

Chapter VI.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

1. Vision and Goals

A neighborhood whose seniors, children, and disabled can stroll at will or cross the street without danger. A neighborhood where bicyclists feel safe and welcome. A neighborhood with frequent buses and convenient bus stops. A neighborhood whose businesses have good truck access. A neighborhood not overwhelmed by through traffic or free way noise and pollution.

This vision can be our Eastlake if we plan well for transportation. Seven goals will help to realize the transportation vision; each goal is associated with specific recommendations.

- Goal T-1 Reduce speeding and collisions
- Goal T-2 Make it safer and more convenient for pedestrians to cross the street
- Goal T-3 Add and improve sidewalks and walkways
- Goal T-4 Improve bicycle conditions
- Goal T-5 Improve bus service for Eastlake residents, employees and customers
- Goal T-6 Reduce freeway-related noise, air and water pollution, and visual blight through technology and system modifications; mitigate the impacts that cannot be eliminated
- Goal T-7 Ensure that any light rail or monorail system is a net benefit to the neighborhood

This chapter on the Transportation planning element first defines terms and summarizes the relevant direction from the City's Comprehensive Plan. The chapter then provides background on the planning process. The chapter ends with the recommendations, classifying them as key, near-term, or long-term.

2. Definitions of Terms

Arterial: A street used primarily for the movement of traffic, which maybe both local and non-local in nature.

Bicycle lane: An on-street lane striped for bicyclists.

Bicycle path: An off-street bicycle route.

Boulevard: Street classification allowing motor vehicles but encouraging physical design features that provide a park-like atmosphere.

Center turn lane: A lane set aside for use by vehicles making left turns in both directions from or into the roadway.

Crosswalk: The marked or unmarked portion of the street designated for pedestrians to cross.

Curb cut: A depression in the curb, usually for a driveway.

Curb ramp: A narrow curb cut with gradual incline suitable for use by wheelchairs and strollers.

Jitney: A van or other vehicle smaller than a bus that provides regular transit service.

King County Metro: Local and express bus service operated by the King County Transit Division.

Local improvement district (LID): A special assessment district in which all property owners share in the cost of a project that benefits them. State and local laws provide that approval must be in writing by property owners representing at least 51 % of the assessment area and 51 % of the linear footage fronting on the improvement. The City Council has the authority to impose an LID even in the absence of this approval.

Paratransit: Buses, vans, and other vehicles that operate dial-a-ride and other on-demand service.

Pedestrian half-signal: A traffic signal (stop light) which provides assistance for crossing the arterial but not for crossing the residential street that intersects it.

Residential Parking Zone (RPZ): An area where the general public's use of on-street parking is restricted; residents of the area who obtain a permit are exempted from the restrictions. The rules vary; among the neighborhoods that have a residential parking zone, Eastlake's RPZ provides the most opportunity for non-residents (such as business employees and customers) to park on the streets that have a restriction.

Right-of-Way: Publicly owned land developed or reserved for street purposes or other public passage. May not be paved; may be usable only by pedestrians, and may even be undeveloped for any access; may be under water.

Seattle Engineering Department: Former name of SEATRAN.

SEATRAN: Seattle Transportation Department, which manages City streets, alleys, and their associated rights-of-way.

Sound Transit: The three-county Regional Transit Authority which is building the Link light rail, Sounder commuter rail, and a regional express bus network.

WSDOT: Washington State Department of Transportation, which manages Interstate 5, State Route 520, and their associated rights-of-way.

Walkway: Any pedestrian route that is separated from the roadway; usually defined as having a more rural feel than a sidewalk.

3. Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan

The Transportation recommendations are based on, related to and supported by the following goals and policies of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan.

Policy C8 requires the City to consider the recommendations of a neighborhood plan in making locational decisions for new or expanded capital facilities. Policy C2 requires the City to assess the policy and fiscal implications of major new and expanded capital facilities based on their consistency with neighborhood plans. (Capital Facilities Element)

Policy L8 requires the City to develop objective criteria regarding public transportation investments and access for each urban village, including Eastlake. (Land Use Element)

Policy L 10 (Land Use Element) designates principal commercial streets for each urban village; Eastlake Avenue is so designated. The Comprehensive Plan also continues the designation of Eastlake Avenue as a principal arterial (Policy T16, Transportation Figure 1) and as a part of the transit priority network (Policy T32, Transportation Figure 4). (Transportation Element)

Policy L 150 permits underutilized or undeveloped rights-of-way to be designated as any one of four categories of "green street" through neighborhood planning to enhance public circulation, pedestrian activity, and street level open space. (Land Use Element)

Goal G1 O and Policy T11 give priority to improving public transit and bicycling and walking conditions, especially in urban villages like Eastlake. (Transportation Element)

Goal G13 directs the City to protect neighborhood streets from through traffic; Policy T18 directs the City to use neighborhood traffic control devices and strategies to protect local streets from through traffic, high volumes, high speeds, and pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. (Transportation Element)

Policy T16 affirms the use of Interstate 5 as a major route for cars, trucks, and buses, and directs the City to coordinate with WSDOT to discourage diversion of traffic from regional roadways and principal arterials onto lesser arterials and local streets. (Transportation Element)

Policy T38 commits the City to connect urban centers and urban villages (of which Eastlake is one) with ten-minute bus headways during most of the day, 15- to 30-minute bus headways during the evening, and one-hour headways at night. (Transportation Element)

Policy T42 and the Comprehensive Plan's Transportation Figure 5 designate Fairview Avenue E. as a part of the Seattle Urban Trails System. (Transportation Element)

Policy T46 permits a neighborhood plan to designate Key Pedestrian Streets within the highest density portions of urban villages and along logical connections between villages. A part of that

designation is a relaxation of parking requirements for new development. Currently (1998), the City is considering expanding the definition to include more than one type of Key Pedestrian Street and their associated rules. (Transportation Element)

Policy T49.5 requires the City to develop methods for evaluating the provision and performance of non-motorized travel facilities, and use them to evaluate existing facilities and develop new ones. The methods are to incorporate such factors as delay and discomfort, barriers, and safety. (Transportation Element)

Transportation Strategic Plan

On March 3, 1998, the City released a public review draft of the Transportation Strategic Plan. Although not an amendment to the City's Comprehensive Plan, the draft is intended to carry out the transportation goals contained in the Comprehensive Plan. The Transportation Strategic Plan has not yet been adopted, but still it is useful to note its close correspondence with the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan.

Strategy W 1 would make street crossings safer and easier, such as by: (W1. 1) reducing curb radii and installing curb ramps, pedestrian half-signals, and mid-block crossings (W1. 1); adjusting signal timing to support walking (W 1.2); and changing the emphasis of pedestrian push buttons (W1.3).

Strategy W2 would improve the sidewalk system, by (W2. 1) filling in gaps and (W2.2) completing needed repairs.

The major difference between the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan and the City's draft Transportation Strategic Plan is the latter's proposal (T1 .4) to institute three-block spacing between bus stops by eliminating some existing ones.

4. Planning Background

Transportation a Primary Issue in Eastlake

Surveys and public meetings have shown transportation to be the highest priority of many Eastlakers. About half of the neighborhood's land is in City streets or the I-5 right-of-way. Most of the travel between Downtown and the University District goes through Eastlake, and the neighborhood is also along access routes to I-5, State Route 520, Seattle Center, Queen Anne, and Capitol Hill. Eastlake's section of I-5 carries more traffic than any other highway segment in the state. Eastlake Avenue is one of the City's busiest arterials for bus, bicycle, and automobile travel.

The neighborhood pays dearly for through traffic. A 1994 survey of 175 Eastlakers found that air pollution had caused 18% to stay indoors, have a headache, or have trouble breathing; and that noise had caused 30% to stay indoors or to lose sleep. The traffic also poses difficulties for safe pedestrian crossings, and thus for residents to make full use of bus routes, parks, and other public facilities.

A livable neighborhood amidst an active transportation system requires a reconciliation of the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, trucks, and automobiles, and also a balance of transportation uses with the needs of those who live or work in the area.

Transportation Planning Prior to 1996

A 1991 Eastlake Tomorrow survey found traffic and parking to be the single highest priority of residents and businesses. Two of the six key projects designated for priority in the 1992 Eastlake Tomorrow framework plan were a traffic management plan and a reduction of I-5 noise. In response to neighborhood concerns, the Eastlake Transportation Plan was completed in 1994 with the help of many volunteers and funds from the Bullitt Foundation and the City's Neighborhood Matching Fund. The planning project was initiated by the Eastlake Community Council and directed by a steering committee of residents and local business people. The terms of the City contract limited the scope of planning primarily to Eastlake and Fairview avenues. Through questionnaires, public meetings, and government liaison, the Eastlake Transportation Plan made 68 recommendations regarding motor vehicle traffic, bus and rail transit, and bicycles and pedestrians. Several key recommendations were made in anticipation of sewer expansion and bus electrification projects in the neighborhood, and became a reality when these projects were constructed in 1996-97--most notably some planted median islands in Eastlake Avenue, a Fairview walking path in front of NOAA, and the cornerstones sidewalk art at prominent intersections.

Residential Parking and the Residential Parking Zone (**RPZ**). The Eastlake neighborhood has serious on-street parking congestion and demand, created by a combination of factors including limited on-street parking supply, older residential uses that have little or no parking, and overflow from commercial uses.

