

## Community proposals for the Westlake Cycle Track and SDOT responses

Nov. 18, 2014

### Overview

Since convening the Westlake Cycle Track Project Design Advisory Committee (DAC) in March 2014, the Seattle Department of Transportation has received several community proposals for an alternative cycle track concept for the Westlake corridor. Below is a summary of each proposal and the elements from each incorporated into the cycle track alignment, followed by a detailed response either shared directly with the proposer or at a DAC meeting.

Proposal	Design elements incorporated into cycle track alignment
<p>1. <b>Multi-use path:</b> Improve the existing sidewalk to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the existing sidewalk to designate space for both pedestrians and bicyclists</li> </ul>
<p>2. <b>Shared space concept:</b> Formalize center of parking area as shared space for vehicles and bicycles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of one-way circulation in parking area</li> <li>• Use angled parking to maximize number of parking stalls</li> <li>• Traffic calming measures throughout the corridor, including potential use of speed humps and colored pavement</li> </ul>
<p>3. <b>West side of Westlake:</b> Place cycle track on west side of Westlake Avenue N to eliminate conflicts with vehicles in parking area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize conflicts with cars by separating bicycles from Westlake Ave N intersections/driveways and parking area for most of the corridor</li> </ul>
<p>4. <b>Elevated cycle track:</b> Place cycle track on elevated structure to eliminate conflicts with vehicles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize conflicts with cars by separating bicycles from Westlake Ave N intersections/driveways and parking area for most of the corridor</li> </ul>
<p>5. <b>Modified sidewalk at north end:</b> Adjust widths to maximize parking/ circulation options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of some smaller parking stalls to increase amount of parking</li> <li>• Add speed humps to parking area to discourage bicycle use of parking aisle</li> </ul>
<p>6. <b>Split protected bike lanes on either side of Westlake Ave N:</b> Split protected bike lanes across corridor to reduce impact to parking area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert some existing sidewalk width within right of way to bicycle use</li> <li>• Preserve as much parking as possible by looking at other opportunities to convert underutilized areas of right of way</li> </ul>
<p>7. <b>Create a Westlake/Dexter couplet:</b> Move freight to Dexter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep four lanes of traffic on Westlake Avenue N to maintain freight access</li> </ul>

<p>Avenue N and place cycle track on Westlake Avenue N</p>	
<p>8. <b>Build the cycle track on Dexter Avenue N:</b> Place cycle track on Dexter instead of Westlake</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain Dexter as-is for confident, faster cyclists</li> </ul>
<p>9. <b>Driveway consolidation concept:</b> Consolidate driveways from Westlake Ave N in order to reduce conflicts among drivers, bike riders and pedestrians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project proposes to close one driveway, and will look at potentially consolidating others during final design</li> </ul>
<p>10. <b>Single lane cycle track on west side of Westlake roadway:</b> Split cycle track into two single lanes with one lane along the west sidewalk of the Westlake Ave N roadway and the other lane within the Westlake Ave N parking area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a combination of pavement markings, signs and crosswalks along the corridor helping to guide pedestrians</li> <li>• Preserve as much parking as possible and implement parking management tools to increase parking turnover</li> </ul>

## Appendix – Detail of each proposal and SDOT response

### **Proposal 1: Multi-use path**

There was no formal proposal submitted to SDOT, however floating home residents encouraged SDOT to explore the idea of improving the existing sidewalk (part of the Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop) to create a multi-use path at DAC meetings and over email.

#### **SDOT response:**

- SDOT revisited the original “Concept B” that placed the cycle track on the east side of the corridor next to the sidewalk, and as the community suggested, also considered how to use the existing space to accommodate both bicyclists and pedestrians.
- SDOT is moving forward into design with the cycle track alignment which works similarly to a multi-use path, with clear delineation between the bicyclist and pedestrian space and protected from vehicles.
- SDOT presented this concept at DAC meetings #6 (July 28) and #7 (August 25) and presented the concept moving forward into design at DAC meeting #8 (Sept. 30).

## Proposal 2: Shared space concept

Arne Levang submitted the below drawing to SDOT at DAC meeting #3 on April 21:



### SDOT response:

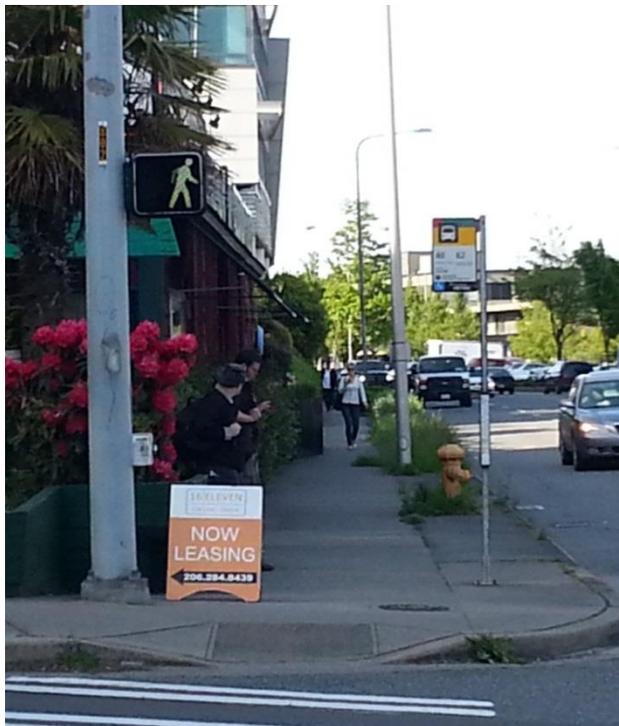
- SDOT presented Arne Levang's idea at DAC meeting #5 on June 23. In this concept, the bicycle facility is in the center of the parking lot drive aisle. It has a 6' wide smooth area which encourages cyclists to ride in the center with speed humps in the parking lot with back-in angled parking.
- SDOT reviewed the idea and appreciated that it adds predictability to the corridor. However, it does not physically separate bicyclists from vehicles, so it doesn't address safety or encourage "willing but wary" bicyclists. Where motorists cross the cycle track is not predictable.
- Elements SDOT considered moving forward were the safety aspect of slowing speeds of motorists in the drive aisle, discouraging cyclists from using the drive aisle with by using speed humps, and considering the safety element of back-in angled parking.
- SDOT worked from Arne's idea to explore the "Center Concept" which SDOT presented at DAC meeting #6 on July 28.

