

South Ballard Transportation Corridor Study
Summary of June 19, 2001 Workshop

The following is a summary of input received from participants at the June 19, 2001 SBTCS workshop. Participants were selected to represent a broad range of interests and users in the Ballard area. A list of workshop attendees is attached.

The workshop first sought input related to issues for all land modes of transportation. The second half of the workshop was spent brainstorming potential solutions to the issues. Some of the issues and ideas go beyond the scope and purpose of the SBTCS, but all ideas are recorded here. This workshop is not to be considered the only source of information for the study. Additional issues and potential improvements will be identified through analysis of transportation data and community input as the study progresses.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Commuter Traffic

Leary Way

- Leary Way is underutilized between Market Street and 15th Avenue NW. This section of roadway has excess capacity between the two intersections.
- Synchronization of traffic signals on Leary Way is needed.
- A signal is proposed for the intersection of Leary Way/N 46th Street to help left turn and crossing movements.
- Parking along Leary Way south of 47th Street can create congestion and confusion during off-peak times. The on-street parking reduces the street from five travel lanes to three.
- There are several five-legged intersections along the diagonal section of Leary Way between Market Street and 15th Avenue that are difficult to control.
- Leary Way/17th Avenue intersection is vast. Connections on the south side of the intersection are confusing. This intersection needs better definition.
- Leary Way/20th Avenue intersection also lacks definition.

- Leary Way/11th Avenue intersection is unsignalized and has limited sight lines because of curve located to east. It is potentially dangerous for unfamiliar drivers.
- Leary Way/3rd Avenue intersection is becoming a problem. A traffic signal may help alleviate problem, but would likely increase traffic on 3rd Avenue NW, which is not desired.
- Vehicular speed on Leary Way is too high.

Shilshole Avenue/46th Street/45th Street Corridor

- Shilshole Avenue is over-utilized.
- Shilshole Avenue/17th Avenue intersection is dangerous. Left turns are difficult to make.
- Many motorists go through the stop sign at the 46th Street/9th Avenue intersection without stopping.
- Intersection at 24th Avenue/54th Street intersection (just south of Market Street) is awkward and potentially dangerous. It is difficult for northbound trucks to make the sharp right turn onto Shilshole Avenue.

Market Street

- Market Street is required to handle too many functions—local circulation, through commuter street, transit street—it is a mess and is the last choice for many motorists. Problems with signals, buses and signage may start far away from this corridor. Motorists are using other streets in the area (Shilshole, 65th Street, etc.) to avoid the congestion on Market Street.
- Synchronization of traffic signals on Market Street is needed (the City and Metro are currently working on a signal interconnect project for the section of Market Street between 24th Avenue and 12th Avenue.)
- In-lane transit stop on Market Street west of Leary Way causes delays to non-bus traffic.

Ballard Avenue

- Past change of Ballard Avenue (between Market Street and 22nd Avenue) from two-way street to a one-way street caused traffic volumes on Shilshole Avenue to increase.
- One-way traffic on Ballard Avenue allowed for a small increase in parking along this street; however, one merchant would prefer to have higher visibility that higher traffic volumes create instead of the additional parking.

- Ballard Avenue/17th Avenue intersection is confusing and potentially dangerous.

Other

- There is no good connection to the Ballard Bridge from Shilshole Avenue, which forces motorists to wind through on 17th to get to Ballard Avenue or Leary Way access ramps.
- No good signage directing motorists and other modes of transportation to various routes.

Truck Issues

- Truck movement to the Ship Canal is critical to the maritime industries. Most commodities serving the maritime industry (including fuel) are trucked to the area.
- Many of the industries have awkward loading configurations that require backing maneuvers. For example, three trucks + trailers per day have to back down the ramp to Ballard Oil.
- It is cost prohibitive to ship most commodities by rail for short distances. Ballard Oil trucks its fuel from Harbor Island (where it arrives by pipeline).
- Connections to the regional arterials (SR 99, I-5, and I-90) are critical.

