

Pedestrianizing Pike Street:
Continuing to re-envisioning the right of way on Pike Street in Capitol Hill

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ABSTRACT

The right of way between Broadway and 12th Avenue on Pike Street un Capitol Hill has been identified as a place of interest for pedestrian oriented design solutions by Capitol Hill community members and the city. In the summers of 2015 and 2017, the Seattle Department of Public Transportation's Public Space Management Group has hosted temporary street closures to address issues of safety and the community's desire to repurpose the right of way. These events were held in the evening hours. Community members have voiced concerns that the nightlife orientation of these street closures may result in the area being viewed as solely a bar scene, when there exist many more uses of the site. In order to address this, this public life study looked into how the site functions throughout the day. The People Street Program Evaluation method of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation was adapted to analyze the study area.

Pedestrian counts, activity scans, pedestrian intercept surveys, and business operator surveys were conducted in the study area. The results of which have led to a few recommendations. First, the city and community should continue exploring temporary street closures, as there appears to still be a debate between stakeholders on the idea. In these interim design solutions, project evaluation methods should be implemented to ensure that feedback about previous designs are heard and therefore addressed in subsequent proposals. Through multiple iterations, there may come a day when a permanent solution is agreed upon. Secondly, the next design should steer away from solely focusing on evening hours. It was found that stakeholders would like to see a more robust design and events that address the use of the space throughout the day. Thirdly, the designs should reflect the communities that have historically called Capitol Hill home and continue to. There has been an observed shift in demographics due to redevelopment and there are fears that this safe space for the LGBTQ community is vanishing. Finally, concerns over the built environments have been raised in recent history leading to urban design policies to preserve neighborhood character. Future design proposals should look to bolster and enhance the built character of the Pike/Pine corridor.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



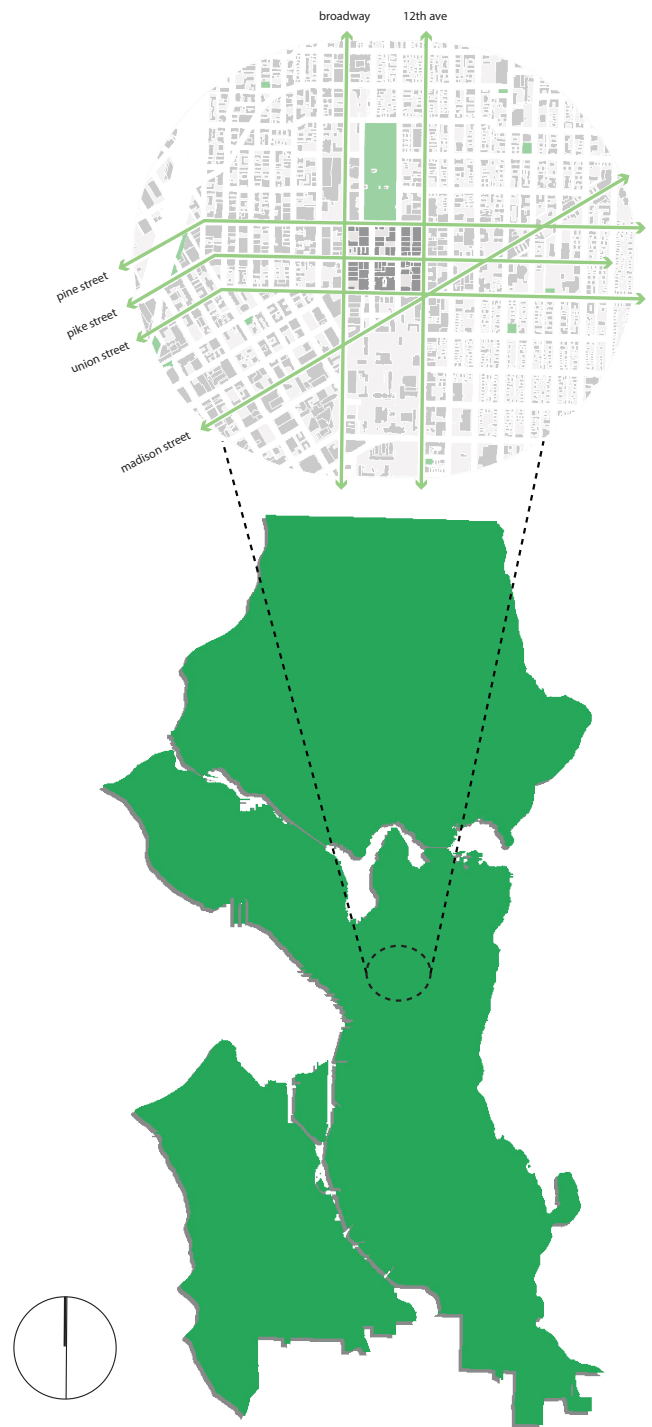
During one of the first trips I made to Seattle, I had a friend invite me to meet up with him in Capitol Hill to go hang out. We spent a few hours in the Pike/Pine corridor that night, and when it came time to start heading home I soon became aware of the chaos that was unfolding around me. As the venues were closing, there was a mad rush to get in a car. People were spilling into the streets meanwhile taxi and Uber drivers were clogging the roads. The police were trying to maintain order and keep traffic flowing as they forcefully slapped on the rear end of cars telling them to move along. Clearly, the area had a bit of a traffic management and safety concern on its hands.

Only a few months later I found myself in the hunt for an apartment in Seattle and I found myself drawn to Capitol Hill. Becoming a resident, I saw the need for a pedestrian street in the Pike/Pine corridor from a different vantage point than as a visitor. Walking out of Mario's Pizza with nowhere to sit but on a busy curb to eat my food. Running into a friend and attempting to stop to talk on an overly crowded sidewalk. In passing, friends and I would talk about the need for a pedestrian-only space in the area. With this perceived need and my new skills in the realm of urban planning and design, I decided to focus my thesis project on the subject.

1.1 The Study Area

The study area for this project is Pike Street in between 12th Avenue and Broadway, which constitutes three city blocks. The site was chosen as it has been identified by the city and community as a suitable location for street closure programs. In the summers of 2015 and 2017, the Seattle Department of Transportation's Public Space Management group ran temporary street closures in the interest of placemaking, safety, business, and mobility (Pike People Street 2015, 2). The idea grew out of the interest of the community and city departments, and has become part of the neighborhoods economic development strategy for the Capitol Hill 2020 Plan (Pike People Street 2015).

The study area is within the boundaries of



context
figure 1.1

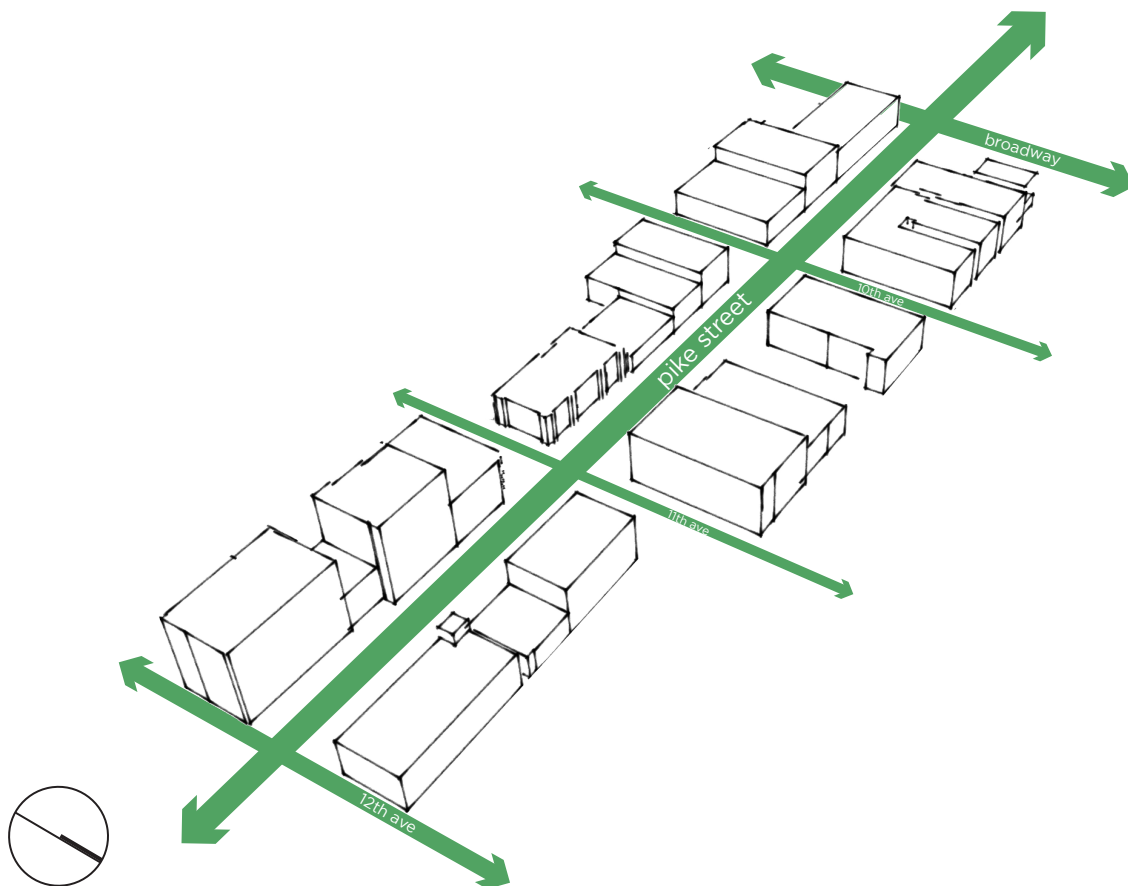
the Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District. Created in 2009, the Pike/Pine Conservation Overlay District seeks to maintain neighborhood character through urban design policies seeks to regulate new development. The development of the conservation overlay district speaks to the concerns of the community in maintaining neighborhood character in light of the redevelopment of the neighborhood and the new investments happening in the greater Seattle area.

The study area, as shown in figure 1.1, is located in the heart of Capitol Hill. It is bounded by a number of main arterials. Broadway, which feeds traffic north and south, not only carry's a large number of automobiles and some bus routes, is also the location of the Seattle Street car line as well as the Capitol Hill Light Rail Station. Pike, Pine, Union, and Madison Streets move traffic into the downtown area.

Figure 1.2 illustrates the built form of the study

area. The buildings within the study area are all low to midrise buildings. The majority of these are classified as masonry structures of low to good quality. (King County Parcel Viewer) The land uses are heavily comprised of retail operations, however, there are also a number of office spaces and residential units present as well.

Notably, it is evident when walking through the space that the community takes ownership of the space. One will find an abundance of stickers on signs and buildings, shoes strung up posts and telephone wires, and works of art displayed on public structures. Along this note, this area and the neighborhood as whole has served as a safe space for the LGBTQ community in the past and present.



site

figure 1.2

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW



This section covers what I have found to be relevant in studying the potential pedestrianization of the Pike Street study area. I give the definition of some key terms necessary to understand this document. From there I will move into topics that will touch upon the history of pedestrianization schemes in the United States, reasoning behind pedestrianization, benefits of pedestrian zones, the role of design in pedestrianization projects, and commercial gentrification in both the broader and local context.

2.1 Definition of Key Terms

Pedestrianization

The removal of traffic from existing streets followed by suitable treatment in terms of paving, street furniture and other design details.

A form of traffic calming.

The restriction of access to a street to pedestrians only. Specific categories of vehicle (public transport, emergency services, delivery vans) are allowed controlled access are included (Soni 2016).

Downtown Pedestrian Mall

The American equivalent of European car-free city centers. Typically, they were exclusively commercial, with no mixed-uses, replicating suburban shopping malls (Pojani).

Pedestrian Zone

The pedestrian zone designation (or Pedestrian retail areas) is intended to “preserve or encourage intensely retail and pedestrian-oriented shopping districts where non-auto modes of transportation to and within the district are strongly favored” (City of Seattle).

Commercial Gentrification

The process by which long-established businesses providing affordable products and services are leaving and being replaced by either establishment catering to more affluent consumers or corporatized retailers that can afford the more expensive rental prices (Chapple

& Loukaitou-Sideris 2017, 4).

Chapter 2.2 History of Downtown Pedestrian Malls in the United States

Following World War II, white flight, and the growth of suburban living in the 1950s and 1960s, American city planners were seeking ways to revitalize downtown areas. Between the 1960s and 1980s over two-hundred pedestrian malls were built in American downtowns, with planners believing it to be a great revival tactic (Pojani, 141). Promoters of pedestrian malls wrote, “... pedestrianization will hopefully improve the business of local merchants and the livelihood of local residents by drawing people, not only from the city proper, but from surrounding regions into the downtown area.” (Brambillo and Longo, 8) However, the pedestrian mall strategy proved to be an incredibly unsuccessful for drawing people into downtown.

