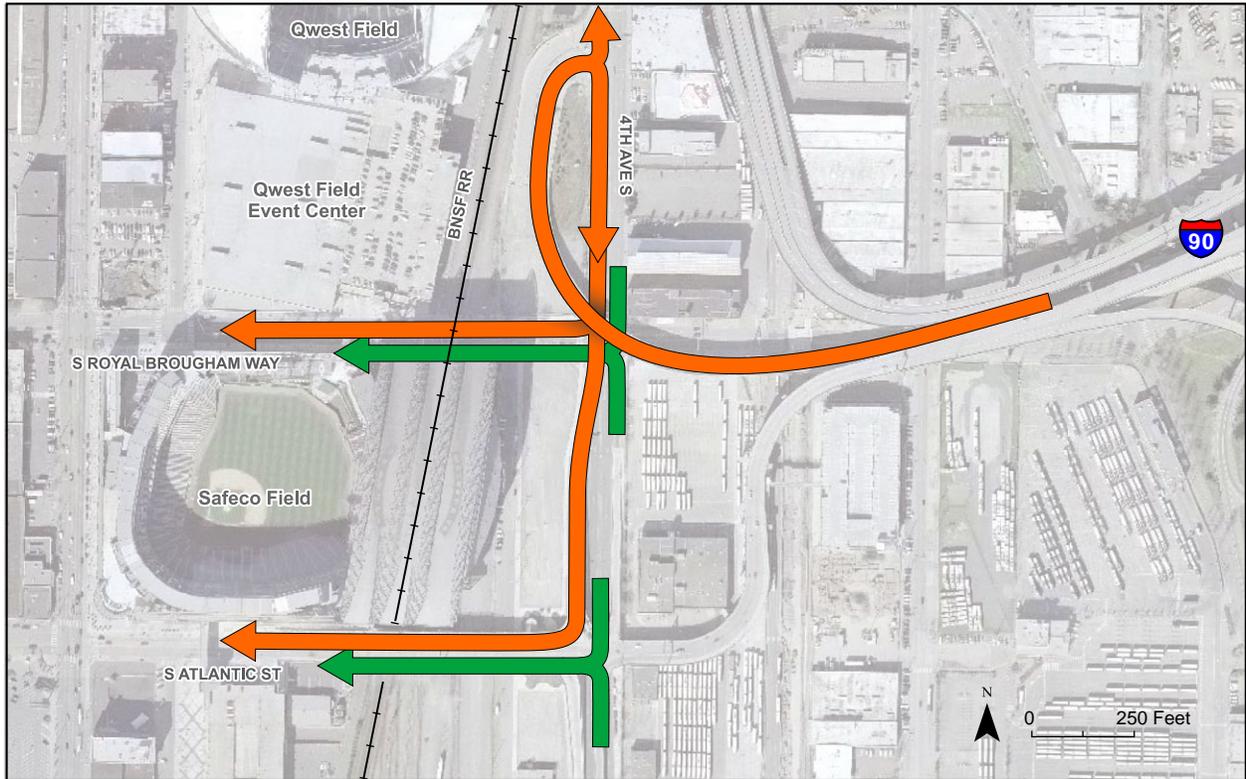
Existing I-90 Off-ramp to Fourth Avenue South



- █ Arterial Bridge
- █ Elevated Ramp
- █ Pedestrian Bridge
- █ Surface Improvements
- █ Fill Embankment

