

Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop Open House #3 December 11, 2008 Public Comment Summary

Overview

The City of Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation and Seattle Parks Foundation hosted the third public open house for the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop to present final design elements and gain public feedback before finalizing the Master Plan. Set to be released in January 2009, the document will propose solutions to specific design challenges around the corridor and recommend future improvements to further enhance the loop.

The Master Plan is an opportunity to recommend further improvements to the existing pedestrian and bicycle routes, creating a seamless and continuous, 6.2 mile loop around Lake Union. The alignment of the loop is based on the existing identified routes. Recommendations for future improvements and design solutions are based on public input received from public open houses, meetings of the project's citizen-based Advisory Committee, and email communication from citizens. The guiding principles developed by the Advisory Committee and the project team shaped the outcome of the master plan planning process.



Member of design team explaining proposed wayfinding system

Public Involvement

The Master Plan process began in early 2008 and included three public open houses and four Advisory Committee meetings. In all, more than 227 people have attended our open houses and 276 people have submitted some form of written comment about the master plan through email or by comment forms provided at open houses.

After gathering feedback at the first open house, the design team further solidified the route alignment and design elements. A second public open house sought input from the public on eight key segments around the lake and corresponding design alternatives. Feedback received at the second open house enabled the design team to select preferred solutions. The third and final public open house then served to present the recommended design solutions and gain public input. This is a summary of the public comments received during the third open house.

Open House #3

The City of Seattle, Parks and Recreation Department hosted the third public open house for the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop Master Plan on December 11, 2008 from 5:00-7:30pm at the Lake Union Armory. Forty-seven people attended the event and 84 comments were collected through comment forms, feedback written on display boards and email messages received following the open house.

There was a brief presentation at 6 p.m. in which the project team highlighted the final opportunities for public involvement and outlined the master planning process. Terry Reckord, the lead architect for the project, provided an overview of the recommended design alternatives to be included in the Master Plan. Display boards featured background information, the public involvement process, and design elements for featured segments. There was also a display to present revised concepts for a wayfinding system around the loop. Terry encouraged attendees to note their feedback directly on the display boards and address specific questions to project staff in attendance.



Presentation



Comment Form Station



Terry Reckord, Lead Architect Explaining Design Elements

Public Comment

This is an overview of the public comments collected regarding the proposed loop alignment and recommended solutions for design challenges. In general, attendees were supportive of the planned improvements to the loop. Most comments related to the Mallard Cove and Fairview Avenue segments, addressing topics such as safety and accessibility. There was also a lot of feedback on the proposed cable ferry alternative, a relatively new design element.

The following summarizes key themes, categorized by geographic segment around the loop.

Mallard Cove

Public Comments

- **Cable Ferry** – In response to severe regulatory and navigability concerns related to the proposed boardwalk through Mallard Cove, the design team developed a ferry cable alternative. Attendees showed large interest in this new design element and provided a mixed response to the proposed cable ferry option. Proponents of the ferry pointed out accessibility concerns associated with the current route's steep incline and proclaimed the ferry a viable alternative. Those who oppose the ferry addressed the safety, environmental, feasibility, and regulatory concerns associated with this option. Many of the comments also requested additional information and analysis of the cable ferry before its incorporation in the Master Plan.

General Support –

- Park and nature recreation should be available to all citizens...including those who are disabled...unable to walk the steeper inclines. I fully support the proposal of a cable ferry.
- Several attendees shared their support verbally with project staff, calling the cable ferry a cool idea.

Safety – Significant safety concerns include potentially hazardous impacts on search and rescue efforts and recreational users.

- This small waterway is used at night by residents, kayakers, the Harbor Patrol and in an emergency, the City fireboats. The ferry and both docks would need to be clearly lighted at all times, even if not in use, as they would be hazards to navigation in a narrow but active waterway.
- How will the ferry and docks be lighted at night?
- Would ferry operate only during daylight hours? Night time operation would seem quite hazardous.
- Fire boat already has narrow passage and constrained turning ability to reach second row of houseboats in Mallard Cove. This entrance must not be constricted further.
- This channel is a small water sports area for residents and the public via the park at the south end. It varies with weather of course, but in addition to residents' boat traffic, it is normal to have lots of kayakers, swimmers, fishermen, and others. How will the ferry not impose safety hazards on these current users of the waterway?

Navigability/Access – Several attendees noted the cable's potential to inhibit boat access to the houseboats at Mallard Cove.

- You could not put an above water cable in place as many boats (including sailboats) use this narrow waterway daily (and nightly).

- If a dock or extension of any kind from the shore at the South terminal were added, it would block access to the second and third rows of Mallard Cove houseboats.
- Large boats would have difficulty avoiding the cable, even given some amount of warning.
- Ferry boats must not impede access to adjacent homes and the waterway entrance to back part of Mallard Cove.
- Severe navigation problems with ferry.

Environmental – Significant impacts to the lake bottom need to be evaluated before further consideration of a cable ferry.

- An underwater cable is problematic as it could not be on the bottom. Lake Union has a highly-polluted bed that cannot be disturbed, as reflected in the “no anchoring” policy.

Cost/Feasibility – Attendees also questioned the cost and feasibility of a cable ferry.

- I was just told that this ferry would not be the main trail route—how can you even think of justifying the cost?
- Cable ferry at Roanoke is not a feasible option, it would be inefficient, expensive and it is unnecessary.

Privacy/Noise – Residents voiced concern for privacy and noise impacts, pointing out the ferry’s close proximity to homes.