According to Dorina Pojani, much of this failure was due to American entrenchment in suburban lifestyles, the general lack of appeal of American downtowns, the lack of continual funding and input, and their overall design. When pedestrian malls would open, people would flock to the grand openings, however they would not return to shop. This would result in shops closing with no new stores replacing them. In addition, people experiencing homelessness would seek shelter in these newly constructed pedestrian malls due to the lack of traffic. This would give a derelict appearance and a dangerous vibe, warding off potential shoppers (Pojani, 143). However, suburban shoppers had no reason to go there in the first-place due to the overall design of pedestrian malls. They were essentially suburban malls with no roofs. Due to this, they were competing with suburban malls that could provide amenities like climate control and ample parking that downtown malls simply could not deliver. (Pojani, 143) Brambillo and Longo surmise that the cause of their demise was their overall design and that cities had relied too heavily on the pedestrian mall strategies. They

write, “many pedestrian malls have been built as an omnibus solution to all a city’s problems, and in such cases, they have usually failed...the project must be designed at a time and for a place where it can function as designed. Some malls have simply been built too late; if stores and people have already deserted the downtown, adding cars to the list is unlikely to turn the tide.” (Brambillo and Longo, 9) By the 1990’s over 100 cities had dismantled their pedestrian malls, sometimes with successful reintroduction of auto traffic.

In the United States, these downtown pedestrian projects that swept the nation and quickly died were an urban renewal strategy. Urban planners believed that the pedestrian malls would bring back shoppers to the central cities. While these failed in the past due to America’s love affair with the automobile and suburban living, pedestrian schemes are making a comeback in American downtowns as a new wave of urbanization has hit the United States. (Poiani, 142)

2.3 Reasons to Pedestrianize

Reasons to pedestrianize vary across each context. According to Soni and Soni, there are both qualitative and quantitative reasons to pedestrianize a space. Qualitative reasons deal with preservation of heritage, tourism, and recreational spaces, safety and security reasons, reclamation of public space for public welfare and development of public amenities, and on popular demand. Quantitative reasons include the presence of high numbers of sustainable modes like pedestrian, non-motorized transit and transit; street geometry and street width not being sufficient and appropriate for motorized transport; presence of good public transport within walking or bicycling distance; if the noise level is in unacceptable range; pollution levels are in unacceptable ranges; and the level of service for pedestrians is in an unacceptable range.

Authors offer the reason of safety concerns for pedestrians as well in the argument for the

implementation of pedestrianization schemes. The largest group of victims of traffic accidents are pedestrians (Tolley and Turton, 185). Researchers claim that projects that aim to increase safety for pedestrians are not actually dealing with the source of the problem. Instead, the interventions that are typically utilized inhibit the movement through cities on foot. These have come in the form of footbridges and underpasses that are not sufficiently policed and cleaned (Tolley and Turton, 185).

Over the last century, urban streets changed dramatically and swiftly to be the sole realm of the automobile, resulting in detrimental effects on public life. Empirical data on the subject has resulted in the realization that “One of the consequences of the increasing flows of vehicles is that, in order to protect themselves, people have stopped trying to use the street in old ways and, except where cars are banned or controlled, have moved their meeting places inside to cafes and halls, or abandoned them all together.” (Toller and Turton, 325) In a time when cities and neighborhoods are looking to bolster their livability, it is essential that the street must be recaptured from the car. (Tolley and Turton, 325)

In recent decades, the social implications of traveling through a neighborhood and city by foot has been heavily explored. Copenhagen’s Jan Gehl has been a prolific writer on this subject for decades as he has championed the social implications of urban policies that promote residents to explore the city on foot. He focuses on how walking should not only be viewed as a tool for commuting, but as a way to enjoy the world and other who inhabit it. He writes, “Man was created to walk, and all of life’s events large and small develop when we walk among other people. Life in all its diversity unfolds before us when we are on foot”. (Gehl 2010, 19) With this viewpoint in mind, cities should begin to move forward with pedestrian projects. With the dawn of modernism came the prioritization of the automobile amongst all other form of urban movement (Jacobs, 1961). As a result, pedestrian movement was left behind and cities were left devoid of life. In light of this, Gehl argues that,

“Cities must urge urban planners and architects to reinforce pedestrianism as an integrated city policy to develop lively, safe, sustainable, and healthy cities.” (Gehl 2010, 6)

2.4 Benefits of Implementation of Pedestrianization schemes

The benefits of implementing pedestrianization schemes is widely written about. Soni and Soni (2016) categorize benefits into transportation, social, environmental, economic, and health related.

There have been several recorded transportation benefits due to pedestrianization strategies. It has found that the creation of pedestrian-friendly networks results in the discouragement of car-dependency (Poboon 1997, 366). This is furthered if there is public transit within an easier walking distance to the pedestrian friendly infrastructure motorized vehicle friendly infrastructure like parking lots according to Knoflacher (2006). The Transport and Environment Studies (TEST) group found that the larger the pedestrianized areas, the more foot traffic they received. Further, the pedestrianized areas were influencing the modes of transit people used to get to the amenity. It was found that public transportation usage increased in all cities studied, while car usage either remained constant or decreased (Soni 2016, 140).

With an urban design strategy that is aimed at getting residents out of their single occupancy vehicles and sharing spaces, it is clear that there are a multitude of social benefits that are waiting to be capitalized on. Pedestrianized streets provide a public forum that promote people from all walks of life to interact and socialize (Gehl 2011, 173). A heightened sense of stewardship has been observed in communities that are highly walkable. It allows people to immerse themselves in their community and gain a sense of belonging, which in turn leads to better care for the neighborhood (Soni 2016, 141).

Due to the lack of vehicles in pedestrian zones, air quality is greatly improved. Wright and Montezuma's (2004) air quality monitoring indicated a reduction of up to forty percent for certain pollutants on a pedestrianized street in Colombia. Chiquetto's (1997) study in Chester, England, found major decreases to the levels of environmental degradation in the central area to the benefit of the various users of the pedestrianized space (Soni 2016, 142).

The economic benefits have been well documented. In Valdemoro, Spain, it was found that the pedestrianization of the city's historic urban center resulted in the increase in commercial activity led to the opening of new businesses, increased demand, creation of new jobs, increased tax revenue, and a rise in property values (Sastre 2013, 745). Klein and Arsensberg (1974) found that retail sales pedestrianized areas located in the United States rose 14-35%, with a similar result in European cities. Hall and Haus-Klau (1985) recorded that retail turnover and customers in a shop are directly proportional to the number of pedestrians in that area. Beyond this, pedestrianization creates economic benefits in the form of reduced negative externalities. Creating more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure has the potential of shifting people from single occupancy vehicle transportation to sustainable modes. Due to this, less public money is needed to be spent on expenses needed for repairing infrastructure damaged by private motorized vehicles (Litman 2003, 8). More recently, economic benefits have been examined by city program evaluations. A post installation study under the People Street Program in Los Angeles found that 50% of storefronts reported an increase in business due to more foot traffic generated by the plaza implementation. (Los Angeles 2012, 11)

Pedestrianization encourages people to move around and enjoy the open air, which in turn results in creating various health benefits to its users. Giles-Corti (2009) found that pedestrian-friendly infrastructure that encourages walking as a mode of transit for children and adolescents directly influences their physical and mental

health. Walking as a form of aerobic exercise has been found to improve eating habits, hunger, food digestion, and metabolism (Ainslie 2002, 2066). Walking in groups or in a setting where many people are present decreases a sense of loneliness and isolation, which greatly benefits one's mental health (Soni 2016, 143).

2.5 Business Operator Views of Pedestrianization Strategies

Public opinion on pedestrianization strategies varies. In much of the literature, there has been an observation that the majority of business owners do not wish to see a pedestrianization scheme come to where their business operates is due to the idea that customers want the ability to drive their cars to the retailer in order to transport the goods they purchase (Hass-Klau 1993, Soni 2016, Parajuli and Pojani 2017). However, it has also been found that those businesses who initially were afraid that the pedestrian zone would decrease the amount of business they received due to the lack of accessibility for cars were the people who most loudly championed the expansion of the pedestrianization scheme following its implementation (Hass-Klau 1993).

In other places, the prospect of pedestrianization has been welcomed with open arms. In Charleston, South Carolina, the city set up a pedestrianization strategy on King Street as a revitalization project in order to maintain its downtown's attractiveness. Following a design charrette, a \$12 million streetscape rejuvenation plan was created where the merchants agreed to pay more than a third of the price through new taxes (Litvin 2005).

Intriguingly, not only were the merchants willingly to pay a large amount for the streetscape improvements, they were also willing to pay more for money for more expensive materials (Litvin 2005). This signifies the importance of engaging the stakeholders from the start of the pedestrianization strategy implementation. By

doing so, a collaborative effort can be made to ensure all those who hold an interest in the area have a voice and can make the best of a well-intentioned urban design strategy.

2.6 Importance of Designing Pedestrianized Areas

Good design has been found to be instrumental in the success of pedestrianization strategies. Success should be defined here as the ability to get users of the space to stay rather than to simply pass through. Gehl surmises that "the duration of all functions in the public domain influences the activity level comparably." (Gehl 2011, 79) By being able to influence people to stay in the public realm for a longer amount of time, a considerable amount of outdoor activities can grow from there. Due to this, Gehl states that lengthy stays outdoors result in lively city spaces. (Gehl 2011, 79)

Through empirical research, Gehl uncovers how the quality of physical outdoor space produces the quantity of three types of outdoor activities: necessary activities, optional activities, and resultant activities (social activities). Necessary activities are those that we are more or less obligated to perform, which may take the form of things like commuting, shopping, or waiting for a bus. (Gehl 2011, 9) Optional activities are defined as ones that a person performs to enjoy amenities the physical world has to offer. These take the form of sitting, sunbathing, or taking a moment to get some fresh air. They are dependent upon favorable exterior conditions and the design of inviting spaces. (Gehl 2011, 11) Finally, there are social activities. These are dependent on the existence of other people being in public spaces and takes the form of greetings and conversations, children playing, or passive contacts. (Gehl 2011, 12) They are referred to as resultant activities as well, due to the fact that they are dependent on the other two forms of outdoor activities to take place. (Gehl 2011, 12) This is because these activities are spontaneous and are a direct result of people sharing public

spaces. (Gehl 2011, 12).

The design of spaces is linked to what types of activities take place in them. Gehl found that the greater the quality of the outdoor environment, the greater the number of optional activities, and resultant activities. With a lower quality of outdoor environment, less of the optional and resultant activities take place. (Gehl 2011, 11) The number of necessary activities stay relatively the same, but he remarks that they tend to take longer in higher quality outdoor environments as the spaces become more inviting to other outdoor activities. (Gehl 2011, 11)

The interplay between the private and public realm is a significant factor in how inviting a place is for users to stay. To begin, the border of the public and private spaces is important. Having a transitional zone between the two makes it easier for users of the space and activities to flow in between the public and private realm as opposed to having harsh borders between the two spheres. (Gehl 2011,113)

2.7 Pedestrianization and Commercial Gentrification

Pedestrianization strategies, beyond their urban design implications and the many benefits they can bring to users of the space, are also about generating more foot traffic to incentivize people to spend more money in an area. This is a major concern for small business owners who often help sustain the character of a neighborhood. However, an increase in foot traffic does not necessarily mean the businesses who occupy the area will make more money. The greater number of people coming to the pedestrian space may bring some downsides to people who are in the position of renting their storefront. This could come in the form of higher rents, which increases their operating cost. That being said, there are people who are able to profit greater from the implementation of pedestrian strategies such as a permanent street closure.

While researching the impacts of pedestrianization and traffic calming on retailing, Hass-Klau was able to find an interesting observation. In her observations, she recorded that while there are increased financial benefits, they do not necessarily go to the shop owners. They can often end up in the hands of the people who own the spaces that shop owners occupy as rental values typically rise as a result of pedestrianization (Hass-Klau 1993, 24).

Raising leasing prices Displacement is a major indicator of the process of gentrification. Most of the literature on gentrification is focused on residential displacement, but there is research beginning to be done on commercial gentrification. In the Gyeongridan neighborhood of Seoul, researchers have recorded the sentiments of independent businesses owners that were either facing the potential of being priced out of their locations or had already been pushed out of their location. It was consistently found that the shop owners could not relate to the new social and cultural atmosphere that was beginning to dominate their neighborhood (Jeong 2015, 151). Interestingly, those who were welcoming of the gentrification were building owners. This is due to their ability to either sell their land to other people or companies willing to pay large amounts of money for the land or lease the properties at a higher rate. Another noteworthy group of business owners who welcome the change are food and drink establishments. Gentrification attracts young visitors who wish to stay out late eating and drinking, and some of these older businesses are able to attract those young people to come to their establishment in the late hours (Jeong 2015, 151).

