

Summary Notes from Westlake Avenue North Interest Group Meeting 2
Marina Owners, Operators and Users
Monday, November 13, 2006

Summary and Introductions

SDOT staff hosted the second of three Interest Group meetings with Westlake community stakeholders to gather and discuss concerns and issues, and to identify volunteer representatives to take part in a Westlake Parking Workgroup. This meeting was focused on issues specific to marina owners, operators and users. Twenty-seven members of the community signed in as attendees.

The meeting opened with introductions of all participants, followed by a brief discussion of the intended purpose and outcomes by Marty Curry. As a consultant, Marty is facilitating the three Interest Group meetings and the subsequent Workgroup meetings.

Parking Management Goals (with Questions and Answers)

SDOT's Mike Estey gave an overview of the City's parking management goals generally and as they pertain to Westlake. He described that the Westlake Avenue North parking is in public right of way, City staff do their best to manage public parking consistent with City policies and goals, while at the same time to best address the needs of the adjacent businesses, residents, property owners, and other interests. He said there are two main goals of the City's parking management plan for Westlake: 1) achieve an 85% maximum peak occupancy of spaces (an industry standard indicating the parking is well utilized but that there are available spaces to be found without a significant amount of trolling); and 2) understand and address the wide variety of user needs in Westlake. Mike's full speaking points are attached at the end of this summary (Attachment 1) and linked on the SDOT web site. His response to what is "on the table" for discussion during this outreach process is essentially anything that achieves those two primary goals and is not currently illegal.

During Mike's presentation, he responded to questions and took comments. Among them (with a brief summary response given at the meeting included):

- Is it possible to establish a special "Westlake Avenue Parking Zone" in recognition of the unusual conditions that exist here? *(Special parking zoning hasn't been established before in the City, but we are open to innovative ideas. It would still have to be in compliance with City and State right-of-way regulations.)*
- Would SDOT actually lower the fees if the parking utilization is less than 85% at peak hours? Would fees then be raised every summer when utilization is the greatest? *(We would lower or raise fees to optimize usage. There has been no decision on the times of year and frequency of rate analysis and adjustment, and that is something we would hope to determine with the help of the Workgroup.)*

- Will residents be able to park anywhere along the corridor? *(When we presented the draft plan last June, we showed resident parking in selected areas. We have since heard feedback that the area locations need adjusting, or that it may be appropriate to allow residential parking throughout the corridor.)*
- An attendee commented that there are transients in the area, creating a concern for safety if residential cars are parked together.
- SDOT says everything is on the table, but have you looked at any solutions that don't include paid parking? *(When we analyzed the 2005 data for WAN, it was our professional opinion that paid parking is the appropriate tool to manage the parking. We are open to different approaches such as having paid parking only in the south end—recognizing that it could just move the problem to the north end—or to a scenario of no paid parking, if it will meet the stated goals.)*
- An attendee suggested that there be two proposals, one for paid parking and one for unpaid—"A" and "B" that could be analyzed side by side and then a decision made as to which better meets the goals.
- What about SDOT's statement during the paving project that there would never be paid parking north of the Rock Salt restaurant? *(Parking management has changed some in the years since that project. At that time parking was installed in response to petitions. Now it falls under the purview of the City Traffic Engineer and his or her professional judgment. Other than that I have no details of statements made 5-6 years ago.)*
- Is the City Traffic Engineer a specific person? *(Yes, he is Wayne Wentz, Director of the SDOT Traffic Management Division.)* How much experience does he have? *(He has 25-30 years in the profession.)*
- There should be a way to address the "park and ride" usage of WAN; 25% of the people parking in front of Marina Mart in the morning are taking the bus downtown. This must be happening in other parts of the City. *(Few or no other areas of the City have such a large reservoir of free parking in such close proximity to downtown. Paid parking is one way to address that type of usage; if there are others SDOT will consider them too.)*
- An attendee suggested that the community members in the room should be a source of ideas for managing the parking efficiently without the need for paid parking.

Small Group Discussions

The large group then broke up into three smaller working groups to discuss in greater detail the specific thoughts, comments, questions, and concerns attendees had regarding marina owners', operators' and users' issues as they relate to parking the corridor. The City presented a summarized list of the marina issues and concerns it had heard over the past several months from meetings, emails, conversations, and other

comments. Each of the three smaller working groups then elaborated on those issues, brought up additional ones, and prioritized its top concerns. The details of those small group discussions can be found as Attachment 2 at the end of this Meeting Summary and are linked on the SDOT web site.