### Proposal 3: West side of Westlake

No formal proposal was submitted to SDOT; however some community members encouraged SDOT to explore placing the cycle track on the west side of Westlake Avenue N rather than in the parking area.

#### SDOT response:

- SDOT presented this proposal at DAC meeting #3B on May 12 and at the second project open house on May 21.
- SDOT considered locating the cycle track on Westlake Avenue N but that option would require additional space to build the facility. There are three key reasons why creating space for a facility the west side of Westlake option would not be viable:
  - First, sidewalk uses. SDOT cannot eliminate the sidewalk on the west side because it is used by transit riders, as well as people accessing businesses and residences. It also provides the space for signs and utility needs, such as street lighting and fire hydrants.
  - Second, for the most part, the property adjacent to the sidewalk is not owned by city and in many instances businesses are built right up to the sidewalk.
  - Third, this area is prone to landslides and would require significant engineering to cut into the hillside. If the bike facility were built on the west side of the corridor, it would need to be constructed in the existing street. To preserve four lanes of traffic, SDOT would have to move the street into the parking lot, which would affect the parking.





## **Proposal 4: Elevated cycle track**

DAC member Cam Strong forwarded a proposal from community members that encouraged SDOT to explore an elevated cycle track concept. Other community members shared the idea of an elevated cycle track at the May 21 open house.

### **SDOT response:**

- SDOT presented the idea of an elevated track at DAC meeting #5 on June 23.
- In her presentation, project manager Sam Woods shared the following information:
  - Some of the key features include:
    - Columns and piers: spread about 50 feet apart for the length of the 1.2 mile project, so likely 134 pairs of columns.
    - Ramps: 5 percent max slope to meet ADA standards. Ramps would be close to 400 feet long with limited parking underneath. For safety reasons, as well as to provide access to the waterfront, several ramps would be included along the corridor.
    - Height: would require a minimum clearance of 14.5 feet. If oversized freight entered the parking lot, the clearance may need to be higher. The depth of the structure could be as deep as 4.5 feet.
    - Width: would be a minimum of 12 feet wide and built to accommodate emergency vehicles including the ramps – likely at both ends of the project and two mid-way for security and accessibility.
    - All of these elements would have a significant impact on parking.
  - Some of the drawbacks include:
    - Cost: For comparison purposes, the Thomas St overpass is 1,000 linear feet and costs about \$12 million. The planned Northgate Bridge is approximately 1,800 to 2,200 linear feet and is budgeted at about \$25 million. An elevated structure along the corridor would cost about \$70 million to \$80 million and if designed wider to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and landscaping, it could cost much more.
    - Securing funding would be challenging – it would have to be in the locally adopted plans and viable alternatives thoroughly explored.
    - Grade separation must be convenient – pedestrians and bicyclists will try to save time and energy and often bypass an inconvenient grade separation.
    - Additional issues: safety, lighting, drainage, maintenance of the facility and view blockage for development on the west side of Westlake Avenue N.
- Because of these issues, SDOT is not considering an elevated cycle track, but SDOT does appreciate the out-of-the-box suggestion.



Thomas St Pedestrian and Bicycle Overpass connecting Lower Queen Anne to the Elliott Bay Trail crossing over Elliott Ave W and the BNSF railroad tracks

### Proposal 5: Modified sidewalk at north end

Jack Wilken submitted the proposal and drawing below to SDOT on Aug. 10:

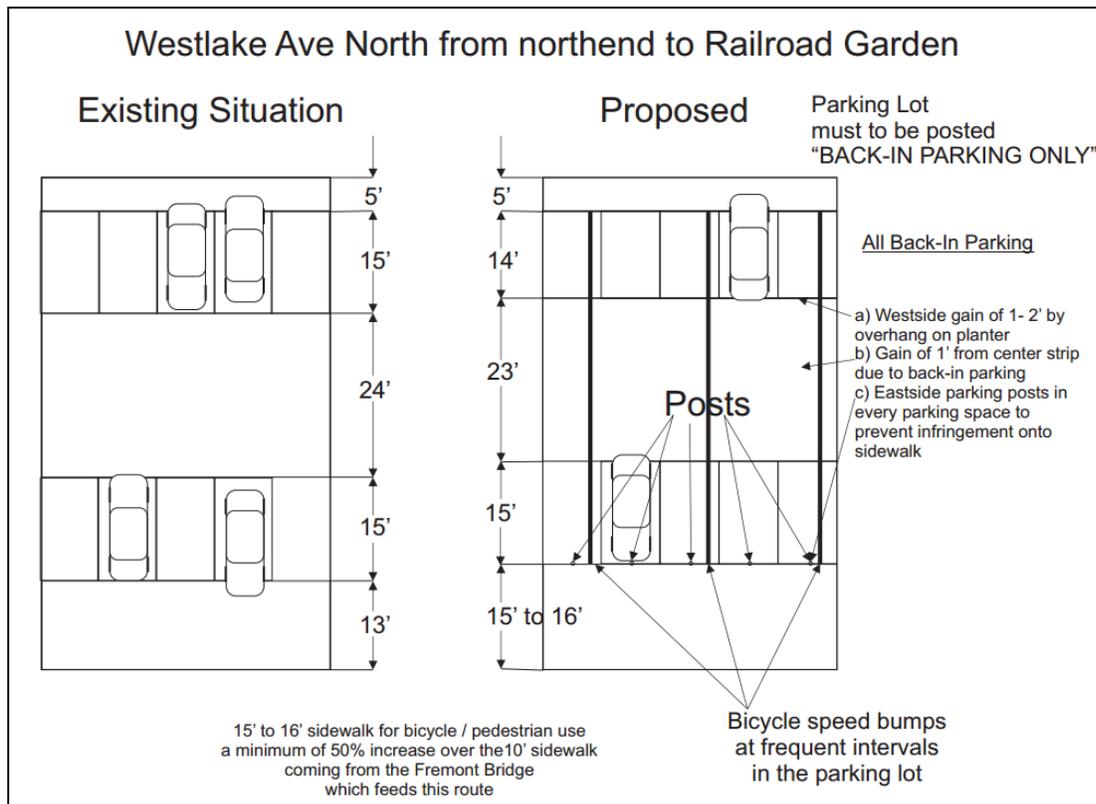
From the Fremont Bridge to the north entrance of the Westlake Ave North parking lot, there is a 10' wide sidewalk that accommodates the flow of bicycle and pedestrian traffic. This has not been a conflictive area as far as accidents between these two transportation modes.

