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**Public Works Department**  
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**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** Joel Pfundt, Transportation Manager  
Julie Underwood, Director of Public Works

**Date:** April 22, 2021

**Subject:** LAKE STREET SOUTH/LAKE WASHINGTON BOULEVARD PEDESTRIAN  
WALKWAY PILOT PROJECT

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Council provide guidance on two items related to the proposed temporary conversion of the on-street parallel parking lane on the west side of Lake Street S/Lake Washington Boulevard to an expanded pedestrian walkway from approximately 250 feet south of 2nd Avenue South to NE 60th Street (see Attachment A):

- The duration of the pilot; and
- Feedback on the mechanism for providing separation between pedestrians and vehicles.

**BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

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

The sidewalk along Lake Street South/Lake Washington Boulevard connecting downtown Kirkland and Carillon Point is a spectacularly scenic walk that is frequented by people from Kirkland and throughout the region, especially on nicer evenings during the spring, summer, and early autumn. For many years, the City of Kirkland's Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) list had included an unfunded project envisioning a much wider sidewalk creating a "pedestrian promenade" along the west side of the Boulevard. The pilot project will help identify the costs and benefits of considering a permanent pedestrian promenade at some point in the future. Figure 1, below, is a good representation of the street cross section along most of this corridor.



**Figure 1:** *Lake Street/Lake Washington Boulevard Cross Section*

Converting on-street parallel parking on the west side of this corridor to pedestrian-only use would create a scenic walkway that is a more comfortable and attractive environment for the many people who walk and bike along the corridor. It also would provide the ability for people walking to be more socially distanced. Such a project has the potential to attract more people to the waterfront, which may also result in more potential customers for shops and restaurants in the vicinity of Lake Street South/Lake Washington Boulevard. The pilot will also allow the City to evaluate potential safety implications such as whether the walkway creates any conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, or increases pedestrian/car conflicts from increased east to west crossings of Lake Washington Boulevard. Finally, the pilot will allow the City to evaluate potential impacts of the walkway with resident and visitor parking, contractor/delivery/services parking and waterfront parks parking needs along the west side of the arterial.

The greatest experience the City has with closing the parallel parking lane on the west side of Lake Street South/Lake Washington Boulevard comes from special events associated with running events. Observations from special event staff include:

- These closures usually are for half a day and occur on weekend mornings. The event usually is less than one hour. Part of the reason for keeping it so short is that the residents in the area impacted by the closures prefer a return to “normal” use as quickly as possible.
- Most negative comments about the disruptions that these events cause comes from people who live in the northern section, between 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South and 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.
- South of 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, people tend to disregard the no parking signs. Residents and visitors to residents sometimes say that they went out of town and didn’t know about the parking closure.
- With special events, the Police Department tries to contact people before towing cars or, depending on the situation, before citing them.

The pedestrian walkway pilot would extend about 4,600 feet. It would begin 250 feet south of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, just past the curb bulb on the west side of Lake Street South, and end just north of NE 60<sup>th</sup> Street. Based on initial field estimates, 1,400 feet (30%) of this section of street provides access to driveways, crosswalks, and mailboxes,

which would need to be maintained during the pilot project. The remaining 3,200 feet (70%) is made up of a combination of on-street parallel parking, red curb (no parking), and loading zones. The "30% area" would need to be kept available for vehicular movement, though the "70% area" could be protected for the temporary walkway.

