



Seattle
Department of
Transportation

COMMUNITY ACCESS PARKING PROGRAM

15TH AVE E PARKING AND ACCESS PROJECT

JUNE 2023

SUMMARY

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) engaged with businesses and stakeholders in the community to get input on recommendations that will improve on-street parking and access along the curb on 15th Ave E. With recent changes in activities along the curb, such as new street cafes and multiple new developments on the way, there is a need to implement a curbspace, access and parking plan that addresses new and upcoming changes along 15th Ave E. Using technical parking studies, parking management tools and input from the community, SDOT will create a curbspace management plan.

As part of its efforts to hear from the community, the outreach team created and shared an in-person/online survey to businesses along and near 15th Ave E between E Mercer St and E Denny Way. The purpose of the survey was to understand and learn about the following:

- Employee and customer parking use
- Parking challenges and needs
- Delivery and curbside access use
- Delivery and pick-up needs
- Street café use and plans

This report summarizes the outreach and engagement effort, survey promotion, and outreach results.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

[Door to door engagement](#)

As part of the effort to solicit feedback from businesses regarding their parking and curbspace use and access, the outreach team visited every storefront business along 15th Ave E at least one time between March 2023 and April 2023. The outreach team attempted to speak with a business manager, supervisor, or owner and administer the survey. If the manager or owner was not available, a team member provided an employee with the project fact sheet containing a link to the online survey. The team revisited businesses that either were not open or did not have time to take the survey at least two additional times. Over a one-month period, the outreach team visited the corridor on five occasions to engage with businesses at various times during daytime working hours.

Additionally, the outreach team hosted a virtual meeting with representatives from Kaiser Permanente to learn about their parking and curbspace use, needs, and challenges. The team recorded feedback during the meeting.

Email and phone correspondence

The project outreach team also made contact attempts to all 73 businesses and organizations along 15th Ave E between E Mercer St and E Denny Way using a combination of phone calls and emails from the project inbox in spring 2023. The team invited businesses to meet in-person for a discussion and participate in the survey. When business managers, supervisors, or owners were not available nor interested in meeting with the team, a link or directions to the online survey were provided. The online survey was active from February 24, 2023 until April 20, 2023. Businesses that did not respond received a minimum of one follow-up email or phone call in addition to attempts to visit the business in-person.

The outreach team also coordinated with the 15th Avenue Business Improvement Area (15th Ave E BIA) to distribute project information and a link to the survey to the BIA members and contacts along the 15th Ave E BIA's email newsletter.

Survey administration

When able to speak with a manager, supervisor, or business owner, the outreach team administered the survey verbally and recorded participants' responses on a written survey in addition to recording other comments provided during the conversation. In total, 43 surveys were completed between February and April 2023: 26 surveys were conducted in-person and 17 surveys were completed online by employees.

The survey consisted of 19 questions: 16 multiple choice questions, two contact information questions, and one open response question. Respondents were able to select multiple answers for two of the questions.

Limitations

Despite efforts to reach all 73 businesses and organizations along the corridor, 43 surveys were completed by 39 businesses (multiple employees from four of the businesses filled out the survey), which represents 53% of all businesses and organizations in the study area. The outreach team was unable to visit non-storefront businesses in person, which limited contact attempts to phone and email correspondence.

The survey is based on business employee and owner perceptions of parking and travel behaviors, as well as existing load zones. Feedback gathered by survey participants may not reflect actual parking, loading, and travel behaviors in the area.

OUTREACH RESULTS

Corridor-wide feedback

We received 43 completed surveys from businesses along 15th Ave E between E Denny Way and E Mercer St.

Transportation and use

The perceived most common modes of transportation to work for employees as indicated by surveyed businesses are as follows (respondents could select multiple options):

- Drive/carpool (70%)

- Walk/roll (50%)
- Bus (39%)
- Light rail (9%)
- Bike (7%)

The perceived most common modes of transportation for customers as indicated by surveyed businesses are as follows (respondents could select multiple options):

- Drive/carpool (79%)
- Walk/roll (52%)
- Bus (12%)
- Bike (2%)
- Light rail (2%)

The following results show how much time businesses estimate that their customers spend at their businesses on average:

- 30 minutes or less (44%)
- 30 minutes to 1-hour (28%)
- 1 – 2 hours (19%)
- 2+ hours (9%)

One respondent had concerns about the usability of pay-by-phone parking for customers.