Rail Issues

- Rail bed and public crossings have been upgraded in the past 3½ years since Ballard Terminal Railroad Company (BTRC) took over the line. The rail can now accommodate the heaviest freight cars (e.g., 114 tons of payload for sand/gravel cars).
- Track is in good enough condition that it could probably be licensed to carry passenger trains.
- The south end of the line is at 40th Street/6th Avenue and the north end of the line is north of Seaview Avenue (across from Ray's Boathouse).
- Locomotive shop is located near 8th Avenue/43rd Street intersection.
- Future plans (next 5 to 6 years) include:
 - New siding adjacent to Western Pioneer
 - Level unloading ramp near Ballard Transfer between Shilshole Avenue and 26th Avenue
 - Develop construction and equipment storage area between 11th Avenue and 14th Avenue.

- Potential re-use of Bardahl Oil spur (located in the 14th Avenue right-of-way)
- Potential re-use of Rudd Paint Spur.
- Parking issues are largely solved. They set up “No Parking” signs on sawhorses the day before a train movement to prevent parking on the tracks. The “No Parking” signs on the telephone poles were not effective. They will tow cars if necessary, but prefer not to and would rather find owners of the vehicles parked on the tracks.
- BTRC opposes use of the rail right-of-way for the Burke-Gilman trail extension. There are too many functions that need to be accommodated, particularly in the section between 15th and 30th Avenues (parking, truck loading/unloading, railcar sidings, etc.)

Transit Issues

- Market Street is Metro’s main transit corridor. Congestion on Market Street affects transit reliability, which is Metro’s primary concern. Metro is working with City to synchronize the traffic signals along Market Street between 24th Avenue and 12th Avenue.
- Route 44 to the University District is one of Metro’s best utilized routes. Buses run every 15 minutes, with the goal to provide 7 to 8-minute headways.
- Improvements are proposed for the Market Street/24th Avenue intersection, but are not funded.
- Metro is re-establishing some service on the route to Golden Gardens that was eliminated by I-695. Prior to I-695, this route operated approximately 8 hours per day, 6 days per week on 30-minute headways. The new route will include six trips per day, 5 days per week (3 buses leaving the Marina during the morning peak period and 3 returning to the Marina during the evening peak period.)
- In-lane stops on Market Street and elsewhere are needed to maintain and improve transit speed and reliability.
- Metro is evaluating a Ballard/Fremont route.
- There is concern from merchants that potential for high-capacity transit on Market Street could eliminate on-street parking. (Seattle’s Strategic Planning Office is performing a separate study related to High Capacity Transit.)

Bicycle Issues

- Completing the Burke-Gilman Trail to Golden Gardens is the top priority for the bike community.
- Safety and convenience are high priorities for bicyclists. Routes without hills are best.
- There are differences between commuter bicyclists (desire fast and direct routes) and recreational bicyclists (desire pleasant ride and connection between destinations). Recreational bicyclists desire connection to Golden Gardens.
- Elements that are particularly difficult for bicyclists include: on-street parking (car door openings), cross streets (potential of not being seen by motorists turning onto street), railroad tracks (particularly if they cross street at less than 90-degree angle), and uneven road surface (gravel or potholes).
- Bicyclists avoid Leary Way because of speed and volume of traffic.
- Intersection at Leary Way/17th Avenue is horrible because of wide area and many cross streets.
- Rail crossing under Ballard Bridge requires bicyclists to swerve into traffic to cross tracks at a right angle.
- Poor condition of shoulder on Shilshole Avenue requires bicyclists to ride in lane.
- There is irregular parking along sections of Shilshole Avenue and 46th Street. Sometimes vehicles park closer to street and leave walkway available, other cars park across walkway. This causes bicycles to weave through parked vehicles.
- Good design can be used to solve some of these problems. The trail connection does not need to be the same design as through Fremont. Area along Shilshole Avenue is the biggest challenge.
- Narrow passageways across the Locks restrict bicycle movements. Corps of Engineers is looking at the existing passageways. If they could be widened, a bicycle connection could be possible between the Burke-Gilman Trail and the Ship Canal and Elliott Bay Trails through Interbay.

