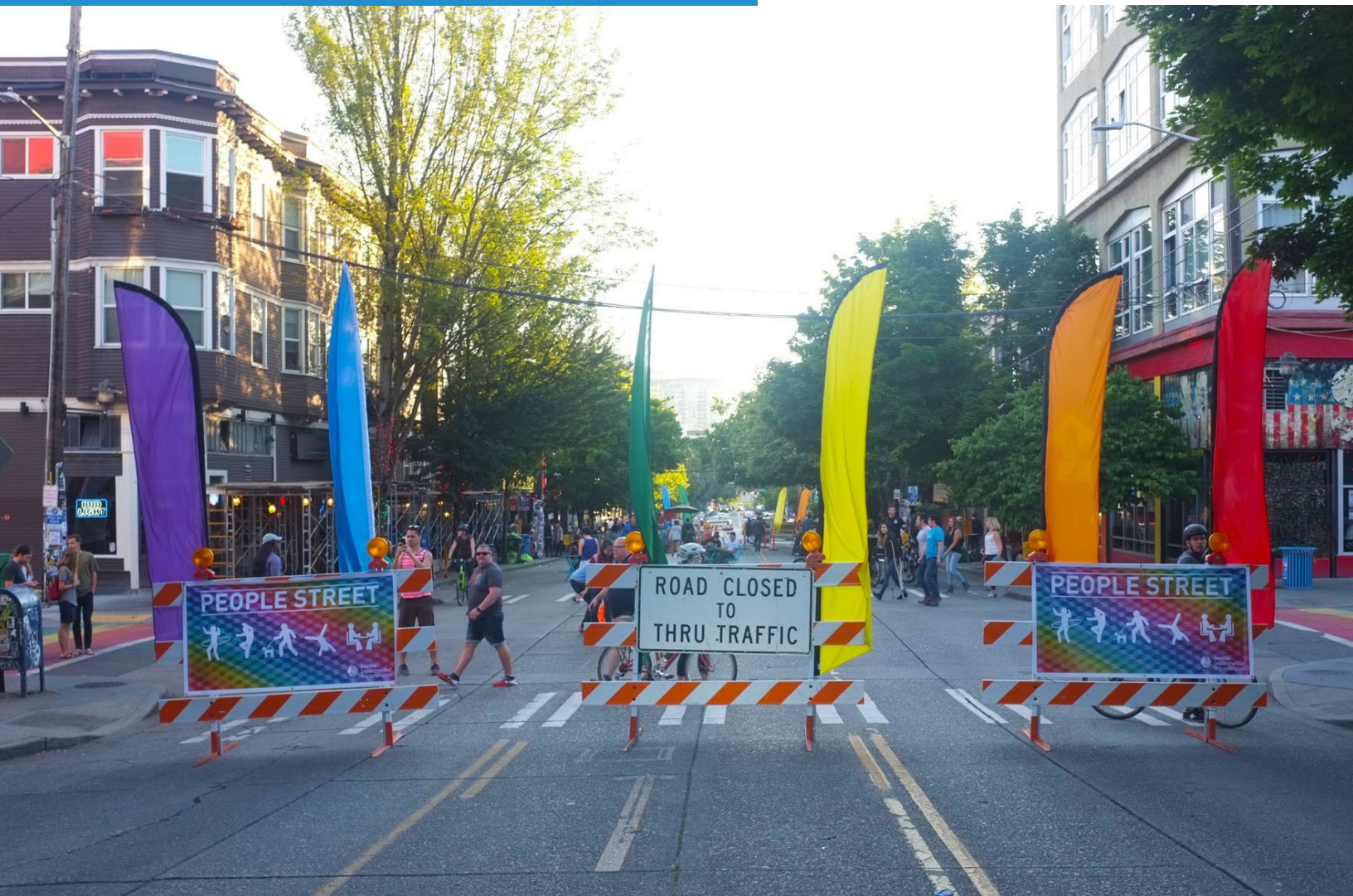


Seattle Department of Transportation

# SEATTLE'S PEOPLE STREET PROGRAM

## 2017 Program Report



January 2018



**Seattle**  
Department of  
Transportation



*East Pike Street during a Saturday people street closure*

# CONTENTS

- 4 Acknowledgments
- 5 Executive Summary
- 6 2015 and 2016 Program Pilot
- 8 Pike People Street 2017
- 13 2017 Program Evaluation
- 22 Lessons Learned
- 23 What's Next?
- 24 2018 Application

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the last three years we tested the concept of pedestrian-only street closures by temporarily closing off certain city blocks to vehicles in the Pike/Pine neighborhood and opening them up for pedestrian access, business engagement, and community activation. In 2015 and 2016 we worked with the community to test a variety of configurations, dates, and times based on feedback from businesses and the public as well as findings from the ongoing program evaluation. After these two years of street closures we heard overwhelmingly positive feedback, with 79% of survey respondents supporting the continuation of the program.

For 2017 we worked with the community to develop a program that responded to feedback from the previous two years, and developed a program that was consistent and predictable with the following goals:

1. Provide a pedestrian environment in Pike/Pine that is comfortable, safe, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the local community
2. Enliven the street and increase public space vibrancy through community and business-led activities
3. Create a balance of pedestrian mobility, vehicle access, and streetscape activities.