There have been cases that where pedestrianization schemes have come, homogenization has followed. In the Kadiköy neighborhood of Istanbul, a before and after land-use analysis found that many smaller older businesses were replaced with domestic and international chain stores, or eating and drinking facilities as a result of the rise in rent prices (Özdemir 2017, 17). Cases like Kädikoy

make me wonder what potential unwanted side effects pedestrianization could bring to Capitol Hill. However, while this was the case in Kädikoy, Özdemir wrote that the result was not an immediate consequence of pedestrianization, but rather a side-effect of the improvements in the local physical environment, and increased economic activity. Özdemir calls for planners to take preventative measures to protect the diversity of small individual shops in order to save the image of pedestrianization schemes.

The prices of land and leases are the determining factor of who is able to live and/or operate a business in an area. In Izmir, Turkey it was found that the pedestrian way is one of the attributes which impact the rental price of housing, it has a significant impact on housing prices, and that the impact on rental pricing differs depending upon the housing unit's proximity to the pedestrianization strategy (Cömertler 2007, 152).

Property owners are most likely those who profit the most from commercial gentrification, but I think a more underlying trend in who are able to profit most or simply survive are those most easily able to adapt to social and cultural shifts in a neighborhood. Those who own land merely need to find a person to sell or lease the land to, which is an easy thing to do when your land is in a highly desirable location. What I find interesting is that there is a common theme of some highly adaptable business types that are able to overcome the shifts in neighborhood atmospheres such as food and beverage establishments. Those who were catering to a niche consumer base that had previously occupied the neighborhood are those who are surely to be the ones to be pushed out once their patrons leave.

2.8 Commercial Gentrification in Pike/Pine Corridor

Capitol Hill in Seattle is a neighborhood where creative and freeing cultures have been able to thrive. There are countless murals, spontaneous

expressions of art, beautiful masonry structures, live shows, an abundance of local businesses, and various other aspects that have made it a neighborhood people seek to live, work, and visit. Over the last decade, Capitol Hill has become a redevelopment hotspot for the city, and a change in neighborhood character has been observed by residents, preservationists, and city officials. There is a sense that, due to redevelopment, the local character is being weakened by an influx of “sterile” redevelopments and high-end businesses catering to young professionals. (Johnson, 70) In 2015, University of Washington student Elizabeth Erling Johnson focused her thesis on commercial gentrification in the Pike/Pine corridor.

Through a case study analysis of the Pike/Pine Corridor using an inventory of recent development projects and a comparative “before and after” analysis of retail use in four recent redevelopment projects, Johnson concluded that through a decrease in the density of establishments, the business character had become less diverse, and that there are fewer local businesses despite new legislation aimed at maintaining neighborhood atmosphere. (Johnson, 72) Manish Chalana, who has authored several pieces regarding the Pike/Pine corridor, adds that while most new restaurants and retail spaces that adhere to the Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District (PPCOD) vision have high rents that raise barriers entry and cater to upper-income brackets. (Chalana, 182) Further, he states that there has been a major loss of unique and affordable retail and residential spaces due to redevelopment. (Chalana, 182) Johnson notes that in terms of preserving neighborhood character, the way people use the space is more important than the physical building facades. (Johnson, 73) According to Johnson, there is an overwhelming majority of eating and drinking businesses. (Johnson, 41) If this area was to homogenize and lose its diverse set of cultural aspects, that would be a major loss for residents, retailers, and the city.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY



This study takes a mixed method approach to assess whether or not a pedestrian zone is a suitable design solution to Pike Street between 12th Avenue and Broadway. What is critical to this study is formulating it as a site analysis. I am treating my study area as a single site, so it is necessary to go into the depth of examining how the space currently functions, and what can be improved. This will take the form of a public life study. Jan Gehl, a prominent figure in the study of public life, writes that, “public life should...be understood in the broadest sense as everything that takes place between buildings... It is everything we can go out and observe happening – far more than just street theatre and café life.” (Gehl, Svarre, 2) There have been several authors on the subject, even city governments have formulated methodologies on how to approach a public life study. For this thesis, I use the City of Los Angeles’ People Street Project Evaluation Manual V1.1 to examine Pike Street between 12th Avenue and Broadway.

Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti describes the People Street Program as a city tool in transforming neighborhoods by repurposing underutilized public spaces into plazas, parklets, and bicycle corrals (People Street Project Evaluation Manual, 2). That is certainly what my study aims to do. The goal is to transform Capitol Hill through repurposing the right of way into a pedestrian zone where users of the space can be invited to gather, stay, and enjoy the space. In using the People Street methodology, I needed to use one of their four typologies of repurposing public space (parklet, plaza, bicycle corral, or corridor). The city has defined a plaza as, “a conversion of redundant or underused portion of a street into a public space with tables and chairs.” (People St Project Evaluation Manual, 8) I believe this fits my project site, as the Pike Street between 12th Avenue and Broadway is a redundant in a robust city street system that could be better utilized as a space for pedestrians and bicyclists. As I have adopted their project evaluation methodology, I have also adapted and edited to fit the needs of this project.

The People St Project Evaluation Manual uses a mixture of primary and secondary data. Primary data is composed of a physical assets inventory, pedestrian and cyclists counts, stationary activity scans, pedestrian perceptions and demographics, and business operator perceptions. Secondary data is comprised of jurisdictions and institutions, local demographics, economic data, vehicular traffic, vehicular collisions, and transit data. For the primary data, it is important that certain components are collected during peak hours. Peak hours are defined as Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 7 am to 9 am, 11 am to 1 pm, and 4 to 6 pm for weekday data, and Saturdays from 11 am to 1 pm for weekend data. If these days fall on a holiday, data should not be collected that day as it would give an improper picture of the usage of the site. The People St Evaluation recommends that data collection should take place for 11 hours during the weekday, and seven hours on the weekend. The only primary data that can be collected outside of peak hours are the activity scans, pedestrian/ user questionnaires, and business operator surveys.

The primary objectives for this methodological approach are to:

- (1) discover how many people move through the study area
- (2) observe how people use the space
- (3) evaluate if the area is an inviting place to stay as it currently stands
- (4) understand how people feel about pedestrian-only spaces
- (5) if residents and visitors would like to see a pedestrian-only space in the study area
- (6) understand how businesses feel about pedestrian-only spaces
- (7) make recommendations about how a pedestrian only space could function in the study area.

The research questions for this study are:

- (1) Are people encouraged to stay in the public realm of the study area?
- (2) What hours during the weekday is the study area most active?
- (3) Are younger generations more inclined to feel positively about pedestrian-only spaces?
- (4) What circumstances make people more inclined to support a pedestrian only space in the study area?
- (5) What would people like to see in a pedestrian-only space amenity if one were implemented in the study area?
- (6) Is this area more oriented towards residents or visitor?
- (7) What case studies can Seattle look towards for implementing a pedestrian-only space in the study area.

3.1 Methodological Approach

Pedestrian Counts

The Los Angeles People Streets Program Manual lays out six peak hours for the weekday, and two for the weekend. The weekday peak hours are 7:00 am to 9:00 am, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, and 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The weekend peak hours are from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. The peak hours occur between three days over the course of the week. The weekday peak hours take place on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, while the weekend peak hours are on Saturdays.

Each count was performed for one hour, using the Los Angeles People Street pedestrian count form. For each count, I was stationed and counting on one block face. I designated an imaginary line at the middle of the block. Anyone who crossed that line was counted. I

Weekday Pedestrian Counts



figure 3.1

Weekend Pedestrian Counts



figure 3.2

took note on the directionality and approximated their gender and age.

Each block face within the study area was designated a peak hour for the weekday. Due to the fact that there are only two peak hours on weekends, I chose to only do counts on two block faces. The ones chosen were the south side block faces between Broadway and 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue and 12th Avenue.

This information gathered from pedestrian counts will help me understand how many people are flowing through the study area and when. The data gathered by performing pedestrian counts will inform me which peak hours see the greatest number of pedestrians moving through the area.

Activity Scans

Activity scans aim to give the researcher valuable information regarding how people use public space in the study area. In addition, they yield information regarding the number of parked automobiles and bicycles on the surveyed block face.

Activity scans are performed by isolating a single block, walking slowly through the space, and recording the actions of people occupying the space. However, not everyone is counted. Only those who are staying in place are recorded. This excludes people who are moving through the space. It serves as a snapshot of the action that takes place on the street. Additionally, parked cars and bicycles are counted. Activity scans are not required to be done during peak hours.

The Los Angeles people street activity scan sheet was used to record this information. It consists of demographic information, five actions, and the parking of cars and bicycles. The five actions it accounts for are posture (standing; leaning; sitting formal; sitting informal), waiting (for transit; to cross street), activities (mobile device; cultural; shopping; vending), and 'nuisance' behaviors (smoking; intoxicated, sleeping; panhandling; urine/defecation/pet waste).

The information gathered through activity scans

is crucial in understanding how people use the site, and evaluating if the study area is currently invites users to stay. This method is about seeing how people utilize the public space.

Pedestrian Intercept Surveys

The pedestrian intercept surveys were heavily influenced by the Los Angeles People Street program surveys, but were edited and altered as to fit the Pike Street study area setting and the research questions I aimed to answer. I felt the one developed by the People Street program were lengthier than I wanted them to, as I was asking people to take the time out of their busy day to help me conduct my research.

The process of developing my survey was one of addition and subtraction from the People Street program survey. I kept questions concerning reasons for visit, frequency and lengths of visit, transportation mode, length of travel, and monetary spending. I omitted questions they posed regarding neighborhood boundaries, perceived cleanliness of the site, and who they are often accompanied by. I then added questions about feelings towards pedestrian only spaces. These included how they felt about them, if they would like to see a pedestrianization strategy implemented at the study site, and what amenities they would like to see. To gather some meta data on why people responded as they did to these pedestrian space question, I at random issued an extended version of the survey. This included questions on how many pedestrian-only spaces they have been exposed to. If they have visited at least one, they were prompted to inform me where, what their favorite one was (if they have one), and why. I intend to use this information on how Seattle could best implement one at the study site by investigating pedestrian spaces people reported they thought were best.

The pedestrian intercept surveys did not need to be administered at peak hours. There is no set quota of survey responses that need to be obtained. They were distributed during weekday hours.

The data collected by pedestrian surveys will yield valuable information that will help me evaluate several important questions I pose in this research. By directly contacting users of the study area, I can gauge what factors bring them to the site, how they got there, how they feel about pedestrianization of the Pike Street study area, and other queries.

Business Operator Surveys

Just as the pedestrian intercept surveys were created, the business operator surveys were influenced by the work of the Los Angeles People Street Program work, but were modified to fit the study site and research questions posed. The original business operator survey done by the People Street program was again too lengthy in my opinion. However, there were many useful components that were usable for my analysis.

This survey too was created out of deletion of select questions and creations of new ones. I kept questions that dealt with business type, ownership of space, operation start date, hours they felt they were the busiest, the mode of transportation they believed their patrons use to arrive at their business, whether their patrons were residents or non-residents, and why they chose their location. I deleted questions that queried what their business format is, if they are involved in a business improvement district, redundant questions regarding patrons, monetary spending habits by patrons, and parking in the vicinity. The questions I added to the survey once again dealt more with pedestrian only spaces, inquired on if they felt such an urban design strategy would add to their qualities that drove them to open a business in the study area, if they have been in close proximity to such an amenity, their support for a pedestrian space if it meant more foot traffic, and whether or not they would be interested in participating in a business improvement district to fund a pedestrian only space project.

The business operator surveys did not need to be administered at peak hours. There is no set quota

of survey responses that need to be obtained. They were distributed either in person or through email.

Being in contact with the business operators who occupy the study area gives me insights to how the space functions from business perspective and will allow me to assess the business communities attitude towards pedestrianization strategies. This is valuable in understanding how they perceive the impacts a pedestrian oriented strategy could have on their operation.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS



CAPITOL HILL
A-Abot
-District
✓

Humanity.
BE
A
America! be the
light.

4.1 PEDESTRIAN COUNTS AND ACTIVITY SCANS

Pedestrian counts were performed to get a sense of the number of people that move through the study space throughout the day. Figure 4.1 shows the how many people were counted during each peak hour of the day, and demonstrates which hours tend to be the busiest. The data is broken up into total number of pedestrians for weekdays and weekends, as well as total females for weekdays and weekends.

During the weekday, I observed that the amount of foot traffic corresponds with the workday flow. In the morning peak hours, the heaviest amount of foot traffic was from 8:00 am to 9:00 am. Over the course of the lunch hour, the number of pedestrians passing through the space increases greatly. The highest levels of foot traffic recorded throughout the weekday was from the hours of 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm, with nearly four hundred people crossing one of the mid-block lines.

As seen in figure 4.1, the weekend pedestrian count far outpaced the weekday foot traffic. During the hour of 11:00 pm to 12:00 pm, the foot traffic was four times higher than that of the same hour during the weekday. The weekend count from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm was over double the amount of the weekday count for that hour.

The observed ratio of women to men remained relatively constant throughout my site observation. During the weekday, there was an average of 38% of those who crossed my midblock line who presented as female. During the weekend that average was 40%.

