

WSG Comments Regarding the

“Parking Utilization Study Summary” by Toole Design – Mar. 21, 2014

GENERAL CONCERNS:

1. This Study is not reflective of “peak” parking usage and therefore is of questionable value.

RESPONSE:

The intent of the study was to look a typical usage, not peak usage. We acknowledge that the parking usage has peaks and valleys.

2. This Study is missing relevant survey information (Business, Resident & Moorage Tenant Survey Data) which should be incorporated before this document is finalized.

RESPONSE:

Between February 11 and March 31 the city conducted a non-scientific online survey of residents and businesses. A summary of the results was distributed to the Design Advisory Committee (DAC) and is now [posted online](#). The project team is considering the input as the bike facility is designed. Discussions are ongoing to determine if a survey of moorage tenants would bring new information forward for consideration.

3. Westlake Ave. N is a working waterfront and diverse water dependent community with unique dimensions in the different sectors throughout this 1.2 mile long corridor. This community is “not” homogeneous throughout, and the parking area sections are reflective of this diversity. We would welcome an opportunity to introduce SDOT, Toole and the DAC to the unique working waterfront and diverse water dependent Westlake community.

RESPONSE:

Good suggestion. As discussed at the June 9 DAC meeting, the project team and the DAC will be taking a walking tour of the waterfront on July 14.

4. This Study has overlooked the Westlake Parking Management Plan which is an important reflection of how SDOT and the Community was able to “partner” to better understand the Westlake Community and successfully jointly develop an appropriate parking plan based upon the unique aspects of this diverse community.

RESPONSE:

The project team and DAC have been briefed on the history of parking planning along the Westlake Corridor, the Westlake Parking Group and the ultimate plan that was put into place on June 9.

SPECIFIC CONCERNS:

- Page 1 - This summary document refers to a study, however does not provide access to the study. The link in this memo does not work [insert link to <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/wct.htm>]. When clicking on the link it states “This webpage cannot be found”. Please disclose all of the data reviewed in support of this study to the DAC, including the actual information source, who collected this data, and how it was collected.

RESPONSE:

The link is now working. The full study is available here:

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/docs/2014-03-21%20WCT%20Parking%20Memo.pdf>.

- Page 1 - This document states: “Data was collected in September 2013 during boating season.” This is an incorrect statement, as boating season in Seattle runs from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Since this survey was conducted during Sept. 13, 14, 15th it should state the survey was taken “outside” of boating season.

RESPONSE:

Seattle traditionally celebrates the first day of boating season on the first Saturday of May and generally considers it over at the end of September. Some may consider it over after Labor Day as you mention, while others may believe it never officially ends. For purposes of the study we use the definition of boating seasons running from May through the end of September.

- Page 2 - The data collected during two “off peak” hours 7:00 am & 6:00 pm and one “peak” hour period (noon), creates a bias when one averages the data. Why were these times selected for use in this study? We believe the peak parking occupancy times in our community are 10:00 – 11:30 am and 1:30 – 3:00 pm and believe a study representing these times would be more appropriate.

RESPONSE:

The morning and evening times were intended to help determine the commuter and commercial/retail/recreational demands, respectively. The study team proposed times to SDOT for their review and approval, and made adjustments based on their recommendations.

- Page 2 - The corridor has 1,271 parking spaces in the public right-of-way. This should state 1,271 parking spaces in the public right-of-way less 93 spaces encumbered (as spaces for dumpsters, loading zones, motorcycle & disabled parking) leaving a net of 1178 spaces available for “general purpose parking”.

RESPONSE:

The study makes the distinction that not all of the 1,271 spaces are available for general use. However, the spaces used for dumpsters, loading zones, motorcycle & disabled parking are legitimate uses of the corridor and therefore included in the overall count.

- Page 4 – The use of a pie chart stating “Public Parking Supply 1271 spaces” is misleading and a more relevant and appropriate statement would be using the “General Purpose Parking 1,178 spaces”.

RESPONSE:

See response above.

- Page 4 – It is unclear what the parking “hourly rate and time limits” has to do with the Cycle Track Design? Perhaps this should be eliminated?

RESPONSE:

Hourly rate and time limits have a significant effect on the parking utilization and utilization patterns. This information will be used to help inform the design.