- You would be running a ferry up and down a channel that would put the ferry in close proximity to our living rooms and bedrooms (feet, not hundreds of yards). This would destroy our privacy and property values.
- Note that families live in the houseboats that will be mere feet from the ferry. I doubt that the ferries could be made totally silent, and I’m sure the riders would not be. Please be considerate of the residents of this small waterway.
- Noise issues associated with the ramp.

Logistics – Many citizens expressed concern for problematic logistics associated with the ferry.

- Would it operate during the night?
- The ferry would become a tourist attraction, bringing additional cars to an area with limited parking for non-residents.

• **Edgar Street End** – A few comments inquired about developing the loop connection at the Edgar Street end while others pointed out environmental issues to be considered.

- We need an easement across adjacent property to north –avoid Yale Terrace or Eastlake Ave. Both are dangerous to bikes and walkers.
- Edgar Street end is a natural wildlife preserve. Leave it alone.

- Currently no existing stair at Edgar—private property.
- Short of getting a ferry, use the Edgar right-of-way to reach Fairview. Good idea [says another commenter].

Fairview Avenue

- **Safety** – Numerous comments addressed pedestrian safety and showed strong support for traffic calming techniques.
 - Traffic calming measure would be good, speed limit 10-15 mph max.
 - Traffic calming and reduced speeds should be a priority.
 - Vary texture of paving and elevations
 - Demand rather than consider traffic calming. Make it a priority.
 - Better visibility required at corner of Fairview and Roanoke.
 - On Fairview there are serious deficiencies in paving and drainage. Pedestrians face increased risks in our rainy environment when forced to compete with auto traffic—often speeding and sometimes splashing those trying to share the narrow open passages.
 - Reconfiguring of intersection to enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety would be good.
 - Regular “flooding” on Fairview Avenue East during rain—limits the space available for pedestrians and bikes.
 - Steep drop off on Fairview north of Fairview Park is dangerous—define edge to increase safety.

Shared Space Street – While most were supportive of the shared street concept, comments indicated a strong preference to preserve parking spaces.

- Caution: do not eliminate any parking, de jure or de facto.
- Provide signs that explicitly say mixed use/pedestrians and vehicles
- Do divert cut-through traffic.
- Separate pedestrians and bicycle lane with planting buffer. The perception is that cars are priority and not people. It is visually unpleasant to have motorists as part of pedestrian/ bike spaces.
- Appropriate surface finish for types of traffic (some parallel, some perpendicular)
- Organize houseboat entries without loss of parking.

Green Street Design – Attendees were supportive of plans to follow Green Street Design standards.

- More natural drainage along Fairview Ave. East would be great, both south and north. No added sidewalks or curbs please! We want natural, green street ambiance. (Did not stay for presentation as a conflict with another meeting)
- Adhere to the Green Street Plan.

Yale Terrace/Roanoke

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety** – Numerous comments called attention to unsafe conditions along Yale Terrace and Roanoke streets.
 - The intersection at Yale and Roanoke should have some control—preferably a stop/yield sign on Yale.
 - Shift signs to go up to Eastlake from Roanoke to Hamlin. Safety issues galore on Yale and the alley.
 - Better visibility required at corner of Fairview and Roanoke.
 - Bicyclists will get killed on Yale Avenue as cars back out of their driveways onto a narrow street. Bikes will zoom down Edgar and turn sharply onto Yale Avenue.
 - Single lane on Yale. Cars have to navigate when one is oncoming Bicyclists come around corner as a car could pull out and into one.
 - Hard to see cars, bikes/etc. coming down Roanoke as we merge from Yale.

Westlake Avenue

- **Safety** – Comments indicated unsafe walking and biking conditions and concern for poor visibility. There was an overwhelming consent to add a lane for bicyclists.
 - Narrow walkway—keep bikes off pathway.
 - Convert truck/service/fire lane to bike lane or sharrow.
 - Use sharrow signage to keep bikes in load/unload lane
 - I second this! This vehicular stop [around 2000 Westlake] is dangerous. I have dodged many cars on the strip. The perception as a pedestrian is that it is dangerous and unsafe. Yes! [from another commenter]
 - Narrow walkway dangerous for all.
 - Make narrow lane a sharrows.
 - Westlake doesn't feel safe to me as a bicyclist.
 - Regarding directing fast bikes to Westlake and Dexter, nobody walking and biking will go up that steep hill just to come back down later on.
 - Yes to enhancing visibility.
 - Increase curb radii and trim vegetation at North end of Westlake path to create more pedestrian space.

Eastlake Avenue East

- **Pedestrian Safety** – A few citizens requested safety improvements on Eastlake Avenue East.
 - Due to the new signs I suspect, there are many bicyclists riding on the sidewalk on the trail...near Eastlake Ave E to Westlake Ave. While many of them are considerate of pedestrians and slow down for them, there are also quite a few who race along this sidewalk.
 - Could the signage be modified to direct bicyclists to the street or parking lots for most of the route?

Miscellaneous

- **Signage** – A few comments suggested incorporation of historic elements in the wayfinding system.
 - Add “walking fish” emblem to bollards in Eastlake neighborhood.
 - Incorporate correct pronunciation of Cheshiahud on signage materials.
- **Peace Park and Burke Gillman Trail**
 - Improve pedestrian connection to new trail, Waterway 15 and John Stanford International School play ground and neighborhood (up 4th Ave NE)
 - Connect lower lake level street ends to sidewalk and streets above Northlake Way
 - Opportunities for storm water cleaning/green streets uphill from Lake.
- **Gasworks Park**
 - Opportunities for trailside gathering space at public (King County) owned site at west entrance (Northlake and Densmore).
 - Sightlines are limited for bikes at east entrance (Northlake and Meridian).