In order to understand the performance of the program we developed a data collection plan to evaluate the pedestrian street based on our program goals. Based on this evaluation we learned that the people street concept proved to be effective at providing an environment that is comfortable, safe, accessible, and responsive to community needs while balancing the needs of pedestrian mobility, vehicle access, and streetscape activities.



*Pike people street 2017 closure signage*

After testing this pedestrian street program for three years in the Pike/Pine neighborhood we heard consistently positive support the people street concept through our evaluation tools. From the in-person survey, over 90% of people reported that they liked the pedestrian street and would like to see more in the future. In busy commercial districts throughout Seattle, a people street could provide space to accommodate outdoor cafes, community and arts activation, and space for people to walk and gather. The program provides an opportunity to enliven our streets and increase public space vibrancy through community and business-led activities.

For the next phase of we are looking for communities who want to host a people street program in their neighborhoods to increase access to public space, provide opportunities for community interaction and activation, support neighborhood economic success, and encourage vibrant Seattle communities.

# 2015 AND 2016 PROGRAM PILOT

In 2015 and 2016, we piloted the concept of a temporary, pedestrian-only street in the Pike/Pine neighborhood. The idea was generated as part of Capitol Hill 2020, a community economic development plan developed in 2014 under leadership from the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce. The pedestrian-only streets concept was one of many implementation elements.

We collaborated with community partners to develop and implement the Pike people street pilot program, facilitated three closures in 2015 and three closures in 2016. The street closures tested different configurations, dates, and times based on feedback from businesses and the public as well as findings from the ongoing program evaluation. After two years of pedestrian street closures we learned some valuable lessons to consider for future people street programs:

- Program schedule should be consistent and predictable
- Scheduling should take advantage of warmer weather months
- Providing pedestrian amenities such as tables and chairs will improve the effective use of the expanded pedestrian space.



*Brainstorming session during a community meeting*

We heard consistent support for the pedestrian street program in our post-program evaluation surveys. In fact, support for the program increased from 2015 to 2016, with 79% of survey respondents supporting the continuation of the program into 2017. See the reports from 2015 and 2016 for more details.

## PIKE ST. PEDESTRIAN PILOTS

### DATA + RECOMMENDATION REPORT



*Pike St Pedestrian Pilots, 2015*  
[www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/PikePeopleStreetPostPilotReport2015.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/PikePeopleStreetPostPilotReport2015.pdf)



*Pike/Pine People Street Action Plan, 2016*  
[www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/PikePeopleStreet2016DraftActionPlan.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/PikePeopleStreet2016DraftActionPlan.pdf)

## PIKE PEOPLE STREET

2016 Report + 2017 Work Plan



*Pike People Street 2016 Report & 2017 Work Plan, 2017*  
[www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/pikepeoplestreet-WorkPlan\\_2017.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/pikepeoplestreet-WorkPlan_2017.pdf)

# PIKE PEOPLE STREET 2017

In an effort to continually improve the program, we collaborated with community stakeholders to develop a program for 2017 that responded to feedback from the two previous years. The 2017 program included a consistent and predictable schedule during summer months (see Figure 2 on p. 8) and a reconfigured pedestrian street footprint to address mobility, access, and opportunity for business and community engagement.

## PROGRAM GOALS

We also clarified our prior program goals to create a framework to better evaluate the success of the 2017 program. They are:

1. Provide a pedestrian environment in Pike/Pine that is comfortable, safe, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the local community
2. Enliven the street and increase public space vibrancy through community and business-led activities
3. Create a balance of pedestrian mobility, vehicle access, and streetscape activities

## PROGRAM FOOTPRINT AND SCHEDULE

This year's pedestrian street was intended to minimize impacts to the larger street network, while still allowing for three main categories of activity:

- Pedestrian access
- Community activation
- Business engagement

A total of 10 closures were held during July and August including the Capitol Hill Art Walk Thursdays and every Saturday (except for July 22 because of Capitol Hill Block Party). Saturday closures spanned early evening and late night crowds and ran from 6 PM – 2 AM; Thursday closures accommodated the Art Walk and ran from 4 - 10 PM. See Figure 1 below for a map of the 2017 closure footprint.



