

Westlake Cycle Track Design Advisory Committee
Westlake Corridor Walking Tour Summary
 Monday, July 14, 2014 5:00-8:00 PM
 Westlake Corridor

Design Advisory Committee Member Attendees

Member Name	Interest Represented	Attendance
Warren Aakervik	Freight interests	Absent
Martha Aldridge	Lake Union Park users	Present
Andrew Austin	Non-vehicular commuters	Absent
Devor Barton	Pedestrian interests	Present
Karen Braitmayer	Westlake Ave North business owners	Present
Dave Chappelle	Lake Union floating home and live-aboard residents	Present
Thomas Goldstein	Cascade Bicycle Club	Present
Amalia Leighton	Transportation Engineer	Present
Sarah McGray	Bicycle interests	Present
John Meyer	Air/water transportation/tourism	Present
Martin Nelson	Westlake Stakeholders Group*	Present
Peter Schrappen	Lake Union marina operators and boat moorage tenants	Present
Cam Strong	Westlake Stakeholders Group*	Absent

**Note: The Westlake Stakeholders Group represents a variety of businesses and residents within the Westlake corridor.*

Staff attendees

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)

- Scott Kubly
- Sam Woods
- Dawn Schellenberg
- Mike Estey
- Barbara Lee
- Mary Rutherford

Mayor's Office

- Andrew Glass Hastings

Office of Economic Development

- James Kelly

EnviroIssues

- Penny Mabie
- David Gitlin
- Kate Cole

Toole Design Group

- Kristen Lohse

Note: *This document is only a summary of issues and actions on this tour. It is not intended to be a transcription of what was said, but an overview of points raised.*

Introduction

Dawn Schellenberg, SDOT communications lead, provided a brief introduction and thanked Design Advisory Committee (DAC) members and corridor representatives for attending, explaining that the City project staff and design team looked forward to hearing more about how various users utilized their space so that this information could be incorporated into the design process.

Stop #1: AGC, Kenmore Air, Argosy Cruises, Rock Salt Restaurant

Todd Banks, Kenmore Air

Todd explained that Kenmore Air is used by approximately 70,000 passengers per year, and several passengers park in their lot for two to three days at a time. The Kenmore Air parking lot has approximately 30 parking spaces that support approximately 100 cars per day. Other vehicles that use the Kenmore Air lot include airport shuttle vans, and up-to-10,000-gallon fuel trucks that access the parking area four times per week.

Brock Gilman, Argosy Cruises

Data below verified with Brock Gilman after tour

Brock Gilman explained that Argosy Cruises receive approximately 900 busses per year, for a total of 36,000 passengers. In addition, 25,000 people per year arrive for lake tours and private events, such as weddings. Brock explained that parking is vital for these customers. Brock said that the private AGC parking lot is an option, but it fills quickly. Brock feels that if public parking is lost, the AGC lot will fill even more quickly. He noted that few people take public transportation to access the Argosy cruises. Mid-day is the most critical time for arrivals and departures, with 1 PM and 4 PM being the peak load times.

Mary Rutherford asked how many people arrive by car. Brock said 25,000 per year.

Jerry Dinndorf mentioned that the Emerald City Trolley stops in front of the Argosy building.

Martha Aldridge asked about upcoming downtown waterfront construction. Brock explained that because the Seattle downtown waterfront would be under construction and thus inaccessible, he expected more people would come to the Lake Union waterfront.

Martin Nelson noted that the Seattle area is unique because it has both fresh water and saltwater access.

Jerry noted that across Westlake Avenue N from the parking lot there were plans to build a hotel and office tower.

AGC Building

Jerry Dinndorf, Associated General Contractors of Washington (AGC), discussed the AGC building and its tenants. He noted that the entrance to the AGC parking lot and the driveway to the Starbucks drive-thru have poor sightlines, due to the up-ramp and high curb at the entrance to and exit from the parking lot.

Jerry explained that the AGC building receives a high flow of traffic throughout the day because the building has numerous tenants. Tenants who receive the highest traffic volume are Argosy, McCormick & Schmick's Restaurant, and Starbucks. Sometimes, the service road backs up all the way into Westlake Avenue N because of cars queuing for the Starbucks drive-thru, as well as cars stopping for bikes and pedestrians.

Jerry estimated that there are over 1,000 vehicles in this drive per day and approximately 42 trucks for loading for the restaurant. Peak demand times are during rush hour and mid-day for the restaurant. During special events at MOHAI or the restaurant, Jerry said that AGC runs out of parking.

