



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Seattle Department of Planning and Development
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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City Sends Parking Recommendations to City Council

Staff to seek Council and public feedback on residential parking policy

SEATTLE – Today the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) sent a report to City Council containing preliminary staff recommendations to address residential parking issues related to new development.

After a thorough evaluation, DPD and SDOT recommend retaining the current parking policy as an important factor that helps mitigate the rapid rise in the cost of housing construction and addresses the City's objectives for managing growth. Staff proposes adding residential transportation options and managing on-street parking more effectively. This includes strategies to address transportation and parking demand, such as requiring transit passes for new residential development, rather than requiring parking in areas well served by transit.

Last year, the Mayor and City Council directed the Department of Planning and Development and the Seattle Department of Transportation to work together in preparing the recommendations for Council consideration this spring.

“Seattle is experiencing tremendous pressures as our economy continues to expand and grow jobs. We are working to keep our city affordable for current and future residents. We can't rely on the parking strategies of the past if we are to manage both the cost of living and the transportation challenges of the future”, said Mayor Ed Murray said.

The recommendations in the report are grounded in Seattle's urban village strategy and long history of progressive parking policies which have provided increasing flexibility in parking requirements for residential buildings in places with access to frequent bus or rail service, starting downtown about 30 years ago. This series of important policy decisions by past Mayors and City Councils were efforts to promote lower cost, more affordable housing in areas with frequent transit service.

Recommendations include developing legislation and programs to:

- Require bus passes for new residential developments in center city neighborhoods and other areas frequently served by transit, along with car share memberships, bike share memberships, or similar services.
- Remove City code barriers and promote shared parking of underutilized parking spaces.



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- Update City code to include improved bike parking for more types of new development and promote guidance for placing bike share stations on private property.
- Review residential parking conditions and the Restricted Parking Zone program to identify demand management strategies in growing neighborhoods.
- Promote garage designs that facilitate sharing parking among different buildings in a neighborhood. This would include providing guidance for optimal access, layout and security.
- Promote transportation options and ensure that our neighborhoods continue to be well served by transit.

Parking construction can cost \$20,000 to \$50,000 per space or more. A Portland, Oregon study found that parking can add as much as \$500 per month in rental costs to a low-rise apartment building.

Studies, most notably King County's 2013 Right Size Parking study, have shown that parking is often significantly over-supplied, needlessly contributing to high housing costs. Our current policies and proposed recommendations also help address traffic congestion, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and aiding other City objectives.

"This report includes key recommended policy changes that Transportation Choices fully supports," said Andrew Austin, Transportation Choices policy director. "It is important that as more people in Seattle choose car-free living, we refine our policies to reflect shifting preferences; doing this is one key component to addressing the affordability problem."

Key findings from the report include:

- About 3/4 of new developments provide parking where no parking is required (average is 0.55 spaces per dwelling unit). In areas where parking is not required, 167 out of 219 projects permitted since 2012 did provide parking. Only about 12% of the 19,000 housing units have been built without providing parking.
- Development with reduced or no parking is clustering in areas with frequent transit service including Capitol Hill and other neighborhoods such as University District and Ballard.
- Additional bus service funded by voters through Proposition 1 will provide better frequency, reliability, and will relieve peak hour crowding in buses along key transit corridors
- Best practices used in other jurisdictions include: low or no parking minimums in urban neighborhoods; space for car share services; development regulations requiring transit passes for residents and employees; and on-street parking management strategies such as pricing and time limits.
- Parking apps directing people toward parking (E-Park), on-street valets, and coordinated public/private efforts (downtownseattleparking.com) offer promise in matching customers and visitors with affordable off-street parking options in Downtown. This approach could be expanded to other neighborhoods.

The Mayor has directed DPD and SDOT to seek input from City Council, prepare a public review draft ordinance, environmental (SEPA) review and have final recommendations for the Mayor by December 2015.



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See the [parking report and recommendations](#)

Questions? Comments?

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