After being on the RPZ waiting list for more than ten years, the Eastlake community and the Seattle Engineering Department (now SEATRAN) undertook a three-year-long public process to evaluate and develop an RPZ for Eastlake's residential streets. The resulting RPZ area, which went into effect in 1994, generally includes: east of Eastlake Avenue, the residential streets between Howe and Shelby streets; and west of Eastlake Avenue, the residential streets between Newton and Edgar. The parking restrictions are among the most generous in the city for allowing non-permitted, non-resident parking, especially for short- to medium-duration customer and employee parking.

The effectiveness of the RPZ is better in some areas than others, but overall has helped to reduce parking demand in Eastlake and make more on-street parking available for the residential uses that abut the RPZ-designated streets. However, some RPZ-signed blocks may still have unacceptable levels of non-resident parking use and congestion (for example, blocks along Yale Avenue and close to Seward/TOPS School still have periods of severe congestion). Other blocks within the RPZ area are eligible for RPZ restrictions but do not have any RPZ signs because petitions were not circulated on the block. For these areas, residents can request and receive SEATRAN approval for more restrictive parking hours or to install new RPZ signs, provided SEATRAN thresholds and criteria are met. Conversely, if residents on a block do not want RPZ

restrictions, or would like the restrictions relaxed, they can similarly request changes to the RPZ for their block.

Because the RPZ currently allows for more non-resident, non-permitted use than many RPZS, and because ongoing congestion problems can be resolved through adjustments to the RPZ, the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan does not make any new specific recommendations related to the amount of parking in the residential areas. However, the community will continue to monitor and address the effectiveness of the RPZ, and will continue to address the parking demands of new development proposals through the Master Use Permit process and its parking mitigation authority.

Seward School Parking and Traffic Issues. Traffic and parking in the vicinity of Seward/TOPS School were the focus of substantial review and debate during the permitting process for the expansion and renovation of the School. Concerns focused on parking impacts, the use of the 2500 block of Franklin Avenue, providing a more orderly system for parents dropping off and picking up children, and minimizing the impacts of through traffic on Roanoke and Louisa streets (because of their proximity to Rogers Playfield and the School, the high number of pedestrians that cross these streets, and narrow widths). The process resulted in agreements about how to use and modify the streets that abut Seward/TOPS School, including agreements for:

- New curb bulbs on Roanoke Street at Franklin and Boylston avenues, and retention of the one-way travel lane on Roanoke west from Boylston Avenue to Franklin Avenue;
- A circulation plan for parents to drop off and pick up children with designated drop off/pick up points along Boylston Avenue and in the School parking lot;
- Use of Louisa Street for bus loading;
- Permanent closure of the 2500 block of Franklin Avenue to vehicles (except emergency vehicles) and designation of the block as a Type IV green street (the block had been closed by renewable and revocable permit for over 50 years, and the Green Street designation will make the closure permanent);
- Use of the new School parking lot for after-hours, non-school-related parking; and
- New non-RPZ parking along the north side of Louisa Street during the daytime, between the morning and afternoon hours when bus loading occurs.

These changes will be implemented by the time the School re-opens for classes in fall 1999.

Transportation Planning Since 1996

The Neighborhood Planning Office recognized that major planning had already been accomplished by the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan, and encouraged Eastlake Tomorrow in 1996 to move ahead with existing projects while working to revalidate and supplement all the recommendations. This process was conducted by a Transportation planning team, chaired in Phase I by Chris Rosenfelder of Bonneville Broadcasting (located on Eastlake Avenue); and in

Phase II initially by Karl Kumm (a resident of Fairview Avenue E.); and then jointly by Kumm and Wes Larson (a business and property owner and resident of Harvard Avenue). Consultant help was provided by Chris Leman, who also served as consultant for preparation of the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan.

The City contracts for Eastlake Tomorrow phases I and II specified several implementation-level work items for transportation. Eastlake Tomorrow agreed to work with the City to finalize plans for medians on Eastlake Avenue during a major sewer expansion project and successfully circulated petitions to obtain support for the medians from adjacent property owners. The Phase II contract also empowered Eastlake Tomorrow to work with the City to redesign the intersection of Fairview Avenue E. and Fairview Avenue N.; and to design and facilitate the construction of a walking route north from that intersection to Newton Street while preserving as much on-street parking as possible. The Washington State Traffic Safety Commission, which had assisted in the original printing of the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan, provided funds in 1997 for a second printing, to make the plan more widely available while its recommendations were being reassessed for the current neighborhood plan.

Public and Interagency Process

The September 1996 Eastlake Tomorrow questionnaire, which received 402 returns, devoted its front page (twelve questions) to transportation. Articles asking for suggestions on updating the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan and for what should go into the new plan were published in the four Eastlake Tomorrow Update newsletters and in most issues of the *Eastlake News*. Three public meetings in 1997 introduced the process for updating the recommendations of the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan and solicited public input on them. Public input was also obtained at the September 20, 1997, Eastlake Tomorrow showcase event, the April 22 and 25, 1998, options fairs and at various public meetings on specific pedestrian projects.

With the help of many public meetings and the 1996 questionnaire, the Transportation planning team developed a series of draft recommendation, posting them on the Eastlake Tomorrow web site and distributing printed versions. The most notable additions to the 1994 recommendations were sections on I-5 noise and pollution and the light rail and monorail proposals. A revised version with 43 recommendations was provided to the Neighborhood Planning Office in early November 1997. Eastlake Tomorrow delivered these recommendations directly to the Seattle Transportation Department on November 26, 1997; the Department responded in writing to the recommendations in a January 28, 1998, memorandum. The recommendations were revised and described in the April 1998 Options Guide, which also included questions about transportation issues that had not been featured on past questionnaires or that were potentially controversial.

Goal T-1: Reduce Speeding and Collisions

For its size, Eastlake has more than its share of arterials such as Eastlake and Boylston avenues and Lynn Street, and of streets that (such as Roanoke) are *de facto* arterials even if they are not classified as arterials. Every significant indicator of public concern shows a deep concern about traffic speeds, especially on Eastlake Avenue. Parents are concerned about their children's safety

on the way to school or the park. Seniors and the disabled are concerned about being able to cross the street to shop or catch a bus. Even those who drive on Eastlake Avenue think the speeds are too high. In a 1994 survey, about one quarter (27 %) answered "no" when asked: "If you drive, do you feel safe in a car with Eastlake Avenue's current traffic and speeds?"

The public concern is justified. According to a September 1997 radar speed survey done between 5 and 6 p.m., half the cars on Eastlake Avenue are going at least 35 miles per hour (the speed limit is 30 miles per hour); five % are going at least 40 miles per hour--ten above the speed limit. The Seattle Police Department finds speeding to be a substantial enforcement problem on Eastlake Avenue. A local couple stated in the 1994 survey that despite a sincere effort to observe the speed limit, each had earned a speeding ticket on Eastlake Avenue because "others are always trying to pass us."

Collisions are substantial in number, and the high speeds mean that they are more serious than on many other City arterials. The collision statistics do not include the non-injury collisions in which property damage was less than \$500, the many collisions with a higher cost that the participants decide not to report to avoid an increase in their insurance fees, or the many near misses and other traffic conflicts that at any time could have been an injury or death.

The vehicle speeds typical of Eastlake Avenue are particularly serious because they often occur in the curbside lane, just feet or even inches from pedestrians and bicyclists. Residents and employees tell of almost being sideswiped by a fast-moving car, truck, or bus. Street trees have been destroyed by a car; someday a pedestrian on the sidewalk will meet a similar fate.

Ironically, the problem is not one of traffic volume. Streets like 45th through Wallingford have much more traffic, but less speeding. Eastlake Avenue is nowhere near its traffic capacity. According to City estimates detailed in the Eastlake Transportation Plan (pp. 19-20), the only part of Eastlake Avenue that in 1990 was over capacity was the short segment north of Harvard Street; every other segment had a ratio of volume to capacity of less than 0.9 and will not have reached capacity even in the year 2010 under any conceivable scenario.

Center Turn Lane. A part of the success of 45th Street through Wallingford in accommodating more traffic safely is its center turn lane; this arrangement has also been adopted for Eastlake Avenue north of Boston Street, and we recommend it south of Boston to Fairview as well. According to the 1996 questionnaire, a majority of respondents (55.5 %) wish to extend the existing center turn lane arrangement on Eastlake Avenue south of Boston Street. A similar proportion (54.1 %) support more planted medians, although 34.4 % are opposed; this result suggests the value of the City's requirement that a super majority of nearby property owners sign off on a particular median.

Uninterrupted Parking Lanes. Another characteristic of 45th street in Wallingford is the single traffic lane in each direction, and two parking lanes that are uninterrupted by any temporary restriction. On Eastlake Avenue, parking is prohibited at rush hour on the west side of the street in the morning and on the east side of the street in the afternoon. The unintended effect is to encourage illegally high speeds. Businesses also are denied needed parking, and sidewalk users lack the safety buffer that is provided by a line of parked cars. The Eastlake Neighborhood Plan recommends that the City and the neighborhood cooperatively reexamine the rush hour

parking prohibition on Eastlake and Harvard avenues, to consider whether to reduce the hours or drop the prohibition completely.