Pedestrian Issues

- Pedestrians are most vulnerable mode of travel.

- High speed of traffic on Market Street west of 24th Avenue is an issue for pedestrian crossings. This is a four-lane roadway with no traffic signals.
- There is more development coming to Ballard. Pedestrian connections need to be improved (particularly to Leary Way and Market Street) so that people walk instead of drive for short trips to/through Ballard.
- There needs to be a good place for pedestrians to cross Shilshole Avenue.
- There is an intermittent sidewalk on Shilshole Avenue. It does not connect through.
- It is difficult to cross 24th Avenue north of Market Street (e.g., at 56th Street).
- It is confusing for bicyclists and pedestrians to negotiate access to/from the Ballard Bridge.

Parking Issues

- Parking along Shilshole Avenue is important for the area. Don't underestimate its value.
- Peak parking demand occurs during winter months when the fleet is in port.
- Parking contributes to congestion on Market Street between Leary Way and 24th Avenue.
- Loading zones on Market Street are inadequate, and trucks often double-park or parking illegally. Loading zones are not currently restricted to commercial vehicles only, and may need shorter time limits.
- Ballard Avenue was converted to a one-way street to increase parking supply.
- Businesses need to maintain truck marshalling, loading, and maneuvering areas.
- Friday and Saturday evening/night entertainment businesses in Ballard have a high demand for parking, and make extensive use of parking along Shilshole Avenue.
- Alternative modes of transportation will reduce demand for parking (and traffic congestion).
- Consider constructing a parking garage to serve the commercial area.

Public Access/Street End Issues

- Street end at 11th Avenue is currently an undeveloped blackberry patch.
- Boat ramp at 14th Avenue conflicts with adjacent use. Trailer parking is an issue.
- Street end at 15th Avenue (under the Bridge) is being evaluated by the City and private businesses in the area. Discussions include a possible skate park.
- 17th Avenue does not have a street end, but this is an important connection between the waterfront and Ballard.
- Public access at 20th Avenue is hidden.
- The public pier at 24th Avenue includes pedestrian access to the Yankee Diner.
- Street end at 28th Avenue has been improved with a bench and shrubs.
- BINMIC supports reserving street ends for industrial uses except for the ones currently being used for public access.
- Improvements to street ends can serve employees of industrial businesses by providing a refuge during lunch and break times.
- Improvements do not need to create destination parks. These could be designed for local use.

POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS

Street/Traffic Control Improvements

- Reconfigure Leary Way between Market Street and 15th Avenue to have three lanes (one lane in each direction plus center turn lane) with additional lanes at the intersections. This would provide additional space for bicycle lanes on Leary Way.
- Create a one-way couplet with Leary Way one-way northbound and Shilshole Avenue/46th Street one-way southbound between the intersections of Leary Way/NW 46th Street and Market Street/Shilshole Avenue/24th Avenue
- One-way couplet described above, but with a contra-flow lane on Leary Way for buses.