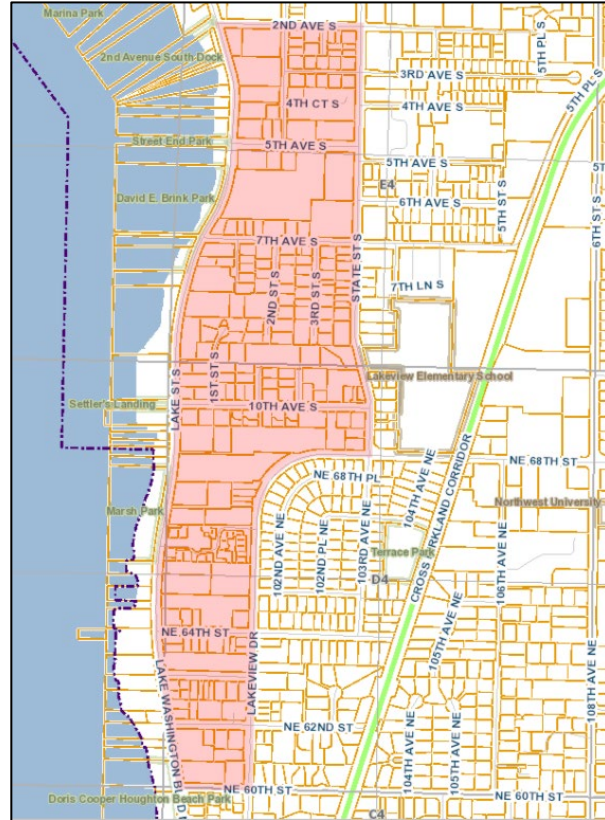
City staff performed an inventory of the on-street public parking supply in an area bounded by 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, Lake Street South/Lake Washington Boulevard, NE 60<sup>th</sup> Street, and along the west side of State Street South/Lakeview Drive (see Figure 2). This area was selected to describe the public parking supply in the vicinity of the project that would necessitate a single crossing of an arterial street for a person walking from their parked vehicle to access a location on the west side of the Lake Street South/Lake Washington Boulevard. The total number of on-street public parking spaces in this area is estimated to be 560. Of these parking spaces, 130 of them (or 23%) are on the west side of Lake Street South/Lake Washington Boulevard.

Vehicle parking in this area is in high demand, particularly on nicer days of the year, so elimination of these parking spaces likely would result in more people parking their vehicles on the eastern side streets and further into neighborhoods.

That likely would result in an increase in parking complaints attributable to illegally parked vehicles. Violations, such as parking too close to a driveway or intersection, and blocking mailboxes already are common-place and presumably would increase, putting additional demand on Police services.

#### *David Brink Park Renovation*

The City will also be closing David E. Brink Park, which occupies Lake Washington waterfront along the west side of Lake St S, starting this summer to renovate the park's shoreline improving access, safety, habitat and aesthetics. Project construction will be limited to the park site itself. Two temporary driveways will be established for construction vehicle access to the site from Lake St S. The project will require construction workers to park in the vicinity which will further reduce available public parking. But except for the contractor parking impacts, staff does not foresee any particular conflicts between this construction project and the pedestrian pilot project.



**Figure 2.** *On-Street Public Parking Inventory Area*

**OPTIONS FOR PARKING LANE CLOSURE:**

**Duration of Vehicle Parking Lane Closure for the Pedestrian Walkway Pilot**

The following five options are for Council deliberation and described in more detail below:

1. Two Weeks;
2. Four Weekends over a Month;
3. One Month, August 4 through September 6 (Labor Day);
4. All Summer, July through September; or
5. No Action.

Following Council direction, staff will begin outreach to the public. Because of the scale of the project, once an option has been selected—assuming No Action is not selected—then converting the parking lane to a pedestrian walkway would be performed by a contractor. The contractor would operate under the direction of Public Works staff, in coordination with the City Manager’s Office, Police, Fire, and Parks and Community Services.

Regardless of the action option selected, once the pedestrian walkway is in place, vehicles parked in the temporary walkway illegally would be ticketed, not towed.

As part of considering the options for the duration of the deployment the pedestrian walkway pilot, staff considered different traffic control devices to separate the walkway from other travel lanes. Table 1, below, summarizes the three types of traffic control devices that were considered by staff and their recommended applications.

**Table 1: Traffic Control Device Evaluation and Recommendations**

**Moveable Delineator Posts with Base** – *This device is recommended for "short-term" walkway options.* It is easier and less costly to deploy, adjust, and remove. It provides the most flexibility of access for emergency responders, postal service, and solid waste pickup. However, it provides less comfort and safety for people walking in the street. It also is extremely easy to tamper with, which would result in more City staff time (primarily Public Works and Police) being dedicated to:

- Relocating delineator posts so they are not blocking the walkway, bike lane or vehicle travel lane;
- Replacing delineators that have been stolen or damaged; and
- Enforcing the vehicle parking prohibition because people are likely to take advantage of locations where delineators have moved or move the delineators for vehicle parking.



**Delineator Posts Temporarily Attached to Pavement** – *This device is recommended for "long-term" walkway options.* It is more costly to install, adjust, and remove than the moveable delineator posts with base, but it has many advantages. Since they cannot be moved easily, they provide more comfort and safety while still providing access for emergency responders, the postal service, and solid waste pickup. This option would require less day-to-day maintenance by Public Works staff and the devices are much more tamper-resistant so it is much less likely that people will disregard them in order to park in the walkway.