SEATRAN's June 16, 1998, comment on this proposal is as follows: "This recommendation does not appear feasible. This is a principal arterial, major emergency route, and a major transit route." Eastlake Tomorrow is hoping for more dialogue, which is all that we have proposed; and we are encouraged that in a community meeting a few months ago, SEATRAN Director Daryl Grigsby was receptive to our request for exploration of the question.

Boylston/Lakeview/Newton/I-5 Intersection. In the April 1998 Options Guide questionnaire, redesign of the intersection of Boylston, Lakeview, Newton, and the I-5 on-ramp received strong support from 53.1 % of the respondents, and another 27.2 % "somewhat" supported the redesign; only 1.2 % were opposed. As discussed in the section on bicycling, this intersection improvement should be a high priority for the City. WSDOT funds might also be available.



This intersection of Boylston, Newton, Lakeview, and the I-5 ramp is dangerous for bicyclists, pedestrians, and local traffic.

Fairview East/Fairview North Intersection. As a part of this neighborhood planning process, in 1997 SEATRAN agreed to design and construct a safer intersection where Fairview Avenue E. and Fairview Avenue N. intersect. And because of the project's relatively small size, SEATRAN agreed to do so without first listing the project specifically as a part of the Capital Improvement Program. Stakeholders and SEATRAN agreed, in its broad outlines, on a design submitted by

Zymogenetics that was included in the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan. In 1997, SEATRAN painted on the existing roadway the proposed new curb outline. A September 2, 1997, Eastlake Tomorrow letter invited stakeholders to examine and comment on the outlines.

Although the proposed new curb outlines have general assent, some additional design work needs to be done with how the bicycle trail and walkway interact with the public parking and the entrance of Seattle Seaplanes. A rough design provided by SEATRAN in 1997 proved worrisome to the owner, as it appeared to block the gangway entrance and may have sacrificed more parking than necessary because the actual location of trees and utility poles was not shown. We look forward to the more detailed design for this intersection that SEATRAN has promised; its preparation will be assisted by the topographic and land survey that was conducted in 1998.

SEATRAN's June 16, 1998, comments on our plan's discussion of the Fairview Avenue E./FairView Avenue N. intersection are not consistent with our understanding: "SEATRAN staff have developed a couple of alternatives that are currently being reviewed by the community. If an alternative is approved by the nearby property owners, the next step is to identify a funding source." We do not believe that any recent alternatives are currently under public review; also, we were assured that the intersection improvement would not be expensive enough to require listing in the Capital Improvement Program, and that it could be done rather quickly after the design was finalized.

Traditional Neighborhood Street Design. Because most of Eastlake's rights-of-way and streets were initially platted and constructed in the late 1800s, they are characterized by relatively narrow street sections. Although sometimes posing limitations with regard to on-street parking supply or planting strip widths, the narrow width of Eastlake's streets are generally regarded as a desired characteristic that promotes safer pedestrian crossings, slower vehicle speeds, reduced amounts of through traffic (traffic not generated by Eastlake residents or businesses), and the overall small-scale character of the Eastlake neighborhood.

For these reasons, Eastlake generally does not support street modifications that involve the widening of streets, large curb radii (that enable more speedy turning), and other similar modifications, including those that would reduce or eliminate planting strips (which have been identified in the Open Space Element of the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan as important open space resources). In some places, especially along portions of Fairview Avenue E., Eastlake prefers street sections without curbs and gutters.

See section 5 at the end of this Chapter for a list of Transportation recommendations that address the above goals and issues.

Goal T-2: Make it Safer and More Convenient for Pedestrians to Cross the Street

Eastlake Avenue is increasingly functioning as a barrier that divides the neighborhood's narrow east and west sides along their entire length. Cars are not stopping for pedestrians as the law requires; a 1994 study by the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Unit found Eastlake Avenue to have some of Seattle's highest percentages of motorists not yielding to a pedestrian at a crosswalk.

Danger is a part of any pedestrian crossing on Eastlake Avenue. In the 1994 survey, two-fifths of Eastlakers reported that as a pedestrian they have had a close call with a motor vehicle or had actually been hit; almost none of these encounters had been reported to the police. Contrary to the pattern in other parts of the city, injuries to pedestrians are not primarily at night, in 'bad weather, or at the peak hour. Most accidents are occurring in clear, dry weather during daylight.

Eastlake Tomorrow lobbied hard for a pedestrian and bicycle count across the University Bridge, and appreciates that the City and the University of Washington worked together to conduct one in late April 1998. When compared with a 1974 count, the results are dramatic. Whereas bicycle use almost tripled in that 24-year period, pedestrian use actually dropped slightly (from 694 in a twelve-hour period in 1974 to 636 in an eleven-hour period in 1998). We should not be surprised, because pedestrian conditions, especially for the seniors, children, and the disabled, have surely declined as traffic has risen with little effort to mitigate its impact.

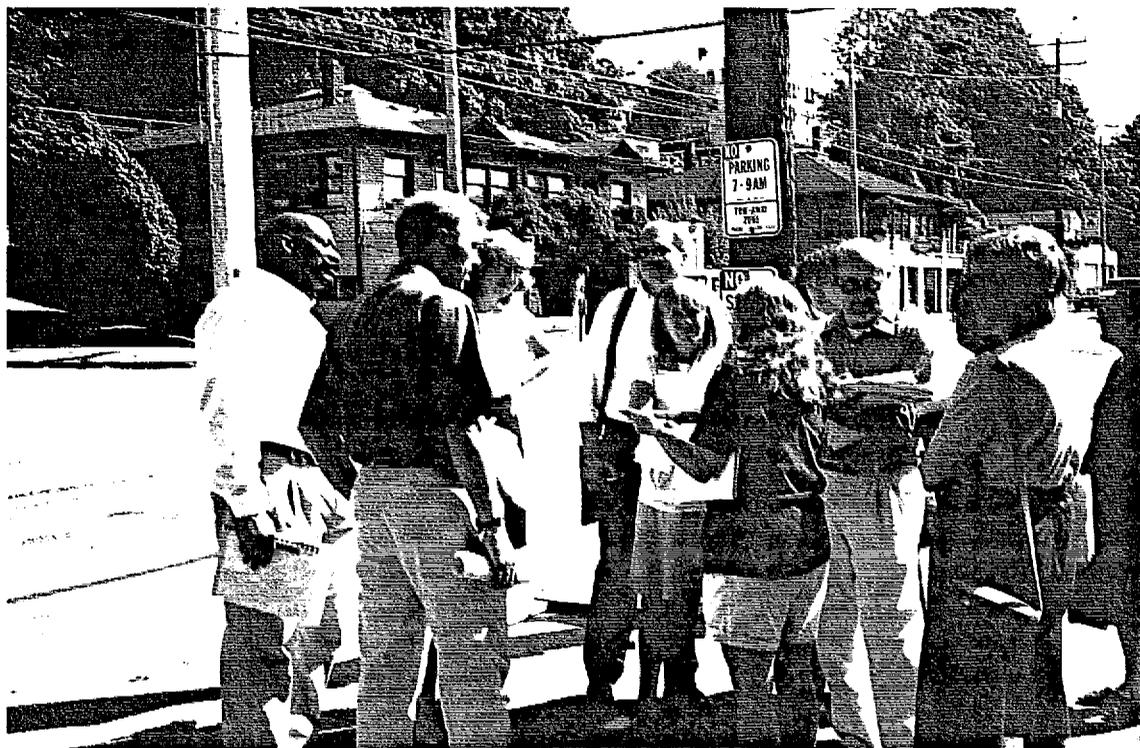
Becoming Disability-Friendly. No one more deserves safe and comfortable pedestrian conditions than the disabled. Disabled pedestrians often do not have the alternative of driving, and may move slowly and with greater difficulty--but also are experienced as pedestrians and often willing to share that experience. Disabled people are also unusually dependent on public transit, and thus on the pedestrian conditions near bus stops.

The Eastlake neighborhood fortunate to have the headquarters of three nonprofit organizations that serve the needs of people who are both deaf and blind, and who come to the neighborhood regularly as clients or employees. The 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan and the current Eastlake Neighborhood Plan both fully incorporate the recommendations for specific measures to aid the deaf and the deaf-blind we have received from Marc Landreneau, a staff person at the Deaf-Blind Service Center who is also a leader of the Washington Deaf-Blind Citizens Association. These recommendations have also been endorsed in a resolution by the King County Chapter of the Washington Council of the Blind and by a letter from David Miller, orientation and mobility specialist with the deaf-blind program at the Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

Of course, many of the recommendations of the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan which are designed to improve pedestrian safety will directly benefit the disabled pedestrian. In a letter endorsing Eastlake's efforts, the King County Chapter of the Washington Council of the Blind observes that "better traffic control will ensure safety for all pedestrians, not just disabled ones." The Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Service, another Eastlake social service agency, has worked closely with nearby businesses to make safer crossings of Eastlake Avenue possible at Louisa and Allison streets.