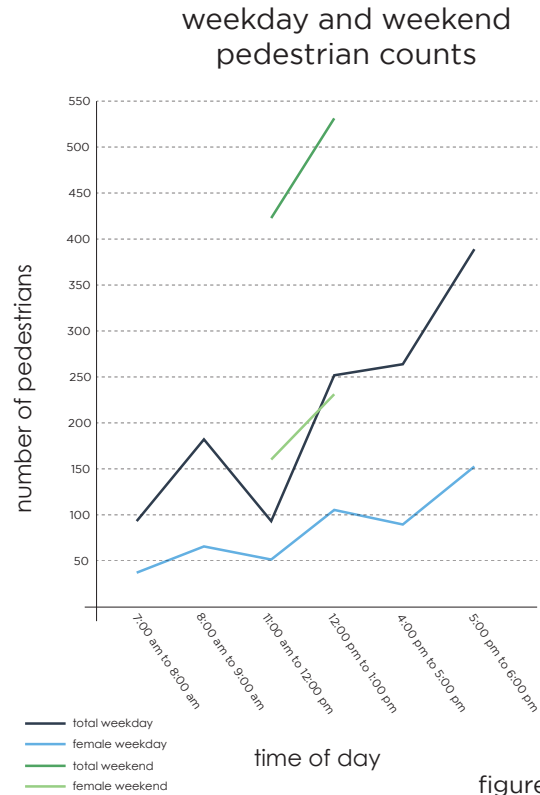


figure 4.1

activity scans: pike street between 12th ave and broadway



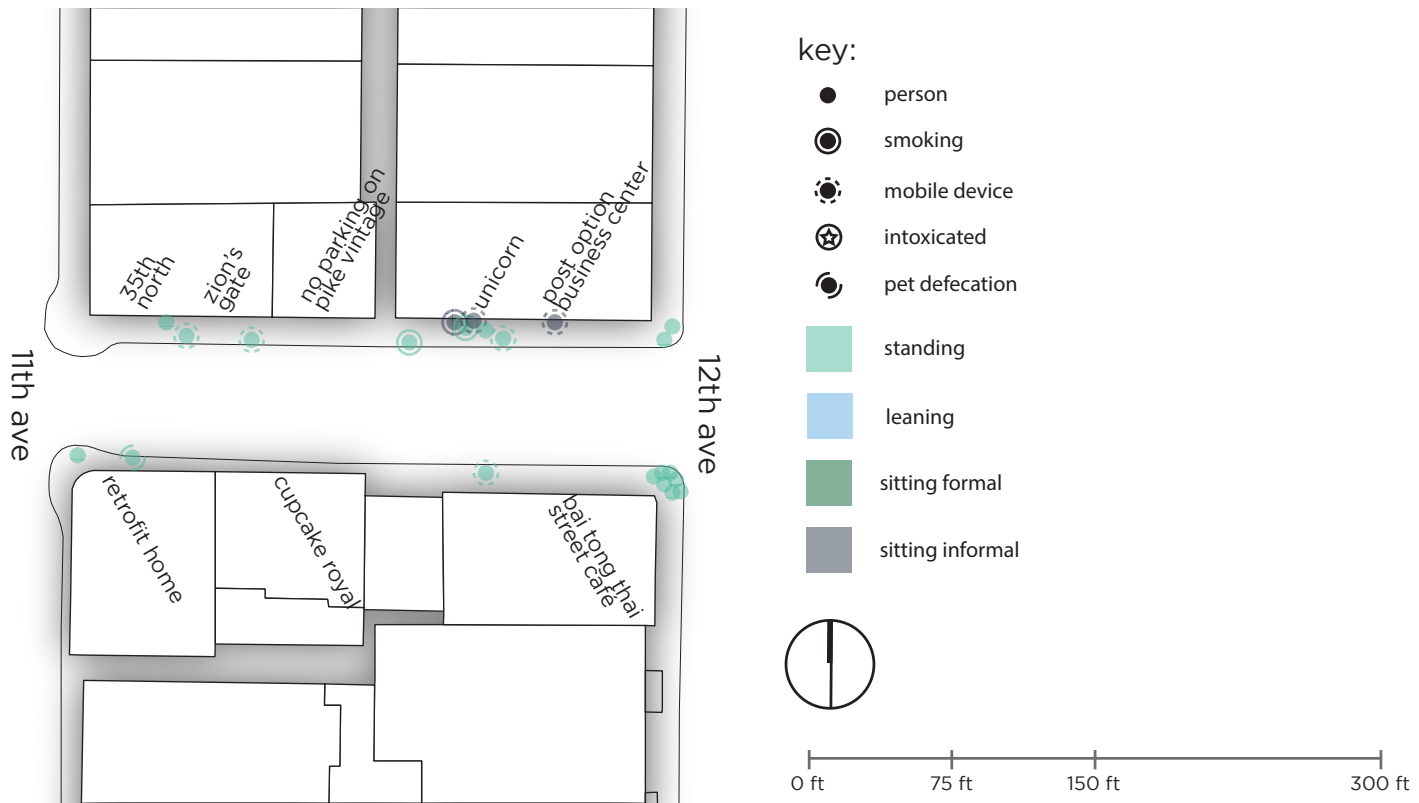
figure 4.2

The activity scans revealed where people tend to stay and what activities take place in the right of way. Figure 4.2, which is composed of 19 observation maps taken throughout the day, illustrates what typically happens on Pike Street. Activities have been broken down into symbols, while colors represent how the user is occupying the space.

Most of the action was found to be taking place on the south west portions of the study site, with the least amount on the eastern blocks. On the south side block between 10th Avenue and Broadway, users typically were found to be standing. On one observation, their looked to be a music event at Neumos. With limited pedestrian space and lack of seating, the eastern entrance to the block was highly congested with people standing and doing what they could to sit informally on a small lip on the building facade. While there is seating outside Capitol Coffee Works, only limited use was observed. Where formal private seating was most utilized was between 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue



private seating provided in the right of way
figure 4.3



outside of Café Vita. These seating was almost always in use during observations, and proved to be a vibrant space as many spontaneous social interactions were observed. However, the seating area was so popular that at times it congested the sidewalk. It was also found that patrons had to turn to informal forms of seating on places like bike racks as they wanted to enjoy their coffee outdoors but no more seating was available.

As shown in figure 4.2, much of the activity on the street is in the form of either smoking or informal seating. Often, these two are mixed. Smoking, often observed as a nuisance, is an activity that forces its participants outdoors. Almost all the blocks had people using the space for smoking, and some areas proved to be a usual space to do take part in smoking. Like smoking, sitting informally is an activity forces its participants to particular spots when there are no seating options available. People were commonly observed on sitting where they could, which was usually any building façade with a small ledge or lip on it.

4.2 PEDESTRIAN INTERCEPT SURVEYS

RESPONDENT QUICK FACTS

total respondents:
68

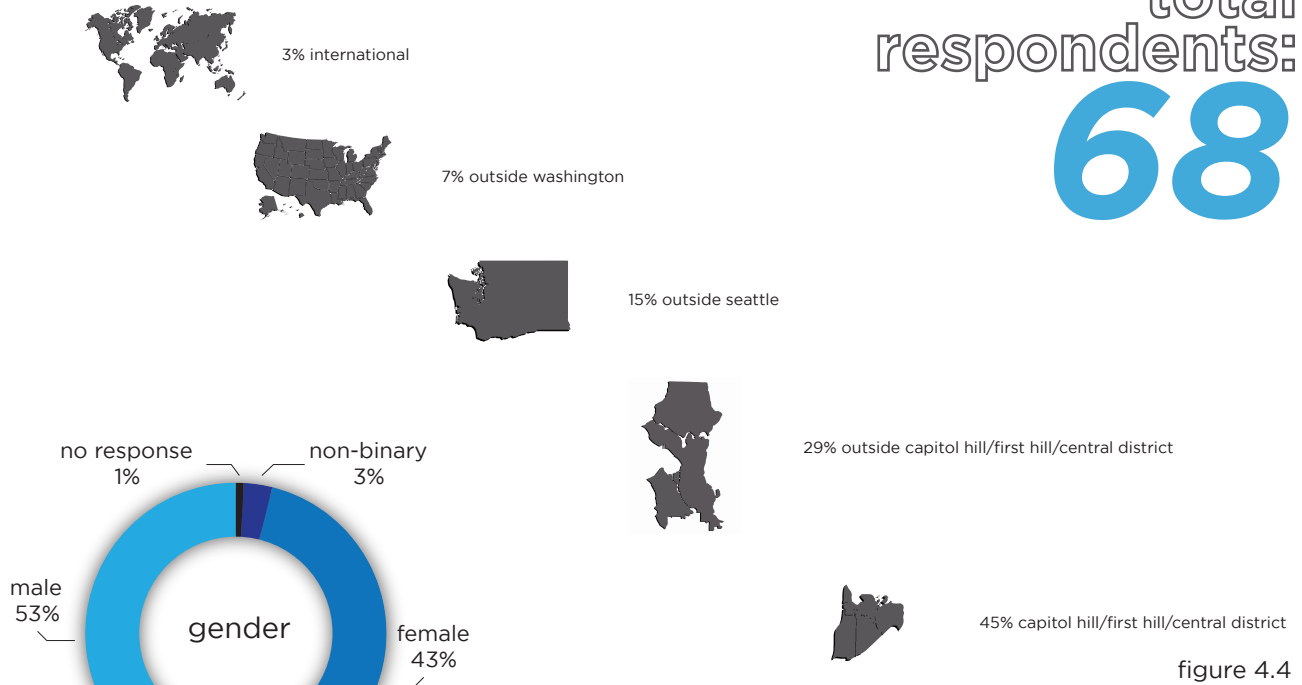


figure 4.4

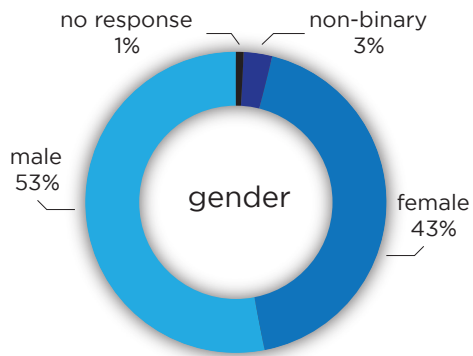
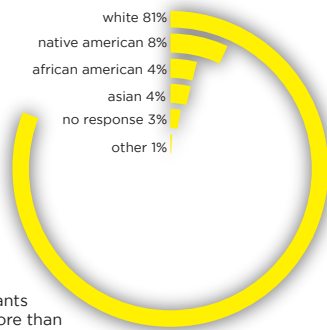


figure 4.5



*some participants identified as more than one race

figure 4.6

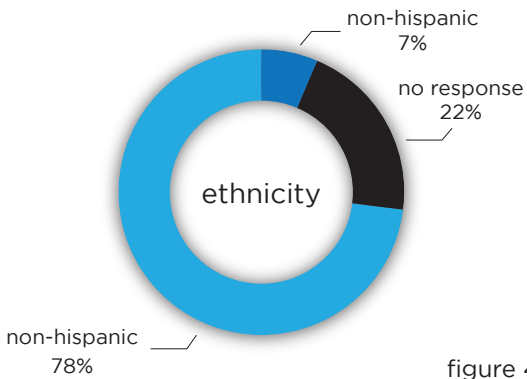


figure 4.7

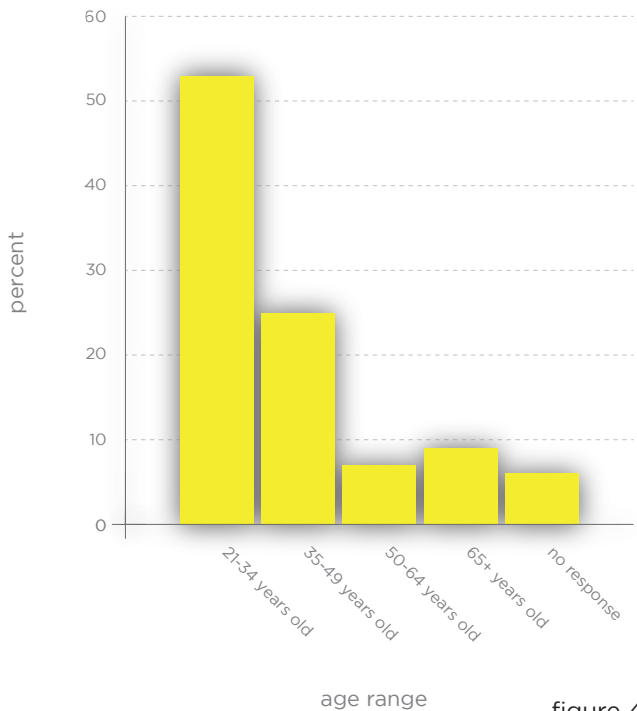


figure 4.8

These surveys were conducted during the weekdays between 8:00 am and 6:00 pm. A total of 68 pedestrian intercept surveys were able to be completed. While there were a wide range of respondents from varying demographic groups, some groups clearly had a higher response rate.