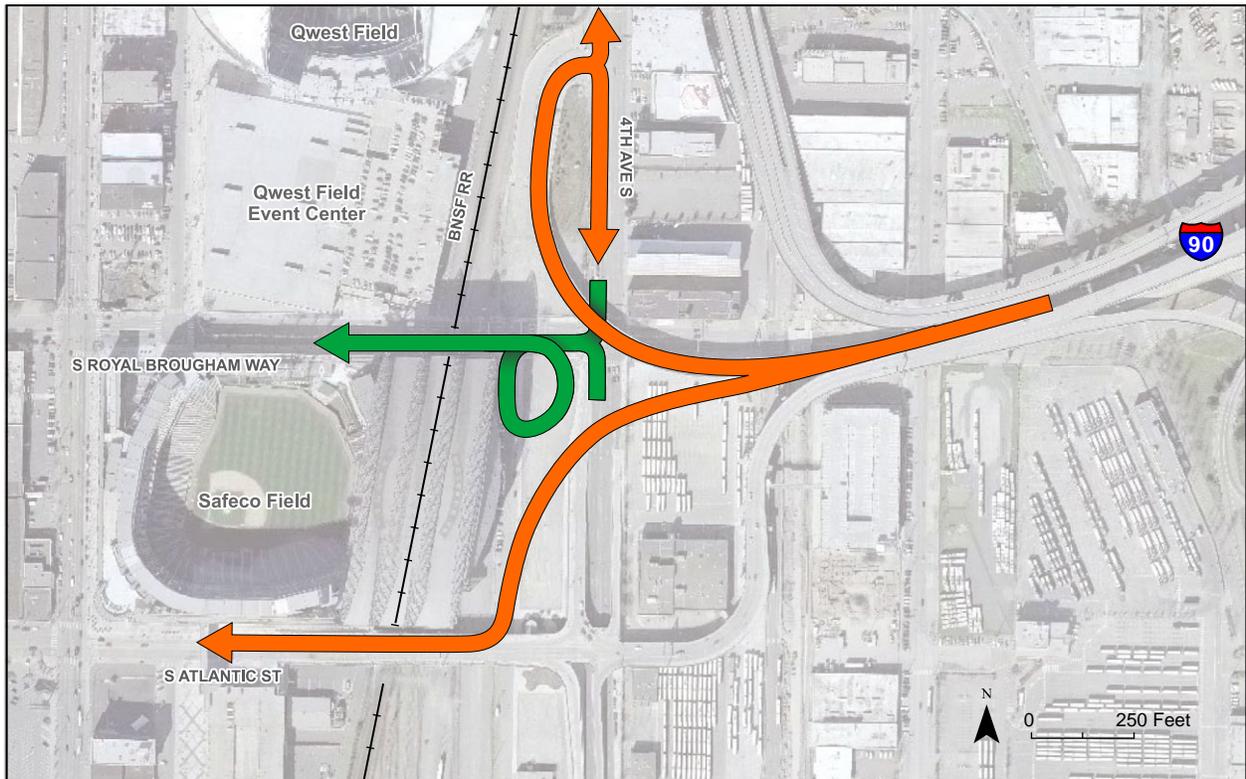


Exhibit 4-1  
The Build Alternative



- Existing Westbound Regional Routes
- Existing Westbound Local Routes

**Existing Westbound Travel Routes**



- Proposed Westbound Regional Routes
- Proposed Westbound Local Routes

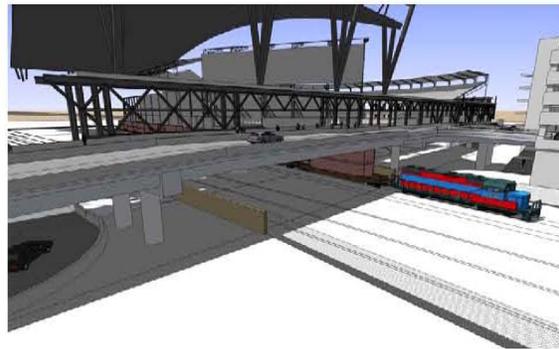
**Proposed Westbound Travel Routes**

Exhibit 4-2  
**Existing and Proposed  
 Westbound Travel Routes**

**South Royal Brougham Way Railroad Overpass.** The South Royal Brougham Way street-level railroad crossing will be closed, but it could possibly be opened to public services in the event of a major emergency in the vicinity. A new two-lane elevated structure will be built, connecting Occidental Avenue South to Third Avenue South. The new overpass will transport vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle traffic over the railroad tracks and provide a new connection and entrance from South Royal Brougham Way to the second level of the Qwest Field Event Center parking garage. The new ramp will accommodate local two-way traffic and provide ADA-compliant access, most likely an elevator, to be determined during project design.



Proposed ramp at east end of South Royal Brougham Way railroad overpass



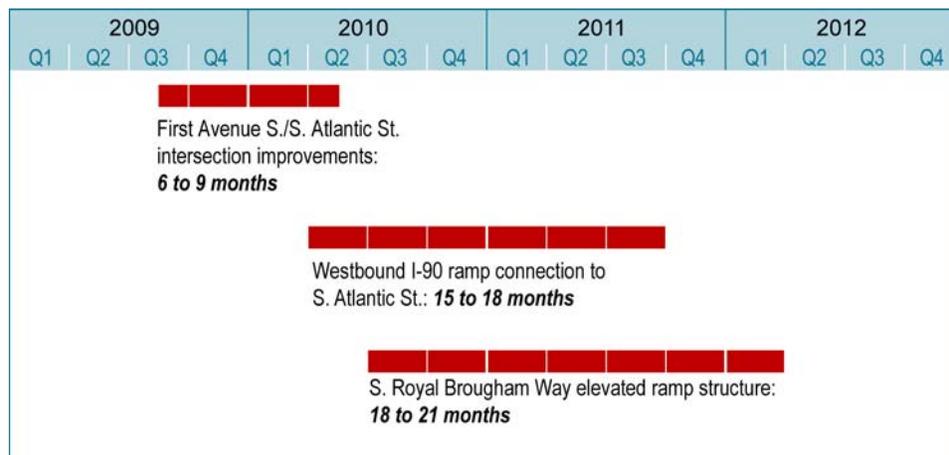
South Royal Brougham Way existing street-level railroad crossing (left) and proposed overpass (right)

**Improvements to the Intersection of First Avenue South and South Atlantic Street.** The project will widen the intersection by adding additional turn lanes to each approach. Existing parking lanes along First Avenue South will be converted to travel lanes, with a new eastbound lane added to South Atlantic Street. Sidewalks along the southern edge of South Atlantic Street east of First Avenue South will be relocated to the south to accommodate the added eastbound lane.

