

4/2/02 Columbia City Parking Kick Off Meeting

This work was initiated in response to neighborhood plans. The City applied for a grant to provide technical assistance to neighborhoods in response to requests for parking improvements. City staff will work with citizens to formulate a set of recommendations that implement the Neighborhood Plan and address the parking needs of the various stakeholders.

The goal of the meeting was to hear more about Columbia City neighborhood's parking needs and to put together a workgroup made up of residents, business and other stakeholders. The workgroup will be a representative body that needs to be balanced with residents and businesses. It needs to be balanced because the parking "problem" usually depends on who you are. Residents want long-term spaces to "store their car," while businesses want short-term spaces in front of their store. The workgroup will attend a series of meetings to jointly identify opportunities to better manage on-street and off-street parking. The idea is to create a team of "Parking Experts" that can help formulate solutions, educate others and implement the recommendations.

At the Parking Kick-off meeting city staff and citizens discussed the changes in the neighborhood that have happened since the 1999 *Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study*. Issues and opportunities were also identified. This document includes a summary of these discussions and an updated "Top 10" list of Parking Opportunities. There is also a section outlining next steps that need to be taken by city staff, residents and business owners.

Changes Since Parking Study

- More business uses in the Neighborhood
- Orca changed their bus parking/drop off scheme.

Issues, Opportunities and Questions raised at the meeting

- Abandoned vehicles – Reactive parking enforcement of abandonment laws.
- Parking on Edmunds should mesh better with Orca buses and traffic flow.
- Library Expansion presents new issues.
- Perception that enforcement only happens with events like the Farmer's Market and SeaFair.
- Opportunities to add parking on 37th between Edmunds and Ferdinand and on 39th.
- Employee Parking is an issue in the neighborhood, explore options

Updated Top 10 List.

Together we'll identify the top parking improvement opportunities – these won't happen unless there is support from the neighborhood. These are our ideas based on current conditions and input from the kick-off meeting.

1. **Some off-street lots have low utilization, opportunity to better market to residents and/or businesses.**

One goal of the Columbia City Parking Workgroup could be to contact private lot owners and discuss the way that lots are marketed. Directional Signage is also a possibility to help with marketing efforts, once a strategy has been devised.

2. **Explore Church and School shared parking opportunities.**

Orca, Zion Prep and the churches in the neighborhood have parking that is only at capacity during certain times. Parking at the churches could be used during the weekday and at night by residents. If these lots are part of a larger strategy for off-street parking they could benefit from signage and marketing too.

3. **Streets where there is currently no parking need to be measured and assessed for the possible addition of on-street parking.**

Property owners on the blocks where parking can be added have to sign a petition to add parking. Involving the Parking Workgroup members in the education and outreach effort needed in petitioning is key to success.

4. **Explore angled parking possibilities. The neighborhood plan suggests east of Rainier on S. Ferdinand and S. Hudson west of Rainier.**

The petition process to add angled parking is similar to the one described above. Effort would be made to account for street design. Participants at the kick-off suggested S. Ferdinand west of Rainier and angled parking already occurs informally on S. Hudson west of Rainier.

5. **Stretches of Unrestricted parking adjacent to nonresidential uses could be converted to time limit signs.**

This protects against employees taking "customer" spots, or "hide-and-ride" and provides more short-term parking for business customers. A more comprehensive on-street parking survey and land use analysis will reveal the possibilities. Education and outreach is important for this suggestion especially with employee parking as an issue in the neighborhood.

6. **Protect against Hide-and-Ride parking.**

Employee parking on residential streets is currently perceived to be a problem. Can we look into an RPZ now? The challenge will be that the City currently doesn't have funding to implement RPZs (budget cuts). We can try to look into if an RPZ would help solve the problem at this time given current conditions and if there is neighborhood support for it. Sound Transit will do a parking study

before the station opens (after construction) and then another study after the station opens to look at the impacts. This does not mean that there will be nothing done about parking until after the station opens, that is why we are here now.

7. On-street peak utilization rates are not high everywhere, changes made now to improve parking management will prevent a greater parking problem rather than react to one.

While there is demand for parking in Columbia City there are areas of on-street parking where peak use is low. These areas present opportunities to be proactive rather than reactive about parking. The question is what can be done in these areas that will prevent a parking problem when there is new development or when light rail is built?

8. Work with Orca, Churches and residents to address buses, parking and traffic flow problems around the school.

Since Orca has changed the pick-up and drop-off points for their buses there have been parking and traffic flow issues around the school, specifically on Edmunds.

9. Work with Parking Enforcement Officials to understand and influence enforcement strategies.

Everyone agrees enforcement is a problem, citizens are encouraged to let elected officials know this is a priority for them. A goal of the Parking Workgroup could be to educate citizens on how they can generate an enforcement action when they need to.

Next Steps

- **City Staff** – Do updated comprehensive field survey of on-street parking types.
DONE
- **Residents/business owners** – Walk around the neighborhood, identify the issues and opportunities you see.
- **City Staff** – Talk with people at Orca, administrators and PTA to solicit participation in Parking Workgroup WEEK OF JUNE 3-7
- **Residents /business owners** – Talk to your neighbors and peers about what their parking needs are and if they want to participate in the Parking Workgroup.
- **City Staff** – Set date, place, agenda and prepare materials for Parking Workgroup meeting in June. Inform all interested parties of the time and place. WEEK OF JUNE 3-7 & 10-14

- **Residents /business owners** – Come to the June meeting full of ideas and enthusiasm!