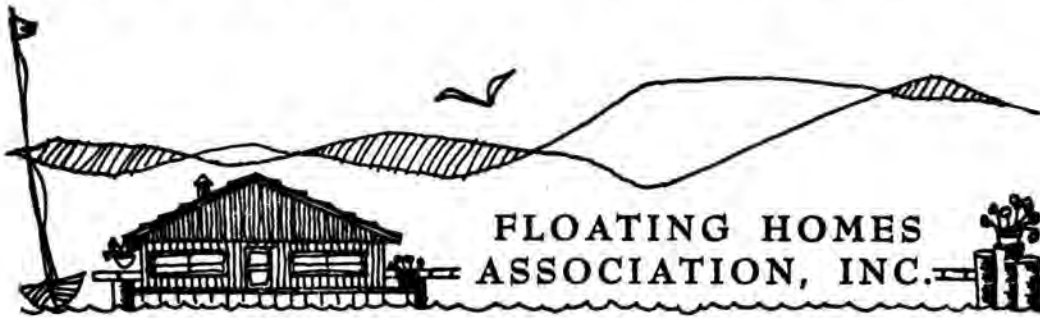


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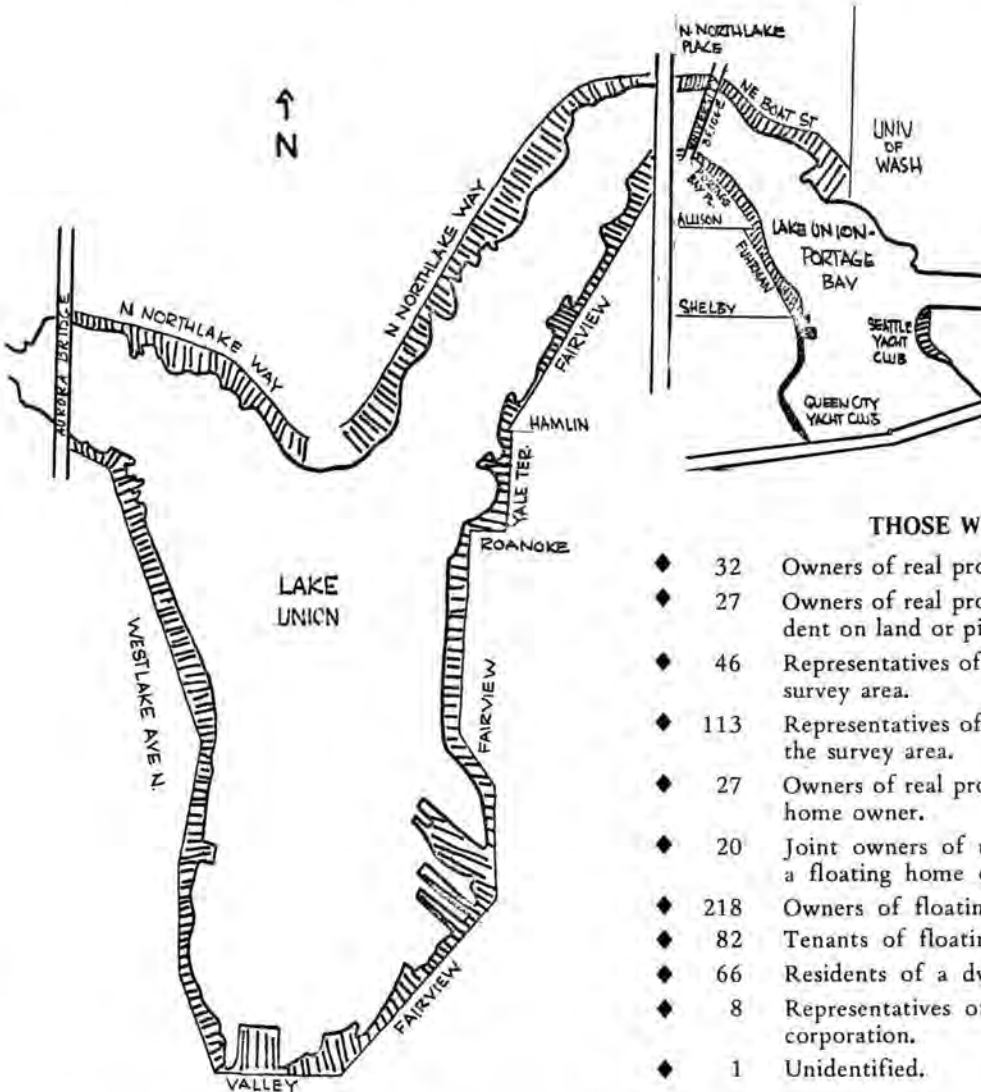
September, 1970