More Pedestrian Half-signals. The easiest way to help pedestrians get across the street is to install more traffic signals. The 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan was successful in obtaining traffic signals at the Garfield, Fuhrman, and Boston crossings of Eastlake Avenue; the Boston crossing is a pedestrian half-signal. The present Eastlake Neighborhood Plan proposes pedestrian half-signals at just three more intersections, the Allison, Newton, and Howe crossings of Eastlake Avenue. The Allison signal was funded in 1997 through the Neighborhood Street Fund, but so far it has been blocked by a restrictive engineering warrant that is based on a 1979 City ordinance. Much has happened since 1979--the 1994 Comprehensive Plan, the 1998

Transportation Strategic Plan (which favors pedestrian half signals), and of course, neighborhood planning. It is time to update the engineering warrants to reflect the City priority for safer pedestrian crossings. The Mayor has ordered a review of the warrants, and it is hoped that community representatives will be included by the Seattle Transportation Department and the City Council in their revision of the 1979 ordinance,



City officials and community volunteers visiting the corner of Eastlake and Allison, site of a proposed traffic signal. Noise from I-5 averages 82 decibels at 9 a. m. at this intersection, making it impossible to hear approaching traffic.

Crossing Prohibitions. A particular priority for improved crossings are those few where crossing is prohibited. With the help of Mayor Rice, SEATLAN restored the right of pedestrians to cross Eastlake Avenue at the south side of the intersection with Louisa Street. Another priority from the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan is to restore pedestrian access to the north sidewalk across the Roanoke Street bridge over I-5. Pedestrian crossing is now prohibited at the northern intersections of Roanoke Street with Harvard and Boylston avenues, and there are no walk signals. To get across the bridge (such as to enjoy Roanoke Park or to take a bus on Harvard Avenue), Eastlakers must cross several additional intersections, going considerably out of their way and exposing themselves to additional traffic danger. Similarly, residents of the Roanoke Park area must walk across several additional intersections to reach the Eastlake business district, bus lines, shoreline parks, etc. The need to improve the Roanoke pedestrian access will be even more critical in 1999, when Seward/TOPS School re-opens, and parents and children will have to cross the Roanoke overpass to get from Seward's designated event parking lot in Roanoke Park to the school in Eastlake.

Protecting the “Walk” Phase from Turning Vehicles. Too many Eastlakers have been injured by turning vehicles when they were legally walking across the street in response to a “walk-” signal. Right turns on red often put pedestrians in jeopardy; a prohibition should be explored at some intersections. A particular safety concern are left turns, such as when vehicles are heading west on Lynn Street and turn south, entering the crosswalk across Eastlake Avenue during its “walk” phase. The Eastlake Neighborhood Plan proposes that, as with similar turns from Roanoke Street today, these left turns from Lynn Street be allowed only during a left turn arrow phase in which pedestrians crossing Eastlake Avenue do not receive a “walk” signal. However, the plan also urges that Lynn Street not be widened; in a similar situation at Westlake Avenue and Roanoke Street, the green arrow functions well without giving left turning vehicles a separate lane on Roanoke. The Eastlake neighborhood felt so strongly against widening Lynn Street that nearly ten years ago, the City had to decline funds that it had been granted by the state Transportation Improvement Board for the widening.



Pedestrians crossing Eastlake Avenue have been hit by left-turning cars heading down Lynn Street. The Neighborhood Plan seeks to reduce this danger without widening the street. This part of Lynn Street is also proposed to be improved for pedestrians, as one of Eastlake's gateways.

Sky bridges. A solution that is rarely, though sometimes proposed for pedestrian travel is an elevated skybridge that connects two buildings over a public street. Such solutions are not supported by Eastlake. See Recommendation CD- 19 in the Community Design Chapter IV for more information and a recommendation on skybridges.

See section 5 at the end of this Chapter for a list of Transportation recommendations that address the above goals and issues.

Goal T-3: Add and Improve Sidewalks and Walkways

As an older neighborhood, Eastlake is fortunate to have sidewalks on most of its streets, although some of these sidewalks have cracks that can trip a pedestrian, or they are overgrown with vegetation. On four of the east-west streets there are a few short but obvious gaps in the sidewalk. Completing these connections rated high in responses to the April 1998 Options Guide questionnaire. For example, the segment on the north side of Newton Street just west of Franklin received strong support from 34.6 %, while another 38.3 % somewhat supported the idea, and only 2.5 % opposed it.

Reconnection. The public gives particular support to projects that would reconnect pedestrian routes that had once existed. Exploring ways to connect the Edgar street-end with Fairview Avenue E. north to Hamlin received strong support on the 1998 questionnaire from 44.4 %, while another 29.6 % said they “somewhat” supported this proposal; A total of 6.2 % were opposed, whether “somewhat” or “strongly.” However, this opposed group includes residents and property owners closest to the site. The Eastlake Neighborhood Plan proposes to explore, with the involvement of those nearby, connecting the Edgar street-end with the Fairview Avenue E. right-of-way. The absence of this connection necessitates blocks of backtracking and hill climbing to advance just a hundred feet.

I-5 severed the historical connections between the Eastlake neighborhood and the areas just east of the current freeway. WSDOT’S multi-modal systems plan places a high priority on restoring such pedestrian connections. The Eastlake Neighborhood Plan proposes that WSDOT design and construct stairs and/or wheelchair accessible ramps under I-5 south of Newton Street. The neighborhood and the City would work closely with WSDOT on the project.

Fairview between Fuhrman and Newton. In 1994, Fairview Avenue E. north of Newton, was honored by the Seattle Design Commission as a “street that works.” A part of the award was a bronze plaque for installation in a prominent sidewalk. The plaque has not been installed for the simple reason that this section of Fairview has virtually no sidewalks! In fact, the street’s very success is that people feel comfortable walking in the roadway (a narrow 18 feet at some points), and the cars oblige. Past proposals to install sidewalks on Fairview Avenue E., especially between Newton and Roanoke, have been strongly opposed by the residents, the very people who most often walk the area.





This curve at the corner of Fairview and Fuhrman has extremely limited sight distance and no place for people to walk. Solutions will be explored in the traffic study that is recommended for this part of Fairview, and will be consistent with the area's "country land" character.

Seattle's Street Improvement Manual technically requires sidewalks and curbs to be installed on Fairview, just as it does on every street. SEATRAN and the DCLU have cooperated with the community in not insisting on this standard regarding individual projects. However, a more explicit policy is needed to recognize and enhance Fairview's status as a strolling lane in which pedestrians and cars share the roadway. The Eastlake Neighborhood Plan proposes designating Fairview between Fuhrman and Newton as a Type III green street. Green streets are authorized by a City ordinance; Type III is the most flexible, allowing for continued use by motor vehicles. The preparation and determination of standards and guidelines for landscaping, walkways, and buffers, including a possible prohibition against full curb, gutter and sidewalk sections, would be done only after a careful analysis, public meetings, and engagement with the nearby property owners and community. Design standards (e.g., whether the pedestrian route should be in the street, and if not, how the walkway would be designed) would be carefully tailored to each block or part thereof. (See Chapter V: Open Space Element for more information about these sections of Fairview Avenue E.)

Fairview South of Newton. In late 1996, the Seattle Public Utilities Department decided that it would be necessary to depart from its written agreement with the Eastlake Community Council and use the parking area along Fairview Avenue E. in front of NOAA for construction staging.

As mitigation, the Department agreed to redesign the parking and to install a landscaped walkway. Thus in February 1997, the Eastlake Tomorrow Transportation and Open Space planning teams jointly convened a stakeholder group of property owners, businesses, and residents to work out a design. With donated help from graduate students and volunteer professionals, the group improved on proposals in the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan for Fairview Avenue E. south from Newton Street to Eastlake Avenue.

It was found that a 4-foot shoreline walkway north to NOAA, as well as picnic tables or benches, could be put in without sacrificing either parking or trees—in fact, the design increased the amount of parking and trees in the area. Led by John Crowser, a property and business owner in the area, the group met nine times in 1997, and held several public meetings and a tour to solicit comment on its design.

In late September 1997, part of the walkway in front of NOAA was constructed under City supervision. Members of the stakeholder group also met October 13 with City officials regarding design of the walkway south of NOAA. On December 9, 1997, the Seattle Transportation Department wrote to Eastlake Tomorrow committing to complete the walkway. To respond to offers of donated construction and funds, the City in April 1998 agreed to prepare a topographic and land survey (completed in August) and more detailed designs of the project (still pending as of August).

See Section 5 at the end of this Chapter for a list of Transportation recommendations that address the above goal and issues.

Goal T-4: Improve Bicycle Conditions

Located as it is between the University District and Downtown, the Eastlake neighborhood receives many pass-through visits from bicyclists. In one eleven-hour period at the University Bridge in late April 1998, a City-UW effort counted 1109 bicyclists in both directions—nearly three times the number found in a twelve-hour count done in 1974. These numbers could be increased further with some effort at a few key points.

Bicyclists riding through Eastlake do not all follow the same route. Some bicycle slowly along the scenic Fairview Avenue E. shoreline route, undeterred by its narrowness and the large number of people walking in the street. Others take the more direct route of Eastlake Avenue, sharing the road with fast-moving buses and commuter traffic. A growing number of bicyclists take Boylston or Harvard Avenue to connect with the Lakeview/Melrose bypass on the east side of I-5 just south of where Lakeview crosses over the freeway. And some bicyclists take Minor Avenue, which has a parking prohibition on the east side of its flat four-block length.

