



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Seattle Transportation
Grace Crunican, Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 16, 2003

TO: Grace Crunican, Director, Seattle Department of Transportation

FROM: Robert Spillar, City Traffic Engineer
Susan Sanchez, Director, Policy, Planning and Major Projects Division

SUBJECT: Policy on Factors to Consider for Installing Arterial Parking Restrictions

REQUESTED

ACTION: Concurrence on Policy Direction and Approval

In May 2003, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) staff proceeded to restrict parking on Aurora Avenue North in the southbound direction in two areas: between N. 107th and just south of N. 104th Streets and between N. 90th and N. 80th Streets. This decision followed months of consultations amongst staff in SDOT, King County Metro, the Washington Department of Transportation, the Mayor's Office, the City Council, and hundreds of stakeholders in the Aurora corridor.

During the deliberative process to determine how to best keep Aurora safe and moving, lessons were learned which we believe can be useful in future consideration of arterial parking restrictions. This memo is intended to provide a framework for decision-making under similar circumstances (i.e., corridor improvement efforts), and to clarify policy and procedures that already exist either in the Seattle Municipal Code or as part of SDOT's standard operating procedures. This proposed standard operating procedure is not intended to affect more minor parking management efforts that are carried out on a routine daily basis by the City Traffic Engineer.

This policy memo will become part of the Seattle Department of Transportation's standard operating procedures and communicated to SDOT staff. It will be converted to the standard format used in previous Operating Instructions and signed by the City Traffic Engineer. The Operating Instruction (or standard operating procedure) is anticipated to affect primarily the



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Policy Planning and Major Projects Division as well as the Traffic Management Division. In addition, it will form the basis for any policies on arterial parking restrictions included in the updated version of the Transportation Strategic Plan, originally adopted in 1998 and scheduled for revision and re-release by 2004.

Background

The City's *Comprehensive Plan* balances several objectives when determining whether to install arterial parking restrictions: "... safety, sufficient on-street parking to support business districts and prevent spillover parking in residential areas, a pleasant pedestrian environment, truck access and loading, and effective operation of the street for high occupancy vehicles, including transit, and bicycles." (*Comprehensive Plan Transportation Policy T28*). Other *Comprehensive Plan* policies, the *Transportation Strategic Plan*, and SDOT practices establish that maintaining on-street parking is often a lesser priority on principal arterials compared to ensuring efficient mobility, and providing transit speed and reliability benefits. Developing and formalizing this policy was a key recommendation in the recently completed SDOT *Seattle Parking Management Study*.

According to SMC 11.16.300, the City Traffic Engineer is authorized "... to determine the location of and establish time-limit regulations for parking ... to determine upon what streets or alleys or portions thereof stopping, standing or parking of vehicles shall be prohibited at certain times, or entirely." In other words, the City Traffic Engineer has the authority to remove or restrict on-street parking when safety or operational problems are identified. The City is not required to replace on-street parking removed from the City's right-of-way.

Factors for Consideration

Based on the *Comprehensive Plan*, the current Seattle Municipal Code, and experience with Aurora and other corridors, we recommend the following explicit policy factors be used when SDOT considers installing arterial parking restrictions along a corridor or portion thereof. These factors should be applicable for areas where 1) full-time, 24-hour removal of currently available parking is proposed, 2) new parking restrictions are proposed for certain hours of the day or days of the week, or 3) extensions of either time or distance are considered for existing parking restrictions. These factors may also be applicable in the converse situation; that is, when considering lessening or removing current parking restrictions. We would reiterate that the City Traffic Engineer currently possesses the authority to remove or restrict parking for safety or operational purposes.

The factors for consideration of arterial parking restrictions are summarized below and spelled out in greater detail in the attached table, with guidance on the types of measures that would be useful to employ. Note that the factors are not listed in priority order.