Parking

The most common employee parking locations according to surveyed businesses are as follows:

- Surrounding residential streets (42%)
- Off-street parking lot (29%)
- 15th Ave E (18%)
- Other: Side streets such as E Republican St (11%)

A majority of businesses (89%) said that most employees can find parking within five blocks of the business.

Most businesses (81%) said that parking is a challenge in and around 15th Ave E. However, a majority (68%) do not think that the addition of paid parking in and around 15th Ave E would benefit their business or customers.

Loading and deliveries

The most common uses of loading zones by surveyed businesses are as follows (respondents could select multiple options):

- Inventory/supplies delivery (80%)
- Food pick-up/delivery (44%)
- Customer pick-up/drop-off (32%)

Only one business has a temporary food priority pick-up zone easel and indicated that it is very useful.

Seven businesses (25%) said that additional loading zones are needed for their business or on their block. Five respondents would like SDOT to install a permanent 5-minute load/unload zone for activities such as food pick-up, etc.

Street Cafes

Two surveyed businesses along the corridor have a street café in the curbspace/parking zone that is permitted through a Safe Start Outdoor Dining Permit. Both businesses plan to apply for a long-term use permits.

E Denny Way – E Thomas St

We received four completed surveys from businesses along 15th Ave E between E Denny Way and E Thomas St.

Transportation and use

A majority of the businesses (75%) said that their customers spend less than 30 minutes at their business on average. Only one business said that customers stay for more than one hour on average.

Parking

The most common employee parking locations according to surveyed businesses are as follows:

- Off-street parking lot (50%)
- Surrounding residential streets (25%)
- 15th Ave E (25%)

One of the businesses surveyed has four employee parking spots behind the building.

Three out of the four businesses (75%) said that most employees can find parking within five blocks of the business. One business mentioned that employees need to move their car every few hours to comply with parking regulations, and this impacts their work time.

One business requested the addition of short-term parking spaces (30 minutes – 1-hour) for customer use.

Loading and deliveries

Food pick-up/delivery and inventory/supplies delivery were the only uses of nearby loading zones identified by businesses.

None of the businesses have a temporary food priority pick-up zone easel.

Only one business indicated that additional loading zones are needed near their business or on the block. The business mentioned that load zones could help with deliveries and pick-up orders. One business said that they would benefit from the installation of a permanent loading zone nearby.

E Thomas St – E Harrison St

A vast majority of businesses (93%) said that employees can find parking within five blocks of their business location. Some employees who park along 15th Ave E have to move their vehicle around

throughout their work shift. This is especially challenging for those who work 10 – 12-hour shifts. One business has customers who consistently stay for three or more hours and have to move their vehicle. At least one business pays for monthly parking spots in the Key Bank parking lot.

Loading and deliveries

These loading zones are most commonly used for inventory/supplies delivery (80% selected). Some businesses also use the loading zones for food pick-up/delivery (50%).

A majority of surveyed businesses (82%) did not think their block needs additional loading zones. One business requested a 5 – 30-minute loading zone along E Harrison St to support food delivery and pick-up.

Two surveyed businesses said that they would benefit from a loading zone and would like SDOT to install a permanent 5-minute load/unload zone for activities such as food pick-up, etc.

Street cafes

One business has a street café in the curbspace/parking zone that is permitted through a Safe Start Outdoor Dining Permit. They plan to apply for a long-term use permit.

E Harrison St – E Republican St

We received 12 completed surveys from businesses along 15th Ave E between E Harrison St and E Republican St.

Loading and deliveries

All the businesses that have a loading zone nearby said that they use it for inventory/supplies delivery. Other common uses for the businesses include food pick-up/delivery and customer pick-up/drop-off.

None of the businesses that responded still have a temporary food priority pick-up zone easel.

Four businesses (50%) said that they need additional loading zones. Two of the businesses said that they wanted SDOT to install a permanent 5-minute load/unload zone for activities such as food pick-up, etc.