The multiplicity of bicycle routes through Eastlake should not be discouraged; it satisfies the needs of different bicyclists, while spreading the load across several Eastlake streets. This result will be assisted if the City accepts our recommendation T-4.1 to designate Minor Avenue as an alternative bicycle route; this recommendation was also in the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan. Having shared this recommendation with SEATRAN in November 1997, we are puzzled that the Department rejected this recommendation with the following rationale: “Eastlake and Fairview are N-S designated routes and are well-traveled by bicyclists. Minor does not offer any

additional benefits over these designated routes, nor is Minor particularly different from any other non-arterial street.” An almost identical point was made in SEATRAN’s July 1998 comments. Of course, Minor Avenue is unique in that it allows parking on only one side; it is already used by many bicyclists, and we continue to recommend that the City designate the street as a bicycle route.

As Dave Mozer of the International Bicycle Fund has pointed out in some useful comments for the City Council, the greatest need that bicyclists have in passing through Eastlake is at the north and south ends. The transition from the University Bridge bicycle lane has never been ideal. In the past year the transition has been assisted somewhat by installation of a traffic light at Fuhrman and Eastlake Avenue; and by the striping of a bicycle lane from the University Bridge south to the intersection of Eastlake Avenue and Harvard. The latter intersection continues to be problematic for northbound bicyclists who face a very large intersection with motor vehicles coming at them in several directions. Bicyclists would be helped by recommendation T-1.11 to redesign the intersection of Eastlake and Harvard avenues.

Eastlake’s south frontier poses the most serious challenge and opportunity for bicyclists. Heading south toward downtown, the bicyclist encounters one very bad intersection (Fairview Avenue N. and Valley Street), or another (Eastlake Avenue and Stewart Street), or another (Boylston/Lakeview/Newton/I-5 on-ramp). We can do the most about the latter, which is growing in importance now that the Lakeview-Melrose trail allows bicycle and pedestrian passage on the east side of I-5 to downtown. We look forward to working with the City on this improvement, which will benefit not only bicyclists, but pedestrians and local traffic.

Goal T-5: Improve Bus Service for Eastlake Residents, Employees and Customers

Historically built around transit, the Eastlake neighborhood has one of the region’s highest levels of bus ridership. The 1994 survey found that 43% of those who live or work in the neighborhood had ridden a Metro bus in the previous week, and only 17% had gone more than a year since last riding a bus.



Electric trolley buses returned to Eastlake Avenue in 1997 after an absence of more than 50 years. This vintage trolley helped to inaugurate the new line.

At present, buses on Eastlake Avenue usually enjoy conditions of virtual free-flow. The current 14 to 19 mile per hour average speed that moving buses now experience on this segment of Eastlake Avenue at the peak period is quite fast in comparison with the bus speeds found on many other arterials. Eastlake Avenue has considerable excess capacity that can be devoted to parking without significantly congesting the arterial.

With or without traffic congestion, the main constraint for most buses on Eastlake Avenue will continue to be the need to stop for passengers, because Eastlake has the ridership to make these stops worthwhile. Metro ridership will grow if the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan's proposals to make Eastlake Avenue more of a "main street" are adopted. The current high traffic speeds are, in the larger view, hurting bus service rather than helping it. In a thoughtful paper from the Transportation Research Board, a planner with Los Angeles' transit agency observed: "Although it is true that higher transit speed means lower cost per vehicle-mile, the incentive to use transit is diminished by a general speed-up, and the overall effectiveness of transit is worsened. This is because the incentive to use transit is based on its performance relative to the automobile and its relative performance worsens as traffic speeds increase" [p. 328].

The current high speeds are a special discouragement for those on the way to and from the bus. A manual on urban design published by San Diego's transit agency observes that major arterials "are difficult places for buses to stop and for pedestrians to cross. To encourage transit use, safe street crossings must be allowed at frequent intervals" [p. 13]. Our surveys indicate that bus riders find it difficult to cross Eastlake Avenue. In an admittedly extreme case, a disabled

resident tells of getting onto the bus and riding it all the way into the University District and back along the other side of Eastlake Avenue—just to cross the street safely!

Considering Eastlakers' high rate of bus ridership, it is impressive that in the 1994 survey, fully three quarters (76%) answered yes to the following question: "Would you support changes in Eastlake Avenue to reduce speeding and improve crossing safety even if they slowed the Metro buses that use Eastlake Avenue?" These are Metro riders speaking, and they are saying that in King County's bus decisions, bus speed should be secondary to an effort to make Eastlake Avenue a safer and more comfortable "main street." King County should take a large view in evaluating proposals to reduce the illegally high speeds on Eastlake Avenue.

Express Bus Stops. Questionnaires distributed in the neighborhood have found unusually strong support for the proposal that express buses that use Eastlake Avenue should, like the new route 66, stop at least twice in the neighborhood. In the 1996 questionnaire, 76.4% (the highest approval rating for any transportation proposal) were in favor, and only 12.8% against, with very little difference among residents, employees, and property owners. A very similar result was found in the 1998 questionnaire, with 56.8% "strongly" and another 23.5% "somewhat" endorsing this view; only 3.7% expressed any opposition.

The 1998 questionnaire also found strong support for keeping the current maximum of two blocks between local bus stops: 40.7% strongly and 23.5% somewhat supported the proposal. Opposition was expressed by 19.7%.

Bus Shelters and Benches. Considering the large number of bus riders who live or work in the neighborhood, there are too few bus shelters and benches. More should be installed, and art or other neighborhood-specific details should be integrated into the design.

See Section 5 at the end of this Chapter for a list of Transportation recommendations that address the above goal and issues.

Goal T-6: Reduce Freeway Related Noise, Air and Water Pollution and Visual Blight through Technology and System Modifications; Mitigate the Impacts that Cannot Be Eliminated.

The construction of I-5 (completed in 1962) destroyed many homes and businesses in Eastlake, Roanoke Park, Portage Bay, and North Capitol Hill. Over time, increasing freeway traffic and deteriorating pavement have combined to produce unacceptably high levels of noise, vibration, and pollution, affecting nearby residences, businesses, and properties. A 1993 study commissioned by WSDOT found that freeway noise reaches extremely high levels in parts of our neighborhood.

Questionnaires and comments at public meetings suggest that many residents are affected by noise from I-5 in their homes and in neighborhood public spaces near the freeway. In fact, reduction in freeway noise got the highest support of any proposal in the 1996 Eastlake Tomorrow questionnaire. Citizens say that freeway noise makes it difficult to have a normal conversation in their yards or on the sidewalk and forces them to keep windows closed year-

round. The City, County, and School District are losing tax revenue because property values are depressed by the noise.

Under the auspices of Eastlake Tomorrow, residents, businesses, and property owners in late 1997 formed a subcommittee of the Transportation planning team to focus on highway impacts. The subcommittee's goal statement recognizes that the freeway's noise, air, and water pollution and visual blight can be reduced through technology (e.g., noise walls) as well as through changes in how traffic is managed (e.g., speeds and hours of operation). The noise and other pollution that cannot be eliminated can be mitigated (e.g., retrofitting homes, or reducing their tax assessments).

The highway impacts subcommittee met four times in October and November, and held a public meeting (80 in attendance) on December 8, 1997. At its December 18 meeting, the group decided to incorporate as an independent organization known as Neighborhoods Opposed to Interstate Sound Exposure (NOISE).

The I-5 Ship Canal bridge, which was designed in the late 1950s before engineers had much knowledge or concern about the freeway's impacts, reflects noise from the express lanes onto the homes and businesses below. A 1992 WSDOT study found that much of the noise coming from two-level roadways (e.g., the I-5 Ship Canal bridge) is due to reflection from the lower, express lanes roadway off of the bottom of the upper roadway. That study found that acoustic material (similar to fiberglass) applied to the bottom of the upper roadway would noticeably absorb and reduce noise from the bridge. An Eastlake Tomorrow priority from 1992 was to reduce the round-the-clock hours of operation of the express lanes as another means of reducing the reflected noise. A major step toward this solution occurred November 3, 1997, when WSDOT began closing the lanes between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.

A subsequent WSDOT study in 1993 concluded that sound walls built alongside the freeway would be yet another effective means to reduce freeway noise—in fact, some of the most significant reductions in the whole SR520-I5 interchange could be obtained through the use of sound walls in Eastlake. For best results, sound walls should be installed on both sides of a freeway—in our case, alongside both Boylston and Harvard avenues.

The April 1998 Options Guide questionnaire showed strong support for measures to reduce noise from the freeway. Over 70% of respondents agreed “strongly” that the City should work for state and federal funding to reduce noise from I-5 and SR520. Another 16% “somewhat” supported this position, and only 4.9% opposed this position either strongly or somewhat. Similarly, 82.8% supported strongly or somewhat a retrofit of the Ship Canal bridge to reduce noise. Possible noise wall locations along Boylston and Harvard avenues received 65.4 and 56.8% approval ratings, respectively.

The City must also work to have WSDOT accept responsibility for the neighborhood impacts of water runoff from I-5, which drains into Lake Union and Portage Bay. Freeway runoff has oil and other pollutants, and should be reduced and treated; malfunctioning drain pipes should be repaired. Perhaps because the pipes to the lake outfalls appear to be stopped up, WSDOT has cut holes in the pipes before they enter the ground, allowing overflow onto City rights-of-way. As a result, this water is entering the City's combined sewer system, but without WSDOT payment to

the City for the cost of treatment. These overflows are also causing damage to open spaces under the freeway, and could undermine its stability. Action on this issue was widely popular on the April 1998 Options Guide questionnaire. Most respondents (75.30A) gave this measure their strong support, while another 12.3% gave it somewhat support; only 3.4% were opposed in any way.