Community Survey Reveals 2,056 Jobs on Lake Union:

# 126 FIRMS NEED SHORELAND TO SURVIVE

## THE SURVEY AREA

Map shows boundaries (shaded) of the survey area. It includes the shorelands around Lake Union and Portage Bay from the Aurora Bridge to the west and the Montlake Cut to the east. This waterfront community includes about 760 businesses, properties and households. Of the total 640 (84% responded); 120 interviews were not completed for the following reasons: Vacant unit, 24; Not at home or otherwise available 54; Refused to participate, 38. The survey was conducted by the Bureau of Community Development of the University of Washington and sponsored by the Lake Union Assn. and the Floating Homes Assn.



## THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED

- ◆ 32 Owners of real property in the survey area.
- ◆ 27 Owners of real property in the survey area and a resident on land or piling.
- ◆ 46 Representatives of a property owning business in the survey area.
- ◆ 113 Representatives of a non-property owning business in the survey area.
- ◆ 27 Owners of real property in the survey area and a floating home owner.
- ◆ 20 Joint owners of real property in the survey area and a floating home owner.
- ◆ 218 Owners of floating homes.
- ◆ 82 Tenants of floating homes.
- ◆ 66 Residents of a dwelling on land or piling.
- ◆ 8 Representatives of a non-business organization or corporation.
- ◆ 1 Unidentified.

That Lake Union and Portage Bay make a vital contribution to the economic life of Seattle is one of the many broad generalizations arising from the first in-depth survey of the area which was taken under the guidance of the Bureau of Community Development of the University of Washington with the cooperation of the Lake Union Association and the Floating Homes Association.

With the Bureau providing the experience and the expertise and the Associations the man and woman power, a Committee under the direction of Dan Shannon, consultant, spent a year in formulating the detailed questionnaire. In May some 100 volunteers took the field to do the interviewing. Property owners who could not be reached in person were given an opportunity to participate by mail. The preparation and conducting of the survey covered a period of some 14 months.

Now available is a wealth of economic and demographic statistical material on computer cards which refine and cross correlate questions faster than they can be formulated. But as it stands the 25-page over-all report provides a great mass of facts about a much discussed but little understood waterfront community. Following are some examples:

- That in a period of widespread unemployment the Lake provides employment for 2,056 persons.
- Although present zoning tends to eliminate water needing uses, 126 firms report they must be on navigable water or go out of business.
- 81% of those surveyed said the major water pollution problem is from the city sewer outfalls.
- 83% believe that the "preservation of the view of the lake from the adjacent uplands" is an important zoning consideration.
- 79% of all the privately owned property around the perimeter of Lake Union and Portage Bay is from 40% to 100% underwater.