Jerry explained that marina users worry about loss of parking. Short-term users utilize the public parking, so the new change to four-hour only parking is appreciated. But, marina users need the long-term parking in the AGC lot.

In addition to parking concerns, Jerry noted that bikes travel fast through the parking lot, which makes it difficult for people to access the parking lot and thus the businesses in the building. Jerry reported that business users are worried about crossing the cycle track to get to the building from the parking lot.

The AGC building also has 100 marina mooring slips. The Rock Salt Restaurant is a part of Marina Mart Moorage and has 201 moorage slips.

Sam Woods asked if people who moored their boats in the marina had permitted parking in the AGC lot. Jerry explained that is hard to know, but suspected that some do.

Dawn noted the SDOT project team would be holding a community roundtable at the AGC building in the coming weeks.

Robert Edwards, Rock Salt Restaurant

Robert Edwards, owner of Rock Salt Restaurant, explained that he had closed his restaurant last August for major renovations. He had put the work on hold when he heard about the cycle track plans because he didn't want to invest in renovations if business would be hurt by the cycle track.

The group observed that the service road ends near the Rock Salt Restaurant.

Stop #2: China Harbor, Safe n' Sound Swimming, Seattle Scuba

Kyle Chapman, Safe n' Sound Swimming

Kyle of Safe n' Sound Swimming explained that his business receives about 200 people per day. Because these are mainly families with children, most customers arrive by car and thus parking availability is very important.

Kyle noted that he is a cyclist, but feels bike riders in the Westlake corridor are inconsiderate. He finds the space unsafe for all users because there is no predictability.

Mr. Sun, China Harbor Restaurant

Mr. Sun of the China Harbor restaurant explained that the restaurant had been in this location for almost 40 years. The restaurant receives six to eight deliveries per day. China Harbor also receives seven to eight bus tours per day. Mr. Sun explained that parking is very important to the restaurant. When weddings are held at the restaurant, they have 200 to 300 guests and it can be difficult for them all to find parking.

Kyle and Mr. Sun both noted that the City does not provide public trash cans in the corridor and that littering and pet waste is a problem. Mr. Sun added that moorage tenants sometimes dump trash from their boats into his private trashcans.

Craig Gillespie, Seattle Scuba

Craig Gillespie, of Seattle Scuba, was unable to attend the tour in-person, but provided his thoughts to Dawn via email:

It is pretty easy for me to lay out my concerns about the proposed changes to the parking lot here on Westlake. My business is now primarily a dive school. When the parking was converted to a pay lot a few years ago it pretty much wiped out my daytime equipment sales and services. Most folks are not willing to pay to park and do business here when they can park for free at Discount Divers just up the street or at any of four other dive shops within 20 minutes of here. That took away over 40% of my business.

Consequently, I had to let go of gear sales and refocus my business on training, which happens mostly on Friday evenings and weekends when the customers are not working. The biggest problem my customers currently complain of is the lack of parking. I am located right next to China Harbor Restaurant. Many, if not most, Friday evenings they have catered events, dances, etc. going on and fill the parking for blocks in both directions. On weekends the boaters fill the parking lot, especially this time of year, when we are the busiest.

Since we don't do much in the way of gear sales anymore, this business is functioning on a very thin profit margin. If I lose even 10% more of my business I have no doubt it will put me into bankruptcy. I also do not see how elimination more of the parking can do anything but adversely impact my business, and contribute to further loss of business.

Stop #3: Blue Water Yachts, Pacific Coast Yacht Services, Lake Union Crew

Paul Sittauer, Pacific Coast Yacht Services

Jo Hull, Western Yacht Harbor

Paul Sittauer explained that Pacific Coast Yacht Services has 12 employees. They load and unload throughout the day. The business receives approximately four trucks per day, ranging from pick-ups, to cargo vans, to 24-foot trucks, as well as numerous clients and contractors arriving by car.

Jo Hull explained that Western Yacht Harbor receives 1,500 pounds of building materials, which they have to wheel onto the boats by hand from the parking lot. As a result, Jo said, access to the causeway from the parking lot is necessary. Because the businesses abut the water, there are no alleys or access areas aside from the parking lot.

Amalia Leighton asked if putting up a temporary “loading” sign when doing this work would allow the business to keep access open when needed. Jo felt like this could be a solution.

Western Yacht Harbor has 40 slips and is at 100 percent occupancy. As a result, Jo feels a one- to two-parking-spot-to-slip ratio would not be sufficient parking.

Jo noted that the Western Yacht Harbor building also has numerous office tenants who have customers and clients arriving by car throughout the day.

