

Thoughts on Lake Washington Promenade

June 20, 2014

Promenade (Oxford dictionaries)

Origin

Mid 16th century (denoting a leisurely walk in public): from French, from *se promener* 'to walk', reflexive of *promener* 'take for a walk'.

Noun

A paved public walk, typically one along a waterfront at a resort.

Synonyms

esplanade, front, seafront, parade, walk, boulevard, avenue, boardwalk

Example sentences

- The walk along the promenade to the more genteel Frinton-on-Sea is lined with beach huts, and the weather was good for taking photos.
- It's little things like wanting to walk along the promenade at Scarborough which I can no longer do.
- Over at Blue Anchor bay the tar on the road was melting and walking along the promenade was a hot-foot experience.

This subject is scheduled for Council consideration at the July 15 Council meeting.

Basic idea

The foundation of the Promenade idea is to improve the experience for pedestrians along the Lake Front. Develop a broad space for pedestrians and bicycles that makes the water front a more active and compelling place; makes better use of the waterfront. It would also be a space for vendors, activities, street musicians etc.

Origin of idea

Tom Neir of the Transportation Commission championed it beginning several years ago. The Commission has endorsed the idea and is interested in seeing it be kept alive. A form of this idea is also in the draft PROS plan.

How would it work?

The original concept was to remove parking on one side of Lake Washington Boulevard and repurpose it as a wider walk way. Since the idea was to have a space for bicycles and pedestrians it may make sense to repurpose space currently dedicated to bicycles. However, leaving an on-street bicycle facility may help to segregate higher speed bicycles away from the promenade. Other options are possible all the way up to repurposing two parking lanes and both bike lanes. The existing sidewalk is 6 to 8 feet in width.

Mitigation

One of the primary sticking points of the project as originally conceived is the loss of parking from Lake Washington Boulevard. Providing additional parking to make up for this loss is a possible way of mitigating the impacts of the parking loss.

Length:

Originally intended for implementation between about 2nd Avenue S. and Carillon Point, but conceptually it could be extended to the north and south, with different cross-sections.

Design considerations

The minimum width for a shared use (bicycles and pedestrians) is 10 feet, but 14 feet or more is needed in areas of high usage and additional width would be needed for public activity spaces. Moving curb lines would require significant surface water improvements.

Public Outreach

No public outreach has been conducted for the idea other than advertising the idea at the April 26 Future Day.

Cost estimate

The cost of the project is highly variable depending on the extent of the project and its scope.

Possible options for Council

- Postpone consideration for the future, don't consider it in the Transportation Master Plan
- Include in the Transportation Master Plan as a concept for future study
- Begin to move more aggressively toward studying the concept and developing a plan for implementation.