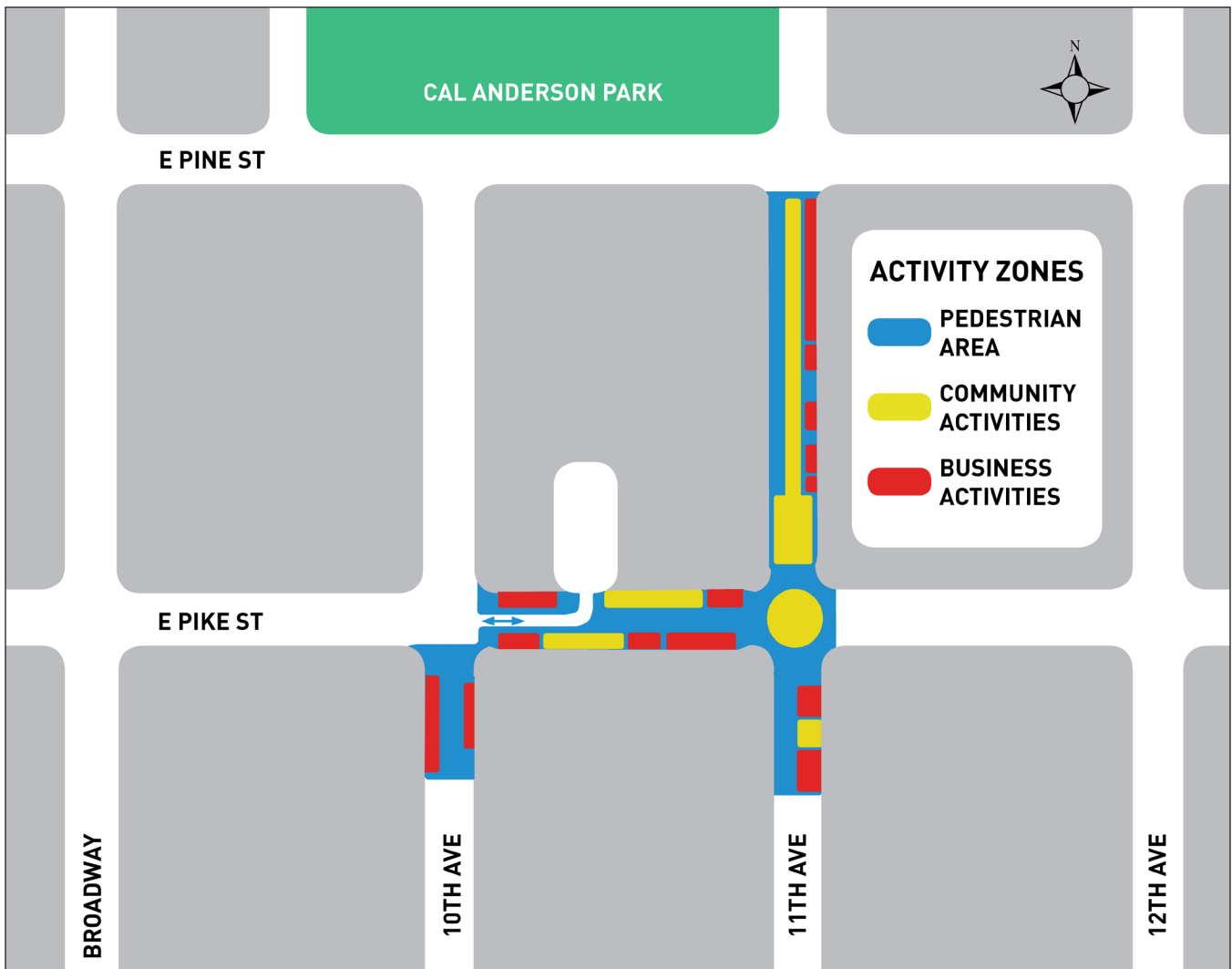


Figure 1. Pike People Street 2017 closure footprint

## PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Pedestrian access, both into and within the street closure, was a focus of this year’s program. In previous years, visitors indicated that the entry points for the pedestrian street did not seem particularly welcoming and could be confusing. They felt it was unclear whether the street was closed for construction or open for people to use, in part due to the required street barricades.

To address these concerns, we used more engaging edge treatments, including people street banners and tall colorful flags, similar to those seen at some farmers markets. Publicly accessible tables and chairs were placed

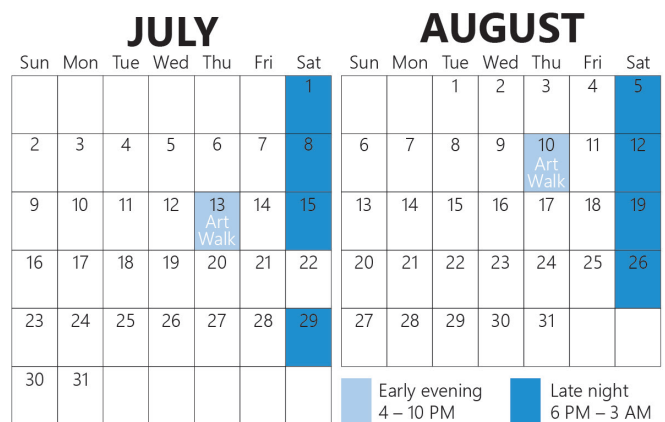


Figure 2. Pike People Street 2017 Schedule

throughout the footprint to provide places for people to linger and relax. These were intended to make a more welcoming, accessible, and comfortable pedestrian environment and alleviate potential confusion.

## COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

A portion of the closure footprint was designated for community activities. Through a simple, free activation application, we invited community members and groups to use and activate the

pedestrian street. Activities included Pianos in the Park, yoga, art displays, and a variety of musical performances. In all, 14 planned community activities occurred over the 10 summer closures. Community activation was more popular during the art walk closures. Some unplanned “pop up” community activation also occurred throughout the summer program, such as a group of dancers during the first art walk closure, and a band played during a busy Saturday night.



*Improved street closure barricades for 2017*

## BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Through agency coordination with Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board, we developed a free and streamlined process to allow food service businesses within the pedestrian street footprint to operate a temporary outdoor café during the street closure to take advantage of the extra space. As part of our efforts to support the outdoor café hosts, we coordinated regular meetings to discuss permit requirements and to address concerns or issues that arose throughout the program. We issued 10 temporary café permits to the interested businesses within the footprint. Participation varied throughout the summer due to a variety of factors (see outdoor café case studies on p. 10).

