

Chapter VII.

MAIN STREET ELEMENT

1. Vision and Goals

A neighborhood whose residents and employees prefer also to shop and dine there. A neighborhood with quality retail and service businesses that reach out to potential customers everywhere. A neighborhood which is lively and busy in the evening and during the day. A neighborhood with a clean and vital Main Street that adds to the sense of community.

This vision can be our Eastlake if we plan well for the business district.

Eastlake is a mixed-use community that seeks to balance residences, office issues, retail and service establishments, and maritime industry. The business and residential districts are long and narrow, and so are never far from each other. Small businesses such as restaurants and shops are central to Eastlake's identity and a particular focus for the community. The Eastlake Neighborhood Plan seeks particularly to strengthen neighborhood-serving businesses.

The Main Street planning element goals, each of which is associated with specific recommendations, are as follows:

- Goal M-1** Develop a theme and a possible event
- Goal M-2** Enhance the streetscape
- Goal M-3 Improve bus service, traffic, and parking
- Goal M-4** Market Eastlake to new businesses and customers
- Goal M-5 De-emphasize the "business strip" nature of Eastlake Avenue by concentrating new commercial development around several nodes



This chapter on the Main Street planning element first defines terms and summarizes the relevant direction from the City's Comprehensive Plan, then provides background on the planning process, and finally lists the recommendations and classifies them as key, near-term, or long-term.

2. Definitions of Terms

Main Street: A voluntary program for the recruitment and promotion of businesses and the improvement of the streetscape and shopfronts tailored to the strengths and needs of each business district. Originated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a means to strengthen older business districts; now promoted statewide by the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (see bibliography).

Business Improvement Area (BIA): A local taxing district created under Washington State statute RC W 35.87A and City ordinances. While not proposed in the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan, BIAs have been used by some other business communities to tax themselves (usually on the basis of square footage, employees or sales), to accomplish such objectives as street and sidewalk maintenance, additional security, or joint marketing. The City of Seattle assists in creating the legal taxing entity. It also collects the taxes, which are subject to a vote and must be approved by businesses representing over 60% of the tax base. A similar vote can end the BIA at any time. A BIA is chartered by the City Council and governed by an advisory board made up entirely of rate payers.

3. Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The following goals or policies of the Seattle Comprehensive Plan are relevant to our efforts to strengthen the Eastlake business district:

- . Maintain and enhance retail commercial services throughout the city with special emphasis on serving urban villages (G 18, Land Use Element goal).
- . In pedestrian-oriented commercial zones, maintain an active, attractive, accessible pedestrian environment (G58, Land Use Element goal).
- . Establish use and development standards for pedestrian-oriented commercial zones which promote an environment conducive to walking and a mix of commercial and residential uses that promote the goals for these zones (L 105, Land Use Element policy).
- . Strive to provide a wide range of goods and services to residents and businesses in urban centers and villages by encouraging appropriate retail development in these areas (E30, Economic Development Element policy).
- . Encourage a mix of complementary neighborhood businesses and services in urban villages to encourage short trips easily made by walking or bicycling (T1 4, Transportation Element policy).

- . Designate principal commercial streets for each urban village; Eastlake Avenue is so designated (L 10, Land Use Element policy).
- . Neighborhood plans should provide at least one clearly defined community focus for informal public gathering and other community events (L 149, Land Use Element policy).

4. Planning Background

The Main Street planning team consisted primarily of business owners and is co-chaired by Susan Kaufman (co-owner of Serafina restaurant) and Cheryl Thomas (local economic consultant); it was assisted by consultant Chris Leman.

In addition to its committee meetings, the Main Street planning team has sponsored forums for local businesses and residents featuring Ron Lewis (True Value Greenwood Hardware and president of Seattle's Neighborhood Business Council), Anne Vemez Moudon (UW College of Architecture and Urban Planning), Michael Verchot (UW Business School's Urban Enterprise Development Project), and Stephen Dunphy (columnist for the Seattle Times).