- Create one-way couplet on N 45th Street/N 46th Street between 15th Avenue and Leary Way. N 46th Street would be one-way westbound and N 45th Street would be one-way eastbound.
- Relocate bus stops on Market Street between Leary Way and 24th Avenue to reduce congestion in the core area.
- Construct new ramps from Ballard Bridge to Shilshole Avenue.
- Install traffic signal and left-turn lanes at Shilshole Avenue/17th Avenue intersection.
- Reconfigure Leary Way/17th Avenue intersection and provide a refuge for pedestrians in vast area of pavement.
- Improve signage indicating which routes are for trucks, commuters and bicyclists.
- Create one-way couplet on the north-south streets serving Fred Meyer (9th & 11th).
- Re-open Ballard Avenue to two-way traffic.
- Fix the intersection at Market Street/24th Avenue. It needs better channelization and truck turning radii.
- Improve five-legged intersections along Leary Way and Ballard Avenue (17th Avenue, 20th Avenue, 22nd Avenue) and provide better driver guidance (e.g., better stop sign placement, stop bars, lane lines, etc.)
- Eliminate parking on the west side of 22nd Avenue just north of Market Street to increase capacity at this intersection and allow southbound cars going through or turning right to bypass left-turning vehicles.
- Eliminate or organize parking along Leary Way southeast of 15th Avenue to reduce confusion for motorists. Existing intermittent parking causes congestion and can be dangerous.
- Improve street widths and eliminate parking strips in the area bounded by 54th Street, 11th Avenue, Leary Way, and 15th Avenue. Institute LID or other mechanism to encourage property owners to make improvements. However, separate the project from the funding so one doesn't stop the other.
- Expedite permitting of street improvements.
- Consult with Seattle Fire Department to make sure that proposed improvements would work for emergency access.
- Expand study area north to NW 65th Street, since changes to roadways within south Ballard could affect this congested corridor.

Truck Improvements

- Provide a new street for trucks within the railroad right-of-way south of Market Street between 26th Avenue to Shilshole Avenue.
- Improve intersection at 54th Avenue/24th Avenue/Shilshole Avenue (south of Market Street) to improve truck access.
- Consolidate truck access points along Shilshole Avenue corridor.
- Provide additional truck loading zones on Market Street. Restrict use to commercial vehicles only and shorter time limits.

Bicycle Improvements

- Locate bike trail on the railroad right-of-way.
- Locate bike trail on Ballard Avenue and tunnel through Ballard Bridge structure to link east and west sides of the trail.
- Locate bike trail on 45th Street east of 17th Avenue (with one-way couplet on 45th Street/46th Street described above), and on Ballard Avenue west of 17th Avenue. Install traffic signal at Shilshole Avenue/17th Avenue to connect two halves of trail. Improve channelization between 15th and 17th Avenues to direct bicyclists.
- Create bike lanes on Leary Way.
- Create a bike lane on 58th Street that connects from Shilshole/Sunset Hill to 8th Avenue. Also connect south to the new municipal complex. Create priority bike routes on 17th Avenue, 22nd Avenue, and 28th Avenue linking core area of Ballard to 58th Street.
- Construct an elevated bike trail along Shilshole Avenue to showcase the maritime industries.
- Widen crossings at the Locks to accommodate bicycles. Coordinate with Army Corp of Engineers, which is planning to rebuild the lock gates.
- Widen narrow areas of 45th Street for bicyclists.
- Extend shoulder on Shilshole Avenue.
- Improve intersection of Burke-Gilman Trail/43rd Street/6th Avenue (behind Hale's) where cars destined to Fred Meyer cross the bike trail.
- This study should be connected to the Burke-Gilman Trail study that is currently being considered by Council member Compton.

Pedestrian Improvements

- Install traffic signal (or ped automated signal) on Market Street at 28th Avenue.
- Improve pedestrian crossing at the Market Street/22nd Avenue intersection (this is being done.)
- Create a linkage between Ballard Avenue and west through where parking garage exists today and a grade-separated connection over Shilshole Avenue to the railroad ROW.
- Organize parking on Shilshole Avenue/N 46th Street and provide wheel stops so that cars don't park on sidewalk/walkway.