Figure 4.4 illustrates where participants said they reside. This data was collected through demographic information given about zip codes. Respondents were found to be a range of visitors and residents of the neighborhood. About half of the respondents said they lived in the study sites surrounding neighborhoods of Capitol Hill, First Hill, and the Central district.

There was a fairly even split between male and female respondents, and a small number of those who identified as non-binary, as shown by figure 4.5. Figures 4.6 and 4.7 detail race and ethnic data on participants. A high number of respondents identified as being white. There were far fewer respondents from minority groups.

Respondents ranged in age from 21 to over 65 years old. In figure 4.8, it is shown that the greatest number of those who took part in the survey were from the age of 21-34 years old, with the lowest from the age of 50-64 years old.



the pedestrian questionnaire
figure 4.9



pedestrian entering the study site
figure 4.10

The Pike Street study area provides several reasons for residents and visitors to come and visit the space. Figure 4.11 shows that the top reason surveyed for what brought respondents to Pike Street was that they live in the area. This signifies that the area is highly utilized by residents and should be functional to people that call the area home. There was a significant amount of people that reported working here illustrating that the site is highly active during the workday. It is also important to note that the third highest response was that the respondent was using the space as a route to a different destination.

It was found that most respondents spend ten to thirty dollars when they visit, which is illustrated by figure 4.12. The other dollar range choices all surveyed around only 12% to 13%. This shows that the spending that typically happens in the study area is on a more moderate level.

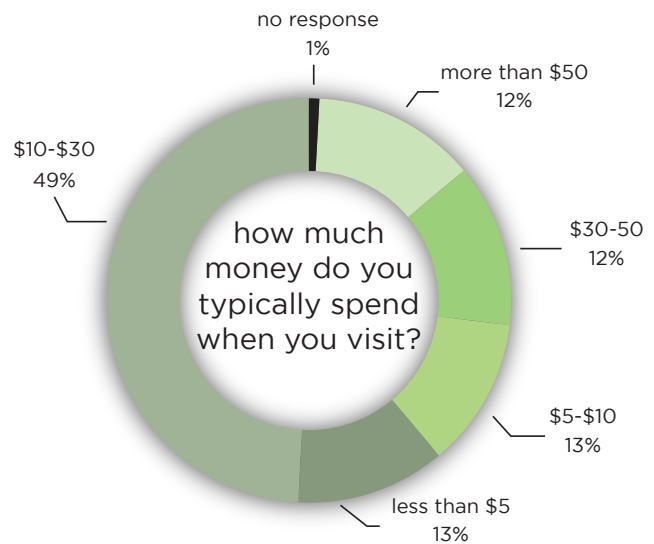
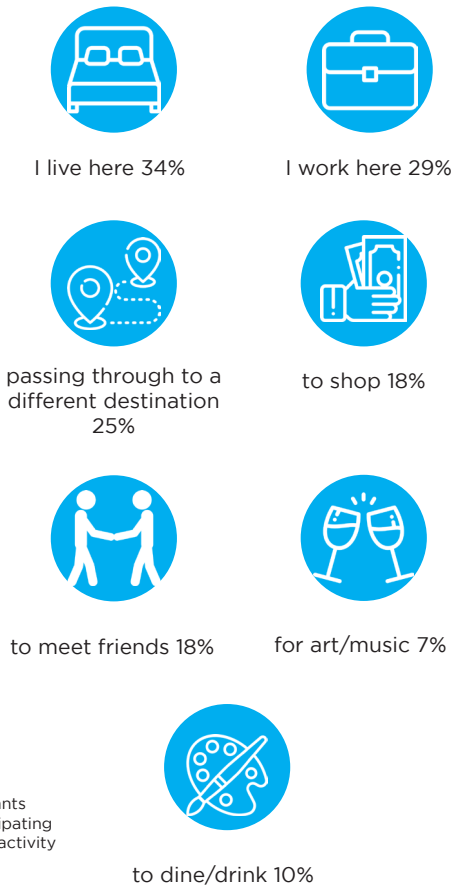


figure 4.12

what brings you to pike street today?



*some participants reported participating more than one activity

figure 4.11

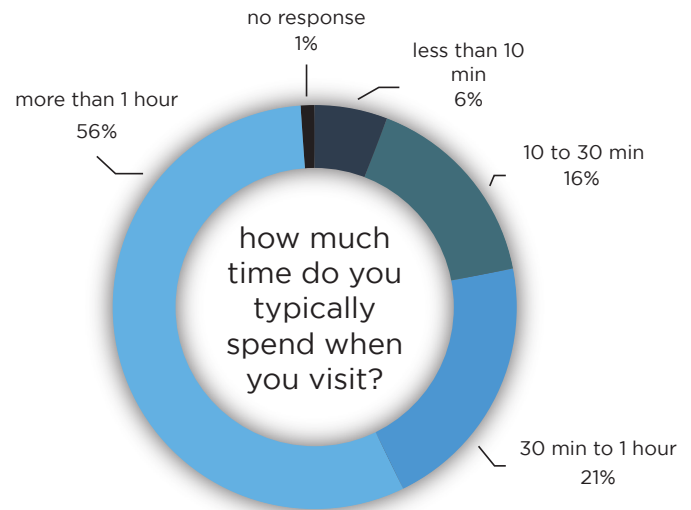


figure 4.13

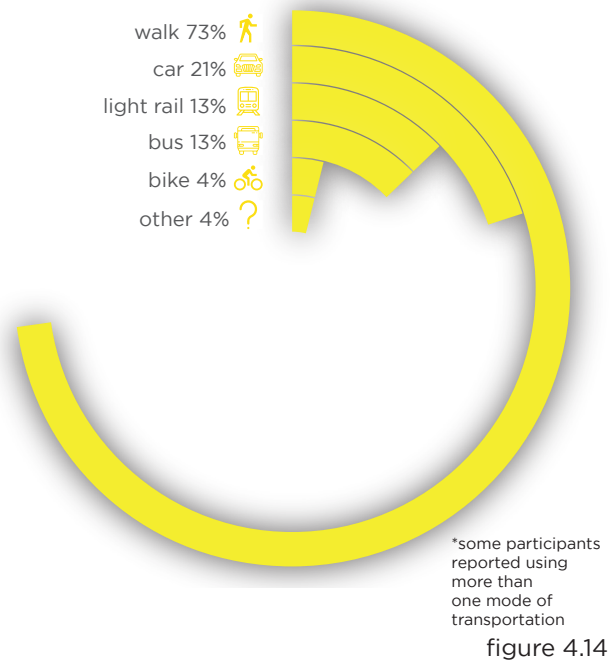
Figure 4.13 demonstrates how respondents answered to the question, “how much time do you typically spend when you visit?”. The majority of respondents reported that they spend more than one hour when visiting the study area. Second to that response, 21% of those who took part in the survey said that they usually spend thirty minutes to one hour.

Participants of the survey were asked how they arrived at the Pike street study area. Figure 4.14 exhibits that 73% reported that they used walking as their mode of transportation. Although there is a light rail station in close proximity to the site, a greater percentage of respondents still chose to use a car to reach Pike street. However, if the light rail and bus are combined under a public transportation category, they would account for a larger portion of respondents chosen mode of transportation. Bicycle usage was not common amongst those surveyed. While the city is working to provide an increase in bicycle infrastructure around Seattle, bicycle usage was tied for the least reported mode of transportation.

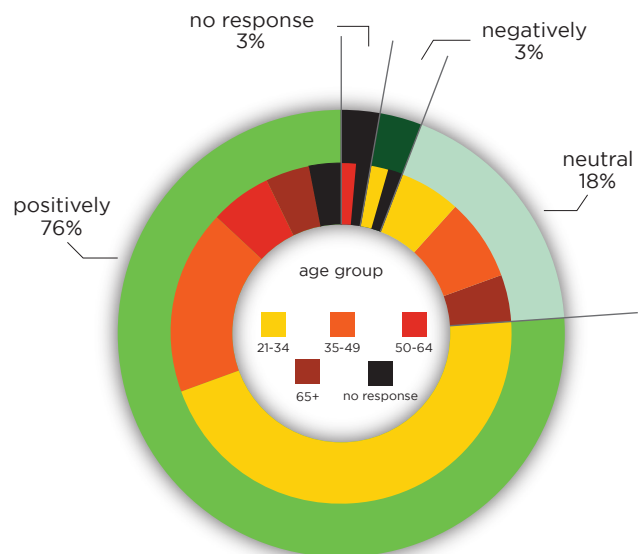
When asked how they felt about pedestrian only spaces, it is shown in figure 4.15 that 76% of respondents reported that they felt positively about them. Only 3% of respondents felt negatively about pedestrian only spaces. I asked some respondents a few extra questions, one of them being how many pedestrian-only spaces they have visited. Some people reported that they have been exposed to 4-5, while others reported to visiting over 10. Perhaps an exposure has played a significant role in people responding positively to pedestrian only spaces.

I was interested in whether or not age played a role in a person’s view of pedestrianization strategies. I came into this study expecting to see older age groups reporting to feel negatively about pedestrian only spaces. I believed that this would be due to their generations being raised in the era of urban planning oriented towards the automobile. However, this was not the case. Figure 4.15’s inner ring demonstrates how age group responses connected to feelings towards pedestrian spaces. All respondents to the

modes of transit used by respondent



how do you feel about pedestrian only spaces?



question in the 50-64 age range reported feeling positively towards pedestrian only spaces, while those in the 65 and over age range said they felt positively or neutral. The sole age group who felt negatively about pedestrian only spaces was the youngest age group, 21-34 year olds. This was a surprising outcome.

Respondents were asked if they would like to see a pedestrian only space in the study area. Figure 4.16 reports how people felt about bringing a pedestrian only space, and connects those responses to how the participants had responded to the previous question of how they felt about pedestrian only spaces. 75% of respondents said they either strongly agreed or agreed. Interestingly, when cross comparing with how respondents felt about pedestrian only spaces, only those who responded positively either strongly disagreed or disagreed with bringing a pedestrian only space to the study area.

I then delved into reasons why respondents came to the study area, the frequency of visits, and how much time they typically spend and cross compared their answers to supporting a pedestrian only space to the Pike Street study area. What arose from these results indicates that being a visitor to the area puts the respondent in more of a position of feeling supportive of a pedestrian amenity.

In figure 4.17, it is shown that people whose reasons for visiting the study area were for more leisurely activities had far greater strong support for a pedestrian only zone in the Pike Street study area. Those who had more daily reasons, had more respondents who expressed some disagreement and strong disagreement with the idea.

Figure 4.18 demonstrates how the less frequent a respondent was so come to the study area, the more likely they were to feel strongly about their being a pedestrian only space in the study area. The only category that had respondents report they strongly disagreed with the proposition was in the daily response.

would you like to see one here?

(a pedestrian only space between pike street between 12th and broadway)

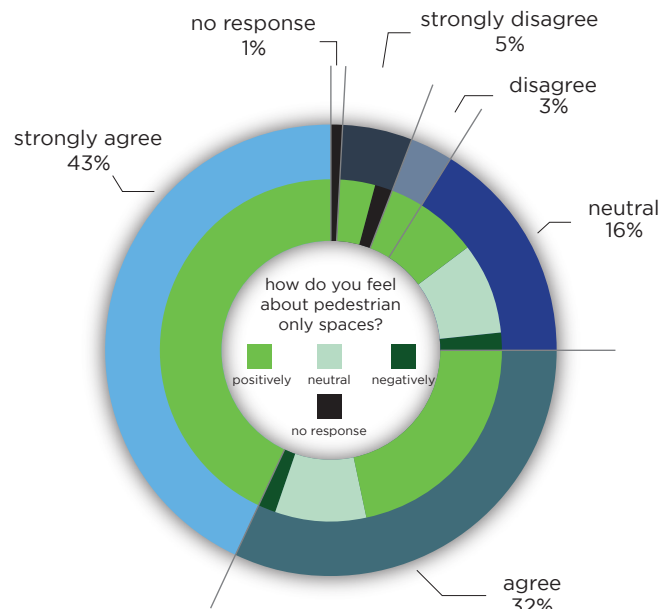


figure 4.16

support for a pedestrian only space in the study area in relation to the respondents reason for visiting the study area

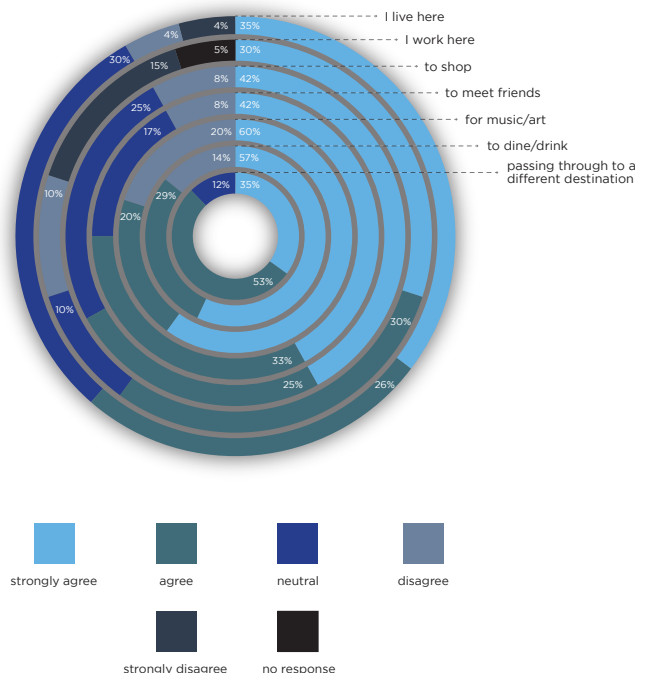


figure 4.17

Lastly, figure 4.19 shows how participants who typically spend more than one hour were those that exemplified the least amount of support for a pedestrian only space. Notably, this was the only group that showed any negative attitude toward the premise. Those who spend about 10 to 30 minutes showed the greatest amount of backing for the idea.