Forming the Workgroup and Next Steps

Following the small group discussion, the next steps for community outreach were described. There will be one more Interest Group Meeting (November 20 for Property and Business Owners, Managers, Employees, and Customers). Once 12-15 Parking Workgroup members have been identified, the Workgroup will meet approximately five times over the next couple months, probably once every two weeks. (See Attachment 3 for additional details about the Workgroup, and fill out and send to SDOT Attachment 4 to indicate interest in joining the Workgroup.) The Workgroup will roll up their sleeves to put together a work plan and arrive at recommendations for a revised Parking Management Plan, with the details to be presented to City Traffic Engineer Wayne Wentz.

Further Questions and Comments

At the conclusion of the meeting, a number of additional questions and comments were raised and addressed. Among them (with a brief summary response given at the meeting included):

- Has SDOT already decided to ultimately put in paid parking? *(As stated previously, paid parking is the tool that we as parking professionals deem to be the most effective for the area, but unpaid parking is still under consideration and we are here to discuss the issues.)*
- Is SDOT willing to pursue changes in City and State regulations and statutes with regard to the WAN right of way? *(We would be willing to pursue them if it makes sense to do so.)*
- SDOT has regulatory and management responsibility, but does it also have revenue goals? Is general paid parking revenue part of the department's existence? *(SDOT does not install paid parking to raise money, but rather to provide better access, availability, and turnover of parking. Parking revenue goes into the General Fund, not directly into the department's budget. There are revenue assumptions in the City's proposed budget, but if paid parking is not installed at Westlake, the budget and assumptions will be revised.)*
- Does the revenue from parking citations also go into the General Fund? *(Yes, it does.)*
- Do you know the amount of parking citation revenue that comes from this area? *(We don't have it at this time but could probably track it down through Municipal Court's records.)*

- Would the City consider using contract parking enforcement at WAN? It might be more efficient and cost-effective. *(It could be worth looking into, but may not be feasible for a number of reasons, including labor-management issues.)* Another attendee commented that they may not want to have enforcement by people whose income depends on citation volume.
- Will the Workgroup ultimately be divided into interest groups? *(No, the value of the Workgroup will be in bringing all the diverse interests together to inform each other and the City, and arrive at mutually-agreeable solutions to the many challenges. There will be no attempt to “divide and conquer”, but rather to develop a proposed plan that reflects, to the extent possible, the needs of the entire WAN community.)*

Attachment 1 – Parking Management Goals; Speaking Points of Mike Estey, SDOT

Attachment 2 – Summary of Small-Group Discussions

Attachment 3 – Summary of Parking Workgroup

Attachment 4 – Application to Volunteer for Parking Workgroup

Attachment 1 – Parking Management Goals
Speaking Points of Mike Estey, SDOT
November 6, 2006

- Parking is an important asset. In case of Westlake, is in public right-of-way. At SDOT, our job to manage in manner consistent with how manage public ROW parking elsewhere. Provide access & ensure mobility.
- When parking study done in 2005, data showed southern half largely “full” during significant portions of day. Over past couple months, have heard that more or less acknowledged. But disagreement about whether or not a problem. We think it is –limits access to businesses, amenities. Why we’re proposing to better manage the parking.
- **Two main goals:** 1) manage parking to achieve a peak maximum occupancy of 85% . . . parking is well-utilized, but don’t have to “troll” too much to find a space – those who need it have access; 2) in whatever implement, do our best to address the wide variety of parking uses in Westlake.
- With those two goals in mind, have been asked what “on the table” for discussion. Answer: anything that helps achieve those two goals that is not currently illegal (e.g., allowing RPZ permits for employees as a “class” in addition to residents – not currently legal).
- Broader context for our work – guiding policy documents like the City’s Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Strategic Plan. They speak to how Seattle will accommodate growth over time, and to employ various transportation strategies in response.
- Accepting that each area of city has its unique characteristics, want to be consistent in how apply tools available to manage parking. Unrestricted, time limits, paid parking, enforcement.
- The data collected in 2005 shows that existing unrestricted parking and time-limit signs not working well. In circumstances like this, experience in other parts of city is that paid parking is effective in providing improved access to available parking.
- In Westlake, draft June plan proposed managing the public right-of-way by introducing paid parking and a residential parking zone. Recognizing that Westlake has a variety of parking needs and has until now been free for parking, also proposed some innovative things:
 - allow for all-day paid parking (which don’t do anywhere else)
 - introduce the possibility of purchasing multiple days of parking; may better meet business, employee and marina user needs
 - allow residents to park in many paid parking areas by displaying a valid RPZ permit
 - start at a lower hourly rate than the rest of the city
 - adjust rates to meet performance targets; if occupancy falls substantially below 85%, then the City would lower rates; if occupancy is still substantially above 85%, the City may raise rates

- Comes back to trying to meet a couple key objectives: 85% occupancy (i.e. – access), and doing our best to meet a wide variety of user needs. What is “on the table” for discussion? Any and all ideas, thoughts, and suggestions to address those goals. We’ll be taking all of them at these Interest Group meetings, and the Parking Workgroup will wrestle with them.

