

**Alki Area Summary – June 17, 2004 (revised)**

Prepared by Randy Wiger (684-8186), Making the Parking System Work program

In May 2004, the Making the Parking System Work program in the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) received a referral for assistance with several parking-related concerns by a resident of the Alki Ave SW area of West Seattle. Staff conducted a review of concerns that area residents have contacted SDOT about over the past several years. The following pages provide a summary of these concerns.

Given the range and frequency of various traffic and parking issues the neighborhood has been experiencing, SDOT suggests the neighborhood may wish to contract with a transportation consultant to do a neighborhood transportation and parking plan, and then work with SDOT to implement it. Particularly of value, since the community has divergent opinions about some of the solutions available, may be a consultant's ability to assist the community in a decision-making process where tradeoffs associated with existing options can be considered and a consensus built. **NOTE: after this summary was compiled SDOT learned that the community had, in fact, developed a Parking Study in 1990/1992 using TSI, Inc. as consultants.**

Should the community wish to pursue this option, SDOT staff Julie Matlick (233-7802) should be engaged in identifying a department representative in the process, and Community Police Team Officer Robert Belshay (233-1549) should be consulted throughout the process to determine how various possible solutions may help or hinder the Seattle Police Department's (SPD) ability to address ongoing public safety issues in this area. Additionally Parks and Recreation Department staff should be consulted as stakeholders due to possible impacts on the Alki Beach Park.

**Immediate Opportunities for Action**

- SDOT recently installed "No Parking 10:00 p.m. to 5 a.m." signs on Alki Ave SW near 64<sup>th</sup> Ave SW to address public safety issues, but some complaints have been made because the nearby park is open until 11:00 p.m. SDOT is willing to consider changing the No Parking time restrictions to 11:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. to better coordinate with the park hours of operation. Please contact Frank Nelson at 684-5379 to explore this change.
- SDOT RPZ Program (Residential Parking Zone) staff can be requested to re-check the blocks just south of Alki Ave SW to assess if there is high enough on-street parking usage (at least 75%) by non-residents (at least 25%) in a large enough area (at least 5 contiguous blocks) that there is the likelihood the criteria for installing an RPZ may be met. If so, SDOT can schedule a formal RPZ Parking Study in this area to document that the conditions for installing an RPZ exist. Contact Julie Erickson at 684-5092 for assistance in requesting this preliminary check for on-street usage.



*May 2004*

**Parking Remedies: Several blocks along Alki Ave SW**

(Randy Wiger 684-8186)

Larry Carpenter of the Alki Community Council contacted SDOT to seek assistance in addressing the significant parking impacts by beach visitors on the nearby residential community's ability to find on-street parking. SDOT staff Randy Wiger agreed to attend the June 17, 2004 meeting of the Alki Community Council to discuss these concerns.

The community perceives an approximately 18-block area to be particularly impacted, with general boundaries of:

- Alki Ave SW on the north
- 55<sup>th</sup> Ave SW on the east
- SW Admiral Way/SW Hanford St on the south, and
- 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW to the west.

Also, SDOT's help was requested to investigate and develop possible solutions for the congestion that occur as drivers attempt to find on-street parking when the available on-street parking immediately adjacent along the stretch of the Alki Beach Park area is full. Vehicles sometimes drive with less than desirable safety on nearby residential streets while attempting to locate on-street parking and, combined with the volume of traffic seeking on-street parking especially on warm weekend days, this can sometimes make the residential streets less safe for pedestrians.

Residents also note that the blocks of Alki Ave SW just west of 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW are sometimes used by people as an area to make a mid-block U-turn when they miss the arterial turning left from Alki Ave SW south onto 63<sup>rd</sup> AVE SW.

*May 2004*

**Traffic Circle Requests: SW Lander St and SW Lander Pl**

(John Marek 684-5069)

In May of 2004 SDOT received traffic circle requests for the intersections on SW Lander Street between 56<sup>th</sup> and 59<sup>th</sup> Avenues SW, as well as on SW Lander Place at SW Teig Pl and at SW Campbell Pl. Due to the low collision history at all of these intersections, they were unable to compete for limited program funding. However, SDOT sent requests to SPD for additional enforcement for speed and parking violations.