### How will the project be built?

Construction of the SR 519 Phase 2 project will require about 3 years, and WSDOT is exploring ways to accelerate this schedule. Construction will involve three project components:

- Improvements to the intersection of First Avenue South and South Atlantic Street could begin first, with construction starting in 2009 and lasting 6 to 9 months.
- Construction of the new I-90 off-ramp connection to the South Atlantic Street overpass could last 15 to 18 months and may begin as improvements to the intersection of First Avenue South and South Atlantic Street are underway.
- Construction of the new South Royal Brougham Way railroad overpass, most likely beginning in 2010, could overlap with construction of the new I-90 off-ramp and last 18 to 21 months.



**Proposed Construction Schedule**

Access for emergency service vehicles will be maintained at all times. A construction management plan (CMP) will be developed to optimize the sequencing of the SR 519 Phase 2 project elements. The CMP will identify approaches that best coordinate with and minimize unwanted effects on the following:

- Stadium and Event Center activities
- Port of Seattle container operations
- Washington State Ferries
- BNSF Railway mainline and yard operations, Amtrak mainline operations, and Sound Transit commuter rail operations

- Sound Transit Link light rail operations, Sounder commuter rail service, and Regional Express bus operations
- King County Metro Ryerson Bus Base operations and Metro bus service throughout the affected area, including through-routes operating within the area, and access to the bases and downtown Seattle transit tunnel
- Greater Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center freight operations

Temporary construction staging areas will be required to store equipment and materials during construction. A gravel lot owned by WSDOT, bounded by South Atlantic Street and South Royal Brougham Way, and Third Avenue South and Fourth Avenue South, will serve as the primary construction staging area for the SR 519 Phase 2 project. This lot is vacant, and no adverse environmental effects are expected from staging at this location. Other temporary staging areas will be determined through consultation with King County and the City of Seattle during project design.

### **What permits will be required to build the project?**

WSDOT will apply to the State of Washington, King County, and the City of Seattle for a number of permits and approvals. They will most likely include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Stormwater General Permit (Washington State Department of Ecology)
- Wastewater Discharge Approval (King County)
- Street Use Permit (City of Seattle)
- Side Sewer Permit (City of Seattle)
- Noise Variance (City of Seattle)

WSDOT will confirm the requirement for these and other permits as engineering design and construction planning proceed in coordination with the permitting authorities.

## What will happen if the project is not built?

Under the No Build Alternative, the three proposed Phase 2 components discussed previously would not be built.

Westbound traffic exiting from I-5 and I-90 would continue to flow as at present, as shown on Exhibit 4-2. The increased efficiency of eastbound traffic moving from the Seattle waterfront to the I-5/I-90 freeway system would continue as a result of completing the SR 519 Phase 1 improvements, but the expected increase in efficiency from the proposed Phase 2 improvements would not be realized.

Use of the existing South Atlantic Street portion of SR 519 would continue as it does today, connecting the I-5/I-90 freeway system to the south downtown area at Fourth Avenue South and to the stadiums and Port of Seattle terminals at First Avenue South. High-volume westbound truck freight traffic moving from the freeway system to the Seattle waterfront would continue to be constrained to the circuitous routing via Fourth Avenue South and South Atlantic Street. Conflicts between trains and vehicle and pedestrian traffic would continue at the railway crossing on South Royal Brougham Way. Local air quality would worsen as engine idling times lengthened with increasing traffic congestion.

Pedestrian use of South Royal Brougham Way is expected to increase in the future, resulting from increasing use of the stadiums and event center, new land uses, and the availability of light rail service at the new Sound Transit Stadium Station. Under the No Build Alternative, drivers using South Royal Brougham Way as access to stadium parking and to the Seattle waterfront would experience increasing congestion and vehicle-rail traffic conflicts. The BNSF Railway and Amtrak main lines are the primary links for freight and passenger train service between Seattle and national and international markets and passenger destinations, and their traffic volumes will increase. Without the South Royal Brougham Way railroad overpass, the existing hazard of train collisions with vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians would continue and would likely increase by 2030 as a result of growing rail, vehicle, and pedestrian traffic volumes.

