



CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800

www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: David Godfrey, P.E., Transportation Engineering Manager
Marilynne Beard, Interim Public Works Director

Date: July 3, 2014

Subject: LAKE WASHINGTON PROMENADE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council receives a detailed briefing on the Lake Washington Promenade concept and directs staff as to next steps.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

At the April 15 Study Session concerning the Transportation Master Plan, the City Council expressed interest in the concept of an expanded "boardwalk" walkway along Lake Washington Boulevard as one of the "big ideas" to be included in the Plan. However, Council had concerns as to how the plan might affect other street uses and requested more details on the proposal.

Origin of idea

The Transportation Commission began seriously considering the idea of an improved walkway several years ago. The Commission continues to endorse the idea and is interested in including it in the Transportation Master Plan as something that could be developed at some point over the next 20 years. A form of this idea is also included in the draft PROS plan as the "Lakeway Corridor."

Concept

The foundation of the Promenade idea is to improve the waterfront experience - making it a stronger destination with commercial vibrancy, providing an area for vendors, activities and pedestrians, and improving the narrow walkway that currently exists. Originally it was 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. Figures 1 and 2 on page 3 provide illustrations giving some context to the concept.

How would it work?

The original implementation idea was to remove parking on the west side of Lake Washington Boulevard and repurpose that space as a wider walkway. Since the concept is to free up space for bicycles and pedestrians, it may make sense to repurpose space currently dedicated to bicycles instead. However, leaving an on-street bicycle facility would segregate higher speed bicycles away from the promenade which might be safer depending on the available width for

the Promenade. Alternatively, developing a protected two-way bicycle facility as a part of the Promenade would have substantial benefits for the bicycle network. Other options for reconfiguration of the existing space include repurposing both parking and bike lanes from Lake Washington Boulevard for the Promenade.

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. The existing sidewalk is 5 to 8 feet in width. The cost of the project is highly variable depending on the extent of the project and its scope.

Mitigation

One of the primary concerns about the project as originally conceived is the loss of parking from Lake Washington Boulevard. Providing additional parking, or better managing existing parking may be ways to make up for this loss.

Public Outreach

No public outreach has been conducted for the idea other than the City Manager raising the concept in his June, 2013 Kirkland 2035 presentation to the Chamber of Commerce and staff discussing the idea at the April 26, 2014 Community Future Day.

Possible options for Council

At their last meeting the Transportation Commission discussed the Promenade and recommended an urban design study as a next step to clarify goals, consider the whole range of alternatives, and allow public comment. Such a study could be an action identified in the Transportation Master Plan.

Council may wish to choose one of the following options as a next step for staff:

1. Postpone consideration of the Promenade for the future and don't consider it in the current Transportation Master Plan.
2. Include the Promenade in the Transportation Master Plan, with a next action being a design study at some point over the life of the Plan.
3. Begin a study of the concept in the near term.
4. Other.

Staff recommends Option 2 because although the concept is worthy, it should compete against other ideas for future funding. Inclusion in the Master Plan would put it in context with other transportation needs.

At the July 15 Council meeting, Tom Neir, Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission will be joining staff to make a brief presentation on the contents of this memo and answer any questions that Council may have.



Figure 1. Lake Washington Boulevard looking south showing existing sidewalk, bicycle lanes and auto lanes. Source: Google Street View



Figure 2. Lake Washington Boulevard looking north south of Brink Park. Yellow area shows the dimensions of one possible Promenade alternative.