

Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop Open House #2 - September 11, 2008 Public Comment Summary

Background

Earlier in 2008, the City of Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation and the Seattle Parks Foundation embarked upon a master planning process to create a Master Plan document that will serve as a design blueprint for enhancing a multi-use loop around Lake Union, called the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop. The loop aims to connect neighborhoods, local resources, existing lakefront and parks; creating a continuous network of open space, ideal for a wide variety of recreational activities and enjoyment of Lake Union.

The Master Plan is an opportunity to make refinements to the existing, disjointed pedestrian and bicycle routes, converting them into a continuous loop circling Lake Union. The alignment of the loop will in part be based on the existing identified routes and upon public input received from public open houses, meetings of the project's citizen-based Advisory Committee, e-mail communication for citizens and the guiding principles developed by the Advisory Committee and the project team to shape the outcome of the master planning process.

Seattle Parks and Recreation, in conjunction with the Office of the Mayor, convened an eleven member citizen advisory group to help develop design principles to guide the development of the master plan and to comment on and evaluate the proposed segments of the loop that will make up the final design of the trail's alignment. Members of the group include representatives from the Eastlake Community Council; the Fremont Neighborhood Council; the Wallingford Community Council; the South Lake Union Friends and Neighbors Community Council (SLUFAN); and representatives from the Floating Homes Association; the Mallard Cove Home Owners Association; and a marine business representative. Additionally, the panel includes a representative from both of the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Boards.

The final product will result in an improved 6.2-mile loop around the lake that will make Lake Union accessible to all neighborhood residents and businesses, as well as tourists and citizens of the region who wish to enjoy and celebrate the beauty and serenity of the lake. The Master Plan will highlight the challenges and potential solutions for areas around the lake where obvious loop connections do not exist and clarify the final route layout.

The Master Plan process includes three open houses and five public meetings of the Advisory Committee. To date, we have held two public open houses, one on June 16, 2008 and one on September 11, 2008. The Advisory Group has met three times since May 2008. In all, more than 180 people have attended our open houses and 76 people have submitted some form of written commentary about the master plan through email or through 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. This is a summary of the public comments received during the second open house.

The Master Plan project is highlighted on the Seattle Parks' webpage (<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/LakeUnionLoop/>). Overall, public comments have been positive and have largely mirrored the project's guiding principles. However, concerns have been raised over the timing of the signage installation and the route alignment between East Hamlin and Louisa Streets. Seven key themes have emerged from public comments. These include concerns or comments about:

- Respecting and maintaining neighborhood character
- Balancing public and private access
- Ensuring that final design elements promote direct access and connectivity with existing routes and resources surrounding the neighborhood
- Improving mobility and safety
- Minimizing parking space losses in the final Master Plan
- Improving traffic flows and minimizing traffic congestion.

Open House #2

The City of Seattle, Parks and Recreation Department hosted the second public open house for the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop Master Plan on September 11, 2008 from 5:00-7:30pm at the Lake Union Armory. Seventy-one people attended the event.

There was a brief presentation at 6 p.m. in which the project team highlighted the opportunities for public involvement and outlined the master planning process. Terry Reckord, the lead architect for the project, provided an overview of the design alternatives. Display boards featured background information, the proposed alternatives and design concepts for each of the eight segments. There was also a display to present initial concepts for a wayfinding system around the loop. Flip charts were placed at each station and attendees were encouraged to note their feedback, preferences, concerns and suggestions.

Public Comment

Numerous public comments were collected regarding the proposed loop alignment. In general, attendees were supportive of the Master Plan and excited to see improvements in the loop. Below is an overview of the feedback collected at the open house. A few themes emerged, including pedestrian safety, parking preservation, accessibility and concern about privacy and property damage.

The following summarizes public comments and catalogues them by the six key segments presented at the second open house.

KEY SEGMENTS

Segments 1-2 Fairview Avenue

- **Parking - Several attendees noted that elimination of parking spaces would significantly harm businesses and anger residents.** There is a strong desire among residents and business owners to preserve parking on Fairview Avenue.