What I believe figures 4.17 to 4.19 show is that the more frequent and longer trips made to the study area pushes people think harder about the implications a pedestrian only space would have on the area. This area is perhaps of greater importance to these participants and therefore they would like to carefully consider how this may affect their daily lives as well, whereas people who spend less time in the area and their visits are less frequent do not feel this would have much impact on them and therefore can more easily give their support for this amenity.

support for a pedestrian only space in the study area in relation to the amount of time respondents typically spend in the study area

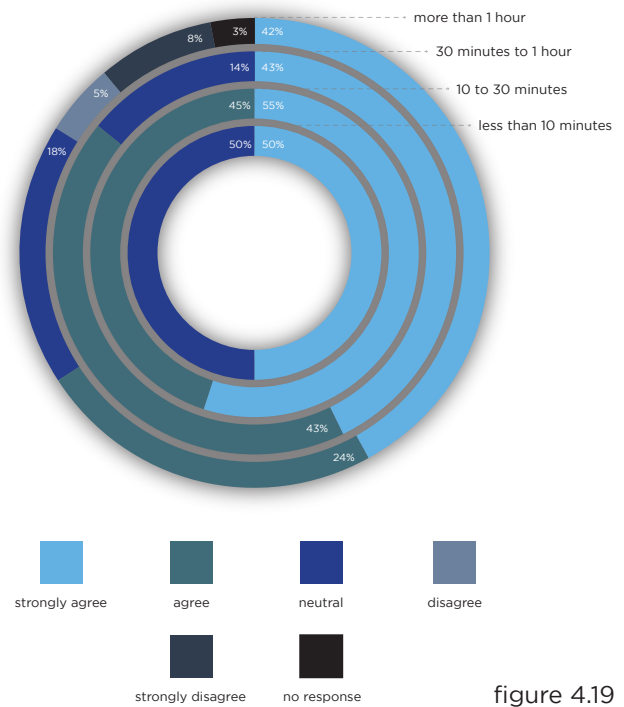


figure 4.19

support for a pedestrian only space in the study area in relation to the respondents frequency of visits to the study area

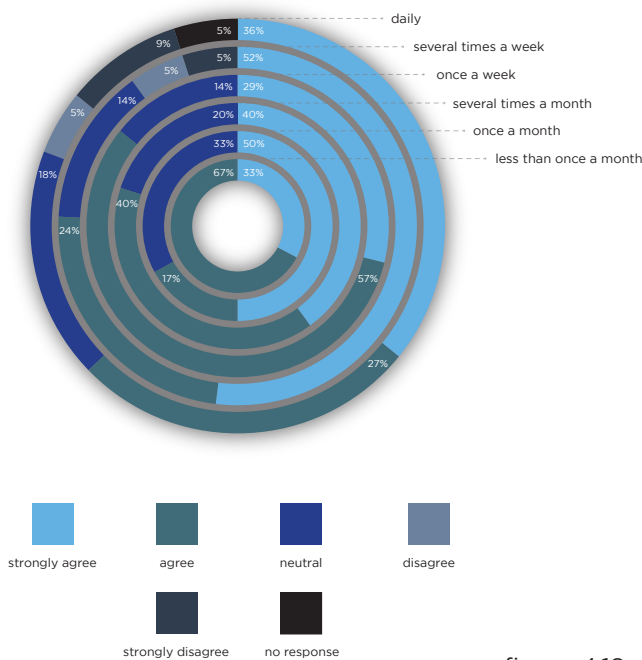


figure 4.18

4.3 BUSINESS OPERATOR SURVEYS

RESPONDENT QUICK FACTS

total respondents: **17** out of 25



retail
10



restaurant:
dine in
5



services
3



other
3

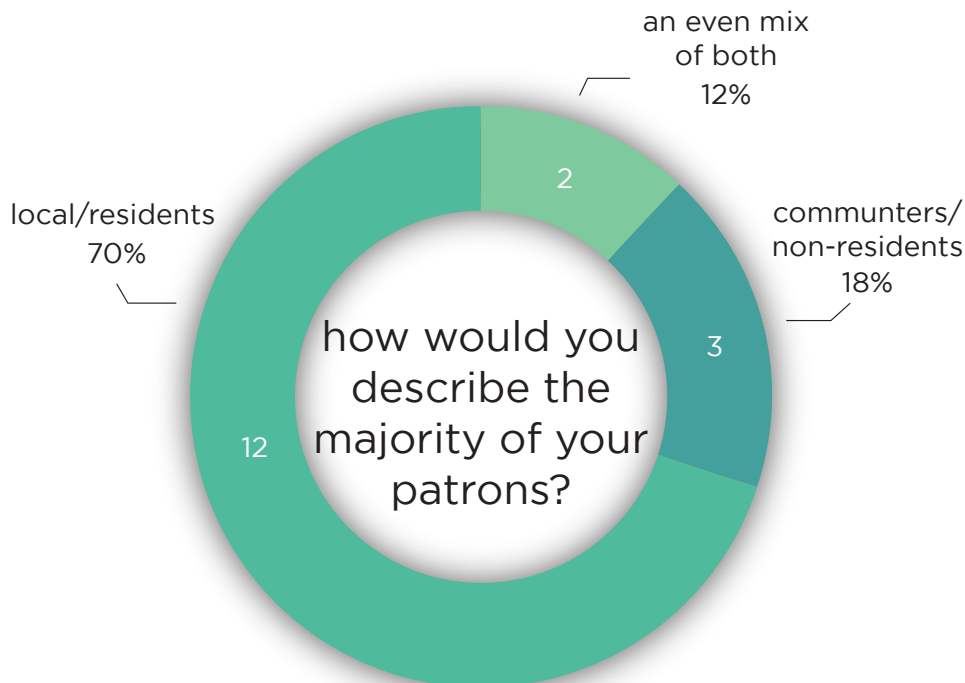


restaurant:
take out
2

*some businesses identified as more than one type of operation figure 4.20

6 have begun operating in the study area since 2014

12 have been located next to a pedestrian amenity

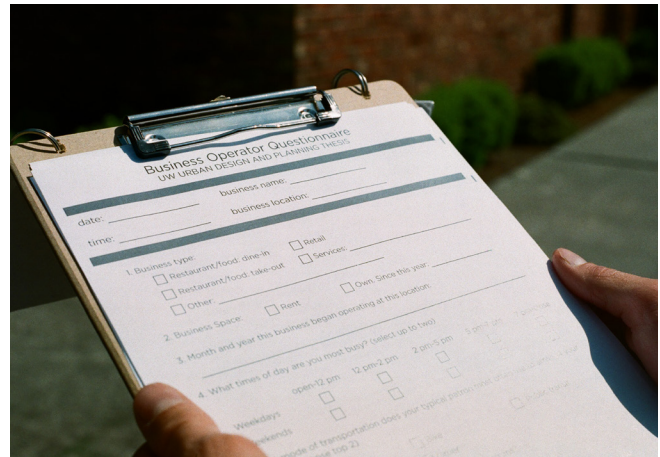


15 reported to be renting their storefront

figure 4.21

In total, seventeen businesses in the study area participated in the study. Figure 4.20 illustrates overall characteristics of these businesses. The majority of them identified as retail businesses. Just over a third of those who participated are new businesses that began in the last four years. Nearly all businesses surveyed reported to be renting their storefront. Lastly, the majority of these businesses feel that their patrons are neighborhood locals, as shown in figure 4.21.

During the weekday, business operators commonly found themselves to be busiest with times that corresponded when surrounding businesses operating in office spaces would either be on their lunch break or leaving work, as shown in figure 4.24. This points to the importance of the symbiotic relationship between the service industry and office spaces on the site. In one discussion, I had with a retailer, she mentioned how she would like to see a greater development of office space in the surrounding neighborhood. She found it important to her small business to have this mix of land use because it provides customers during the weekday hours.



the business operator questionnaire
figure 4.22



midday shoppers
figure 4.23

On the weekend, the busiest hours were also reported to be 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm and 5:00 to 7:00 pm. I assume the reason for this is because the majority of businesses I interviewed identified themselves as a retailer. Most retail businesses do not stay open past 7:00 pm. Therefore, previous street closure event held by the City of Seattle would not have provided a boost in the number of customers visiting their storefront, as those events took place in the late evening at through the night.

Figure 4.25 exhibits what modes of transit business operators believe their clients use to arrive at their business. An overwhelming majority of business reported that they credit walking as the one of the two main modes used by customers to reach their storefront. While this is true, a little more than half of them assumed their clientele drove cars to get to their storefront. Due to the fact that so many businesses believed that most of their patrons arrived by foot, that influenced their responses on whether or not their believed that a pedestrian zone would add to or enhance the qualities that drove them to create a business in the neighborhood.

what times of day are you most busy?

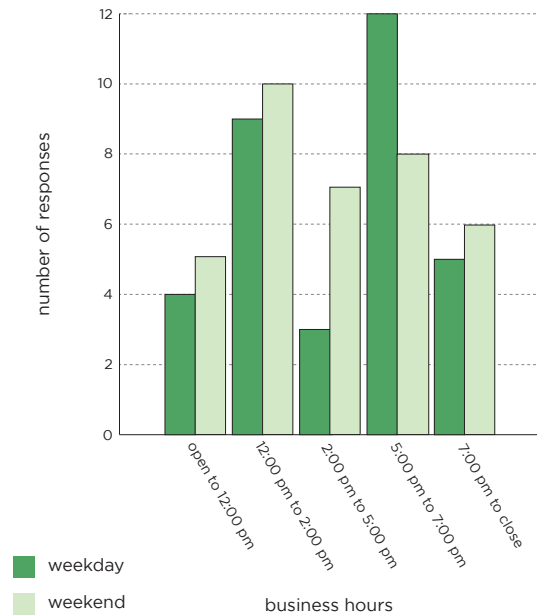


figure 4.24

what mode of transportation does your typical patron most often use to arrive at your business?

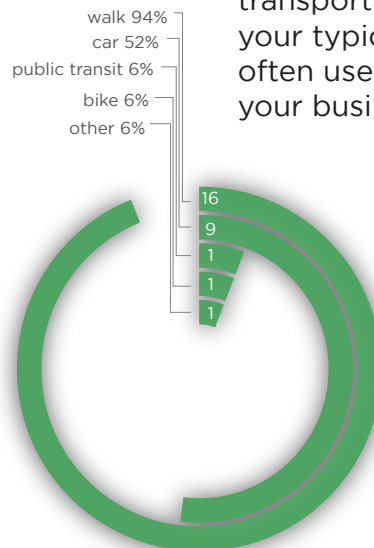


figure 4.25

*participants were asked to choose the top 2 modes of transportation

In asking the question, “Do you think a pedestrian zone would add to/ enhance the qualities that brought your business here?”, I found that 60% believed it would, 60% believed in would not, and 20% said they were unsure. What I found interesting in response to this question was that some were unsure because the area already gets a large proportion of its users traveling to the area by foot. Another interesting response were those noting previous trial runs of street closures. Those responses believed they either saw no increase in business or even a loss in business due that projects aim of creating a safer night life for the area.

Figure 4.26 details businesses support for a street closure, dependent on if foot and bicycle traffic increased. 41% of business operators who responded to the questionnaire said they would be in support of a street closure if foot and bicycle traffic increased, while 30% responded they would not be. This is a fairly even response rate for the two sides. I think it is important to note that those who said they would be supportive mainly choice the answer, “very supportive”, signifying the enthusiasm for a project if it were shown to bring a greater number of potential customers to the area.

With the same qualifier of increased foot and bicycle traffic, respondents were asked if they would be interested in participating in a business improvement district in order to fund a redesign of the space. Figure 4.27 shows that while the answers were nearly evenly split between “yes”, “no”, and non-responses, it leaned towards no. One retailer noted how expensive it is to operate in the area currently, and that adding upon that with more taxation would add to the burden they were facing monetarily. Thinking through this also brought up concerns over a redesign potentially raising rents as well. This left the respondent to mark their “x” in between the yes and the no, as she did believe it could also bring benefits.