During one of the Thursday art walk street closures, Chophouse Row, a food and retail corridor, took their ongoing Night Market event out into the street and set up booths featuring local arts and crafts. Both vendors and customers of the Night Market were drawn out into the streets and utilized the extra space that the closure provided. Other businesses within the footprint were able to benefit from the additional pedestrian space. Customers at Big Mario's and Café Vitta utilized the tables and chairs provided by SDOT for eating pizza and drinking coffee.



*Spontaneous dancing during a Thursday street closure*



*Chophouse Row's night market on 11th Ave*



*People using the SDOT-provided tables and chairs on E Pike St*

# Outdoor Cafe Case Studies

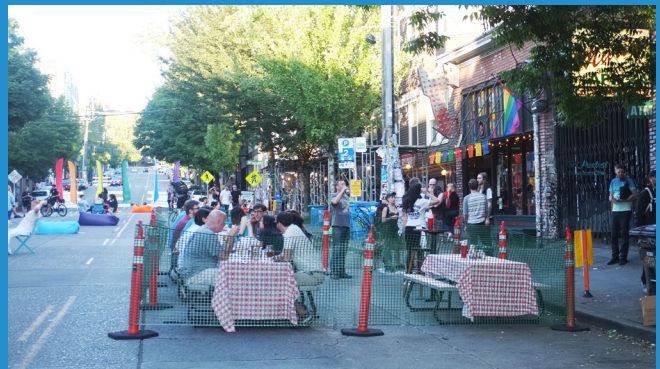
## Case Study 1: Quinn's Pub

A hip gastro-pub with table service on the corner of E Pike St and 10th Ave, Quinn's is a staple for both locals and visitors. Management consistently hosted an outdoor café during pike people street and reported that their sales were higher during those evenings. The outdoor cafe helped offset Quinn's long wait times and was consistently in use throughout the 10 closures.



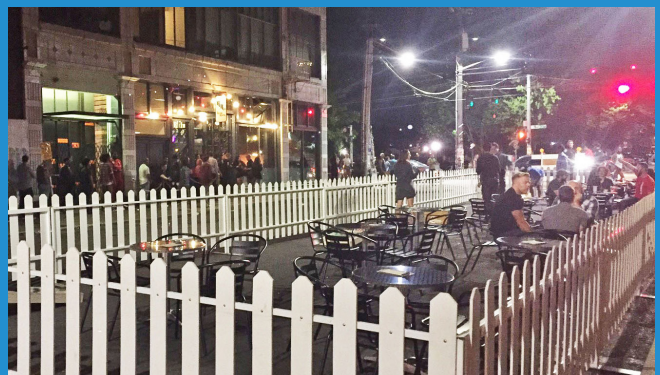
## Case Study 2: Big Mario's

A New York-style pizza joint located mid-block on E Pike St. Management participated in the Pike people street for the first several Saturdays by placing picnic tables outside to supplement the limited interior seating. The picnic area was very popular with patrons and the restaurant saw high turnover. Management mentioned that while the outdoor café was busy, the additional logistics it required were too burdensome and therefore stopped hosting an outdoor after 4 closures.



## Case Study 3: Stout

A large, open restaurant craft beer pub on the corner of 11th Ave and E Pine St. Management participated in the Pike people street for the first few Saturdays by placing lawn games and tables outside. Patrons sometimes used the games and seats, but with ample interior space within the pub, it was never fully occupied. After a few slow Saturdays, they determined it was not widely used and stopped hosting the outdoor café.



# 2017 PROGRAM EVALUATION

Consistent with the previous two years, we developed a data collection plan to evaluate the performance of the pedestrian street based on our program goals. Observations were made on-site during each closure. Our approach drew on the Gehl Public Life methodology, which is a people-centered approach to measuring vibrancy on streets and sidewalks. The following is a description of the data we collected along with key findings.

## IN-PERSON SURVEYS

In-person surveys were used to learn people's opinions about the program, and to learn more about visitors and their activities during the study nights. We approached people on the street with a brief 10-question form that asked generally who they are, why they chose to visit, how they got to the Pike/Pine neighborhood, and what they thought of the pedestrian street.

The majority of people we encountered during Pike people street either lived in or were visiting the neighborhood (Figure 3). Figure 4 shows the reasons that people were visiting the neighborhood during Pike people street, most commonly going out to dinner and drinks or just hanging out with friends. Another important finding from the in-person surveys was the overwhelmingly positive support for the program. See Figure 8 on p. 16 for more details.