- 81% of the property has remained under the present ownership for more than 10 years while 42% has been under the same ownership for more than 20 years.
- The area has a high percentage of owners (59%) who do not use their property but lease or rent it.
- Participants in the survey included 113 representatives of the businesses who do not own real property. This is the "silent sector" which does not have a voice either through the Floating Homes Assn. or the Lake Union Assn. The latter organization is restricted to real property owners.
- 83% believe that the Myrtle Edwards Park to rise on the old gas plant site should have a "nautical atmosphere."
- 79% believe the 33 Street Ends should be developed as mini parks and view points while 11% think they should be turned over to the adjoining property owners. Of the 19 larger State Waterways 77% believe they should be developed or cleared out for public use while 12% favor turning them over to adjoining property owners.
- 67% believe property owners should be encouraged by zoning to develop their property for water-needing uses while 23% disagree and 9% had no opinion.
- The median range for annual payrolls in the survey area is \$10,000.00-\$99,999.00 Four employers reported payrolls from \$1 million to \$5 million and one more than \$5 million annually.
- Only 14 firms reported using the railroad spur for shipping in and out of the area while 166 said they did not use it. 80% of those using this facility utilized 50 or fewer cars per year. 12% said the railroad is essential to their business while 87% said it was not.
- As would be expected, water transportation by boat or barge, has more users with 40 firms reporting it as essential to their businesses.
- Forty-seven percent of the property owners own less than 120 feet of shoreland. The breakdown: Less than 60 feet, 26%; 60 to 119 feet, 21%; 120 to 199 feet, 13%; 200 to 299 feet, 21% and more than 300 feet, 19%.
- Forty-six percent of all property owners said the existing use of their property "would be threatened by an increase in the tax base."

#### MAJORITY SUPPORT ISSUES IN ASSOCIATION'S LAW SUIT

While there is a wide diversity of opinion as to property uses to be permitted in any future zoning changes, a majority are in agreement with two issues raised by the Floating Homes Association's suit against the controversial, high-rise, over-the-water apartment at Fairview E. and Lynn Sts.

The suit challenges the use of state leased land to increase the number of permitted units (bulk) of the structure on privately owned property. Since the suit was filed such a use has been prohibited by State Land Commissioner Bert Cole and the City Zoning Code.

Asked if this practice should again be permitted, 76% said no; 14% said yes and 9% had no opinion. (Under recent regulations any construction over navigable waters requires a permit from the Corps of Army Engineers.)

The suit also challenges the city permit allowing the underwater lot to be entirely covered by a concrete platform with no setbacks at water level. Although the famous "Lake Chelan" decision of the State Supreme Court casts a cloud of illegality over such practices it is still permitted in the city's Manufacturing and Commercial General Zoning Code. These two zones comprise about 90% of the entire shoreland of Lake Union and Portage Bay.

Asked if this should continue to be permitted 67% said no; 20% said yes and 14% had no opinion

Following are the responses to some significant questions:

QUESTION: "With the lake as it is today, which is the most appealing use?"

- (A) Floating Homes, 52% (B) Multiple-story structures, 5% (C) Commercial and recreational boat uses and marinas, 25% (D) Industrial activity, 4% (E) Other, 10%.

QUESTION: "Are the present zoning regulations concerning houseboat moorages"

- (A) Too restrictive, 32% (B) Not restrictive enough, 20% (C) Satisfactory as they are, 23% (D) Don't know 23%.

QUESTION: "Floating homes should be permitted in"

- (A) All parts of the survey area, 27% (B) Most parts of the survey area, 33% (C) Some limited parts of the survey area, 33% (D) No part of the survey area, 4% (E) Don't know, 2%.

(Under present regulations floating homes are a "permitted use outright" only in the small Resident Waterfront Zone on the south shore of Portage Bay. They are a "Conditional Use" in the Commercial General Zone and are not permitted in the Manufacturing Zone. Moorages now in the Manufacturing Zone have a legal but "non-conforming status" as they were established prior to the adoption of the present Zoning Code in 1957.)

QUESTION: "Major office buildings and apartment house development over the water on private property"

- (A) Should not be allowed, 54% (B) Should be allowed under special circumstances, 23% (C) Should be allowed only where present zoning permits such structures, 12% (D) Should be allowed anywhere in the survey area, 8% (E) Don't know, 2%.

QUESTION: "Should the present Seattle construction limit line be extended further into the lake?"

- (A) Yes, in all areas, 3% (B) Yes, in most areas, 5% (C) Yes, in some areas, 11% (D) No, 75% (E) Don't know, 3%.