Early in 1996, the Main Street planning team solicited ideas from business people and residents through the Eastlake Business District Questionnaire and the September 1996 general Eastlake Tomorrow questionnaire. The first questionnaire found much support for a cleanup effort, streetscape improvements (like trees and art), joint advertising, and stops for the express buses that use Eastlake Avenue. The second questionnaire collected hundreds of suggestions for where to locate trash cans, bulletin boards, benches, bus shelters, and bicycle racks. The surveys also yielded many suggestions for businesses that were needed in Eastlake (listing here does not imply endorsement by Eastlake Tomorrow, as some of the suggestions may not be practical or popular):

Artist supply store	Flea market	Music store
Bed and breakfast	Framing shop	Office supply
Bicycle shop	Fresh produce market	Photo finishing
Bookstore	Garden store	More restaurants
Barber shop	Gas station	Specialty grocery store
Cash machines	General store	Supermarket
Drug store	Ice cream parlor	Theater
Fish market	Hardware store	
Fix-it shop	Liquor store	

A draft set of Main Street recommendations was distributed for public comment in November 1997; a second draft was published in the March/April 1998 *Eastlake News*; and a third draft was included in the April 1998 Eastlake Tomorrow Options Guide. The attached questionnaire

yielded impressive support for the draft recommendations. More than half of those responding supported (34.6% strongly) moving a block north the existing HOV parking places on Eastlake Avenue; only 8.6% were opposed. More than half (again, 34.6% strongly) also favored eliminating the peak-period parking prohibition on Eastlake Avenue, although more than one quarter were opposed (17.3% strongly). Continuing the “cornerstones” art project was highly popular, being supported strongly by 46.9% and somewhat by another 27.20A; only 11.1 % were opposed.

In addition to Eastlake Tomorrow, businesses have also participated in the activities of the Eastlake Business Association and/or the Eastlake Community Council. Further efforts at business improvement will require their more extensive involvement. A continuing Eastlake Main Street organization (whether within or alongside the Eastlake Business Association) could become the rallying point needed to follow through on the needs and opportunities identified in this plan. Only when businesses are organized and meeting on a regular basis could such possibilities as a BIA be explored.

The involvement of businesses in Eastlake Tomorrow has already produced some tangible results. A farmer’s market was organized on August 25, 1996, as a successful pilot project. Eighteen businesses and individuals have committed to keep clean a block area for a twelve-month period. Eastlake Tomorrow volunteers have also arranged for the towing of several abandoned cars; have arranged for the addition of three trash cans on Eastlake Avenue; have arranged for the removal of oversized I-5 signs on City streets; and have initiated discussions with WSDOT for landscaping the Lakeview exit from I-5. Eastlake Tomorrow has worked with Seattle Public Utilities and the Seattle Transportation Department to install three planted medians on Eastlake Avenue just north of Allison Street.

The successful transformation of Eastlake Avenue as a “main street” will depend, in large part, on the resolution of transportation-related problem. A 1994 University of Washington design studio class report observed: “While many other neighborhood districts have blossomed with a diverse range of businesses, Eastlake hasn’t, and we lay much of the blame on the speed of through traffic.” As outlined in Chapter VI, the problem is not traffic volume, but speed. Wallingford’s 45th Street actually has a lot more traffic than Eastlake Avenue, but because this traffic is calmer, it enables a stronger business district. In contrast, a 1994 City planning study found that none of the commercial zones along Eastlake Avenue offered a positive pedestrian environment, and that some have a poor pedestrian environment.

