PEDESTRIANIZE PIKE PLACE MARKET

Tsz Him Lau*, Program on the Environment, University of Washington
Site Supervisor: Gordon Padelford, Seattle Neighborhood Greenways (SNG)
Faculty Advisor: Tim Billo, Program on the Environment, University of Washington

Background

• Pike Place Market is one of the busiest tourist destinations in Seattle
• A mixture of pedestrians, private vehicles, and delivery trucks today

Figure 1. Pedestrians lining up on the sidewalk, vehicles parked at main street, while some vehicles try to pass the street.

• Private vehicles parked next to the sidewalk narrowed the public spaces
• Low walkability and low accessibility for elderly and the disabled

Research Questions/Thesis

1. Understanding the views of vendors at Pike Place Market towards the idea of pedestrianization.

Hypothesis: Vendors oppose the idea of pedestrianizing Pike Place Market since fewer vehicles may decrease vendors’ income.

Internship and Methods

• I interned with SNG on the project Pedestrianize Pike Place Market
• Throughout the internship, I visited Pike Place to interview business owners and employees about the idea of a car-free Pike Place
• Interviewees expressed their opinions and concerns about the idea
• During my internship, 67 responses were collected, with 52 participants indicating their supportive level

Results

Current Problems

• Private vehicles (vendors and visitors) sometimes parked at the spot for loading and unloading purposes
• Pedestrians have to be alert of vehicles when crossing the street which degraded their experience
• GPS mislead visitors directly to the main street even if the store requires visitors to walk

Survey

• Vendors overwhelmingly support the idea of pedestrianizing Pike Place Market (Figure 2).
• There are still concerns about the idea

Arguments in favor

• Currently a chaotic street environment
• Reduction of documented road rage events
• Reduce car vs. pedestrian collisions
• Increase accessibility for elderly & disabled

Argument against

• Parking garage too expensive (especially for workers, ~$275/month)
• A far distance to parking garage

Advantage of full closure

• Tables & seats on street (good for food vendors)
• Provide safe & walkable environment
• Better shopping experience
• Studies showed increase income for vendors on pedestrian streets because people love to walk

Compromise/Solutions

• Better enforcement of existing parking regulations
• Redirect GPS and bring vehicles to parking garage
• Limit hours for vehicles and delivery trucks

Implications

• Pedestrianized streets provide a safer, healthier, and more equitable place
• Promote public transport/encourage people not to drive
• A reduction of air/noise pollution and GHG emissions

Figure 2. Participants indicated their level of support of the idea for pedestrianizing Pike Place Market

Figure 3. The opportunity to attend the event “Pedestrianize This” and speak to the public

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my site supervisor Gordon Padelford, faculty advisor Tim Billo, my cohort, my family and friends (especially Kat). You’ve all been incredibly supportive along the way.