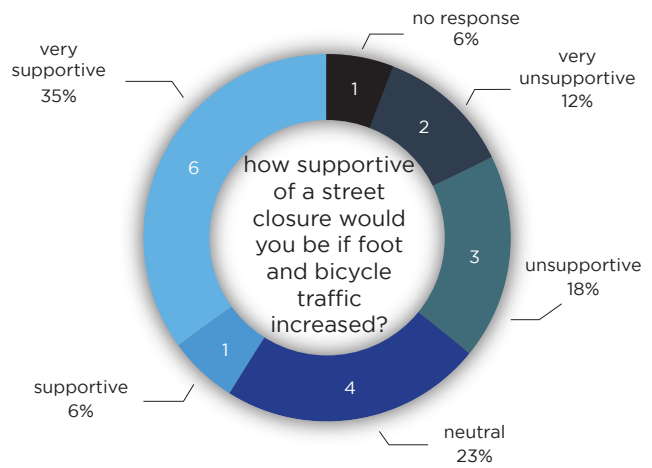


figure 4.26

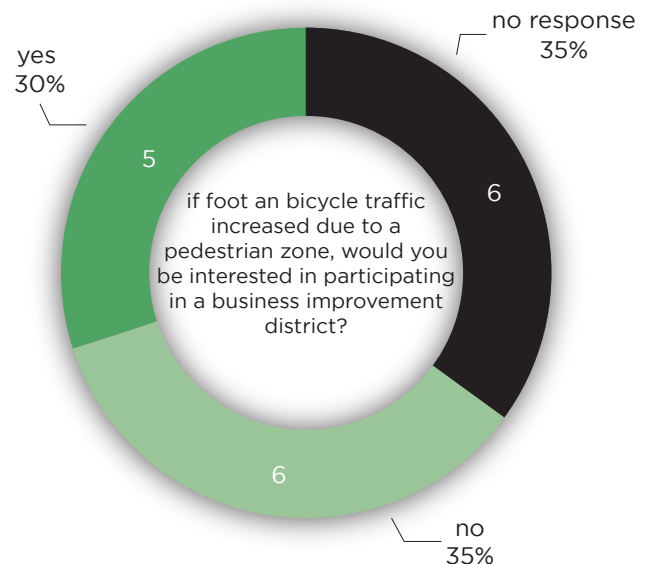


figure 4.27

Figure 4.28 gives information on how business operators responded to how they felt their business would be changed due to the implementation of a pedestrian only space in the study area in regard to employees/staff, number of patrons, debt, revenue, and profit. Their responses, while fairly even in regard to believing that a pedestrian space would either have a positive or negative effect on these aspects of their business, did overall slightly lean towards a negative viewpoint. I find it significant that the “no change” response in every aspect was either the highest responded answer or was on even footing with the other choices.

Those who felt that the pedestrian only space would have a negative effect on these aspects of their business often cited that the omission of parking from the site would be detrimental to their ability to operate. This was often stated along with the belief that patrons not from the surrounding neighborhood would have difficulty accessing their business, and therefore no longer give them their business. This sentiment is one that has been found in numerous other studies, as stated in my literature review.

Notably, some negative responses were drawn from negative experiences from previous street closures done in the study area. One respondent wrote “If it is a drinking/music event, it hurts our business greatly”. This shows the concern that pedestrian projects in the future should aim to be inclusive of all the business types on site, and not just a select category.

The business operators who felt the pedestrian only space would have a positive effect on these aspects of their business noted that the increase of foot traffic would mean more business for them. These respondents gave explanations that this amenity would give greater exposure to patrons that may have not noticed their business before. This would be due to a pedestrian only spaces ability to slow down the pace at which people move through a space.

what kind of change would you expect in the following aspects of your business if pike street (between 12th ave and broadway) is closed to vehicular traffic?

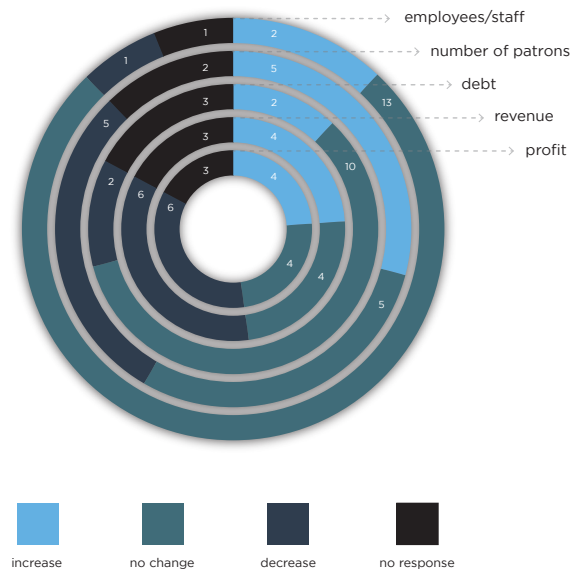


figure 4.28

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CHAPTER 5

discussion



The information gathered by the public life study elements were fruitful and insightful. Stakeholders who responded brought understandings of the study site to light that can be easily overlooked. I found that this work yielded several important points to discuss. First is that the study site is able to accrue a high daytime pedestrian volume, yet the site severely lacks invitations to stay in the public realm. The pedestrian intercept and business operator surveys were garnered a large number of favorable responses towards a pedestrianization scheme at the study site. The study illustrated a that there is a strong presence of neighborhood residents using the space, giving it a strong local character that needs to be continued. Finally, there is a need for diversity in land uses and pull factors to maintain a day time user presence to support the diversity of local and small businesses who occupy the site.

The pedestrian counts demonstrated that there is a high number of people who walk through the study site both on the weekdays and weekends, however the activity scans showed that the public realm does not provide many places to stay and enjoy the area. It seems to do so, one must have money to spend as much of the attractors are private spaces.

There are four outdoor seating areas within the study site. Three of them are clearly private, meaning you must spend money at the business to use the seating options. These private seating areas are provided for the customers of Cupcake Royal, Bimbo's Cantina, Café Vita, and Capitol Coffee Works. These options were found to be highly utilized, especially the seats and small tables outside of Café Vita. These seating arrangements were often found to breathe some life into the sidewalk. People sitting at them would often attract more people to gather around the seats as people who knew them would stop by for quick conversations. On sunnier days, the Café was unable to keep up with the demand for outdoor seating, as people were observed drinking coffee from the storefront, but sitting on bike racks near the fully occupied seating area. The fourth option, located near the corner of Pike street and 12th Avenue is unclear as to whether it



"if you ain't no customer of ours...move it along"
bimbo's cantina
figure 5.1



fourth seating option
figure 5.2

is private or public seating. However, no one was observed to be using it during the course of the activity scan.

The activity scans made it clear that people have a desire to sit and enjoy the public realm, yet are given no public options to do so. People were often found to be informally sitting in the study area. This would be in the form of sitting on window sills, bike racks, sidewalks, or wherever they could manage to fit themselves semi-comfortably for a moment. By shutting off areas off to automobile traffic on the study site, the city would be able to regain a sizeable amount of land to repurpose as a gathering area for residents and visitors of the site. With such large numbers of people moving through the space by foot, the city should work towards creating spaces to entice users to stay and enjoy the area.

The uses this space has the potential to provide are both social and optional activities for the users of the Pike street study area. By closing off a portion of the study area to vehicle traffic would provide sufficient space for public seating, market events, community events, art/music events, and greenspace. Providing inviting public spaces for people to enjoy the built and natural world while in the company of other users would bring a greater sense of community and life to the study area. Gehl writes that optional and social activities are a direct result of people sharing public spaces. The private seating options in the public realm provided by Café Vita I believe is a great example of this. It is able to draw in people to enjoy the study area, while keeping people on the street to promote spontaneous social interactions. However, its only downfall is that is a private seating that is limited. Not everyone is permitted to use it, as you have to buy an item from Café Vita to use them, which dwindles the number of people who are able to access them, and therefore add to the public life. Secondly, it is unable to keep up with demand at certain times, which limits the amount of life able to take place on the street. This gives customers three options: find informal seating on the street; stay off the street in



popular informal seating spot
(between 10th ave and 11th ave)
figure 5.3



seating provided by Cafe Vita
figure 5.4

indoor seating; or go to another area off the study site. Public seating provided through the closure of areas of the study site to motorized vehicles would be able to bring to bridge the gaps the private sector is unable to.

By asking intercepted pedestrians and business operators if they would like to see or support a pedestrianization strategy implemented in the study area, it was found to be highly favorable. I think the openness to this controversial conversion of right of way space is due to a few factors. A high number of pedestrian intercept respondents reported that they arrived at the study site by foot, demonstrating the walkability of the space. The business operator surveys brought to light that the store owners are aware of this preferred mode of transportation. Nearly all business operator respondents noted that they believe that one of the top two ways their patrons arrive at their business is by foot, with only 52% saying they came by car. In previous studies, the business operators on site decry reclaiming the right of way for pedestrian use because they fear that taking away motor vehicle parking spaces will result in a major loss of business. However, the Pike street study area operators contrasted the norm. 41% of business operators gave supportive answers for a street closure, while 30% gave unsupportive answers. I attribute this finding to their astute observation that the majority of their patrons are walking to their businesses. However, I still did find some business operators giving the echoed response found in previous study that there is a need for more parking so patrons from other neighborhoods and even cities can still access their stores.

In taking this project to the next steps of an implementation of a pedestrian only space, an important note to keep in mind were the high number of respondents who reported their reason for coming to the Pike street study site is that they either live or work in the area. This finding establishes that there is a sense that this is a local amenity that must serve these populations of users in the planning and design of a pedestrian amenity on Pike street in Capitol Hill. I believe this is even more evident in the street art that



seating provided by Capitol Hill Coffee Works
figure 5.5



community message board
figure 5.6

has been documented in this work through the photos of each chapter break. Residents of the neighborhood have taken ownership of the space and implemented their own touch to the public realm. Signage has been splattered with sticker art, utility poles have been made to look like forest trees by attaching fungi to them, and even a community board has been placed on the corner of 11th avenue and Pike street. The city as well has implemented strategies to respect communities who call the study area and greater neighborhood home through interventions like painting the crosswalks with the gay pride flag. There is a strong neighborhood character that must be respected in the design of a pedestrian only space in the study area.

While a large number in the business community gave supportive responses to a pedestrian street redesign of study site, there were still concerns over the outcomes and implications of previous events like the Pike People Street program and the Capitol Hill Block Party. The NACTO Urban Street Design Guide remarks that, "A streets uses, demands, and activities are subject to change over the course of a day... Street design should be sensitive to how streets operate across all hours of the day, for all users." (NACTO, 147) I heard several concerns that these events were not sensitive to how streets operate across all hours of the day, for all users. In the eyes of multiple small business owners surveyed, these events instead promote a homogenized land use oriented towards a night-life business. The fear is that street closures performed in the evening and late-night hours fosters image of the study site as a night life hub. This fear is one that I find legitimate.

I found in my literature review an instance where homogenization followed a pedestrianization strategy in Kädikoy, Istanbul. Where there was once a rich diversity of small businesses, a wave of homogenization of hit the Kädikoy historic center. A before and after pedestrianization land use analysis found that many smaller and older businesses were quickly replaced by chain stores and eating and drinking establishments that could afford higher rents. I raise this concern

because it was found that 15 of the 17 businesses who responded to the survey reported renting the space their storefront occupies, which leaves them to whims of a landlord's ability to dramatically raise rent prices.

In the form of additional comments to this concern, I received common responses that cited the need for events and marketing that would support not only the bar scene in the area. Many felt that retail and market events could be the solution to this issue. Some mentioned that moving the Capitol Hill weekly farmer's market from the Seattle Central College campus to a new pedestrian only space in the study area could greatly benefit surrounding businesses.