Blue Water Yachts

Cheryl McChesney from Blue Water Yachts was unable to attend the tour in person, but Dawn shared points Cheryl made via a phone call:

- Blue Water Yachts needs to maintain the driveway and boat display area in front of their business. Without access to either, they’d have to move or go out of business.
- Parking is very difficult near Blue Water because of so many people who park in the parking area and then walk or bus to work in other locations.
- More parking enforcement is necessary, potentially with 4-hour limits.
- Bicycle behavior enforcement is necessary. Cheryl wants to be sure cyclists use the sidewalk so behavior for all modes is predictable.

Rail-tie Park

Dave Chapelle noted that the Westlake houseboat community pays dues and does work to maintain the rail-tie park. He raised the speculation that the park may need to change to accommodate additional parking. Martin noted the historical importance of the park to the community.

Mara Barckert, Lake Union Crew

Mara Barckert explained that Lake Union Crew has 250 active members, including 50 to 70 athletes who visit the building three times per week year-round. In the summer, Lake Union Crew also teaches classes with 20 to 30 students each. In the afternoons, 100 to 150 students arrive to row. Mara explained that rowers arrive by bike, bus, carpool, and individual cars. As a result, parking is important to remaining a vibrant business.

Eight times per year, Lake Union Crew brings a 70-foot trailer of boat shells into the parking area (see photo). The trailer enters through the Halladay driveway and uses the curb cut in front of 2500 Westlake to situate the trailer for loading/unloading. Mara explained that maintaining width at this intersection is important so that Lake Union Crew can continue to enter with their trailer.

Mara explained that it is very difficult to see bike riders when she is parking in the parking lot and she often worries about safety. She likes the idea of diagonal and back-in parking, as this

would make it easier to avoid conflicts. She said that some bike riders go up to 30 mph, which is too fast. She appreciates the “slow” signage SDOT recently posted, though she wishes speed were enforced.

Mara mentioned that she sometimes rides her bike to Lake Union Crew. Thomas asked how fast she thinks cars drive on Westlake Avenue N and Mara responded that she does not feel safe biking on Westlake Avenue N because cars drive around 45 mph.



Lake Union Crew provided a photo of the 70-foot trailer they park in front of their boat house throughout the year.

Stop #4: Diamond Marina, Morrison Fueling, Seattle Boat Works

Dave Morrison, Morrison Fueling

Dave Morrison has leased the Morrison Fueling fuel dock since 1977. He explained that the business is the only fueling station on Lake Union, although there were five such businesses at one time. He sells ethanol-free fuel, as well as runs a small grocery store and provides free pump-out services.

Dave explained that multiple large fuel trucks bring deliveries as frequently as once per day in the peak boating season. If access to the parking lot were changed such that only smaller fuel trucks could make deliveries, Dave explained that he would have to raise his prices by 7.5 cents per gallon, which would put him out of business.

Thomas asked Dave why raising prices would put him out of business if Morrison Fueling is the only fueling station on Lake Union. Dave explained that boaters would choose to go to public ports, with much lower prices, for their fuel.

Amalia asked if “loading” signs could be put up when fuel trucks were making deliveries, to help keep access open even with a cycle track in place. Dave said this would not be realistic, as deliveries come sporadically throughout the day and he does not have time to go to the parking lot to put up a sign each time.

Jack Wilken, Seattle Boat Works

Jack Wilken, of Seattle Boat Works, noted that there were many empty spaces in the lot at this point in the tour (approximately 7 PM) because many business users had left for the day. He felt that “park and riders” were not a problem in the north portion of the corridor.

Jack said that bike riders and pedestrians shared the sidewalk from the end of the corridor to the Fremont Bridge without problem, despite the sidewalk being narrower than the sidewalk within the corridor.

Jack said that originally, a barrier had been placed at the end of the sidewalk from the Fremont Bridge as it entered the north end of the parking area, which kept cyclists from continuing on the sidewalk into the parking area. However, he noted that the barrier had been removed soon after installation, which he suspected was due to a bike accident. He suggested removing the 90-degree turn from the end of the parking area to Westlake Avenue N.

He displayed a picture of a large crane that had been in the corridor, explaining that similar equipment is often needed in the corridor by many different businesses. Jack felt the idea of “conflict areas” was inapplicable because business activity, as well as pedestrians, bike riders, and drivers are distributed throughout the corridor.

Waterside tour

Following the walking tour, the DAC members, SDOT project team and City representatives boarded an Argosy Cruises boat to view the Westlake Corridor from the water.