



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Kim Scrivner, Transportation Planner
Joel Pfundt, Transportation Manager
Julie Underwood, Director of Public Works

Date: March 25, 2021

Subject: PARK LANE—CLOSURE TO VEHICLES

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Council provide guidance on two items related to the proposed closing of Park Lane to vehicles:

- The duration of closure—times of day and months of implementation; and
- The preferred mechanism for blocking the drive-lane to vehicles.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

At its March 16, 2021 Council Meeting, the Council first discussed this item under its newly established Legislative Request Memoranda process as outlined in the Council Rules of Procedure. At that meeting, the Council directed staff to return to Council with additional information.

Closing Park Lane to vehicles reduces parking spaces but allows restaurants and merchants to expand their businesses further out into the sidewalk and streetscape, expanding their ability to seat customers and sell merchandise outside. This also provides more open space for pedestrians to remain more socially distant while enjoying the downtown atmosphere.

When Park Lane was closed to vehicles during the evenings last year from July to November, the City received many positive comments from the public who enjoyed the experience the street closure provided, stating that the atmosphere attracted more people to patronize downtown Kirkland. Some merchants expressed concern that if the parking was closed during the day their businesses could be impacted negatively, but that the evening-only closure would not have that same impact. Also, there is an impact to City staff and/or volunteers who opened and closed the street each day. That proved to be complicated on Sundays and holidays when City crews were not always available.

OPTIONS FOR STREET CLOSURE:

Duration of Street Closure to Vehicles (between Lake Street and Main Street)

These options are for Council deliberation. Once the Council provides direction, staff will begin outreach to the public. Staffing to open and close the street could be a combination of volunteers and/or City staff.

OPTION 1. "Similar to last year." Close Park Lane May 1 to October 1 only during the evenings (beginning at 6pm) and all day during permitted special events downtown.

- If staff was needed, overtime would be required for Sundays and holidays. Estimated staff time cost would be \$9,280 (1 hour per day x 25 days per month at \$58 per hour + 1 hour per day x 5 overtime hour days at \$87 per hour) x 5 months.

OPTION 2. Close Park Lane from May 1 through October 1 on weekday evenings (beginning at 6pm) AND full-day closures on weekends and holidays.

- The Council could change the 6:00 p.m. closure time (that time was chosen last year as a compromise with retailers who did not want the parking restrictions);
- Full weekend and holiday closure would reduce City staff time and expense because overtime pay would not be required. Estimated staff time cost would be \$7,540 (1 hour per day x 20 days per month x \$58 per hour¹)

OPTION 3. Close Park Lane all day and evening every day from May 1 to October 1.

- The Council could choose to shorten or lengthen the May-October window, including to full permanent closure;
- Parking spaces would be eligible for "parklet" use (restaurant seating or retail use of vacant parking spaces);
- Staff time required would be low due to the one-time nature of set-up and take-down.

OPTION 4. No action.

- By application, parking spaces would be eligible to be reserved for parklet use (outdoor restaurant seating or expanded retail).

For options 1 and 2, additional signage would be needed for each parking space to ensure compliance with the daily parking restriction. The cost for these signs is about \$500.



¹ The hourly rates used in this staff report are fully-burdened, including the cost of benefits.

For options 1 through 3, the alley on the south side between Feast and Cactus that provides access to/from Washington Federal Bank would need to be closed. No additional cost would be incurred for the sign itself (one would be supplied from the Maintenance Center), but it would be required to be moved when Park Lane is open to vehicles.



Mechanism for Street Closure

All proposed alternatives for a means to physically close the street would be operated manually, which would require volunteers and/or City staff. An automated option would still require a person to ensure the street is clear of people and vehicles to ensure safety, so automated options are not recommended because the additional benefit would be minimal given the additional cost.

PERMANENT GATE

A gate installed at the west end of Park Lane would provide an opportunity for more extended closure of Park Lane, but also provides a simple method for closing the street daily. This alternative also provides an opportunity for the gate itself to serve as an art installation to compliment the aesthetic of Park Lane.



Installation

The installation would require design and permitting that would range from as low as \$50,000 but could escalate up to \$300,000 based on the following items:

- The permeable soil content under Park Lane;
- Location of proposed gate near tree wells;
- Potential conflicts with underground utilities.

Other Costs

- Procurement of gates: \$15,000 to \$20,000 for basic gates. Custom fabrication could elevate the cost significantly.
- Maintenance: Maintenance and any needed repair of the gates may need to be provided by a third party. The potential for the gates to become damaged is quite possible because the existing bollards have been hit by vehicles over time.



Additional Considerations

- The gates would be designed to serve as a kind of fence for landscaped areas when open; they would not obstruct pedestrian travel when open.
- Installation in 2021 likely would need to occur during the early summer.
- Staff and/or volunteers would be required to open and close the gates.

Staff Recommendation

This gate option would be preferable if the Park Lane closure to vehicles were to occur every year or periodically. Council may wish to discuss a budget maximum for this option, though some site and existing infrastructure information is unknown at this time. With a better-defined scope, followed by some design work, staff would be able to narrow down these costs.

- ▶ Total Costs: \$65,000 to \$300,000

MOVEABLE FENCE OR BARRIER

A movable fence or barrier would not require amending the surface of the street but would need some type of storage when Park Lane is open to vehicles. This option can accommodate both extended and temporary durations.

Costs

- Procurement: \$2,000 to \$8,000 based on type and quality of barrier selected
- Storage: \$300 per month for a storage pod, plus the loss of one parking stall in the Lake and Central lot for the storage pod

Additional considerations

- Some fences or barriers may be quite heavy, so using volunteers may or may not be feasible.
- Easy access to the storage unit would be required.



- ▶ Total Costs: \$3,500 - \$9,500

A-FRAME SIGNS (AS WERE USED LAST YEAR)

The A-frame signs used to close Park Lane last year worked well for the street closure, but storage was an issue and the reliance on volunteers was inconsistent.



Costs

- Use the same signs from last year. \$500 would fund additional signs needed for each parking stall sign if options 1 or 2 are chosen.
- A portable storage unit is recommended for this option or have City staff place the signs in areas along Park Lane when not in use if a storage pod is not used. The images below show where signs could be stored when the street is open to vehicles. Volunteers were not consistent with sign placement and storage, and signs were found scattered in inappropriate places last year.
 - Storage costs: 0 - \$1,500 for storage costs (recommend staff to place signs if stored on-site if not stored in a container)
 - Staff costs: 0 - \$9,280 based on duration and open/closure hours



Total Cost would depend on duration of street closure, staff time, and storage options. Recommendation is to either fund staff time to implement or designated storage if not both. Range from \$1500 - \$11,280

ADDITIONAL OPTION: BOLLARDS (not recommended)

- Repair or replacement of existing bollard is not a recommended option because of the following factors:
 - Bollard is not favored by fire department
 - Risk with getting hit by a car
 - A "Road Closed" sign would need to be attached, which would make it difficult to open and close the street daily

- Cost: The cost of using the bollards could range from \$1,000 to \$13,000. The lower range would cover the cost of inspecting them and ensuring they work properly and safely. The higher range would be to repair or replace them were they to become damaged.

ENGAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESS:

Once Council provides direction regarding the questions posed in this staff report, staff will begin an engagement process with the public to include the following:

- April 7: "Notice of Engagement" distributed and web page posted
- April 19: Virtual Community Meeting
- May 4 or May 18: Council Decision