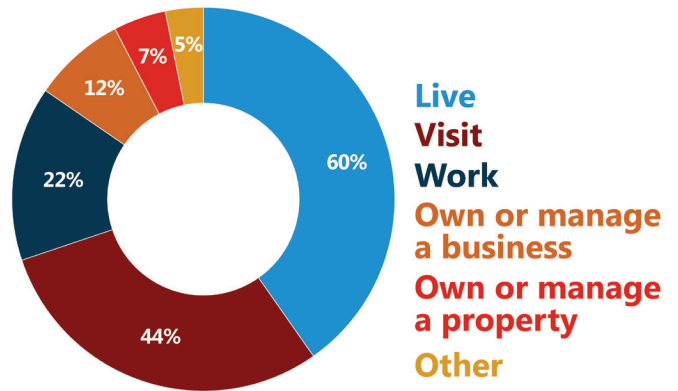


Figure 3. Survey respondents relationship with Pike/Pine neighborhood



SDOT Staff conducting intercept surveys to Pike people street visitors

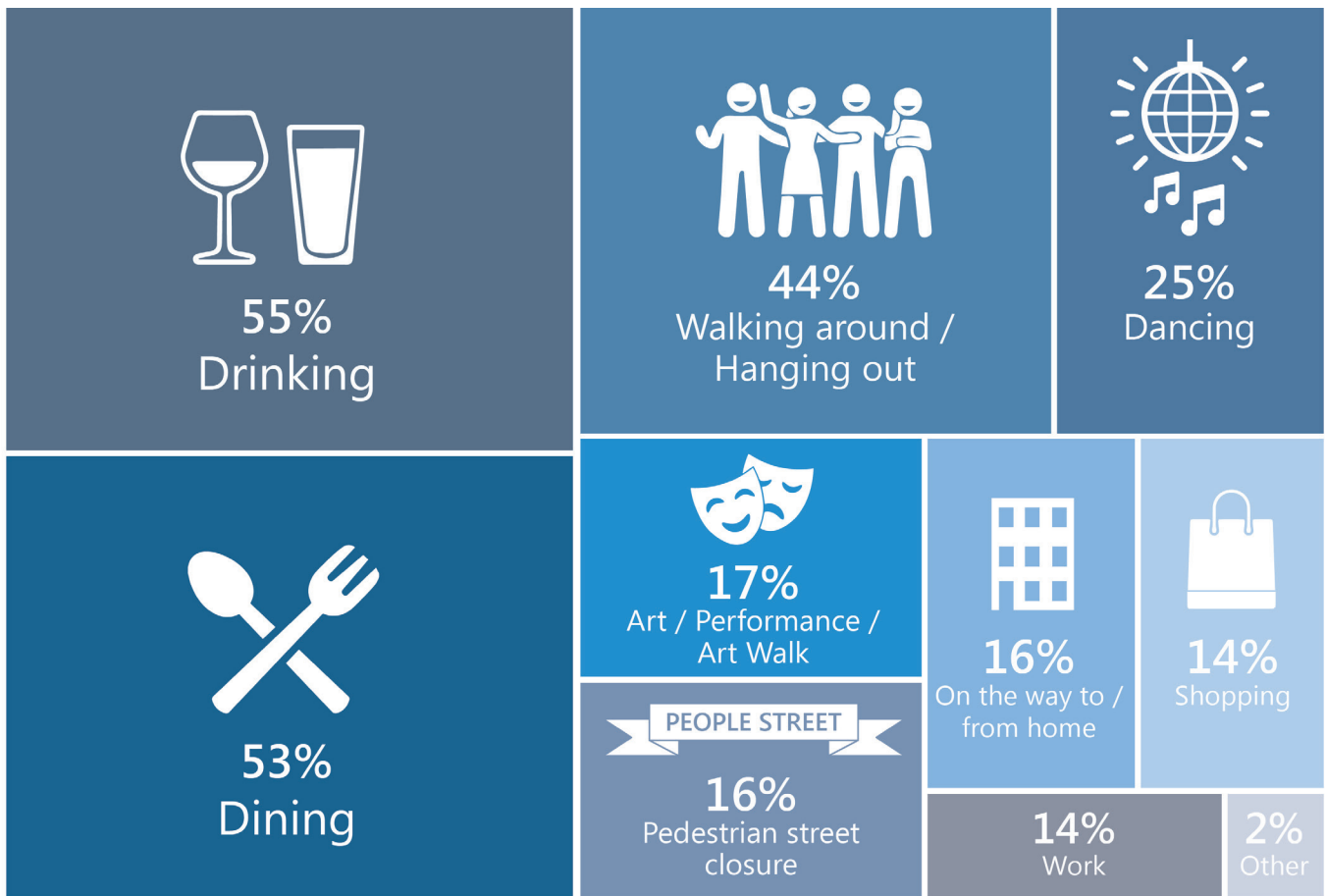


Figure 4. Reasons people were visiting the Pike/Pine neighborhood during Pike people street

## PEDESTRIAN COUNTS

We counted the number of people crossing three entry points to the pedestrian street for 10 minutes each hour to create a rough estimate of pedestrian volume. These counts provide a picture of the scale of pedestrian activity and just how busy streets can get in the study area. Figure 5 shows the pedestrian counts by hour during both Thursday and Saturday closures. Peak pedestrian traffic was observed between 7-9 PM on Thursdays, while on Saturdays the peak pedestrian times were later on between 11 PM - 12 AM.