Street cafes

One business has a street café in the curbspace/parking zone that is permitted through a Safe Start Dining Permit. This business plans to apply for a long-term use permit.

E Republican St – E Mercer St

We received 12 completed surveys from businesses along 15th Ave E between E Republican St and E Mercer St.

Loading and deliveries

Most businesses (57%) that have a loading zone nearby said that they use it for inventory/supplies delivery. Only one business said that they use the loading zone for food pick-up/delivery. Two businesses said that they don't usually use the nearby loading zone. Respondents expressed support for 15-minute parking or loading in this area to support businesses with lots of pick-up service.

Only one business that responded still has a temporary food priority pick-up zone easel. They said that it is very useful.

Two businesses said that they could benefit from additional loading zones and one business would like SDOT to install a permanent 5-minute load/unload zone for activities such as food pick-up, etc. One respondent said that the lack of loading zones causes delivery trucks to block their driveway.

CONCLUSIONS

Transportation and use

Throughout the entire study area, driving/carpooling and walking are perceived to be the most common modes of transportation for both customers and employees of business along the corridor. Businesses reported that they think customers visiting the area generally spend less than an hour in most businesses.

Parking

Businesses along the corridor shared that they think their employees typically park on surrounding residential streets or in off-street parking lots. A minority of employees reported that they park along 15th Ave E. Those who park on 15th Ave E often shuffle their cars throughout the day. Other common parking locations for employees include alleyways, side streets off 15th Ave E, or further north in the neighborhood near Volunteer Park.

Nearly 90% of businesses say that their employees can find parking within five blocks of the business, but they generally find parking to be a challenge along 15th Ave E. Despite the parking challenges, most businesses don't think that the addition of paid parking would benefit them or their customers.

Concerns about the addition of paid parking included:

- Financial impact to employees who currently park on 15th Ave E, especially those in entry-level positions
- Customers not wanting to pay for parking and visiting the area less often
- Increased parking on residential streets
- More illegal parking in loading zones or private lots
- Concern that the neighborhood character is changing quickly with several new developments slated for or under construction and the potential of paid parking contributing to loss of neighborhood feel

Some ideas expressed for improving parking access in the area included:

- Temporary loading zones – changing loading zones to parking spots during off-peak loading times
- More parking enforcement to increase turnover
- Short-term parking areas around food service businesses to accommodate takeout and food deliverer services
- Parking zone permits or discounted parking for employees who work on 15th Ave E

Loading and deliveries

Most businesses didn't think additional loading zones were needed. Those who did express interest in more permanent loading zones were primarily food service businesses or those whose customers stay for less than 30-minutes. Businesses said that people often park their vehicles or bikes in loading zones, making them less useful for businesses. Greater enforcement of loading zones could make them more effective for businesses.

Kaiser Permanente Feedback

During a virtual meeting with representatives from Kaiser Permanente, which has multiple facilities within the study area, the team learned the following:

- Kaiser has two garages along 15th Ave E, two surface parking lots within one block of 15th Ave E, and seven surface parking lots of varying size within six blocks of 15th Ave E
- Most Kaiser parking lots and garages are for member use – the first two hours are free for members. After the first 2 hours, Kaiser charges following rates:
 - 0-2 Hrs - Free
 - 2-4 Hrs - \$3.00
 - 4-5 Hrs - \$4.00
 - 5-7 Hrs - \$5.00
 - 7-9 Hrs - \$12.00
 - 9-24 Hrs - \$18.00
- Use of Kaiser's garages would likely increase if paid parking were installed in the neighborhood
- Garage occupancy is nearly full most days
- A majority of member visits are two hours or less
- Most patient drop-off occurs at the traffic circle next to the main facility or on the east side of 15th Ave north of Thomas St to access Kaiser's North Building
- Kaiser employees are able to use parking lot, however, there is an extensive waitlist for employee parking. Parking spots are prioritized for Kaiser visitors

NEXT STEPS

The SDOT team will review and evaluate feedback received from this outreach and survey effort, in addition to technical parking and access data. The feedback and technical data will be used to inform a curbspace management proposal for the 15th Ave E corridor between E Denny Way and E Mercer St. The proposal will be shared with businesses and organization along the corridor once finalized.