**Temporary Plastic Jersey Barrier** – *After evaluation, this device is not recommended for use on any of the walkway options.* This option would provide the most pedestrian comfort and safety and would be better for parking enforcement. Unfortunately, it makes access for emergency responders, such as Fire, much more difficult. It would make postal service delivery and solid waste pickup more difficult without significantly decreasing the amount of barrier placed along the corridor. This would result in additional gaps that would greatly reduce the effectiveness of the walkway. Also, the City would need to purchase, instead of rent, temporary plastic jersey barrier. This would cost the city an estimated \$150,000-\$200,000 and the City would need to find a place to store about seven truckloads of plastic barrier when they are not in use.



Options 1 and 2 are shorter term and staff therefore recommends using the moveable delineator posts for speed and ease of implementation and lower costs. Options 3 and 4 are more long term, and staff recommends using delineator posts attached to the pavement. If the pilot is of a more extensive duration, there is a much higher likelihood of the public frequently removing or scattering the moveable delineator posts. Making the posts semi-permanent is more expensive, but the walkway is more likely to be sustained. In addition, the attached delineator posts would provide a visual greater delineation for cars and sense of safety for pedestrians as the pilot extended one month or longer. A more detailed description of each option is described below.

**OPTION 1. Implement Pedestrian Walkway for Two Weeks**

- Separation provided by a moveable delineator posts with base
- "No Parking" signage on moveable delineator post with base on sidewalk
- Variable message sign trailer deployed at each end of the corridor one week prior to implementation and during the duration of the pilot
- Moveable delineator posts will require more City staff time for maintenance and parking enforcement
- Estimated traffic control contractor costs would be \$10,000 and the City is responsible for loss, damage, or theft of traffic control devices

**OPTION 2. Implement Pedestrian Walkway During Four Weekends Over a Month**

- Separation provided by a moveable delineator posts with base
- "No Parking" signage on moveable delineator post with base on sidewalk
- Variable message sign trailer deployed at each end of the corridor one week prior to implementation and during the duration of the pilot
- Moveable delineator posts will require more City staff time for maintenance and parking enforcement
- Estimated traffic control contractor costs would be \$15,000 and the City is responsible for loss, damage, or theft of traffic control devices

**OPTION 3. Implement Pedestrian Walkway for Four Weeks, August 4 through September 6 (Labor Day)**

- Separation provided by delineator posts temporarily attached to pavement
- A combination of "No Parking" signage on moveable delineator post with base on sidewalk, on existing signposts, and/or pavement markings
- Variable message sign trailer deployed at each end of the corridor for one week prior to implementation
- A planning level opinion of costs to install and remove delineator posts and other signs and markings is \$100,000 to 500,000
  - Staff acknowledges that a wide range of this magnitude is not ideal for making an important decision. Reasons that contribute to the imprecise cost estimate:
    - There has not been sufficient time to design the semi-permanent solution, especially given that key factors have not yet been decided upon and public input has yet to be gathered. With so

many unknowns staff do not want to give the Council an overly optimistic budget amount.

- Staff referred to the real costs that the City incurred for the 122<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE Traffic Calming Project, which was much shorter in physical length. Staff extrapolated using that information.
- This option requires installing and removing more than 300 delineators, plus associated traffic control, all of which will be expensive.
- The spring/summer months are the peak time for pavement-related contractors, so it may not be the best bid climate either for contractor availability or cost.
- Alternately, the City could use the Job Order Contracting (JOC) option, which while efficient in time and process nonetheless comes at a premium price.
- The need to implement the project quickly to occur this summer will likely yield greater costs.

**OPTION 4. Implement Pedestrian Walkway All Summer, July through September**

- Separation provided by delineator posts temporarily attached to pavement
- A combination of no parking signage on moveable delineator post with base on sidewalk, on existing signposts and/or pavement markings
- Variable message sign trailer deployed at each end of the corridor for one week prior to implementation
- A planning level opinion of costs to install and remove delineator posts and other signs and markings is \$100,000 to \$500,000—see explanation in Option 3

**OPTION 5. No action**

**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:

- May 5: Notice of Engagement & Web landing page
- May 17: Organizing Event/Community Meeting
- June 1 or June 15: Council decision, discussion/issue:
  - June 1—Council decision/meeting would make engagement process challenging
  - June 15—Council decision precludes any implementation until likely mid-July due to need for notification and contractor mobilization



April 22, 2021

**Attachment A: Lake Street S/Lake Washington Boulevard Promenade**