*Spring 2004*

**Traffic Calming: SW Lander St and 56<sup>th</sup> Ave SW**

(Theresa Smith 684-0353, and John Marek 684-5069)

Location: from the intersection of SW Admiral Way and SW Lander St going west on SW Lander St, into the hairpin curve of SW Lander Pl, then north into 56<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, then to Alki Ave SW. Vehicles appear to be going too fast on this hairpin curve. Community believes 25 m.p.h. is too fast for this curve, and requested traffic calming devices (such as speed humps or chicanes) be installed. SDOT notes these devices commonly reduce speeds to around 25 - 30 m.p.h. Because of the slope of the street going downhill from SW Lander St to SW Lander Pl to 56<sup>th</sup> Ave SW, SDOT believes the existing curvature in the roadway already helps to limit speeds to this range.

The street is too steep to install speed humps. To install chicanes, SDOT would require strong support from a clear majority of residents because chicanes would displace on-street parking and may not result in vehicles going much or any slower than they already are due to the slope. SDOT does not have traffic control devices that reduce speeds below 25 m.p.h. Partial street closure is one option, but SDOT would need the community to demonstrate strong consensus to pursue this.

SDOT is working with the community to utilize the Neighborhood Speed Watch program (Angela Steel 684-0817). Neighbors completed the first phase by using a radar gun to monitor vehicle speeds. On June 15, 2004, SDOT set up the Speed Watch Trailer on 56<sup>th</sup> Ave SW just north of SW Lander St to monitor northbound traffic heading towards Alki Ave SW.

In late 2003 in response to community requests for traffic calming, SDOT staff reviewed the collision history for several intersections along 56<sup>th</sup> Ave SW (at SW Lander St, at SW Teig Pl, and at SW Lander Pl) and found the collision history of these intersections to be very low (i.e., none or one incident per intersection in the last ten years). As such these intersections do not warrant a stop sign and most likely would not compete well for funding of a traffic calming device (such as a traffic circle) in SDOT's Neighborhood Traffic Control Program (NTCP).

*Summer 2003*

**Sidewalk Blockage: Planting strips on Alki Ave SW, 1200 – 1700 blocks (near Duwamish Head)**  
(Billy Jack 684-8329)

In September 2003, SDOT attended (with SPD) a meeting of the Alki Community Council to respond to a complaint about the sidewalk being blocked on Alki Ave SW (south side) by vehicles parking on the planting strip and overhanging the sidewalk. There are a variety of residences on the south side of Alki Ave SW. Some have on-site parking spaces (driveways, surface or underground), and some do not have on-site parking spaces (generally the older ones), and residents sometimes park perpendicular and sometimes at an angle on the planting strip and/or parking lane between the travel lane and the sidewalk.

A complaint by a citizen had been made about the sidewalk being blocked by the overhang of a vehicle parking on the planting strip, and Seattle Police responded. Some residents of Alki Ave SW then raised the issue of would the City/SDOT issue a "variance" of some kind in order to allow the residents to legally park on the planting strip at an angle. The RCW (State Law) prohibits the parking of vehicles on planting strips or sidewalks, as does the Seattle Municipal Code. Additionally, the planting strip is currently not sufficiently wide to allow vehicles to park on it in such a way as to prevent the City from being held liable if the City were able to "approve" such use and an accident or injury resulted.

SDOT notes one possible idea may be to develop a design to rebuild the parking lane and planting strip in such a way that formalized angle parking may be possible. SDOT has questions as to whether sufficient space exists utilizing the existing parking lane and the planting strip to install an angle parking area so that vehicles would not overhang and block the sidewalk. SDOT also notes that current land use code would require trees to be planted, perhaps in bulbs/bump-outs, at 25-foot intervals along a new angle parking area.

Investigation into the feasibility of this design possibility is an option that the community may wish to pursue (i.e. if the space from parking lane to planting strip to sidewalk's near edge is wide enough for the parking lane and planting strip to be removed, and angle parking spaces constructed). The

community is advised that SDOT does not currently have funding to commit to such a project should it prove to be feasible, and may wish to consider forming a LID (Local Improvement District) as one possibility of creating funding. For more information on LIDs, contact Benita Staadecker at 684-7580.