1. **Transit:** This factor is a determination of the degree to which transit speed and reliability are impacted by arterial congestion, how frequently transit uses the corridor, and whether the arterial is designated as a major transit route. Such measures as transit speed, on-time performance, delay, headways, and modeled potential time savings can all be used in assessing this factor.
2. **Traffic:** This factor is used to determine whether the arterial in question is approaching its carrying capacity without use of the capacity provided by the curb lane. Useful measures here include the number of vehicles using the available travel lanes in the peak hour, the level of service in the corridor measured either at selected intersections or in roadway segments, and modeled potential travel time savings if parking restrictions were in place.
3. **Parking:** The degree of utilization of the curb lane for parking is a factor when considering whether to install parking restrictions. High parking utilization by business customers or residents might indicate potential impacts. In addition, an inventory of nearby on- and off-street parking is useful to determine whether there is the capacity to accommodate any spillover.
4. **Pedestrian Environment:** Restricting parking could mean eliminating a buffer between pedestrians and auto traffic, and consideration should be given to the presence of other available buffers such as landscaping, as well as to the presence of sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities.
5. **Business Assessment:** Consideration should be given to whether businesses adjacent to the arterial depend on access and loading of passengers and goods via the arterial curb lane, and whether there may be alternate locations for passenger loading and truck and freight delivery.
6. **Adjacent Land Use:** Is the adjacent land use commercial or residential in nature? What is the level of current and future development capacity? These considerations help to determine the current and future market potential for transit along arterials, and what future traffic congestion may result from increased development.

Suggested Public Information Steps to Ensure Effective Review and Outreach

The Seattle Department of Transportation will strive to ensure effective public outreach and communication with affected stakeholders when considering arterial parking restrictions. SDOT staff will continue to identify corridors and spot locations where parking restrictions would be considered, and will review those locations using the factors mentioned in this memo as guidance. SDOT staff will review these areas with affected stakeholders, including adjacent property owners and tenants, transit riders, neighborhood and business district representatives, community organizations, and other corridor users as appropriate. Outreach efforts may include community or individual stakeholder meetings. After this review and with all the relevant information at-hand, the City Traffic Engineer will exercise professional judgement to determine whether to install parking restrictions.

Attachment: Action Matrix

ME/RJS

cc: Hoffman, Jemae; Mary Catherine; Billy Jack; Mike Estey; Phil Thordarson

Factors to Consider for Parking Restriction Policy

| Factor | Measure | How to measure |
|---|---|--|
| Transit conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transit speed and reliability measures – current speed, on-time performance, delay, transit headways, potential travel time savings • Street classification • Plans that support transit • People-moving capacity of the lanes • Transit market potential | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King County Metro can provide current transit speeds, on-time performance, delay, and transit headways. VISSIM modeling can provide potential travel time savings. Cost-benefit analysis of travel time savings can also be conducted. • Street classifications are in the Street Classification Manual. • Metro's 6-Year Plan would be a source for plans that support transit. • SDOT monitors traffic volumes on an annual basis (and by request). • Transit market potential can be evaluated by employment/residential density within ¼ mile and ridership numbers. |
| Traffic conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles/lane/peak hour • Travel time savings • Street classification • Level of service (LOS) • Delay • Congestion on parallel arterials/spillover traffic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic volumes per lane counts. • Travel time savings can be measured by evaluating current traffic speeds, delay, and congestion. VISSIM modeling can also provide potential travel time savings. Cost-benefit analysis of travel time savings can also be conducted. • Street classifications are in the Street Classification Manual. • SDOT monitors LOS and delay. • SDOT monitors traffic volumes on an annual basis (and by request). |
| Parking condition: Utilization and spillover | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking utilization along corridor during the time periods considered for restrictions. • Type of parking users (business customers, residents, employees, commuters, general on-street vehicle storage) • Availability of parking nearby to accommodate spillover • Identification of alternative parking scenarios | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parking utilization study can be conducted to identify existing curb space designations and measure parking use. • A survey of businesses can determine parking needs/uses. |
| Pedestrian environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of sidewalks and/or other buffers • Plans to build future sidewalks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field inventory to identify existing buffers. |
| Business assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification for alternate access for trucks/freight delivery, as necessary. • See parking utilization factors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See measures for parking conditions. |
| Adjacent land use | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial or residential? • What is the level of current and future development capacity? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available from DCLU/Land Use Map. |