We are proposing this theme be continued in the parking lot until the "Railroad Garden" with an additional 50% in width to the sidewalk. This sector of the corridor does not have a service lane which could be converted to a protected cycle lane. Even a 5% loss of parking would threaten the businesses in this sector with a loss of revenue that would create a catastrophic domino effect. The city's own norms call for 1 parking space per every 2 boat slips adjacent to marinas; this does not take into account additional businesses or liveaboards. We are already at or below this norm. The historic conflict in this sector has been between high speed cyclists & cars, cyclists that ride close to the parked cars and the cars exiting parking spaces, or pedestrians & cyclists in the parking lot. (Cyclists on the side walk give way to pedestrians.)

For this reason, measures such as bike bumps the full width of the parking lot are an important part of any discussion about safety.

Thanks,

Jack



### **SDOT response:**

- Project staff met with Jack Wilken to discuss his proposal.
- SDOT analyzed some of the advantages of the concept including:
  - Retains perpendicular parking and maximizes parking supply
  - Back-in parking better accommodates vehicle overhang and increases visibility
- SDOT also analyzed some of the challenges of the concept including:
  - Currently many truck drivers with larger vehicles back into parking spaces on the west side of the parking area to take advantage of the landscape buffer for vehicle overhang
  - Need to maintain existing planting strip width adjacent to Westlake to accommodate vehicle overhang (see photo below)
  - 15-16' sidewalk may not be wide enough to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians
  - Lack of space and separation from pedestrians may shift bicyclists into the parking area; the sidewalk connecting to Fremont Bridge functions adequately as all travel by pedestrians and bicyclists is parallel to the sidewalk, that is there is no cross pedestrian traffic as in the business, marina, residential areas in the corridor.
- SDOT did incorporate speed bumps in the drive aisle into the cycle track alignment.
- SDOT will work with the community to identify possible constrained areas where narrowing and shortening parking stalls may be appropriate.



**Peter Schrappen sent SDOT the email and drawing below on Oct. 21 following up on Jack's initial proposal:**

I'm not certain who to direct this to so I'm going to error on the side of "more is more" here.

*Community proposals for the Westlake Cycle Track and SDOT responses  
Nov. 18, 2014*

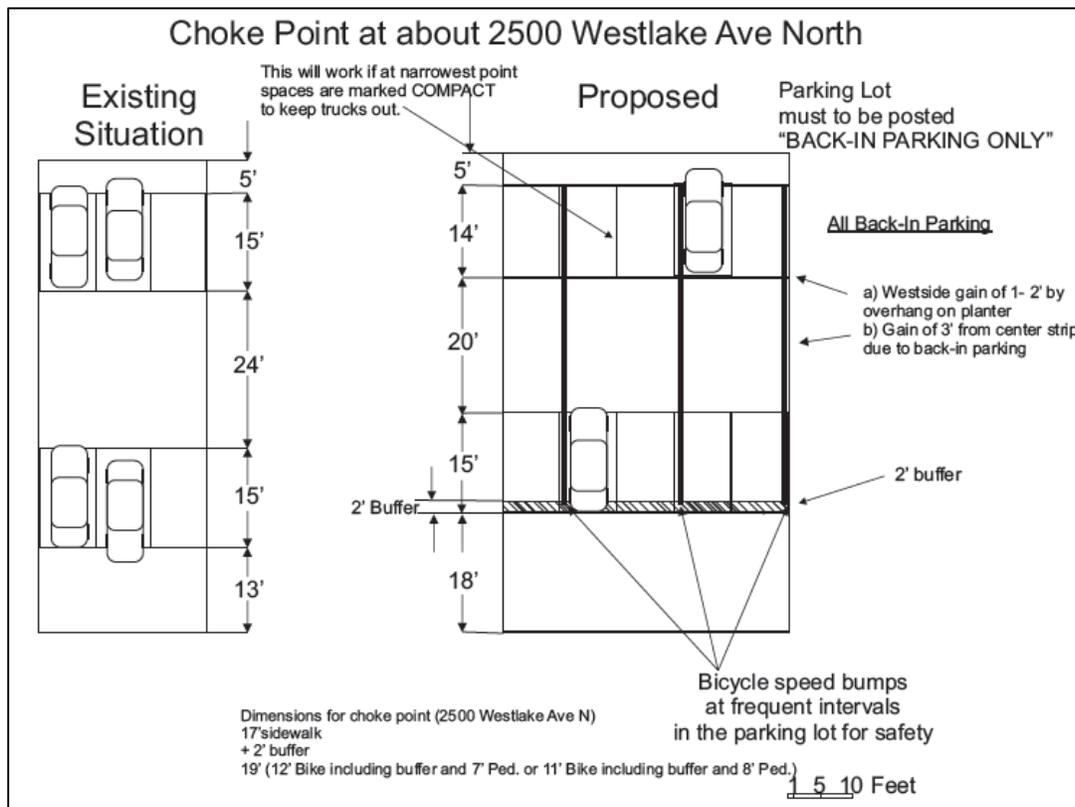
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Anyhow, given that you have a plan before you (see attachment) that saves essentially 100 percent of the parking and delivers a world-class cycle track, what is preventing the city from advancing it? This is the plan that was shared with Sam and James last week (and CJ) as well as Sen. Kohl-Welles when I met with her last Thursday.