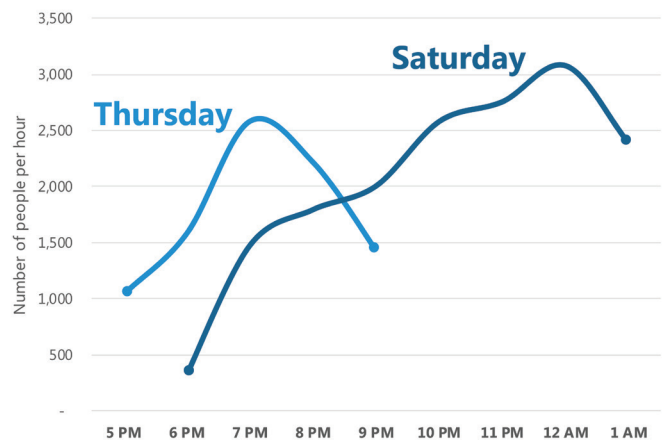


Figure 5. People counted within the Pike people street footprint by hour



*People using the open space for gathering and line queuing on 11th Ave*

## STATIONARY ACTIVITY

While volumes of people circulating in the neighborhood are helpful, we also wanted to understand how people used the street space. Every hour, we noted the types of stationary activity occurring within the closure footprint (e.g. sitting, talking, queuing, etc.) on maps. Figures 6 and 7 on pages 14 and 15 provide a picture of where people are congregating, how the street is being used, and what elements of the pedestrian street work well.

## HOW PEOPLE USED THE SPACE

The Saturday street closures spanned from early evenings to late nights and accommodated different uses of the space throughout the night. The first few hours of the closure experienced lighter foot traffic. Figure 6 shows a composite of stationary activity at 7 PM on 8 different Saturday nights. The space is fairly open with the majority of activity occurring on E Pike St where people were using tables and chairs and gathering in groups. Figure 7 shows a composite of stationary activity at 11 PM on 8 different Saturday nights. There is



*A fashion show hosted by Vermillion during a Thursday street closure*

a significant increase in activity from 7 PM and the majority of activity is still on E Pike St, though there is a notable increase in activity on 11th Ave where people are queuing in line for bars.

# Stationary Activity - 7 PM



Figure 6. Composite of stationary activity at 7pm on 8 Saturday closures



# Stationary Activity - 11 PM

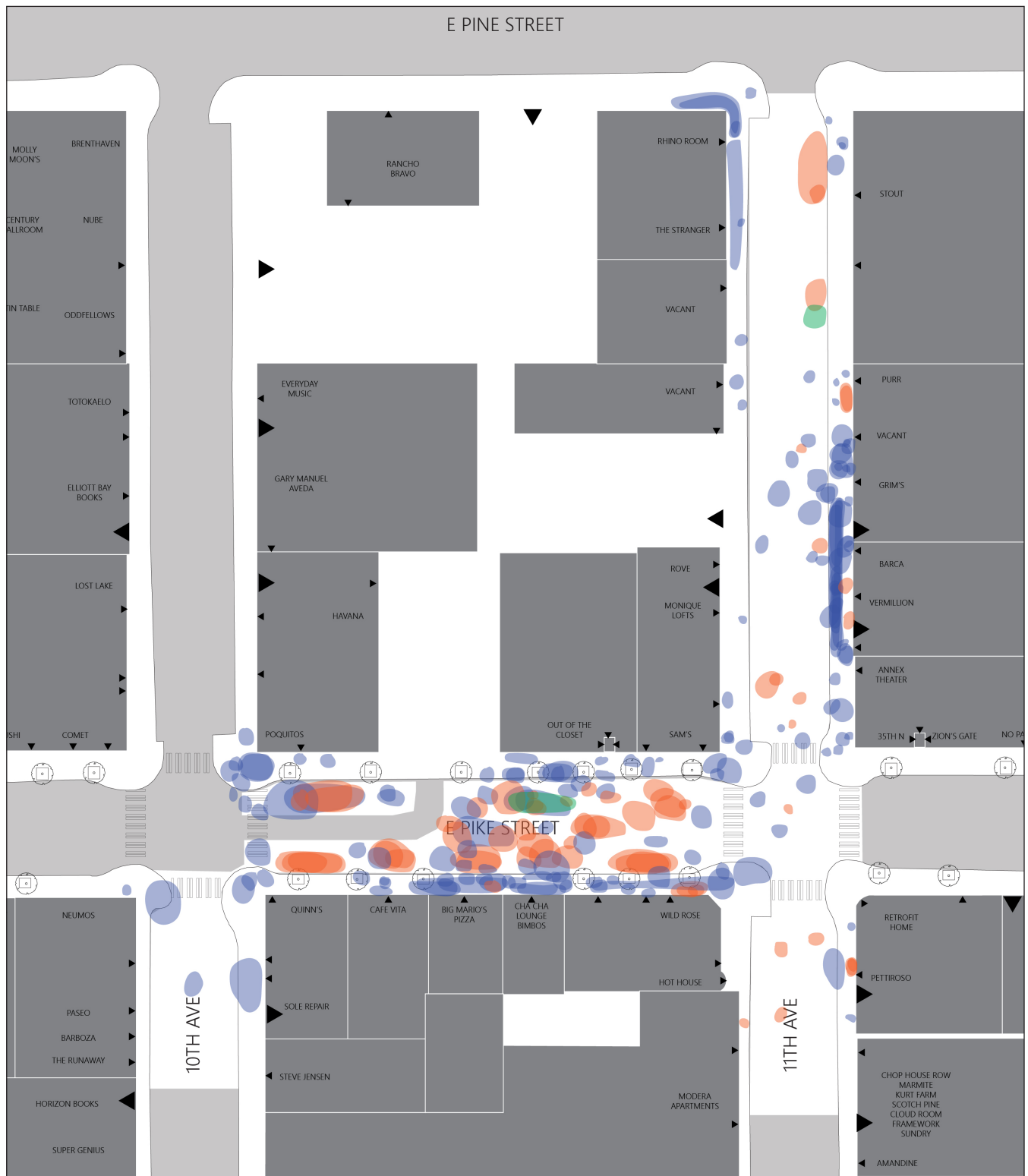


Figure 7. Composite of stationary activity at 11pm on 8 Saturday closures

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Throughout the 10 street closures we collected feedback from a total of 818 visitors to Pike people street. These surveys revealed an overwhelmingly positive response about the people street closure, with 96% of visitors who reported that they liked the pedestrian street and would like to see more people street closures in the future (Figure 8). Figure 9 on page 17 shows some additional survey results including travel patterns and demographics.

