



MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Victoria Kovacs, AICP, Transportation Planner
Martha Chaudry, Special Projects Coordinator

Date: January 17, 2023

Subject: Future of Park Lane Study

I. RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission receive a short briefing of the purpose and scope of a consultant study for the Future of Park Lane. Staff is seeking Commission thoughts, observations, and ideas for consultant consideration in developing and evaluating scenarios of closure of Park Lane to vehicular traffic.

II. BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

Park Lane is a two block, curbsless "Flexible Street" at the heart of Downtown Kirkland lined with businesses, restaurants, and retail uses. Park Lane has been designed as a pedestrian-oriented street with slow moving vehicle traffic, parking, and has removable bollards at each end to enable regular closure of the street for community events. Recently, consideration has been given to more permanent closure of Park Lane to vehicle traffic through a 2019 "Summer Sundays" pilot, which closed vehicle access to both blocks of Park Lane all day on Sundays from May through September; and "Evenings on Park Lane" which closed one block of Park Lane to vehicle access during the evenings with varying start dates and times over the summer months from 2020-2022.

At the City Council [August 3, 2022 meeting](#), staff presented two options on the future of Park Lane as either: a) an open street with parking, or b) a street closed seasonally or permanently to vehicle traffic. Council voted to evaluate seasonal or full closure of Park Lane, and authorized staff to hire a consultant to assist in the evaluation of options. The results of this study will be shared back with Council in June 2023 to inform a final decision on the Future of Park Lane.

III. CONSULTANT STUDY

The purpose of the consultant study will be to identify and evaluate the practical implementation challenges and opportunities of three options of permanent or temporary closure of Park Lane to vehicle traffic. This study will identify the infrastructure, programming, parking mitigations and other investments that would be necessary to potentially close Park Lane to vehicle traffic and successfully

activate a pedestrian retail, service, and dining area in the downtown core. The operational scenarios for Park Lane vehicle closure include:

1. Full year-round closure,
2. Full summer seasonal closure such as from May to October,
3. Summer evening closure such as from May to October, 6PM to 11PM (i.e., "Evenings")

The results of this study will inform a Council decision on the future use of Park Lane. While Park Lane could remain as a flexible street with vehicle access and parking, evaluation of the status quo is not necessary nor included in the consultant scope. Vehicle closure scenarios are only considered for the west end (Lake St to Main St) of Park Lane given different vehicle circulation pattern, building frontages, and uses along the street at the east end (Main St to 3rd St); and any special events which require temporary or full vehicle closures of Park Lane could occur under any scenario.

This scope will include document review and stakeholder engagement, concept design of the closure scenarios with visualizations, identification of recommended capital and operational investments including planning level costs for each scenario, an evaluation matrix of the scenarios for comparison, and a final report. Key components for each closure scenario to identify include, but are not limited to:

1. Infrastructure recommendations and requirements, such as shelter, seating, parklets, vehicle access control, and bollards/barriers.
2. Operations recommendations and requirements, including street closure and re-opening procedures, maintenance access plan, and loading zone locations.
3. Parking mitigation strategies, such as wayfinding or other public awareness campaigns for Park Lane parking closure times and available alternative public parking lots, or aesthetic and/or safety improvements to the Library Garage.
4. Programming and street activation recommendations, including during winter months if applicable.
5. Public safety requirements including emergency, fire, or police vehicle access and circulation.

IV. COMMISSION INPUT

Staff is seeking Commission thoughts, observations, and ideas for consultant consideration in developing and evaluating scenarios of closure of Park Lane to vehicular traffic. Some prompting questions for discussion include:

- What are your ideas for the Future of Park Lane?
- What are key topics for the consultant to consider?
- What information would you like the know about each closure scenario?

V. NEXT STEPS:

Staff and the consultant will conduct listening sessions with business owners of Park Lane at the end of January. In March, staff and the consultant will return to the Commission with the draft vehicle closure scenarios for Commission feedback.