QUESTION: "Do you think filling of the lake beyond the present water line"

- (A) Should not be permitted, 65% (B) Could be permitted under restricted conditions, 22% (C) Should be allowed on private property, 9% (D) Don't know, 3%.

QUESTION: "Should public boat-launching ramps be developed if public parking is provided?"

- (A) Yes, 77% (B) No, 18% (C) Don't know, 4%.

QUESTION: "Do you think the construction of a major, all purpose stadium at the Seattle Center would"

- (A) Adversely affect the development of the survey area, 42% (B) Be a benefit to the survey area residents and property owners, 17% (C) Have little effect on the survey area, 31% (D) No opinion 9%.

QUESTION: "Do you think the City asphalt plant at the southeast end of Lake Union should"

- (A) Be developed into a park, 31% (B) House an Indian Center, 6% (C) Be a public boat moorage and launching facility, 11% (D) Be a combination of the above, 43% (E) Don't know, 8%.

QUESTION: "Do you think the Gas plant property on Lake Union should be"

- (A) Developed by private interests for private use, 3% (B) Developed by the City for the public's use and benefit, 82% (C) Developed by private interests for public use and benefit, 12% (D) Left as it is, none (E) Don't know, 3%.

## NOW WE CAN SEE OURSELVES AS THE SURVEY SEES US

Among many other things, the Lake Union Community Survey took the first in depth look at the water-happy folk who live around the perimeter of Lake Union and Portage Bay. Of the 423 families surveyed, 308 reside in floating homes, 57 in single family dwellings on land or piling, 47 in over-the-water apartments and 10 on boats. From these detailed interviews came the outlines of a very distinct community which differs in some important aspects from conventional, shore-side neighborhoods.

For one thing the community has far fewer children than suburbia and fewer persons 65 years and over than most urban neighborhoods. The largest single age group are those between 24 and 34. They comprise 35% of the 799 individuals in households answering the questionnaire.

Here is the age breakdown: 37 children (5%) under five years of age; 45 (7%) between 6 and 18; 531 (65%) between 19 and 44; 136 (16% between 45 and 64 and 50 (7%) over 65 years of age. Males outnumber females 442 (55%) to 357 (45%).

From the reaction of the news media, the unusually high educational level was something of an eyebrow lifter. For instance: 7 individuals attended only elementary school; 13 junior high school; 22 some high school; 78 are high school graduates; 32 attended a vocational school; 186 have some college education; 227 are college graduates and 145 attended graduate school.

This educational level is reflected in the occupations of the "heads of households." The largest classification is professional with 132; technical, 20; managerial, 47; clerical, 22; sales, 26; craftsmen and skilled workers, 39; semi-skilled workers, 8 and students (mainly in graduate schools), 62.

Some two years ago the Seattle Times published a neighborhood feature on floating home residents in which it said that professors have replaced undergraduate students. This is borne out in the location of the employment of heads of households. The University District leads with 90; followed by downtown with 71; Capitol Hill and Queen Anne, 45; South End, 44; North End, 36 with 38 scattered hither and yon and 7 working east of Lake Washington.

For transportation to and from the survey area, 83% use automobiles; 10% public transit; 4% walk and 1% use bicycles. The mode of transportation within the survey area shows 57% relying on the private car; 3% public transit; 32% walk and 5% use boats in spite of the dearth of public facilities for watercraft in the "boating capitol of the world."

Parking, a monumental urban headache, is apparently but a minor throb in the survey area with 53 households reporting that they do not need any parking space. Of the others, 235 need one parking space; 119 need two; 10 need three

and 9 require four or more.

Of the floating homes surveyed, 218 were owner occupied and 82 rented or leased. (Ours is one type of housing for which the demand has long exceeded the supply. For years there has been a zero vacancy rate for floating homes as well as moorage sites.) For all dwellings in the survey area 270 are owner-occupied and 148 (including apartment units) are rented or leased.

The age of the dwellings (particularly floating homes) obviously required a lot of guess work on the part of owners and/or occupants. In spite of this the findings are interesting: 6 were less than one year old; 18 were one year old; 22, two to four years; 8, five to nine years; 26, ten to nineteen; 220, twenty to forty-nine; 79 fifty years or more with 49 occupants saying they did not know.