See Section 5 at the end of this Chapter for a list of Transportation recommendations that address the above goal and issues.

Goal T-7: Ensure that Any Light Rail or Monorail System Is a Net Benefit to the Neighborhood

More than any other neighborhood, Eastlake faces a growing and constantly changing list of rail alternatives, some of which were thought to have been settled at the time of the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan. In late 1997, in the midst of the Eastlake Tomorrow neighborhood planning effort, new proposals emerged for both light rail and monorail through the neighborhood. It was almost a replay of the emergence of an Eastlake Avenue surface light rail route halfway through the development of the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan.

By its topography and geography, the Eastlake neighborhood is often treated as a corridor through which to get somewhere else. These corridor projects can have a good impact if they have many stops in the neighborhood, as did the streetcar line that opened in 1893 and as do the bus lines that took its place in 1941. But corridor projects can also have a destructive impact, as with the loss of hundreds of homes and businesses in the path of I-5, and that freeway's continued visitation of air pollution and noise on the those that remain. The heavy traffic of Eastlake Avenue—including fast-moving express buses that do not stop here—splits the neighborhood in two.

Although it is beyond the scope of this neighborhood plan to make a final recommendation for or against a light rail or monorail presence in Eastlake, it does recommend against certain routes, and identifies conditions for the other alternatives that appear necessary to gain the support of many residents and businesses.

The Re-emergence of Rail. The street railway (1893- 1941) around which Eastlake grew stopped almost every block. The rail systems to which the Seattle region is returning are higher capacity and higher speed, and thus have fewer, more widely spaced stations (typically two or more miles apart). In fact, "light rail" is a misnomer, as it is heavier than the big-city subway systems usually deemed "heavy rail." Although monorail vehicles are physically lighter than light rail, putting them high up on pylons requires each stop to have a station, and stations are limited in number by cost and space; the Seattle monorail proposals envision a distance between stations of one mile or more.

The high capacity rail proposals that the voters defeated in 1968 and 1970 did not include an Eastlake route. An Eastlake route was first seriously examined in 1990 as a part of the Metro 2000 High Capacity Transit Study. This study ruled out an Eastlake Avenue route, suggesting further study of routes via a Capitol Hill tunnel and the I-5 express lanes (in 1992, the Joint Regional Policy Committee identified the Capitol Hill tunnel as its preferred alternative).

A major evaluation of an Eastlake route occurred in 1994 as a part of the neighborhood planning process that produced the Eastlake Transportation Plan. Although the Seattle City Council had passed several resolutions supporting the Capitol Hill tunnel route, the three-county Regional Transit Authority (founded in 1993) evaluated a possible surface route along Eastlake Avenue. The light rail alternative through Eastlake had the rails in reserved lanes (not grade-separated) on the surface of Eastlake Avenue, lined with low curbs that would admit rubber-tired vehicles in emergencies. As in other light rail alternatives studied here, the trains would be in combinations of from two to six 60-foot cars, running every five minutes in peak periods, and about every ten minutes at other times between 5 a.m. and midnight.

Eastlake Tomorrow cooperated with RTA in 1994 on an intensive planning process regarding the surface light rail alternative that included a public workshop, two public meetings, a survey, and a neighborhood delegation to evaluate the impacts of Portland's MAX system on neighborhoods. The 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan has ten pages on the light rail issue. RTA's first director, Tom Matoff, acknowledged the extensive impacts upon Eastlake of the construction and continued operation of I-5. At a 1994 public meeting, Matoff stated, "Eastlake has paid its dues," and promised not to recommend an Eastlake route unless the neighborhood would clearly benefit from it. At the end of the 1994 study, Matoff and RTA decided against the Eastlake Avenue surface route. Because that decision still stands, the analysis in the 1994 Eastlake Transportation Plan will not be added to here.

The voters turned down the RTA ballot measure in March 1995; the proposal that went to the voters included the possibility that the Capitol Hill tunnel might emerge at Harvard Avenue and continue across the Ship Canal on a high level bridge. A lower cost RTA ballot measure was on the ballot in November 1996, and this time the voters approved it. The successful November 1996 ballot measure retained the tunnel under Capitol Hill as its preferred route—the only portion of the ballot measure in which a preferred route was specifically identified. Residents of Eastlake easily approved both ballot measures, and in higher proportions than most other Seattle neighborhoods.

Light Rail Since 1996. To qualify for federal funding, RTA must conduct a major investment study that examines at least one alternative route. In May 1997, RTA established an 1 S-member Task Force to design an alternative to the Capitol Hill tunnel; Eastlake's representative was Jules James (Carol Eychaner, alternate) and Portage Bay/Roanoke Park's representative was Ed Brighton (Kingsley Joneson, alternate).

After five meetings, the Task Force recommended in September 1997 that the alternative alignment to be studied would include a station near Eastlake Avenue and Fairview Avenue N., and would proceed through Eastlake in a tunnel but emerge as a high-level bridge crossing of the Ship Canal, with additional possibility that this crossing be by tunnel as in the Capitol Hill tunnel alternative. The high-level bridge alternative was opposed by Ed Brighton, Kingsley Joneson, and Carol Eychaner, among others.

On January 16, 1998, newly elected Mayor Paul Schell wrote to the RTA stating that during his election campaign he had heard a number of concerns raised about the current RTA plan, and that he had made the commitment to address these concerns based on several principles, including "exploring alternatives that may result in cost savings (i.e., less tunnel length.)." On

February 23, Schell wrote again to RTA on the results of his reassessment, this time stating a clear preference for the Capitol Hill tunnel and reporting that alternative routes would have lower ridership and slower travel times.

The Eastlake Tomorrow Steering Committee approved a February 2, 1998, comment letter to RTA regarding the proposed scope of the alternatives and the environmental analysis in the light rail environmental impact statement (EIS) regarding the light rail proposals. RTA is now preparing this EIS, which is expected to be released in draft by the winter of 1998 for hearings and written comment in January 1999. The environmental impact statement would then be completed in the summer of 1999 for a final record of decision in the spring of 2000.

Monorail Initiative (1997). In November 1997, Seattle voters approved by a margin of 52 to 48% a public initiative calling for a rubber-tired, electric, elevated transit system. Eastlake residents easily approved the initiative, although not by as large a margin as they had the RTA. To establish and manage the system, the initiative chartered a public development authority (the Elevated Transportation Company [ETC]). The ETC began its deliberations in February 1998. A clear funding source has not been identified, and ETC is mandated to seek private funding, especially for station-related land and commercial development. Although some have argued that small personal transit vehicles would satisfy the initiative, initiative author Dick Faulkenbury and others on the ETC board appear to favor a system with a high passenger capacity, implying trains longer than the current monorail.

Although the monorail initiative did not specify routes for the voters, it was specific about the vicinity of stations, including one within a mile of UW'S Denny Hall and one within 1,000 yards of the intersection of Fairview Avenue N. and E. Mercer Street. Faulkenbury has stated his preference that the monorail route be on or above I-5, avoiding Eastlake Avenue; however, WSDOT has resisted this route, emphasizing its imposition on highway capacity. Friends of the Monorail, a nonprofit group, has proposed that the monorail route go through the Broadway area, allowing Sound Transit's light rail to follow the freeway or Eastlake Avenue.

Neighborhood Concerns. Responses to the April 1998 Options Guide questionnaire showed a solid majority against having light rail or monorail in the neighborhood; but the questionnaire also found a vocal minority—up to one fifth—who gave this prospect their strong support. Thus 53.1 % strongly oppose an additional bridge for either light rail or monorail across the Ship Canal, but 14.8 % strongly favor that result.

Bridge Crossing. The I-5 Ship Canal bridge emits an unacceptable level of noise at most times of the day or night. Many in the vicinity fear that a rail bridge crossing will add to the noise, although some feel that it could be an opportunity to achieve a net reduction in the noise. For public discussion to be most useful, it is essential to prepare benchmark measurements of existing noise along Eastlake Avenue and a projection of future noise with and without the rail bridge. Also, we need to know which noise-reduction technologies are available and how the neighborhood can assure that the best technologies are selected and actually installed.

Portals. Emergence of the light rail line from the ground for a bridge crossing (or entry of a surface light rail into the ground to access a tunnel) will require a portal whose length and width will vary depending on the geography. Among the potential negative impacts of this portal

would be to eliminate existing buildings, occupy developable land, and worsen Eastlake and Harvard avenues' barrier-like quality by creating a "ditch" that pedestrians and bicyclists could not cross and that a pedestrian overpass would inadequately correct. A portal could also create noise that at some points is far louder than if a passing train were entirely on the surface.

Parking. One or more stations can intensify a rail line's impact on the neighborhood. Because light rail, and to a lesser extent the monorail, will have far fewer stops than the existing bus system, the activity associated with each station will be very great. The Eastlake neighborhood has consistently opposed being a park-and-ride, whether by installation of official park-and-ride lots, or unofficially by use of neighborhood streets. A new light rail station or monorail station could invite rail riders who drive from other areas to park in the neighborhood. This new traffic would bring more noise, pollution, and traffic danger, potentially negating the environmental benefits of rail to the neighborhood. The increased demand for parking would also usurp parking needed by Eastlake residents and customers of neighborhood retail businesses.