*Summer 2002*

**Request to re-install parking on Alki Ave SW (north side)**

(Billy Jack 684-8329)

In July 2002, SDOT attended a meeting of the Alki Community Council to respond to a written request to re-install parking on Alki Ave SW (north side, approximately between Bonair Dr SW and the Duwamish Head) as a way to reduce the parking impacts of visitors on nearby residential streets (there is perhaps as much as half a mile of curb space that could have parking installed). The meeting had a large attendance (over 100) with strong opposition to installing parking on Alki Ave SW. Additionally, SPD expressed preferences against re-installing parking here due to concerns that public safety may be possibly exacerbated. The outcome was that SDOT did not re-install parking here.

*Spring 2002*

**Residential Signage: Alki Ave SW at 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW**

(Theresa Smith 684-0353)

In early 2002, SDOT installed signage on Alki Ave SW just west of 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW indicating the arterial turns onto 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW and that Alki Ave SW becomes “residential.” SDOT also painted “hatching” in the parking lane on the north side of Alki Ave SW just west of 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW to discourage people from parking in such a way as to block the unmarked crosswalk.

*2001 - 2004*

**Traffic Calming: 61<sup>st</sup> Ave SW between SW Admiral Way and Beach Dr SW**

(John Marek 684-5069)

For several years now SDOT has been working with residents to address concerns about excessive vehicle speeds and volume on 61st Ave SW between SW Admiral Way and Beach Dr SW. As a result of this effort, a curb bulb has been installed on the east side of 61st Ave SW at Beach Dr SW, and traffic circles on 61st Ave SW at SW Hinds St and at SW Spokane Street. These devices have helped to slow traffic some. However the community is interested in additional measures.

Last year residents participated in the Neighborhood Speed Watch Program and SDOT set up the Speed Watch trailer on two occasions. Residents asked that speed humps be installed along this route. Unfortunately, 61st Ave SW was unable to compete for SDOT's limited Mid-Block Speed Control Program funds. SDOT supports installing additional devices on 61st Ave SW but the community will need to secure funding, perhaps using the Neighborhood Matching Fund or other sources.

Residents have also expressed interest in closing 61st Ave SW at Beach Dr SW. However, pursuing this possibility would impact larger neighborhood traffic circulation, and impacts would need to be assessed before determining the viability of this option. Additionally, the community would have to demonstrate strong support and consensus for this option.

*November 2001*

**Angle Parking: Alki Ave SW between 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW and 64<sup>th</sup> Pl SW**

(Theresa Smith 684-0353)

SDOT developed a draft conceptual plan for installing angle parking on Alki Ave SW between 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave SW and 64<sup>th</sup> Pl SW. The draft plan envisions reconfiguring the median between Alki Ave SW and the Alki Bike Trail in such a way as to create sufficient space for the installation of angle parking. SDOT is not committed to providing funding for such a plan. This draft conceptual plan has the initial approval of SDOT Bike Program Staff (Pete Lagerway 684-5108) but has not been vetted with the Parks and Recreation Dept and SPD for possible impacts and issues to Park or Police operations or concerns. *Note: this should not be confused with the existing angle parking area further west on Alki Ave SW near Point Pl SW.*

*June 2000*

**Curb Bulb: SW Admiral Way and Landers St**

(John Marek 684-5069)

SDOT installed a curb bulb on the north side of SW Lander Street just west of SW Admiral Way. This project was requested by the community and funded through the Neighborhood Street Fund in an effort to increase pedestrian safety and reduce speeds of vehicles turning onto SW Lander St off of SW Admiral Way.

*Spring 1997*

**Request for RPZ: blocks immediately south of Alki Ave SW**

(Julie Erickson 684-5092)

On March 26, 1997 SDOT was contacted by Peter Stekal of the Alki Community Council with a request to investigate establishing an RPZ (Residential Parking Zone). The letter requested an RPZ be considered for the following area: on Alki Ave SW from Beach Dr SW east to Bonair Dr SW (near 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW), and the area north of SW Admiral Way, between 64<sup>th</sup> Ave SW and 57<sup>th</sup> Ave SW. The letter suggested a year-round Zone with hours of 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. with a time restriction of 2 hours for vehicles without RPZ permits. The letter described the parking generators as being patrons of restaurants on Alki Ave SW and Alki Beach visitors.