- Page 4 – The Statement about parking occupancy in the City being 70%-85% is reflective of a homogeneous city block where there is limited street parking capacity and nearby parking garages available to the public. This is not the situation for the Westlake working waterfront and diverse water dependent community. I would therefore recommend that any loss of the current parking spaces along Westlake Ave. N require nearby replacement with public parking as part of the DAC recommendation.

RESPONSE:

Comment noted.

- Page 5 – The parking occupancy conclusion statements reflect a perspective that Westlake is identical to a homogeneous city block where there is limited street parking capacity which is subject to the City’s paid parking metrics and this limited street parking is also supplemented by extensive public parking capacity available in private buildings and parking lots. Westlake however is bordered by Lake Union to the east and a very steep hillside on west. As a result, the current parking area represents “all” of the space available to support the parking needs of the Westlake Community.

The occupancy conclusion statements are not reflective of the significant “seasonal” impact of this working waterfront and diverse water dependent community. Rather the Westlake community is similar to the seasonal impacts such as the Seattle waterfront (with the absence of the nearby parking lots), not a homogeneous city block. As a result, the conclusion statements in this survey are incomplete and misleading. The awareness and understanding this working waterfront and diverse water dependent community needs to be reflected in the report.

RESPONSE:

Comment noted.

- Page 7 – The Summary Statements have been made without the benefit of the survey of the businesses, residents and moorage tenants and thus contain inappropriate conclusions based upon a one size fits all “city block” survey which is not the real world situation of this working waterfront and diverse water dependent community.

RESPONSE:

See response to comment #2 under ‘General Concerns.’

- Missing Information - SDOT has released “Existing Conditions” information stating Westlake Ave. N carries 24,000 cars per day, 124 bicycles per day and 150 pedestrians per day. Why has this information been excluded from this Survey data?

RESPONSE:

This memo specifically addresses parking supply and utilization. Existing conditions and traffic circulation of motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles are addressed in separate memos.

- Missing Information - Why does this survey not provide the demographics of the Westlake Community (# of Businesses, # of residents, # of moorage tenants, and number of customers per day)? This information is important in being able to understand the volume of traffic needing to enter & exit throughout this area as well as compete for scarce parking spaces at peak times of the business day and high seasons linked to the recreational use of Lake Union through Westlake Ave. N.

RESPONSE:

The project team continues to work with and solicit information from local businesses and residents to identify users, ideas for how parking could be prioritized and how supply and demand can meet the needs once a bike facility is built. This effort includes receiving written and oral comments, hosting two open houses to date, conducting an online survey and working with the DAC. The project team also includes representatives of the Office of Economic Development and Department of Planning and Development to help us understand not only current needs, but expected growth and private development parking minimum and maximum requirements.

Other Community Comments:

It is suggested in the Design Criteria that all cyclists be required to use this facility and not the parking lot or sidewalk, but "suggesting" is not enough. If this facility will actually work, there the criteria also need to be supported by a City ordinance and properly enforcement, and not simply left up to the discretion of the cyclists. If this isn't done then the “safety” argument for the need of this facility is a hollow one.

RESPONSE:

Comment noted.

There should be a 10 mph motor vehicle speed & cycle speed limit for the entire parking corridor with proper signage and enforcement.

RESPONSE:

Below is the email SDOT sent to Mr. Strong on May 28, 2014 in response to his request for a 10MPH speed limit along Westlake East Roadway Avenue N.

Under current state law the City cannot lower the speed limit on streets below 20MPH without state legislative action.

As you know, the parking area along Westlake is not a true parking lot, but rather a street (Westlake E Roadway Avenue N) with a great deal of on-street public parking. In 2013, after a long fought battle (that we supported) the state amended RCW 46.61.415. This amendment lets “Cities and towns in their respective jurisdictions establish a maximum speed limit of twenty miles per hour on a non-arterial highway, or part of a non-arterial highway, that is within a residence district or business district.” It used to be 25MPH. But this change does not get us to 10MPH.

The cycle track project gives us a great opportunity to look at how the public parking is organized and to consider back-in angled parking and sight distance improvements. Also, designing a bike facility that encourages calm speeds and more predictability will help all users. In the meantime, one idea we had for encouraging slower speeds in the parking area this summer is to use some of our trail yard signs. I’ll start working on getting some printed up and installed along the corridor.