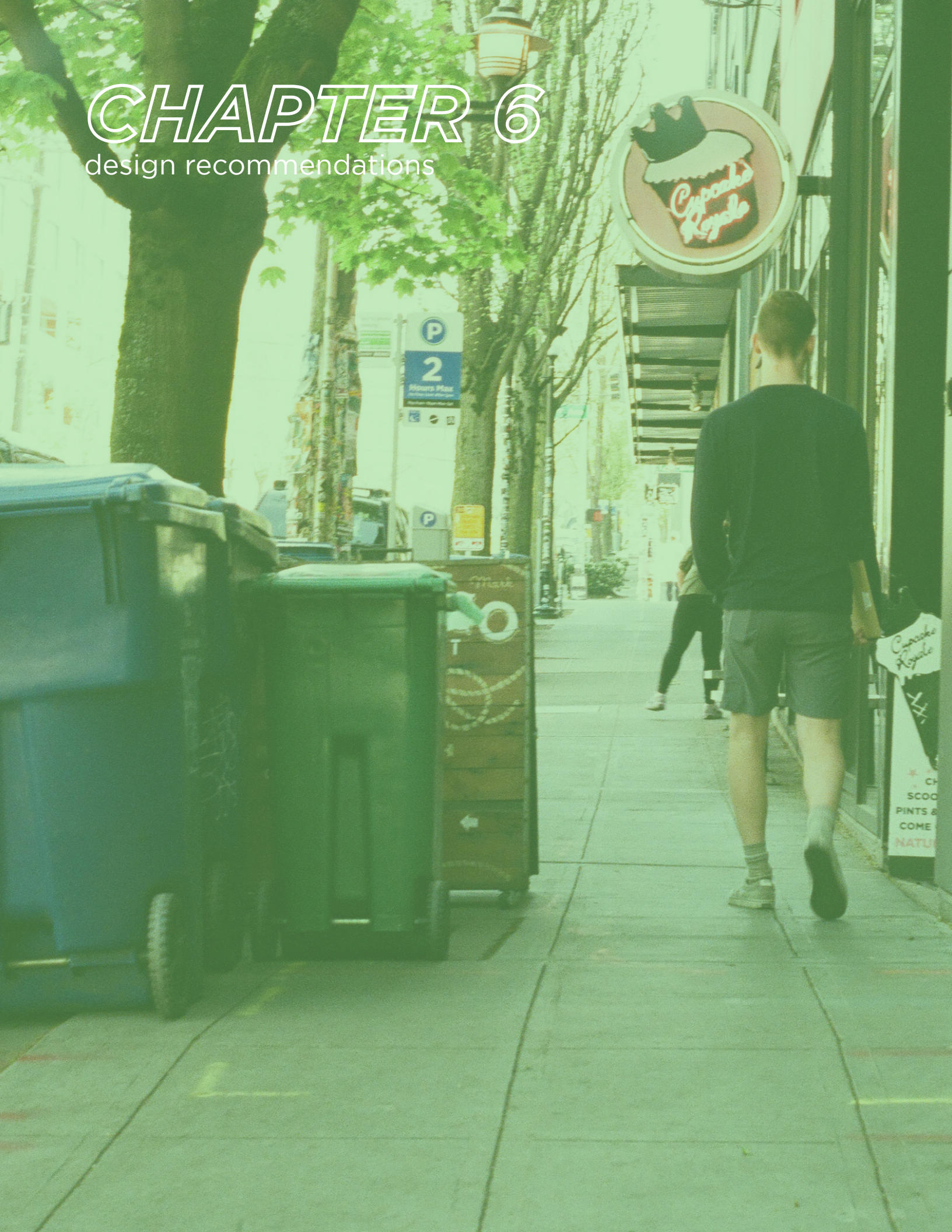
Overall, it was found that there were a lot of mixed feelings about pedestrian only spaces and bringing one to the study area. While there was solid support found, there was also a good amount of weariness of implementing a pedestrian only space. As shown in the pedestrian intercept survey analyses, there is some hesitation from those who typically spend the greatest amount of time in the area. This may be attributed to the fear that the site would transition from one that predominately serves the neighborhood to one that serves visitors or tourists. In order to further examine these issues and reveal how this space could best serve residents, there may be a need to keep exploring temporary pedestrian oriented design interventions. By doing so, more experiments can be run which would be responsive to new feedback.

When progressing this urban design strategy in Capitol Hill, this study has brought to light several considerations for urban planners and designers. Currently, there is a missed opportunity at the study site to provide greater opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy the public realm. The area clearly draws large numbers of people to it, and users of the site are attempting to utilize the public right of way as illustrated by the activity scans performed. However, there are no public space amenities at the study area to provide invitations to stay. Reclaiming the

street for pedestrians could provide ample room to do so. The study area is most often travelled to by foot, and the majority of business owners are aware of this fact. I believe this has given rise to a large number of favorable responses for a pedestrian only space on Pike street between 12th avenue and Broadway. Designing such a space should involve a heavy amount of community involvement as it is a space the community clearly takes ownership of. Lastly, to avoid homogenization of the land uses, the design and programming should take into consideration the array of small businesses and how the street operates over the course of the entire day.

CHAPTER 6

design recommendations



Recommendations

Based upon observations of current conditions and pedestrian and business operator surveys the following recommendations seek bring a greater sense of livability and walkability to Capitol Hill. These are in line with the goals of the Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan, which states that it seeks to “tailor City street design standards to better serve pedestrian mobility and to upgrade the urban design character of neighborhood streets.” This plan outlines recommendations for improvements to Pike Street between Broadway and 12th Avenue.

6.1 Four Design Recommendations

Summary

1 **challenge:**
The results from the pedestrian intercept and business operator surveys indicate that pedestrianization is still a topic of debate for stakeholders.

1 **Recommendation:**
Continue to experiment with temporary design solutions for the pedestrianization of the Pike Street study area.

- Expand the city’s effort to provide pedestrian amenities
- Continue to explore design solutions through interim projects and community input
- Provide a space for community members to gather

2 **challenge:**
Previous street closures on the study site have had a nightlife focus, which did not serve how the street is used across all hours of the day.

2 **Recommendation:**
Create a space that addresses how the street is used across all hours of the day.

- Diversify the programming of the pedestrian only space

3 **challenge:**
The neighborhood has served as a safe place for historically marginalized communities that feel the neighborhood is transitioning away from their demographic.

3 **Recommendation:**
Bolster the sense of community that thrives in this neighborhood.

- Work with the community to create a space that reflects the character and history of Pike Street
- Create a unique space that reflects the neighborhood character

4 **challenge:**
Capitol Hill and specifically the Pike Pine corridor has become a popular place for reinvestment and redevelopment resulting in the loss of historical structures and overall built character.

4 **Recommendation:**
Design the space to reflects the neighborhood character and complements the goals of the Pike Pine Design Guidelines.

- Strengthen the visual quality of the Pike Pine Conservation Overlay District

1

Recommendation:

Continue to experiment with temporary design solutions for the pedestrianization of the Pike Street study area.

Due to the mixed sentiments about implementing a pedestrian only space in the Pike Street Study area that was expressed in this study, there is a need to further explore these ideas temporarily. Alongside the ephemeral solutions, program evaluation measures should be created. In doing so, feedback about what worked and did not work in the design can be given from the community and visitors.

Currently, the Seattle Department of Transportation's Public Space Management temporary street closures has focused on the feedback from the community regarding concerns of the disorder due to the nightlife scene that exists in the area. From this study, stakeholders have raised concerns that this design solution and expressed that they would like to see an iteration that focuses more on the day time use of the space. Further, I received feedback about what amenities stakeholders would like to see in a pedestrian amenity, which is shown in figure 6.1. In the next experiment, these public space elements should be factored into the design.

what type of public space amenities would you like to see here?

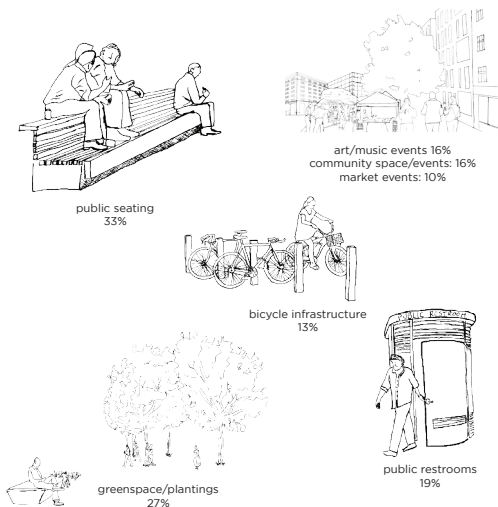


figure 6.2

Expand the city's effort to provide pedestrian amenities



Strøget, Copenhagen, Denmark

Since 1962, due to the popularity of pedestrianizing a portion of Strøget, the pedestrian network has grown considerably

Continue to explore design solutions through interim projects and community input



Los Angeles, California

Interim projects that span the entire day allows for a greater input from stakeholders. In doing so, a temporary design solution can evolve into a permanent project

Provide a space for community members to gather



Public spaces provide an area for residents to gather and voice their views and concerns

2

Recommendation:

Create a space that addresses how the street is used across all hours of the day.

As I interviewed businesses, there was concern that previous pedestrianization programs have not addressed how the street functions 24 hours a day. If a pedestrianization scheme is put in place, it should take this issue into greater consideration. Vibrant cities are active 24 hours a day, and there are several different attractions that bring people to the Pike Street study area across all hours of the day.

In order to help facilitate activities, engage the neighborhood community, and support the wide variety of businesses that operate on the site, programming should be varied and take place across all hours of the day. In the surveys conducted, there was interest in relocating existing neighborhood events to a pedestrian space on Pike Street as well as starting new ones.

Diversify the programming of the pedestrian only space.



Capitol Hill Farmers Market, Seattle, WA

Every Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm Seattle Central College hosts a Farmers Market. Survey respondents commonly raised an interest in bringing the farmers market to a pedestrian only zone in the study area.



Night Market, Cuba Street, Wellington, NZ

Every Friday and Saturday, a night market is held on Cuba street from 5 pm to 11 pm to celebrate cuisine, culture, and creativity.



Bedford Ave, New York City, New York

New York City hosts “Weekend Walks”, which aim to promote the use of streets as public space and highlight local businesses. Hours vary by location.

4

Recommendation:

Bolster the sense of community that thrives in this neighborhood.

Recent upzoning in the Pike/Pine corridor has attracted new development in the past decade. These new developments have primarily come in the form of luxury living situations that have displaced longtime residents. (Chalana 2016, 182) The Pike/Pine corridor has not only seen a loss in neighborhood character due to the vanishing of neighborhood establishments and historic structures, but a degradation of the safe space for the LGBTQ community. Sadly, there has been a re-emergence in violent hate crimes against LGBTQ persons that has coincided with redevelopment of the neighborhood. (Chalana 2016, 182)

In the wake of redevelopment and displacement, there is a need to make sure that a newly conceived pedestrian space is welcoming of everyone, especially to longtime residents. It is important that the space be constructed alongside community groups to reflect their needs and desires in a pedestrian only zone. Further, programming of the space should be community oriented as temporary design solutions aim to serve the neighborhood.

Work with the community to create a space that reflects the character and history of Pike Street



Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York City, New York

The Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of NYC hosts a summer STooPS event to promote community interaction and cohesion in the face of gentrification. Events are held in yards, stoops, and sidewalks

Create a unique space that reflects the neighborhood character



Inner Belt Freeway, Akron, Ohio

Due to lack of use, Akron Ohio is closing their inner belt freeway opening up the large space to new uses. A 500 person dinner party was set up to discuss the residents' vision for the space.

5

Recommendation:

Design the space to reflect the neighborhood character and complements the goals of the Pike Pine Design Guidelines.

In addition to concerns over displacement of community, there has been fears that the built form and character structures that add to aesthetic quality of the study area are vanishing as new developments are planned and developed. Due to this, Seattle implemented the Pike/Pine Conservation District that has its own urban design guidelines as a strategy to help the neighborhood to hold onto the elements they feel add to the neighborhood character. Temporary design solutions put forward should aspire to compliment the characteristics the conservation district and the neighborhood wish to bolster.

6.2 Conclusion

This public life study sought to further explore the idea of pedestrianizing Pike Street in Capitol Hill between Broadway and 12th Avenue. This site has been designated as a place of interest for pedestrian oriented design solutions by Capitol Hill community members and the city. In the summers of 2015 and 2017, the Seattle Department of Public Transportation's Public Space Management Group has hosted temporary street closures to address issues of safety and the community's desire to repurpose the right of way. These events were held in the evening hours. Community members have voiced concerns that the nightlife orientation of these street closures may result in the area being viewed as solely a bar scene, when there exist many more uses of the site. In order to address this, this study looked into how the site functions throughout the day. The People Street Program Evaluation method of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation was adapted to analyze the study area.

Pedestrian counts showed that there is a high volume of pedestrians that flow through the site, especially during the evening hours of the weekday and during the afternoon hours of the weekend. The activity scans revealed that there is a lack of public seating, and that private forms of seating in the right of way are currently insufficient in fulfilling the desire to enjoy the current public space. Surveys that targeted pedestrians and business owners revealed that there is still interest in implementing a pedestrian only space in the Pike Street study area, but there is still some hesitation by those who spend the greatest amount of time there and from business operators.

These results have led to a few recommendations. First, the city and community should continue exploring temporary street closures, as there appears to still be a debate between stakeholders on the idea. In these interim design solutions, project evaluation methods should be implemented to ensure that

feedback about previous designs are heard and therefore addressed in subsequent proposals. Through multiple iterations, there may come a day when a permanent solution is agreed upon. Secondly, the next design should steer away from solely focusing on evening hours. It was found that stakeholders would like to see a more robust design and events that address the use of the space throughout the day. Thirdly, the designs should reflect the communities that have historically called Capitol Hill home and continue to. There has been an observed shift in demographics due to redevelopment and there are fears that this safe space for the LGBTQ community is vanishing. Finally, concerns over the built environments have been raised in recent history leading to urban design policies to preserve neighborhood character. Future design proposals should look to bolster and enhance the built character of the Pike/Pine corridor.

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