The Eastlake residential parking zone that is now in effect will help protect residential parking, but upon opening of a station, it would have to expand to all residential blocks, have increased enforcement, and stronger parking restrictions. The increased price that could be charged for private parking would encourage landowners to favor automobile commuters to the neighborhood, forcing residents' and employees' cars onto the streets, where parking availability is already limited. Special efforts must be made to assure that retail businesses have adequate short-term parking. Parking structures (which, in 1994, the RTA offered to build) would not be located conveniently to many businesses, and they would need to be well-designed and respectful of existing zoning constraints. Many in the neighborhood feel that free-standing parking garages should be excluded from Eastlake's business district between Hamlin to Newton streets.

Transit-Oriented Development. The Eastlake neighborhood is currently zoned to allow substantial expansion in commercial and multifamily development. The impacts of this development are already being magnified by the barriers of the lake and the freeway, and by major growth in the nearby University of Washington and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and South Lake Union in general. While upzoning (increasing the maximum allowable height, bulk, and scale and density for new buildings) near transit stations may make sense in some areas, and is usually a by-product of the station, it is not appropriate for Eastlake, which has very limited infrastructure and land, and is already struggling to deal with impacts from existing development and to retain its desired scale and character. Commercial development near a station could also compete with and undermine Eastlake's "main street" vision and the many small independent businesses that comprise its commercial community. Suggestions have been made that any Eastlake station might be accompanied by graduated caps on permitted square footage of commercial and residential development to help pace the development at a rate that the neighborhood could successfully absorb.

Bus Service. The light rail line could potentially reduce noise, pollution, and congestion by eliminating some buses that now move through the neighborhood on I-5 or on Eastlake Avenue. However, this effect could be negated if an Eastlake station came to be a transfer point for buses not already coming through the neighborhood. Although the addition of bus service might be welcomed by residents and employees who have seen their choices reduced in the last decade by

the downtown bus tunnel, the additional buses might be mainly at peak hour and if they have picked up commuters on their way into town, might be too full for Eastlakers to be able to board.

Enforcing Commitments. We learned in a 1994 visit to the Hazelwood neighborhood on East Bumside Street in Portland that some of the features originally promised to make light rail palatable to the neighborhoods never materialized. Before agreeing to an Eastlake route or station, the neighborhood might seek a legally binding document committing RTA and, where applicable, the City of Seattle, to specific protections. Baseline traffic counts and projections would need to be made, with public investments tied to actual targeted ceilings. These street improvements would need to be installed during or before the light rail development, not after it.

Construction-Related Disruption. The well known loss of retail businesses during the Downtown bus tunnel construction make aggressive efforts essential to protect Eastlake's retail and other commercial businesses during any light rail or monorail construction. Despite the best efforts of the agency managers, the recent construction of the Seattle Public Utilities combined sewer overflow project (primarily a tunneling project) and King County's trolley wire expansion project imposed serious hardships. A binding plan should be developed that clearly delineates responsibilities for relocating, compensating, or otherwise helping businesses and residents during the construction process.

Conclusion on Rail. A succession of neighborhood planning efforts have found that Eastlake's highest priority is to become and remain a safer, quieter, and more pleasant place to live, play, and do business. Many in the neighborhood would likely oppose a light rail system that took us farther from these goals. Eastlake and Portage Bay/Roanoke Park are not just a corridor through which travelers pass; they are neighborhoods whose quality of life must be preserved and enhanced. Noise, air pollution, and impediments to pedestrians are already at high levels and must not be allowed to increase. Because of the neighborhoods' proximity to Downtown and the University District, the pressures for land development and for parking are already intense; installation of one or more light rail or monorail stations would likely exacerbate these pressures beyond acceptable or mitigatable levels.

See Section 5 at the end of this Chapter for a list of Transportation recommendations that address the above goal and issues.

5. Transportation Recommendations

Following are goals and their related recommendations along with proposed follow-up activities. Most of the recommendations do not require capital spending; some that do can be funded outside the Seattle Transportation Department (e.g., by the state).

Some of the elements of Eastlake's existing and proposed Transportation System are shown on Figure VI. 1 at the end of this chapter.

Goal T-1: Reduce Speeding and Collisions

- T-1. 1 On Eastlake Avenue, south of Boston Street to its intersection with Fairview Avenue N., establish a street section with one lane of travel in each direction, a

- center left-turn lane, and a parking lane on each side (this configuration during off-peak hours). This configuration will improve safety by making each lane wider and reducing turning collisions, while making the parking lanes more usable. Neighborhood volunteers to collect signatures of property owners supporting this change.] [Key]
- T-1.2 Install planted medians in the Eastlake Avenue center lane when this does not interfere with left turns at intersections and into existing driveways. [Subject to funding and the permission of abutting property owners; neighborhood volunteers to follow up.] [Key]
 - T-1.3 Eliminate the current peak period parking prohibition on Harvard Avenue that creates a second travel lane in the direction of peak commute, and explore reducing the hours or dropping entirely the current peak period parking prohibition on Eastlake Avenue. This prohibition eliminates needed parking, and encourages speeding on these arterials.[Eastlake Community Council and Eastlake Business Association to follow up] [Key]
 - T-1.4 The City of Seattle should work with other localities and with state legislators to amend state law to permit localities to enforce speed limits on residential streets down to 15 miles per hour from the current 25, and to allow a school zone speed of 20 miles per hour to be enforced whether crossing guards are present or not. [Follow-up by Eastlake Community Council, Floating Homes Association, and other neighborhood organizations] [Near-term]
 - T-1.5 Reduce the posted speed limit from 25 to 15 miles per hour on Fairview Avenue E. between Roanoke and Newton streets. [Follow-up by Eastlake Community Council and Floating Homes Association] [Near-term]
 - T-1.6 Install traffic calming measures at the intersection of Fairview Avenue E. and Newton Street. [Follow-up by Floating Homes Association and Eastlake Community Council; to seek a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant] [Key]
 - T-1.7 Redesign the intersection where Fairview Avenue E. turns to the southwest and becomes Fairview Avenue N. to discourage drivers from making fast, sweeping turns. [A pledge has been received for this project from the Seattle Transportation Department; follow-up by Eastlake Tomorrow volunteers.] [Key]
 - T-1.8 Install a stop sign at the west end of Blaine Street for turns onto Fairview Avenue E. [Follow-up by neighborhood volunteers in cooperation with the abutting landowners] [Near-term]
 - T-1.9 Install traffic calming measures at the intersection of Fairview Avenue E. and Lynn Street [Long-term]
 - T-1. 10 Install traffic calming measures at the intersection of Fairview Avenue E. and Roanoke Street [Long-term]

- T-1. 11 Redesign the intersection of Eastlake and Harvard avenues to reduce collisions; redesign should include (1) curb bulbs and wider sidewalks for that portion of Harvard Avenue fronting on the commercial property between the Franklin Avenue staircase and Allison Street, and (2) additional planted median at the intersection of Harvard Avenue and Eastlake Avenue. [Long-ten-n]
- T-1. 12 For Fairview Avenue E. between Fuhrman and Hamlin and between Roanoke and Newton, adopt a green street Type III designation, and pursue with the community, property owners, and City a public process to determine possible standards and guidelines for landscaping, walkways, and buffers, including a possible prohibition against full curb, gutter, and sidewalk sections. Consistent with the objectives of the green street and “country lane” for north Fairview Avenue E., prepare and implement a study of north Fairview Avenue E. between Hamlin and Fuhrman streets that evaluates and develops solutions for traffic calming, traffic circulation, pedestrian safety, and on-street parking. [Key]
- T-1. 13 In general, do not widen existing street widths, construct large curb radii, or make other roadway or intersection modifications that expand Eastlake’s existing street sections, unless identified and supported in an Eastlake planning process. [Near-term]

Goal T-2: Make it Safer and More Convenient for Pedestrians to Cross the Street

- T-2.1 Paint all crosswalks along Eastlake, Harvard, and Boylston avenues. [Follow-up by neighborhood organizations] [Near-term]
- T-2.2 Increase the length of “WALK” signals to allow more crossing time before the “DON’T WALK” signal appears. [Follow-up by social service organizations and the Eastlake Community Council] [Key]
- T-2.3 Install pedestrian half-signals (stop lights) at the Allison, Newton, and Howe crossings of Eastlake Avenue. [Follow-up by the Eastlake Community Council] [Key]
- T-2.4 Restore automatic “WALK” at full traffic signals. As is still the case at the Lynn Street crossing of Eastlake Avenue, do not require pedestrians to press a button to obtain a “WALK” indicator at full traffic signals (push button would still be used to gain a quicker “WALK” signal, and at pedestrian half-signals). [Follow-up by neighborhood volunteers] [Near-term]
- T-2.5 Install a mid-block crossing of Eastlake Avenue at Shelby Street. Fairview-Olmsted Park will open in 1998–1 999 just west of this intersection, and the Shelby hillclimb is proposed just east of it. [Follow-up by Olmsted-Fairview Park Commission] [Key]