The bicycle community would get their dedicated track; pedestrians would have predictability and the marine community would not lose parking. Even more, this design was put together after several drafts, incorporating the feedback from the SDOT team all along the way.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Peter Schrappen



**SDOT emailed Peter the following response on Oct. 30:**

Hi Peter-

Sorry for the delay in responding to your email. As you mention, staff has talked with you and Jack about the proposal you emailed. I see adjustments to the sidewalk and drive aisle widths from previous versions and really appreciate this type of collaboration.

Here are some key considerations:

- 17 feet does not meet the cycle track design guidelines for accommodating bicycles and pedestrians (minimum eight feet for the sidewalk and 10 foot with two foot buffer for the cycle track). Lack of space and separation from pedestrians could shift bicyclists back into the parking area
- We've incorporated the suggestion of adding speed humps in the drive aisle
- We're considering back-end parking
- We'll work with the community to identify constrained areas where narrowing parking stalls may be appropriate.

Thanks for your continued engagement; and for helping us at the recent Open House. We're busy plugging through the 200+ comments received. I'll see you soon at the Design Advisory Committee in mid-November to get more feedback on the project design.

Best-Dawn

## **Proposal 6: Split protected bike lanes on either side of Westlake Avenue N**

Bill Wiginton submitted the proposal below to SDOT on Aug. 15:

Hello Dawn:

Bill Wiginton, here, from Sooz' computer. I've been a Westlake Avenue North risk holder since 1976. Currently, I'm a property owner, landlord, business owner, employer, resident, boat owner, bicyclist, pedestrian and driver in the Westlake North Corridor. We've met and talked at the second open house and at several DAC meetings.

I believe SDOT is making a dangerous and destructive mistake in hurrying and pushing a 10 mph cycle track through the Westlake North community. SDOT has titled this mistake the 10 mph East Sidewalk Concept (ESC), which is essentially Concept B from early spring. This ESC is dangerous because it leaves a large percentage, probably well over 50% of cyclists, especially commuters, still riding in what remains of the parking lot in the Westlake North corridor because they ride faster than 10 mph. Also, the ESC exposes every pedestrian going to and from a residence, business or marina to the danger of being hit by a cyclist. The ESC is destructive because it eliminates significant access, parking and support for the current businesses, residents, boaters and visitors. SDOT's preliminary estimate of 20% loss of access and parking could easily mushroom to 30% or more. As for "hurrying", if the best SDOT can conceive and design is still dangerous and destructive, as described above, I think it should shelve this 10 mph East Sidewalk Concept, return the grant money and involve the community and the cyclists in developing a solution that works for all concerned. Such a solution might look like the west lane of Westlake Avenue North repurposed into a real cycle track that would be big enough and safe enough for both communities.

However, since SDOT is hurtling forward with a partial unsafe solution, I would like to submit an alternative Cycle Pathway concept that would ameliorate some of the danger and destruction SDOT is proposing for the Westlake North community.

### **Alternative Cycle Pathway Concept**

Separate the cycle pathway into two lanes: a northbound lane and a southbound lane. The northbound lane would be taken from the current 14 foot-wide sidewalk (along the water) and the southbound lane would be a shared lane with pedestrians on the expanded sidewalk on the west side (hillside) of Westlake Avenue North. Now, the northbound component on the eastside of the Westlake parking lot has and is being vetted as part of the ESC. The new part of this concept is the use of the four foot

sidewalk plus two foot planting strip to create a six foot wide bike pathway to be shared with maybe 10-20 pedestrians per day.

### **Strengths:**

- Removes approximately 50% of the cyclists from the dangers in the parking lot and of pedestrians crossing the cycle track.
- Mostly eliminates the threat of North/South bicycle collisions
- South bound cyclists would be much safer
- There are very few pedestrians who use the sidewalk on the west side of Westlake Avenue North.
- It may avoid eliminating many trees along the east sidewalk in order to accommodate a full-width cycle pathway.
- Should prevent a huge loss of access and parking, which in turn helps to preserve current businesses and residences
- Could prove to be much cheaper
- Gives SDOT an opportunity to compromise with the community
- Could actually get support for SDOT from the Westlake North Community
- Could be a partial Win-Win for both the Westlake North community and commuting cyclists.