Attachment 2 – Summary of Small-Group Discussions Regarding Marina Owners, Operators and Users Issues

At the November 13 meeting, the larger group split up into three smaller groups to further discuss concerns, questions, and ideas regarding parking in the Westlake corridor as it relates to marina owners, operators, and users. The City provided a summarized list of the marina owners', operators' and users' issues it had heard over the past several months from meetings, emails, phone calls, and other comments. This document includes the City's initial summary of marina issues, followed by the notes of each of the three smaller groups at the November 13 meeting. Each group was additionally asked to prioritize its top issues. Those are shaded at the top of each group's list.

Westlake Avenue North Parking Issues and Concerns: Marina Owners, Operators and Users

(As summarized by City staff from e-mails, letters, phone calls, meetings and conversations with community members over the past several months)

Space Availability

- 1) Growth and development in the immediate area make it difficult to find convenient parking during some periods of the day.
- 2) Commuter parking for bus transport to center city destinations increases demand for available parking spaces.
- 3) The demand for parking spaces is lower on the weekends.

Economic Impacts

- 4) The cost of paid parking will increase the "effective" lease cost for a mooring space compared to marinas that do not charge for parking.
- 5) The cost of paid parking and other area development pressures/building standards will force local businesses to relocate, thus changing the unique character of the Westlake neighborhood for those who chose to live and moor there.
- 6) The cost of paid parking will increase prices for marine service businesses that are used by those mooring boats at area marinas.
- 7) The cost of paid parking, on top of the economic hardships caused by the succession of local transportation-related construction projects, is unfair to business owners.

Residential Parking Zone Permits (RPZ)

- 8) Need to define the type of moorage lease/live-aboard situations that qualify for an RPZ permit.

9) Need to balance space allocations for all of the RPZ permit holders and their guests with other area parking needs.

Convenient Use of Parking Spaces

10) Need to locate load/unload spaces close to marina entrances.

11) Need to recognize the need for marine service vehicle access near marina entrances.

12) Need to provide for the frequent “in-out” parking requirements of the boating community.

Enforcement and Security

13) Need to monitor “non-resident” parkers migrating to RPZ spaces to avoid paid parking.

14) Need to address parking periods in excess of 72 hours for boaters who leave for multiple-day/multiple-week cruises.

15) There are public safety and security concerns associated with the parking areas.

Notes from Three November 13, 2006 Small Group Discussions

(Shading indicates the issues that each group identified as high-priority.)

Group 1

- Enforcement of existing parking as solution—12-month trial
- Single RPZ zone
- Long term paid sticker is a target for crime
- Hide and ride problem, plus local employees
- Who is a “live-aboard”? defined by moorage lease=RPZ
- How to keep character of neighborhood
- Increase access by public transit or other demand management measures
- Load/unload

Group 2

- Any plan requires credible enforcement – use parking revenue
- Class of permit for employees and boat owners make money from park and ride and other users
- Previously suggested RPZ permits for boat owners – response was it is illegal. Is there a way to qualify for guest pass if have utility bill?
- Permit sticker for residents, boaters, employees as first step; can give permits for customers
- “Some” areas have problems, not all

- Should use term “park and hide”
- Not just park and hide, also employees of area, many move cars, trade spots; boat owners not a problem
- Boat owners can’t park in other locations
- But as employee downtown, also can’t park nearby
- Employees and park and ride should reserve close spaces for customers (customers are boat owners, others)
- 15-30 minute load zones could work well if better organized
- What hours/days are being considered for paid parking?
- Don’t want to purchase a sticker that identifies will be away for many days
- Concern with walking distances for residents
- Allow boat owners and employees to have parking permit
- No need for parking controls from noon Friday to Monday morning
- Hear that goal is to raise revenue
- Exclude west side businesses to force them to use their own parking (not all agree)
- Paid parking won’t solve park and ride problem if downtown cost is \$18/day; solve by limiting parking to local users only
- Area is unique, can’t relocate just anywhere
- Lower tech solution probably exists – tried at little risk
- Has other data on parking users been collected?
- Small businesses don’t have other options; paid parking would be major impact
- Understand concern about transferring problem to north end