Public Comments:

- Implement vehicle size limits or require parking permits to regulate parking.
 - Work with Metro to reclaim parking spaces recently designated for bus parking in an extremely congested area.
 - Proposed pedestrian path will eliminate existing parking opposite houseboats.
 - There is very limited parking available to non-residents.
 - Houseboat owners are concerned about losing parallel parking spaces.
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- **Pedestrian Safety - Option 2 requires pedestrians walk behind parked cars creating a potential safety hazard.**

Public Comments

- I am worried about the safety of the proposed striped pedestrian pathway between cars and pedestrians.
- Implementing a crosswalk in proposed site could pose danger from cars speeding off of Eastlake.
- Several comments suggested making Fairview a one-way street to create space for a separate bike/pedestrian path.
- Building a boardwalk (Option 1) on the slope makes a safer passage- but do not remove any trees.
- Keep speed limit low for kids, families, and pedestrians.
- Pedestrian/biker safety around Fairview is my biggest concern but beautification elements would be nice too—I love the idea of the boardwalk.

- **Congestion – Residents expressed general concern about an increase in congestion along this corridor.**

Public Comments:

- Fairview Ave. E is currently congested with cars, cycles and pedestrians.
- Advertising this section will bring more people on foot and on bikes.

Segment 3 Mallard Cove

- **Privacy & Property Damage – There is concern among Mallard Cove neighborhood residents for privacy and property damage issues resulting from Option 2.**

Public Comments:

- If no decision has been made why was Option 2 signed as the trail last Saturday? The signage is premature.

- **Option 1: Boardwalk over water – This design option for the Mallard Cove Segment was the most favored by citizens attending the open house. It is being studied as a possibility because it would provide quick and easy access. However, the number of regulatory issues and the number of design challenges that would have to be overcome makes this option prohibitive.**

Public Comments:

- Feasibility and regulatory issues will prevent implementation.
- Why is Option 1 even presented if it cannot be permitted?
- Would love to see this design.
- Privacy and boat access issues.

- **Option 2-3: Use existing or modified path on Yale Terrace or Eastlake – These options direct users to a combination of streets and alleys and utilize the existing bicycle routes outlined in the City of Seattle Bicycle Master Plan.**

Public Comments:

- Rather than Yale Terrace bring path up to Eastlake on Edgar.
- The “secondary route” option is too steep for strollers, bicycles.
- Is there a feasible option connecting down to the waterway on Edgar?

Segments 4-6 University Bridge, Gasworks/Northlake, Fremont – The options for this segment explore shared and separate paths for bicycles and pedestrians, using the Burke Gilman and Northlake Ave.

- **Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety – Maintaining a safe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists is an important consideration in planning this segment of the loop. Continuous access for both modes is needed.**

Public Comments:

- Safety improvements for pedestrians are needed at the west end of University Bridge.
- What about biking in a clockwise direction?

Segments 7-8 Fremont Bridge S. and Westlake

- **ADA Accessibility – Accessibility is one of the guiding principles of the master plan.**

Public Comment:

- Make sure loop is ADA accessible: The only current handicap access across Westlake in this area is at Kenmore Air/American meter and Appliance. A cross walk here would be best for handicap residents and businesses.

- **Alignment –General concern is that alignment allows pedestrians and bicycles to share right-of-way. The general sentiment seemed to move towards separating mode uses along the segment of the loop.**

Public Comment:

- No need to improve lower road for Lake Union walkers—they will walk it in any condition.
- Send/sign new walkway along Westlake (for tourists) – Seattle residents will know they can take any route.
- It would be great to have more crosswalks across Westlake to access the loop.

- **Bicycles –Accessibility and safety concerns related to cyclists along this segment of the loop.**

Public Comments:

- Slow bikes in this area.
- Can bike lane symbols go in parking lanes?
- Please include signage along this segment to notify bikers this is not a high speed area.

Other Comments

- **Shared Use Concept – Most feedback indicated support for the “shared use” concept.**

- Love idea with paved street to design different “shared space” road.
- I like the brick/alternate street treatment to highlight the mixed use nature of this portion of the trail.
- We support shared use concept!!! Aka, Pike Place Market.
- Need separate space for pedestrians and cars.

- **General Support**

- I love the loop! I love the changes that are happening and the loop.

- Any vote would be for improvements that facilitate the biking and walking even in cases where such improvements might eliminate some parking or otherwise make it more Inconvenient for drivers.

Miscellaneous

- Make entire route ADA accessible.
- Neighborhood residents would like better notice by mail and better visuals for notices on website. Posting on poles.
- Fairview/Eastlake junction to NOAA is completely inadequate for pedestrians – trail street with garbage and blocked by huge pick-up trucks blocking access.
- City zoning is antithetical to pedestrian use.
- Try a bus round-about @ Eastlake @ Fairview
- Don't change SDOT parking planning effort that has evolved.
- Don't squeeze out water dependent uses (boats/houses) out—don't create too urban/retail environment.