### **Potential Challenges:**

- Replacing broken and un-level sidewalk, mostly from the Fremont Bridge to approximately across from Diamond Marina.
- Paving the two foot planting strip where still not paved.
- Moving or removing city street lights in this planting strip. (Note: there are currently two light poles across the street on the water side from each light pole in the proposed pathway).
- There are a few fire hydrants in the pathway that would need to be well marked.
- SDOT has noted in the past that some buildings have been built right to their east property line and therefore, eliminating room for a full cycle pathway. However, the only location for which I have found that to be partially true is the 1735 Westlake N address. There are two doors and these seem to be approximately nine feet from the curb which should be sufficient to allow bikes to pass and ingress and egress to occur safely.
- There are four bus stops between the Fremont Bridge and Garfield that might have to be reconfigured.

I deem this concept to be quite viable and propose that you pass it on to Sam, Mary and the DAC. I also propose after an initial vetting that this concept be presented at the October open house.

Looking forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Bill Wiginton

Cc: Cam Strong

Martin Nelson

Peter Schrappen

Tim Zamberlin

Dick Schwartz

By mail: Councilmember Sally Bagshaw

**SDOT response:**

- SDOT emailed Bill Wiginton's proposal to the DAC on Aug. 22.
- SDOT emailed the following response to Bill Wiginton on Sept. 19:

The design team has looked at your proposal to split the cycle track directions between the roadway and parking area. As you identified in your email, the concept requires very few changes from the existing conditions in an attempt to reduce the overall footprint of the cycle track and therefore maximizes parking and preserving the existing landscaping. The design team identified the following issues with the proposal:

- The condition is very similar to what exists today – which has issues that the design team is working to address
- The southbound bicycle facility (which in your proposal is a shared 6' wide sidewalk) does not meet the project goals and objectives.
- The southbound bicycle facility may not be used by bicyclists as it would be less attractive and convenient than riding in the parking area – many cyclists destined for South Lake Union or on recreational rides will not cross Westlake Ave N and instead will stay in the parking area.
- This would require additional crossings of Westlake Avenue North which has an impact on traffic mobility on Westlake Ave N.
- There are encroachments in the right-of-way on the west side of Westlake Ave N that would have to be removed.
- Further south, there is development up to the right-of-way line creating conflicts.
- There are pedestrian conflicts on the west side sidewalk – the sidewalk is more heavily used at the south end of the corridor.
- Motorists and pedestrians may not anticipate bicycle traffic on the constrained sidewalk.
- There are utility conflicts in the sidewalk, not only limited to fire hydrants, but street light poles.
- There are other areas of unstable hill side along the west side creating challenges to maintaining the existing sidewalk.

- A buffer would be required between the curb travel lane and the bicycle facility.

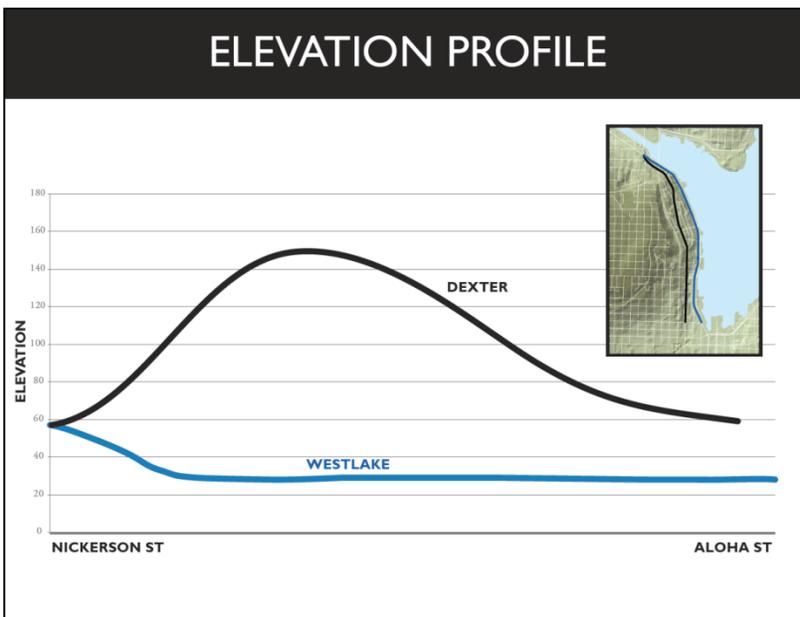
The project team is moving forward with the Sidewalk Concept and will continue to work with the community to best accommodate everyone's needs. The Sidewalk Concept aims to preserve about 80% of the parking in the corridor and SDOT is including parking management as part of the project in order to make better use of the existing parking.

## Proposal 7: Create a Cycle Track on Dexter Avenue North

There was no formal proposal submitted to SDOT, however some community members – including attendees at project open houses – have suggested SDOT upgrade Dexter Avenue North to a cycle track.

### SDOT response:

- SDOT presented this proposal at the DAC meeting #5 on June 23.
- Dexter Ave N is an on-street bicycle facility with minor separation. It is not considered an all ages and abilities route, nor would most parents feel comfortable riding with their children on this route. It is designed for the more confident cyclist.
- The chart below illustrates the elevation profile of Dexter Ave N compared to the Westlake corridor. The vertical axis is elevation the horizontal axis is distance from the north to the south. Dexter is a long grade, gaining nearly 100 feet, while on Westlake it is nearly flat except at the north end with the rise to the bridge. Dexter is challenge for many cyclists and particularly for the more casual cyclist we expect to attract with the Westlake project.



- Dexter is a great facility that is being emulated in other cities, especially with the transit islands. It crosses 16 intersections and 98 driveways. For these reasons it does not meet the project objective of accessibility.
- Dexter does not provide a direct connection to South Lake Union Park or the South Ship Canal Trail. A completely level route along the Westlake and is much more recreational in nature. Connectivity is another project objective.
- We know the demand exists and will continue to grow as South Lake Union is one of the fastest-growing areas in the city.
- Dexter was a \$4.4 million dollar project of which the bicycle master plan contributed \$154,000 (3.5% of the project cost).