Transit Improvements

- Improve transit service (both frequency and speed) to increase market share for this mode to reduce congestion and parking demand.
- Grade-separations on Leary Way and Market Street could improve mobility for buses.
- Construct multi-level transit connections to/from the Ballard Bridge to/from Leary or 15th Ave.
- Create shorter circulator routes with smaller buses that serve people who live in Ballard. The routes should run more often, later in the evening, and be tested for a year or two to build ridership.
- Consider using 14th Avenue for future high-speed transit route.
- Have City of Seattle provide local bus service if King County Metro cannot.
- Implement alternative east-west routes to #44.
- Implement commuter rail service on the rail line linking to Fremont. This service could be extended north to Kenmore.
- Consider high-capacity transit on Market Street (e.g., trolley or monorail).
- Study needs to consider the future commuter rail station on Seaview Avenue (near Shilshole Bay Marina). A northern connection to this station site should be considered. Better bus feeder service is needed between the inner core area and the station.
- Consider water taxis as a transit option.
- Give transit an increased level of priority over other traffic to maximize the person-carrying capacity of arterials.

Parking Improvements

- Construct two parking garages—one at each end of Market Street—to accommodate parking needs of the commercial core.
- Construct parking garage under the new park/municipal center site.
- Consider raising parking prices in Ballard (currently no charge for on-street since meters have been hooded or removed.)
- Reconfigure 14th Avenue, which is a very wide street. Move parking to edge of street and put traffic in center to increase parking capacity.
- Organize parking on Shilshole Avenue. Provide wheel stops to prevent vehicles from parking on pedestrian walkways.

Public Access/Street Ends Improvement

- Use street ends to showcase the industrial uses in the area.

**SOUTH BALLARD TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR STUDY
WORKSHOP – INVITEES AND PARTICIPANTS (*italicized*)**

WORKSHOP DATE: Tuesday, June 19, 2001 3:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Workshop Participants

Name

Representing

Committee Members

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Warren Aakervik</i> | <i>BINMIC</i> |
| 2 | <i>Tom Bayley</i> | <i>C.D. Stimson Co/Chamber of Commerce</i> |
| 3 | <i>David Boyd</i> | <i>Groundswell NW</i> |
| 4 | <i>Byron Cole</i> | <i>Ballard Terminal Railroad</i> |
| 5 | <i>Jody Haug</i> | <i>Neighborhood Planning Committee</i> |
| 6 | <i>Jennifer Macuiba</i> | <i>Sunset Hills/Friends of Burke-Gilman</i> |
| 7 | <i>Paul Nerdrum</i> | <i>NSIA</i> |

Other Community Members

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 8 | <i>Barry Hawley</i> | <i>Real Estate/Development</i> |
| 9 | <i>Ken Molsberry</i> | <i>Central Ballard Community Council</i> |
| 10 | <i>Kay Ogren</i> | <i>Ballard Avenue Merchant</i> |
| 11 | <i>Thomas Whittemore</i> | <i>East Ballard Community Association</i> |
| 12 | <i>Richard Dix</i> | <i>D.A. Burns, Merchant from East Ballard</i> |
| 13 | <i>Stephen Lundgren</i> | <i>President of Ballard District Council</i> |
| 14 | <i>Dave Schniedler</i> | <i>Port of Seattle</i> |
| 15 | <i>Frank Harris</i> | <i>Sunset Hills/Friends of Burk-Gilman</i> |

City Staff

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Eric Tweit</i> | <i>SPO</i> |
| 2 | <i>Phillip Fujii</i> | <i>Dept. of Neighborhood</i> |
| 3 | <i>Mark Clemmens</i> | <i>SeaTran – Freight</i> |
| 4 | <i>Pauh Wang</i> | <i>SeaTran – Ped/Bicycle</i> |
| 5 | <i>Kristen Nielsen</i> | <i>SeaTran</i> |
| 6 | <i>Irin Limargo</i> | <i>King County Metro</i> |
| 7 | <i>Bill Bryant</i> | <i>King County Metro</i> |

Consultants

- | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| | <i>Marni Heffron</i> | <i>Heffron Transportation</i> |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------------|

**SOUTH BALLARD TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR STUDY
WORKSHOP – INVITEES AND PARTICIPANTS (*italicized*)**

WORKSHOP DATE: Tuesday, June 19, 2001 3:00 to 6:00 P.M.

Jerry Ernst
Laura Van Dyke

Ernst & Associates
Heffron Transportation