5. Main Street Recommendations

Goal M-1: Develop a theme and a possible event

- M-1.1 Explore developing a united theme suitable for joint advertising for the Eastlake business district. [near-term]
- M-1.2 Explore having an annual Eastlake event to promote the neighborhood’s retail and services businesses. [Near-term]

Goal M-2: Enhance the streetscape

- M-2.1 Install street-level amenities such as litter cans, bus shelters, benches, and trees. [Key]
- M-2.2 Expand volunteer cleanup efforts. [Near-term]
- M-2.3 Continue the “cornerstones” sidewalk art on additional street comers. [Key]
- M-2.4 Explore creating a design concept for lighting Eastlake Avenue at night which would include pedestrian sidewalk lighting within each of the business nodes and a lighting design for business and office facades within the nodes. [Long-term]
- M-2.5 Install bulletin boards or information kiosks. [Near-term]
- M-2.6 Landscape the freeway ramps entering and leaving the neighborhood. [Key]

Goal M-3: Improve bus service, traffic, and parking

- M-3.1 Work with King County Metro to establish that all express buses that use Eastlake Avenue will stop at least twice in the neighborhood. [Key]
- M-3.2 Move one block north some of the HOV-only parking places that now interfere with retail parking on the east side of Eastlake Avenue between Lynn and Louisa streets. [Key]
- M-3.3 Install planted medians in the Eastlake Avenue center lane when this is supported by the abutting property owners (see also T-1.1, T-1.2, and OS-14). [Key]
- M-3.4 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 (also T-1 .3). [Key]

Goal M-4: Market Eastlake to new businesses and customers

- M-4.1 Provide prospective businesses with demographic information on Eastlake. [Near-term]
- M-4.2 Recruit businesses that the neighborhood needs. ~ear-term]
- M-4.3 Publish a map guide of neighborhood businesses. [Long-term]
- M-4.4 Initiate more media mentions of Eastlake businesses. [Near-term]

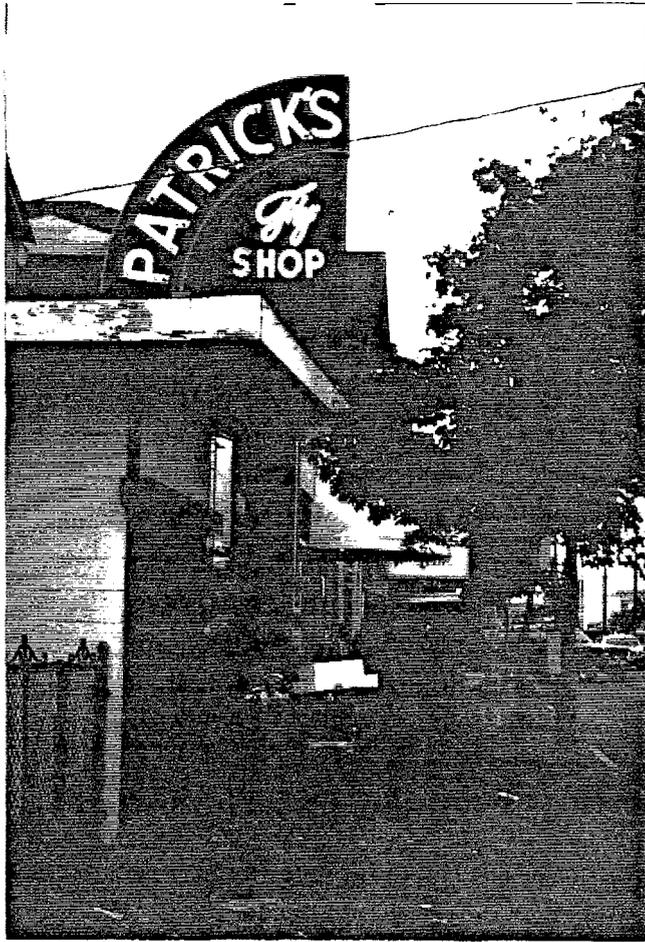
M-4.5 Work with WSDOT to install “Capitol Hill/Eastlake” signs near the Eastlake off-ramps on I-5. [Key]

Goal M-5: De-emphasize the “business strip” nature of Eastlake Avenue by concentrating new commercial development around several nodes

M-5.1 Support recommendation CD- 1 in the Community Design planning element that would channel commercial space in new land development projects to distinct segments of Eastlake Avenue. [Key]



Eastlake has some of the City's most popular restaurants and taverns.



Unique and well-regarded businesses are Eastlake 's specialty.