## **Proposal 8: Create a Westlake/Dexter couplet**

DAC member John Meyer sent SDOT the following email on Sept. 23 and also distributed hard copies at DAC meeting #8 on Sept. 30:

There is additional idea for a more functional alignment of The Westlake Cycle Track that I think has merit, and should be considered. If we are to make this a lasting, integral, and safe solution, everything should be considered. “Band Aids” and “Making Do”, and not factoring in future transit in the corridor, is a waste of all our time and efforts.

I think a given in any scenario that has the cycle track utilizing an expanded existing trail will not keep cyclists from riding down the center of the parking lot at a higher speed than is possible on the track. This keeps in place one of the major dangers of the corridor, and does nothing to address safety.

Please give this some thought, and how it might make the corridor safer and more functional.

### Westlake/Dexter Bicycle Track

Observations: Dexter Ave N was originally a major four lane arterial used by automobile traffic for North/South transit between downtown Seattle and the Fremont Bridge. Dexter is currently being used as a major bicycle corridor for commuters from the Fremont Bridge to South Lake Union and downtown Seattle. This major automobile arterial has had safety issues when mixing bikes and cars. An example is the “no right turn” from Dexter to Mercer which is one of the major East/West streets to the Queen Ann District and the Seattle Center because of safety. Further, there are talks of putting a bicycle “track” at the South end of Dexter (at considerable expense to the taxpayers of Seattle) to improve the safety for cyclists.

There are development plans that have been submitted to the City for permitting by Holland Partners along Westlake that proposes a total of 745 residential units and 1500 square feet of ground floor retail space. However, there are only 475 parking spaces that will be built as part of this project. When questioned at the recent DAC meeting, it was confirmed that all residents along Westlake would be allowed to apply for Residential Parking Zone Permits in the Westlake corridor. Potentially, 270 parking spaces of the current parking area could be used by residents of the new development.

If a bicycle “track” is put in on Westlake, the majority of the cyclists will no longer use Dexter because of the hill either going or coming from the Fremont Bridge and the option of a flat route. If the cycle track is designed for commuting with a maximum speed of 20 MPH, Dexter would be abandoned by the majority of cyclists except for the local commuters. If the track is designed for 10 MPH, there will be significant enforcement issues and there are a significant number of cyclists that will continue to use the Westlake parking lot or the Cheshiahud Loop Trail as the preferred route (see the April 24th bicycle blog). There needs to be a safe solution to separating the different modes of transportation and still providing cyclists with a “track” and saving the maritime industry along Westlake that has been here for over 100 years.

**THERE IS A SOLUTION TO THE SAFETY AND ECONOMIC (PARKING) ISSUES:**

Convert Dexter Ave N to a three lane arterial; one lane Northbound, two lanes Southbound. Put a cycle track in the Western most lane of Westlake Ave N and reconfigure Westlake to three lanes; one lane Southbound and two lanes Northbound. Slow the speeds on Westlake to 30 MPH. Bus stops on Westlake Northbound/Southbound and the sidewalk would stay with some minor alterations to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian conflicts (which would be minimal) and ADA. This would separate the commuters and the pedestrians using the Cheshiahud Loop Trail with this configuration. Increase the size of the Cheshiahud Loop Trail by two feet to accommodate new riders and children using bicycles or those

cyclists that will be willing to have speeds not to exceed 5 MPH (SIGNAGE NEEDED AND ENFORCE IT). There are currently many locations where the existing Trail narrows by 50% because of vegetation. No one seems to be responsible for maintaining the Trail that exists today. TAKE CARE OF WHAT IS THERE RIGHT NOW! There would be virtually NO LOSS OF PARKING through the entire corridor other than some minor adjustments to accommodate bus stops and ADA issues that need to be improved in any case. For those cyclists that come under Aurora Ave and access Dexter from the East side of Queen Ann, have a lane, comparable to what exists today, down the hill to join the Westlake track at the Fremont Bridge. Other than that, keep bicycles off Dexter and make it safe for everyone. CONNECIVITY! This track would be accessed on the North at the Fremont Bridge stop light (just like it does now for access to Dexter), continue through the West side of the Westlake corridor to 8th Ave N (not a major arterial), along 8th Ave N to the park on the South at Denny Street and connect with the proposed Amazon cycle trail on 7th Ave. The Dexter cycle track in the South end would not be necessary (keep the conflicts with a major automobile route to a minimum and save taxpayer dollars) and separating cyclists from major arterials. SAFETY! For those cyclists that want access to Lake Union Park, have a light at the location where 8th Ave merges with Westlake and require that the cyclists that cross Westlake obey the 5 MPH limit on the joint use Trail that ends at Lake Union Park and MOHAI and ENFORCE THE RULES. This stop light would also make for a safer access by vehicles to Westlake. At this point on Westlake, the road would expand to four vehicular lanes from here to Mercer which would reduce congestion for those vehicles wanting to access Mercer and Valley streets.

The separation of the different modes of transportation is obvious; speeds of bicycles and pedestrians jointly using the Cheshiahud Loop Trail would be SAFE. The number of conflict points with Trail users, residents, and customers of the businesses will stay the same as now. Conflict points on the West side alignment are much less frequent than the “sidewalk” alignment and hence, much safer. The maritime industry and residents along Westlake would not be negatively impacted and there would be no significant loss of parking through the entire corridor. Parking management would still need to be addressed. And the bicycle master plan that advocates the preferred route from Fremont to downtown using Westlake would be realized. Now, let’s address the freight aspects of the proposed alignment. After speaking with a freight person, there needs to be NO LOSS of freight lanes through this area (two lanes Northbound and two lanes Southbound). Make the Northbound lanes available to trucks on Westlake, and make the Southbound lanes on Dexter available to trucks (this would allow traffic to turn right at any cross street, especially at Mercer because all of the cycle traffic would be on Westlake). During the day, this would be the preferred routes for trucks. But this does not preclude trucks from using the Southbound single lane on Westlake day or night, but especially late in the evening when the traffic on Westlake is not an issue and busses run less frequently.