Many floating homes have been rebuilt and remodeled over the years and the exact date of original construction is impossible to determine in most cases. One of the oldest extant floating homes that has been definitely authenticated is the one-time "Hostess House" at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exhibition held on the University of Washington campus in 1909. It is now owned by Ken and Clara Kennedy who are lovingly restoring it on Portage Bay (During recent years several persons in remodeling have reported finding newspapers in the walls dated 1909.) Another "vintage" floating home that could date from the turn of the century is the prized possession of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wagner on Westlake North.

As to the amount spent for improvements to dwellings in the past five years there were 401 responses although there are only 365 single family units surveyed. These totals must include some apartment dwellers and other renters. The results; 109 reported spending less than \$100.00; 58 from \$100.00 to \$499.00; 99 from \$500.00 to \$1,499.00; 67 from \$1,500.00 to \$2,999.00 and 78 spending more than \$3,000.00.

The the survey report meeting August 4 those attending set up a Lake Union Community Development Committee to implement the findings. The survey reports are on computer cards for cross-correlation of the substantial amount of statistical information. Alex Brindle and Clara E. Kennedy were elected co-chairmen with Gary Vesoja, secretary. It was pointed out that persons, businesses and institutions in the survey area are cordially invited to participate in the follow-up work. Volunteers can contact Mr. Brindle (MA 3-3088); Mrs. Kennedy, (EA 3-3478); Mr. Vesoja (EA 4-5904); Mark Freeman, president of the Lake Union Assn. (ME 2-0151) or Terry Pettus of the Floating Homes Assn., (EA 9-1517) or EA 5-1132). Both Mr. Brindle and Mrs. Kennedy are members of the official Lake Union Advisory Committee established by the City Council and appointed by the Mayor.

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(CONTINUED from page 2)

QUESTION: "The height of over-water construction should be - - -"

(A) Unrestricted, 7% (B) Restricted in certain areas, 23% (C) Restricted in all areas, 64% (D) Don't know, 3%.

QUESTION: "The maximum height of over-water construction should be - - -"

(A) 30 feet, 37% (B) 35 feet, 8% (C) 45 feet, 8% (D) 60 feet, 20% (E) Don't know, 25%.

QUESTION: "Which type of zoning should govern the survey area?"

(A) Conventional shorewide categories, such as commercial general, manufacturing, and multiple residence, as is now the case, 8%; (B) Several special, water-oriented zoning categories developed to suit its unique conditions, 59% (C) Combination of A and B, 26% (D) No zoning at all, 1% (E) Don't know, 5%.

### OPINIONS ON PUBLIC SERVICES PRESENTS A MIXED BAG . . . .

Opinions on public services and general conditions in the survey area ends up as something of a mixed bag. Here as elsewhere in the report a "no response" to a question is not indicated in the percentages and accounts for the differences between the stated percentages and 100.

Police services on land were described as satisfactory by 65; unsatisfactory by 17% with 17% saying they do not know. On water (Harbor Police) the satisfied category dropped to 59% with 21% unsatisfied and 18% saying they do not know.

Fire Dept. services on land were described as satisfactory by 71%; unsatisfactory by 5% with 22% saying they do not know. Fire services on water were satisfactory to only 24%; unsatisfactory to 36% with 38% saying they do not know.

Garbage collection was found satisfactory by 73%; unsatisfactory to 18% with 8% saying they do not know. Collection of floating debris in the water is satisfactory to 26%; unsatisfactory to 64% with 9% in the don't know column. Asked if the City should be responsible for the clean up of floating debris, 86% said yes, 6% no. (This problem promises to get worse before it gets any better. Engineering Dept. budget cuts will force retirement of the obsolete drift-boat "Pelican Pete" January 1, and what service, if any, will replace it is undecided as of now.)