In addition to the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data and lessons learned during the program, we reached out to the community following the 2017 closures to learn more about how people felt about the pedestrian streets and to gather feedback on where the program should go next. Results from the post-program survey represent a broader group of opinions than we received during the intercept survey. Of the 379 responses received, the majority of people reported that they either live or visit the Pike/Pine area. Other respondents were business and property managers/owners and neighborhood residents (see Figure 3 on page 11).

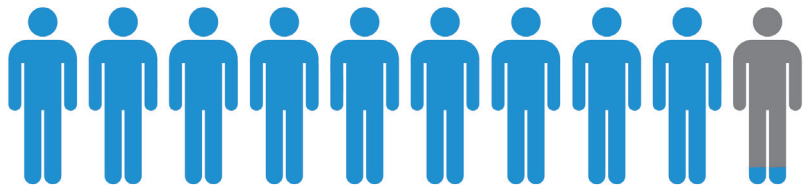


*Gathering surveys on E Pike St*

**96%** liked the pedestrian street, would like to see more pedestrian streets in the future, and felt that it made it easier to walk around the E Pike St area



**91%** felt the pedestrian street made Pike/Pine safer and more comfortable



**77%** felt the pedestrian street did not make it more difficult to get to the Pike/Pine area



*Figure 8. Opinions about Pike people street from the intercept survey*

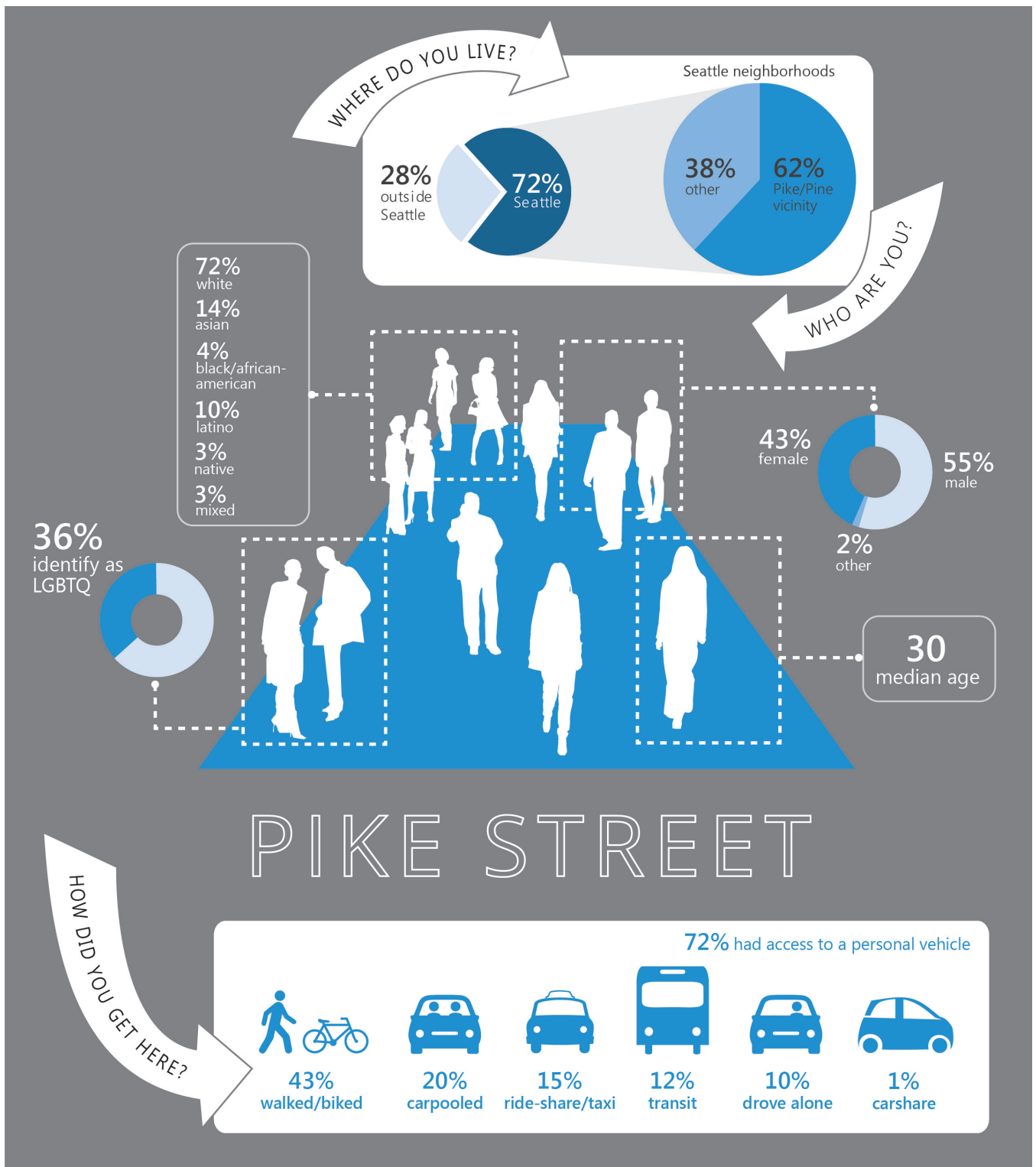


Figure 9. Results from the in-person evaluation survey

## BUSINESS FEEDBACK

Feedback from the businesses provides an important perspective on the street closure. We received 44 responses to the feedback survey from business owners and managers across retail, service, restaurant, bar, and office business sectors. Half of the business respondents were located directly within the street closure footprint and the other half were located within one to three blocks from the closure footprint. Survey respondents reported mixed impacts to their business' sales during Pike people street dates than compared to a typical night. Thirty four percent reported lower than normal sales, 25% reported that sales were about the same, and 5% reported higher sales than on a normal night. A few comments from the survey include:

- "Our sales were almost 33% lower during street closures compared to the same period the previous year."
- "The outdoor cafe brought in business specifically because it was outside."
- "Did not positively impact our operation in the way that we thought."



*Community activation*

The businesses who hosted outdoor cafes during Pike people street also reported mixed experiences, and reported that certain logistics made the cafe experience challenging. Providing additional staffing, acquiring fencing materials, and storing the additional materials for the outdoor cafe were some of the challenges that business owners reported.



*Street yoga on E Pike St*

# What We Heard



*“Do it more. Every weekend. Safety patrols maybe could be included when the streets are not blocked off?”*

*“It would be cool if the program worked with the local businesses within the street closure to organize early evening events centered around the arts. This may in some way shift the focus to what the area actually offers and showcase the residents living here who make the community what it is.”*

*“Temporarily affecting a space such as this creates a disconnect for the public- either it has to be permanent or a one-time thing/event. This method was a disaster for our business and the businesses around us because it removed the vibrancy that we normally have (before 10 PM) without instigating an equal or better energy.”*

*“Publicity!! The only sign that anything would be happening were the no-parking at specific times notices. Need celebratory posters, more coverage in the local press, a schedule of events (would love to see something online like the SAM sculpture park summer events calendar), and if it’s on Art Walk nights, there should be clear maps of Art Walk venues and cross-publicity for both.”*

*“I enjoyed it being closed on a Thursday night. It felt as though there were more people out and I liked the outside activities.”*