Because of the Parks Department Bike Trail Project going on at the time, SDOT was not able to pursue this until August 1. On August 1 (a Friday), SDOT staff field checked the neighborhood streets at 10:30 a.m. and again at 7:00 p.m. for capacity levels. On that day SDOT did not find that there were at least 5 contiguous blocks with 75% of the on-street spaces in use – the minimum threshold necessary to consider installing an RPZ. After conversation with Peter, SDOT checked again on August 30 (a sunny Saturday on Labor Day weekend with temperature of 77 degrees). At 1:00 p.m. the on-street parking south of Alki Ave SW was at 100% capacity to SW Stevens St (one block off of Alki Ave SW) and then thinned out the further south one went to Admiral Way SW. This area of 100% on-street capacity was not large enough and did not occur enough of the time to meet the criteria for an RPZ.

1994 - 1997

**Alki Trail Project: Removal of On-street Parking**

(Frank Nelson 684-5379, and Pete Lagerway 684-5108)

The installation of the Alki Bike Trail parallel to Alki Ave SW impacted the amount of on-street parking available on Alki Ave SW. Although the street is wide enough to allow on-street parallel parking on both the north (water) and south (land) sides, parking was not installed on the north side at the culmination of the project. Parallel parking is permitted on the south (land) side.

Throughout a number of project planning meetings conducted by the Parks Department, the comments on both needing to provide parking – especially for residents – and of not installing parking on the north side of Alki Ave SW were documented numerous times. These meetings took place before many (or even any) of the large condos along Alki Ave SW were built. SDOT understood that, at the time of the trail project completion, the community did not support the re-installation of parking on the north side of Alki Ave SW for several reasons: to help decrease cruising; to reduce the potential for problem activities on the beach; and, presumably, to also improve views across Alki Ave SW from nearby residential properties.

The connection between parking on Alki Ave SW and these issues are as follows:

- Alki Ave SW has an Anti-Cruising Ordinance (see below) that is posted up and down the street. People may be “cruising” on Alki Ave SW, and if they are stopped by a law enforcement officer, they may say they are not “cruising” but only looking for parking. However, if they are pulled over in an area that does not have on-street parking, then it is less believable that they are looking for parking. Also, if someone is “cruising” and sees a law enforcement officer in the area, they can pull over into the first available parking space until the officer passes by, then pull out and continue cruising. But if there is no parking allowed, then they do not have this option to use in avoiding being identified as a vehicle engaged in “cruising.”
- Each summer some visitors arrive at Alki in RVs of all sizes. Rather than parking in a friend’s driveway or arranging a space at an appropriate RV Park, etc., they park on-street on Alki Ave SW for days and weeks at a time. The larger RVs especially completely block any view of the waterfront that the smaller, one-story bungalows, single-family residences, and first floor condos along Alki Ave SW have. Although car camping per se is not illegal in Seattle, the prolonged parking of one’s vehicle on public streets over 72-hours at a time is illegal. Additionally, SMC 11.72.070 prohibits vehicles over 80 inches wide (which includes most RVs) from parking on-street between midnight and 6:00 a.m. except next to Industrial or Commercial land uses. Residents do call the police about such activity, and officers will speak with the RV owner and explain that they are not allowed to park on the same block for more than 72-hours (or less depending on posted restrictions). The RVs will move a few blocks away and block another residences’ view until they are again contacted by the police and asked to move along, and this continues all summer. (Alki Ave SW currently has unrestricted parking.)

Signs posted at several places on Alki Ave SW between the Duwamish Head and 63rd Ave SW state an "Alki Ave SW Anti-Cruising Ordinance is in effect - SMC 11.69.030."

SMC 11.69.030 Cruising prohibited in traffic congestion area.

No person shall drive or permit a motor vehicle under his or her control to be driven within a posted traffic congestion area in the same direction more than one (1) time within a four (4) hour period.