- T-2.6 Install disability-friendly facilities at the Louisa, Roanoke, and Lynn crossings of Eastlake Avenue. Provided that east/west through traffic is not encouraged with a fill signal, include a “WALK” signal on the south side of Louisa Street. Nearby organizations serving the blind, deaf, and deaf-blind have requested improvements such as curb ramps, brighter signals for the partially sighted, a vibrating signal panel or button, and crosswalks in a different color and texture and outlined in ways that can be felt by a cane. [Follow-up by Deaf-Blind Service Center and the Abused Deaf Women’s Advocacy Service] [Key]
- T-2.7 Install a green arrow for left turns westbound from Lynn to Eastlake Avenue, and provide a “WALK” phase across Eastlake Avenue that is protected from Lynn Street; left turns will be acceptable only if Lynn is not widened. Neighborhood volunteers to follow up] [Near-term]
- T-2.8 Re-establish pedestrian access on the north side of the Roanoke Street bridge across I-5. Include “No Right on Red” sign for westbound traffic on Roanoke turning north to Harvard, and an additional crosswalk on the north side of the Harvard/Roanoke intersection. [Follow-up by neighborhood volunteers, jointly with Roanoke Park area] [Key]
- T-2.9 Once the City has clarified the variety of Key Pedestrian Streets and the rules that apply to them, upon opening of a station explore designating one or more streets in Eastlake as a Key Pedestrian Street. [Follow-up jointly by the Eastlake Business Association and the Eastlake Community Council.] [Long-term]
- T-2. 10 Install curb ramps on all street corners to accommodate wheelchairs and baby strollers. [Key]

Goal T-3: Add and Improve Sidewalks and Walkways

- T-3.1 Restore and clean sidewalks throughout the neighborhood. [Adopt-a-street assignments to do cleaning; neighborhood volunteers to prepare and prioritize an inventory of restoration needs] [Long-term]
- T-3.2 Identify those sites that have excessively wide or unused driveways, and recommend driveway sharing and curb restoration as appropriate. [Follow-up by neighborhood volunteers] [Long-term]
- T-3.3 Install a pedestrian walkway on the west side of Fairview Avenue E. between Blaine Street and Fairview Avenue N. [Follow-up by neighborhood businesses and volunteers] [Key]
- T-3.4 At no sacrifice to habitat, complete the walkway on the west side of Fairview Avenue E. from Fuhrman Avenue to Martin Street (south of University Bridge). [Follow-up by neighborhood businesses and volunteers] [Long-term]
- T-3.5 Complete the sidewalks on both sides of Allison and Hamlin streets and Fuhrman Avenue between Eastlake Avenue and Fairview Avenue E. [Follow-up by

neighborhood volunteers in close coordination with residents and property owners in the area; funding of a sidewalk on the south side of Fuhrnan Avenue will be sought from WSDOT (the abutting landowner)]. [Near-term]

- T-3.6 Install a set of stairs and wheelchair accessible walkways under the I-5 viaduct between Franklin Avenue and Lakeview Boulevard, to connect to the existing Blaine and Garfield streets stairs up to 10th Avenue E. [Follow-up by Seattle Transportation Department to obtain design and funding from WSDOT, the landowner]. [Key]
- T-3.7 Explore ways to connect the Edgar Street-end with Fairview Avenue E. north to Hamlin Street (north end of Mallard Cove). [Follow-up by neighborhood volunteers in close coordination with residents and property owners in the area.] [Long-term]
- T-3.8 Explore a possible walkway or viewing platform that, at no sacrifice to habitat, allows pedestrians to pass on the west side of Fairview Avenue at the Boston Street-end. Any modification should also address drainage and access issues on the east side of the intersection. [Follow-up by Eastlake Tomorrow volunteers] [Near-term]

Goal T-4: Improve Bicycle Conditions

- T-4.1 Recognize Minor Avenue as a “major bikeway” (a designation now given only to Fairview Avenue E.). Doing so would encourage bicycle travel on Minor in addition to Fairview and Eastlake avenues. [Follow-up by neighborhood volunteers] [Near-term]
- T-4.2 Redesign the intersection of Boylston Avenue, Lakeview Boulevard, Newton Street and the I-5 on-ramp to facilitate safer conditions for local traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians. [Follow-up by neighborhood volunteers]. [Key]
- T-4.3 Install more bicycle racks, particularly at businesses and parks Neighborhood volunteers to develop prioritized list of locations] [Near-term]

Goal T-5: Improve Bus Service for Eastlake Residents, Employees, and Customers

- T-5.1 Establish that all express buses that use Eastlake Avenue will stop at least once in the neighborhood. [Work with King County; follow-up by neighborhood organizations] [Key]
- T-5.2 Maintain a maximum distance of two blocks between local bus stops. [Eastlake Tomorrow to send a letter to King County and the City of Seattle] [Key]
- T-5.3 Reduce “deadheading” (layovers) of Metro and Community Transit buses in the neighborhood, including on Eastlake Avenue south of the intersection with

Fairview Avenue N. [Work with King County and Community Transit (Snohomish County); follow-up by neighborhood organizations] [Near-term]

- T-5.4 Increase the number of bus shelters and decorate them with the help of artists and students from the neighborhood; provide benches at more bus stops, and restore the benches that were removed at Lynn Street (northbound). [Follow-up by neighborhood organizations] [Near-term]
- T-5.5 Study Lake Union ferry to connect Fremont, UW, Eastlake and Westlake.[Long-term]
- T-5.6 Study jitney (van/bus) to circle Lake Union. [Long-term]
- T-5.7 Neighborhood-wide trip reduction project. [Long-term]
- T-5.8 Yield signs at Franklin Avenue intersections. [Long-term]
- T-5.9 Complete the sidewalk on the north side of Newton Street between Eastlake and Franklin. [Long-term]

Goal T-6: Reduce Freeway Related Noise, Air and Water Pollution and Visual Blight through Technology and System Modifications; Mitigate the Impacts that Cannot Be Eliminated.

- T-6.1** Urge WSDOT to retrofit the I-5 Ship Canal bridge with sound-absorbent panels above the express lanes to reduce reflected noise. WSDOT'S acoustic consultants estimate this measure could reduce noise by ten decibels. [Follow-up by volunteers in the Eastlake, Roanoke Park, University District, and Wallingford neighborhoods] [Key]
- T-6.2 Urge WSDOT to install small noise walls on both sides of the I-5 express lanes just north of Shelby Street. This site is particularly noisy, but also well-suited for construction of a wall. [Follow-up by volunteers in the Eastlake and Roanoke Park neighborhoods] [Key]
- T-6.3 Develop community consensus for additional locations for noise walls. [Follow-up by NOISE] [Near-term]
- T-6.4 Urge WSDOT and the state legislature to allocate funds for noise retrofits. City of Seattle to exert influence in Olympia for such funds, which are at a zero level in the current biennial state budget. Support legislation redirecting revenues from parking leases along WSDOT'S rights-of-way (that revenue now funds highway development in rural areas), revenue from cellular antennas, and any other appropriate sources of finding. [Follow-up by volunteers from the Eastlake, Roanoke Park, University District, and Wallingford neighborhoods] [Key]
- T-6.5 Work with WSDOT and the City to further reduce the hours when the I-5 express lanes are in operation. They are now usually closed between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., whereas the City noise ordinance recognizes 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. as quiet times.

[Follow-up by volunteers from the Eastlake, Roanoke Park, University District, and Wallingford neighborhoods] [Near-term]

- T-6.6 Secure a City ordinance prohibiting the use of diesel compression brakes on the Eastlake sections of I-5. [Follow-up by NOISE and local community councils] [Long-term]
- T-6.7 Urge WSDOT to resurface this stretch of I-5 with “quiet pavement.” When WSDOT resurfaced SR520 on the bridge deck and to the East, noise levels were significantly reduced. Though this technology can be expensive, it can help mitigate noise in affected neighborhoods without even more expensive barriers or lids. [Follow-up by NOISE and local community councils] [Key]
- T-6.8 Under I-5, urge WSDOT to ensure adequate drainage, treat stormwater run-off, and keep the area clean, safe, and well-lighted. [Key]
- T-6.9 Encourage the City, County, and School District to conduct a study of the tax revenue foregone from property tax devaluation because of increasing levels of noise. [Long-term]

Goal T-7: Ensure That Any Light Rail or Monorail System Is a Net Benefit to the Neighborhood

- T-7.1 Light rail should not be on the surface of, or elevated above, any Eastlake streets. It would significantly harm existing businesses, traffic, parking, and neighborhood livability. [Key]
- T-7.2 Oppose an additional light rail (or monorail) bridge crossing over the Ship Canal, or a nearby tunnel opening. Both would significantly harm properties and homes. [Key]
- T-7.3 Explore the addition of rail to I-5 and the Ship Canal bridge, if it produces a net reduction in noise and vibration and does not produce a widening of the bridge. [Long-term]
- T-7.4 A monorail line on Eastlake Avenue cannot be recommended because of view blockage, loss of property values and privacy, loss of street space, and possible taking of property. [Key]
- T-7.5 A Boylston Avenue or I-5 monorail route could be explored if it produces a net reduction in noise and does not harm existing properties. [Long-term]
- T-7.6 Oppose a light rail station in Eastlake if there are not strong protections against inundation by up-zoned commercial development and by commuters arriving by car. [Key]
- T-7.7 Potential impacts of one or more monorail stations must be closely examined before such a station could be recommended. [Near-term]

T-7.8 Support the Capitol Hill tunnel route for light rail. If the South Lake Union alternative is chosen as the light rail route, support only the all-tunnel alternative through Eastlake and under Portage Bay. [Key]