*“I just really love that we’ve expanded seating areas/activity areas, and removed auto-centric elements of our community. Thank you!”*

*“Spread them around the city on all days of the week and promote them for good vendors, retail, music, etc.”*



# LESSONS LEARNED

From our in-person observations, surveys, and direct conversations during Pike people street 2017, these are the four key lessons we learned:

- 1. Strong community partners are essential to the success of the program.** Future people street should be led by a community stakeholder such as BIA, Community Group, Business, etc. Local community has better connections and on-the-ground knowledge than the City. Community leaders can build better coalitions, leverage community resources, and develop support with key stakeholders to ensure long-term program success.
- 2. Extensive outreach should be a key component to the program,** throughout the process including preliminary (in the planning of the program), during (to gather feedback and adjust along the way), and afterwards (to effectively evaluate success).

Local businesses need time to plan and promote the event in order to leverage the opportunities.

- 3. Community activation requires extensive planning and outreach.** Community partners are best-suited to identify opportunities for programming and engagement during a people street. Scheduling a people street in tandem with an existing community event can be an opportunity to leverage an existing interest.
- 4. Feedback/surveys and on-site evaluation indicate that people like this program.** From the in-person survey over 90% of people reported that they liked the pedestrian street and would like to see more in the future; in the post-program survey, 75% of people reported that safety walking in the Pike/Pine area was improved during the street closure.



*"Pianos in the Park" during a Thursday street closure*

# WHAT'S NEXT?

After testing a pedestrian street program for three years in the Pike/Pine neighborhood, we learned that people like and support the people street concept. As such, we recommend continuing the people street program into 2018 and expanding the opportunity to other interested neighborhoods across the City.

For the next phase of the people street program we are looking for communities who want to host a people street in their neighborhoods to increase access to public space, provide opportunities for community interaction and activation, support neighborhood economic vibrancy.

Interested partners will lead all program planning, logistics, outreach, and neighborhood engagement. We will provide technical support and guidance based on our experience leading Pike people street over the last few years. Seattle's people street 2018 program will run June-August 2018. We are holding an open call for neighborhood people street proposals and will select up to 3 interested communities to hold up to 10 people street closures during summer of 2018.

We are looking for neighborhoods to submit proposals demonstrating capacity to:

- Lead a neighborhood discussion on people street and perform outreach to inform the public on a specific proposal
- Staff people street dates, including data collection, set-up and break-down, and working with business owners and community groups answering questions
- Promote the people street and manage those interested in using the street for creative, engaging public programming and enhancing neighborhood economic development

Proposals will be evaluated based on the applicants demonstrated ability to lead a people street program in their community. For this initial round of applications we are looking for groups who have experience managing community events, and who can successfully take charge and lead a neighborhood people street closure.



*Live music during Pike people street*



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