Group 3

- Must protect the essential character of the area
- Suggest 1-year experiment: classify stakeholders, give them permits, charge other parkers (clarify what real situation is – who else is parking here?)
- Recommendation: 1) employees and residents get permits, 2) all spaces are either 2-hr. or 4-hr., 3) enforcement makes 2 passes a day to write tickets
- No parking enforcement on weekends and holidays
- Don’t know the extent to which parking problem is due to park and ride, Marriott, other non-marina uses
- 20% of people who park in front of Marina Mart take the bus downtown
- Use existing parking, not WAN
- Building permit requires a certain number of parking spaces that don’t get used if there is nearby free parking
- Charging for parking is not really “providing” parking; building permit gives incentives to limit on-site parking
- Parking downtown is \$300/month; WRQ building charges \$100/month
- SDOT could use influence to back special business and residential zone parking
- Businesses should get parking permits depending on amount of parking they already have available

- Consider relocating the bus stop (north?) or put official park and ride somewhere
- City has policy against park and ride lots
- If it becomes too costly or inconvenient boaters and businesses will relocate
- Marine related businesses can't relocate
- Fragmenting community (giving permits to residents but not others) not right
- Consider future cost to covered marinas – sprinklers required by 2008
- Consider no charge for short-term parking
- People who come and go during the day
- WAN parking wasn't a problem when it was a gravel lot

Attachment 3 – Summary of Westlake Avenue North Parking Workgroup

As part of the Westlake Avenue North community involvement effort, a Parking Workgroup will be formed and meet with City staff to address issues identified by stakeholders and develop parking management recommendations. Marty Curry will facilitate the meetings, working with the workgroup and SDOT staff to ensure the process is open and effective.

Membership

The overall group will have a total of 12 - 15 people, who will be identified from volunteers from the three prior stakeholder meetings. The workgroup will reflect the various types of stakeholder interest and use of Westlake parking, and will include representation from the different geographic areas throughout the corridor. All workgroup meetings will be open to other attendees, though active participation at workgroup meetings will be limited to workgroup members.

Commitment

The group will meet approximately five times, once every two weeks (accommodations will be made for holiday schedules). An initial meeting will likely be held in December, with subsequent meetings taking place in January and February. Meetings will likely last about two hours each.

First Meeting

At the first meeting, the workgroup will need to establish a set of goals, ground rules for how the group operates during meetings, parameters for discussions, and a communications plan. The group will want to outline a workplan for how it intends to move through subject matter in subsequent meetings to reach its ultimate recommendations. As the person designated in the Seattle Municipal Code with the responsibility for making decisions regarding parking, curbspace designation, and the public right-of-way, City Traffic Engineer Wayne Wentz will attend the first meeting to share his perspective.

Communications Strategy – Keeping the rest of the community informed and involved

It will be important to keep the broader Westlake community fully informed and involved throughout the workgroup process. The workgroup will help serve as a two-way conduit of information to members of larger stakeholder and other interest groups. As part of a communications strategy, non-workgroup members will be kept current via regular updates of the SDOT website and email summaries of each workgroup meeting to the project contact list. The workgroup will also help with posting, spreading, and sharing information throughout the community involvement process. Non-workgroup members are invited to share and comment throughout the process, either through workgroup members or directly to SDOT staff. As mentioned above, all workgroup meetings will be open to other attendees, though active participation at workgroup meetings will be limited to workgroup members.

Attachment 4 – Application to Volunteer for Parking Workgroup –Marina Owners, Operators and Users

Westlake Avenue North

November 2006

PARKING WORKGROUP VOLUNTEERS – MARINA OWNER/OPERATOR/USER INTERESTS

Thank you for your interest in participating in a parking workgroup for the Westlake Avenue North community. The following information will help us form a workgroup that is balanced by both interest group (e.g., residents, businesses, employees, marina users, etc.) and geographic area.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Residence Address: _____

MARINA AFFILIATION:

- Owner
- Operator
- User
- Other _____

Also a corridor Resident? _____

MEETING AVAILABILITY: Put an "X" in the times during the week when you typically ARE AVAILABLE.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Mornings: 8:00 to 11:00 AM					
Afternoons: Noon to 5:00 PM					
Evenings: 6:00 to 9:00 PM					

Return by November 27, 2006 to:

Sue Partridge, Seattle Dept. of Transportation, P.O. Box 34996, Seattle, WA 98124-4996, (206) 233-3718, Fax: 206-684-5093, sue.partridge@seattle.gov