COLUMBIA CITY PARKING PROPOSAL FAQ – GENERAL QUESTIONS

Why are parking changes proposed for Columbia City?

- The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) works in neighborhood business districts across the City through the Community Access and Parking Program. Neighborhoods change and evolve, and this program pairs data collection and public outreach to improve parking and access in areas of high demand.
- Citywide, Seattle grew in population by over 12% from 2010 to 2016 and more growth is on the way. Our street parking system is a public resource, but we are generally not able to build new street parking. Changes are aimed to balance the many competing needs for street parking.
- Specific to Columbia City, parking is frequently very full. In a residential area parking study, parking in 2016 was 30% to 40% more full in 2016 than on the same streets in 2012.

What are the details of the proposal?

- See embedded map

Why add time limits and paid parking to Columbia City?

- Lack of parking availability causes drivers to circulate throughout the area which leads to driver frustration and local congestion.
- In dense, mixed use areas SDOT prioritizes short term parking over longer term parking, which will remain available on blocks outside of the commercial area.
- In a survey of parking on commercial streets in Spring 2015 SDOT found that occupancy exceeded 90% from 10 AM until after 8 PM. In addition, we found that over a third of parking spaces (which included some with no time limits) were occupied by a single vehicle for 6 or more hours.

Why paid instead of free parking with time limits?

- Our studies show that the existing time limits are no longer sufficient in creating available parking. Converting unpaid time limits to paid is consistent with how SDOT manages parking across the city. It is our most effective tool for creating reliable short term parking in areas with high parking demand.
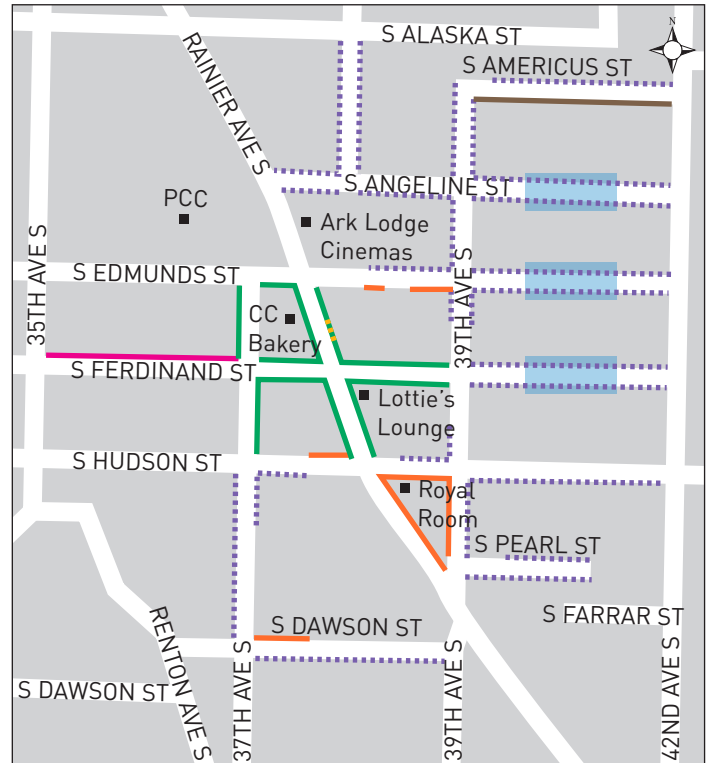
PROPOSED CHANGES

- ──── Paid, $1/hr, 8 AM-8 PM Mon-Sat, 2 hr Limit, with 3 hours after 5 PM (80 spaces)
- ····· RPZ, 7 AM-6 PM Mon-Fri, 2 hours except by permit (390 spaces)
- ──── Unpaid Time Limits, 7 AM-6 PM, Mon-Sat, 2 hr limit (40 spaces)
- ──── Sign No Parking
- ▪ Establish Vehicle Turn-out Areas
- ····· Convert One Space to Passenger Load Only 5 PM - 2 AM
- ──── Add New RPZ 29 Parking Spaces

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How will we know if this works and/or has effects on blocks outside the area where changes are made?

- Within a year of implementing changes, SDOT will survey parking occupancy in the areas where changes are made, on surrounding streets, and will report our results.
- We will also welcome your feedback on how changes have altered area parking and if you feel further changes are needed.

What if people need to drive and parking for longer than 2 hours?

- For **residents and employees** within the RPZ area, they can purchase RPZ permits to park on RPZ blocks, park outside time limit areas, or utilize off-street parking.
- For **customers and visitors** arriving during the day, they can park outside time limits or utilize off-street parking.
- Keeping time limits at 2 hours in the core of the business districts is consistent with existing time limits and makes parking regulations easy to understand and prioritizes the most convenient parking for short trips.
- Proposed and existing time limit and RPZ areas are 2 hours and in effect 7 AM – 6 PM Mon-Sat. This allows for arriving at 4 PM and parking through the evening. In paid parking areas, visitors would be able to purchase time starting at 5 PM to allow them to stay through the evening.
- Two hour limits serve most customers and visitors. In spring 2016, we surveyed almost 400 customers and visitors to the Rainier Avenue Business District.
  - We heard from 75% of respondents that their visit was under 2 hours.
  - Of those staying longer than 2 hours, about half were visiting after 4 PM, which is when time limits and paid parking will allow for longer stays
  - Only 4% of total customers and visitors surveyed reporting that they visited during the day and parked on the street for longer than 2 hours

How will this alter how or if customers and visitors come to the business district?

- A spring 2016 intercept survey of almost 400 customers and visitors to the neighborhood found that driving was the single most popular mode of travel, but that most customers and visitors arrived by means other than a car. The most frequent customers and visitors are those that walk to the business district.

- The parking changes are aimed to make short-term parking near businesses more available for customers and visitors who drive. Those who drive may choose to pay for parking in existing paid lots or on streets on or near Rainier, or park a block or two away in unpaid time limited areas.

Would the price of street parking go up or down in the future?

- SDOT is directed by city law to set and adjust rates based on how full parking is in our commercial and mixed use areas. We adjust parking rates once per year in $0.50 increments based on how full parking is. After our first survey, if paid parking is below 65% utilized during the morning, afternoon, or evening, we will lower the rate. If it is above 90% occupied during the morning, afternoon, or evening, we will increase the rate. A short video explaining this program and process is posted on www.seattle.gov/parking.

Could the City build a public parking garage instead?

- There are existing publicly available off-street paid parking lots adjacent to Light Rail and the Rainier Avenue business district. We surveyed these facilities and found they have available parking supply, though parking in the large lot on Ferdinand can fill on weekend evenings.
- A new parking garage would require significant public investment to construct and operate. Revenue received would almost certainly not cover these costs. Seattle's policy direction is to make the most efficient use of parking that we have available and prioritize improvements that make our business districts easier to reach by transit, biking, and walking. We do not have a City program to build neighborhood parking garages.

How can I make comments, ask questions, or find out more?

- Respond to our online questionnaire at www.surveymonkey.com/r/SDOTCC by February 13, 2017
- Contact us at Columbiacityparking@seattle.gov or 206-733-9026
- For more information, see the project website at www.seattle.gov/transportation/parking/cp_ ColumbiaCity.htm