**SDOT response:** SDOT sent John Meyer the following email on Oct. 10:

Hi John-

Your concept to rechannelize Dexter and add a cycle track on Westlake Avenue has been shared and considered by the design team. It is a very creative solution and I appreciate the out-of-the box thinking. In fact, there are a couple of recommendations in it being considered in the sidewalk alignment. For

example, the possibility of a new signal at driveway #2 (on Westlake near 8th Avenue N); and our city traffic engineer has agreed to look at speeds on Westlake Avenue N.

There are two main reasons your idea cannot be considered as an option. The first is, in 2011, the city made a large investment in Dexter. It included repaving the street from Fremont Avenue N to Roy Street; adding dedicated left turns at busy streets; installing transit islands at 10 bus stops; making street lighting upgrades; installing new surface water detention facilities and subsurface drain systems; creating a buffered bike lane; and bringing 20 curb ramps up to current Americans with Disability Act standards. The project was a substantial investment paid for by the Bridging the Gap transportation levy approved by Seattle voters in November 2006 and will remain in its current state.

The second reason is Westlake Avenue N is part of Seattle's major truck street network. Truck drivers often choose their routes for the same reason many bicyclists do; they look for gentle grades. Westlake Avenue N is easier to manage than Dexter Avenue N. As we've been exploring the best location for the Westlake Cycle Track, we have heard loud and clear from the freight community that Westlake Avenue N cannot be reduced to three lanes. Particularly before the Seattle Freight Master Plan is completed. Additionally as you know, there is not sufficient public right of way to develop a cycle track on the west side of Westlake Avenue N. Therefore, we have eliminated consideration of a cycle track on the west side of Westlake Avenue N either adjacent to the sidewalk or next to the curb in the street.

Regarding vegetation overgrowth on the trail, please share locations where this is occurring. Our Urban Forestry makes a substantial investment in maintaining the vegetation along the corridor. If we are missing locations it would be good to know where, or to understand if the growth is coming from private property.

As always feel free to contact me with questions. We'll share this response with the DAC since because some members have been asking about this possibility as well. However, I wanted to get back to you first.

Best-Dawn

Dawn Schellenberg  
SDOT, Traffic Management

## **Proposal 9: Driveway consolidation concept**

At DAC meeting #8 on Sept. 30, DAC member Warren Aakervik suggested that another alignment option is to close Driveways 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 and add a signal at Driveway 14. Closing the driveways would remove conflicts. DAC members requested a high-level traffic analysis of the concept.

### **SDOT response:**

- At the open house on Oct. 22, SDOT will reinforce that it currently plans to close Driveway 11, but will consider potentially consolidating other driveways during final design.
- There are 14 existing driveways along the corridor. The proposal would close half of them. With the vast majority of the impact between 8th Avenue N to Halladay Street (Waterway 1) where all the driveways would be closed. This is a distance of 0.7 miles (or approximately 10 city blocks).
- Traffic analysis elements evaluated:
  - The number of vehicles that would use the remaining or consolidated driveways
  - The implications to level of service or drive aisle function as a result of consolidating driveways
  - How customer access to businesses along Westlake is impacted

### Conclusions

- There would be increases to delay and queues for vehicles exiting at the remaining driveways during peak hours, which already have limited storage lengths for queuing vehicles.
- Vehicles queuing in the parking areas to exit onto Westlake Avenue N could block access for other vehicles trying to access the parking area.
- A signal at driveway #14 would add delay to Westlake Avenue N at a location that already experiences congestion due the opening of the Fremont Bridge.
- Motorists traveling south on Westlake Avenue N may have an increase in delay due to impact of increased queue of motorists turning left into the parking lot at driveways that remain open. Additionally, there may be an increase in likelihood of rear-end crashes at locations where driveways remain open.
- Several driveways are Shoreline Street Ends which mandate public access to the shoreline; therefore, closure may not be possible.
- Several driveways provide direct access to businesses and marinas that have many visitors or deliveries; driveway closures make accessing these businesses less direct.
- There would likely be an increase in circulating traffic in the parking drive aisles and the service drives since some motorists will not be able to use driveways closest to their destination.

## Proposal 10: Single lane cycle track on west side of Westlake roadway

DAC member Cam Strong sent SDOT the following email on Oct. 20:

# Westlake Cycle Track West Sidewalk Cycle Track Single Lane Option

## WHAT ARE THE WESTLAKE CYCLE TRACK PROJECT'S GOAL & OBJECTIVES?

### Goal: Safety for All Users

- People biking – support people riding bikes of all ages and abilities
- People walking – separate bicycles from pedestrians
- People driving – provide predictability within the parking area

### Objectives:

- Connectivity – Connect the Fremont and South Lake Union neighborhoods, the Fremont Bridge and surrounding trails and park
- Economic vitality – Creating a space that attracts customers and supports adjacent land and water uses
- Accessibility – Provide a flat, low-stress bike path making this scenic corridor more accessible to residents, employees and visitors

## WHAT IS THE WEST SIDEWALK CYCLE TRACK SINGLE LANE OPTION?

The west sidewalk (to the west of Westlake Ave. N Street) is rarely used throughout most of the 1 mile area between the intersection of Dexter/Fremont and Westlake Ave. N to Newton St. The 11' right-of-way provides an excellent location for a single lane cycle track (or shared pathway).