The City Water Dept. came in for a whopping 90% approval with only 2% reporting dissatisfaction and 8% saying they do not know. City Light chalked up a high score with 85% satisfied; 7% unsatisfied and 7% saying they do not know. Other questions and responses are

QUESTION: "Do you think street conditions in the survey area are . . ."

(A) Satisfactory, 30% (B) Unsatisfactory, 67% (C) Don't know, 2%.

QUESTION: "Would you financially support an underground wiring project?"

(A) Yes, 41% (B) No, 42% (C) Don't know, 16%.

QUESTION: "Do you think the City's maintenance of Street Ends is . . ."

(A) Satisfactory, 19% (B) Unsatisfactory, 68% (C) Don't know, 13%.

QUESTION: "Do you think the speed lane in Lake Union is . . ."

(A) Necessary, 23% (B) Desirable, 11% (C) Both necessary and desirable, 25% (D) Neither, should be eliminated, 24% (E) Don't know, 16%.

QUESTION: "What is your greatest complaint with the speed lane?"

(A) Dimensions (too wide or too long), 10% (B) Poorly enforced, 26% (C) No restrictive hours, 8% (E) No complaints, 39%.

QUESTION: "Is the speed limit in Lake Union of 7 knots . . ."

(A) Too high, 16% (B) Too low, 4% (C) Don't know, 14% (D) Satisfactory, 62%.

QUESTION: "Do you think that boat wake causes serious problems in your area?"

(A) Yes, 56% (B) No, 29% (C) Don't know, 13%.

QUESTION: "Which of the following do you think would be most effective to help solve the wake problem?"

(A) Institute a no wake rule in addition to the speed limit, 44% (B) Lower the speed limit, 6% (C) Lower the speed limit and institute a no wake rule, 11% (D) Don't know there is a wake problem, 20% (E) Don't know, 6%.

Although surveys of communities with common interests and particular problems are commonplace, the Bureau of Community Affairs was sharply criticized for its assistance by Richard Lofgren, president of the Portage Bay-Roanoke Park Community Council. Lofgren objected to confining the survey area to the shorelands and in letters to Dr. Harold Amoss, director, said the Bureau should have no truck with such "special interest" groups as the Lake Union Assn. and the Floating Homes Assn.

On a happier note is the recommendation of one respondent that the 18-acre Gas Plant Park Site should be converted into a "giant tavern with dome." It is safe to predict that this is one engaging idea whose time has not yet come.

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### N.W. MARINE INDUSTRIES FAVORS WATER-ORIENTED ZONING . . . .

Future zoning of Lake Union and Portage Bay shorelands should have as its primary purpose the encouragement of water-needing uses, the Northwest Marine Industries said in responding to the questionnaire sent out by the official Lake Union Advisory Commission. (For the Floating Homes Association response, see our NEWS LETTER, July 1970.)

Sent in by Frank Deuster, executive secretary, the NWI response was summarized by the City Planning Dept. as follows: "(1) Should be reserved primarily for uses requiring waterfront (2) Offices and apartments should be discouraged (3) No need for further public ownership - but need for development of publicly owned areas. Clean up street ends (4) Houseboats O.K. if sewered (5) No high rises, no new filling or bulkheading even by government (6) Park development useful at asphalt plant site plus couple of street ends (7) Generally lake should have compatible, marine oriented uses - open space opportunities, launching ramps, waterfront parks, moorages and water oriented business and industry."

Approval of sewer connected floating homes was also expressed in responses from the Central Association; Fremont Improvement Club, League of Women Voters, Rainier Beach Community Club, U of W Dept. of Business & Finance and the Wallingford Community Council. The one exception was expressed by Robert Dietz, Dean of the U of W School of Architecture & Urban Development who wrote that "houseboats should be eliminated and phased out." Dean Dietz also said that "Ideally, all the land should be publicly owned for effective control of development and attainment of a functional, beautiful city. Lake Union is now a cluttered mess . . . If any one person on any parcel of land can do what he wants, we are going to have the junk atmosphere we see surrounding the Lake today."

With the exception of the Central Association all groups responding to the questionnaire favored more stringent controls on construction on the shorelands.

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