The West Sidewalk Cycle Track Single Lane Option proposes to provide a “one way” south bound cycle track lane (or shared pathway) located along the west sidewalk to the west of Westlake Ave. N street and a one way north bound cycle track lane located inside the Westlake Ave. N parking area. The cycle track would need to cross over into the Westlake Ave. N parking area for a short distance between Driveway # 8 (Newton St.) and Driveway # 5 (8<sup>th</sup> St.) and then crossover near the overhead crosswalk beside 8<sup>th</sup> St. and then continue all the way to Mercer.

Using this west sidewalk location for a one way “southbound” cycle track (or shared pathway) for the morning bicycle commute would eliminate many 1,000's of conflicts between pedestrians & bicycles which will occur if the southbound bicycle traffic is located in the east sidewalk of the Westlake Ave. N parking area.

SDOT could also consider reversing the commuting direction of this west sidewalk location to “northbound” at 1:30 pm to support the northbound bicycle commute outside of the Westlake parking area as well.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Early in the Westlake Cycle Track DAC process, recommendations were made to SDOT to consider placing the cycle track on the west side of Westlake Ave. N as that sidewalk area is used very little (as opposed to the very large pedestrian usage of the east sidewalk located within the Westlake parking area. SDOT advised the DAC that it was not possible to cut back any of hillside to install a retaining wall in this area west of Westlake Ave. N., and therefore SDOT stated that options for locating the Cycle track in this area could not be considered.

On August 29, 2014, SDOT announced its plan to cut back the hillside and install a retaining wall. The retaining wall work was completed during September, and now demonstrates that installing a retaining wall to the 11’ right-of-way location can provide an excellent and safe location for a single lane cycle track.

Some adjustments may need to work around current telephone poles, fire hydrants & bus stops, however the benefits of using this area for a one lane cycle track far outweighs the merits of a 2 way cycle track within the Westlake Ave. N parking area.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE WEST SIDEWALK CYCLE TRACK SINGLE LANE OPTION MEET THE WESTLAKE CYCLE TRACK’S OVERALL GOAL AND SDOT’S VALUES?**

#### **GOAL: Safety for All Users**

A West Sidewalk Cycle Track “Single Lane” Option meets the Project’s overall goal and also meets SDOT’s “5 Values” substantially better than the East Sidewalk “2- Way” Cycle Track inside the Westlake Ave. N Parking area Option based upon the following major factors:

1. The West Sidewalk Cycle Track “Single Lane” Option provides the greatest opportunity to achieve “**safety for all users**” goal as it does not require the many 1,000’s of daily conflicts for 100% of all employees, customers, residents moorage tenants and tourists who need to cross back and forth daily from the driveway & parking areas to access businesses, residences, marinas and water dependent recreational uses.
2. Removing one lane of the cycle track within the Westlake parking area from two lanes to one lane will “**prevent unnecessary loss of parking spaces**” within the Westlake parking area and thus better meet the Projects “Economic Vitality” objective as well as achieve SDOT’s “5 Values” commitment to “Supporting a Thriving Economy” and “Building Healthy Communities”.

One property owner who has rented a small right of way space for business purposes from the city for a number of years has expressed a need for mitigation for the loss of the use of this space.

**SDOT response:** SDOT sent Cam the following email on Nov. 7:

Hi Cam- Thanks for sending the West Sidewalk Cycle Track Single Lane Option for the Westlake Cycle Track project team to consider. We are onboard with the goal of safety for all users and managing public parking to support the adjacent corridor uses. As you know from our meeting on October 27, we are unable to pursue this option for a couple of reasons.

The west side sidewalk between driveways #8 and #14 is about six feet wide. This is not enough space to accommodate a cycle track lane and sidewalk. Additionally, the proposed southbound bicycle facility with its wiggle to the signal at Dexter and Nickerson for those arriving by the Ship Canal Trail and two crossings of Westlake Avenue N would not be obvious and intuitive to people biking. People destined for South Lake Union, or on recreational rides, would likely stay in the parking area—the very issue the project is working to resolve. Therefore the option does not meet our connectivity objective.

We've talked about the option of building a cycle track on the west side of Westlake Avenue N at previous Design Advisory Committee (DAC) meetings and included the technical review in Community Proposals<[http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/wct/2014\\_1022\\_WestlakeCommunityProposals\\_final.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/wct/2014_1022_WestlakeCommunityProposals_final.pdf)> document posted online. A single southbound lane includes similar considerations. In the south end, there is development up to the edge of the existing sidewalk making widening impossible; there are fire hydrants, street light poles and transit stops in the sidewalk; and there are areas of unstable hill side already creating challenges to maintaining the existing sidewalk. As we noted previously, it would require significant engineering to cut into the hillside (as confirmed by the stabilization project we are doing in the north end) and for the most part the property adjacent to the sidewalk is not owned by the city. We do manage the 150 feet of right-of-way to the east of the hillside that includes the Westlake Avenue N roadway, parking area and sidewalk —and this is the appropriate space to consider locating a cycle track.

To ensure the new cycle track works well for pedestrians, we'll use a combination of pavement markings, signs and crosswalks along the corridor helping to guide travelers. As with any project, we'll monitor the facility after installation to see if further refinements are needed. We'll also include an educational component.

Related to parking, you have been generous with your time and attended both roundtables to help identify a management strategy. As you know, along with the project's goal of preserving 80 to 85 percent of the public parking spaces, we are working with the community to create a parking strategy to increase turnover, reduce 'park and riders' and create more spaces for waterfront business customers and residents to use.

I look forward to talking with you and the rest of the DAC on November 19 about the actual design. As always feel free to contact me with questions and I'll make sure your proposal and this response are included in the summary we have online.

Best-Dawn