



## City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

## Seattle Planning Commission

Barbara Wilson, Executive Director

### MEMORANDUM

To: Grace Crunican, Director, Seattle Department of Transportation  
From: Tony To, Chair, Seattle Planning Commission  
Re: SPC comments on draft recommendations of the Residential Parking Zone policy review

June 26, 2008

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Ms. Crunican,

The Planning Commission appreciates the opportunity to provide you with comments regarding the Seattle Department of Transportation's (SDOT) draft recommendations for the Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) policy review.

The Commission would first like to commend SDOT for taking a thoughtful approach in performing this review. There is a definite need to reexamine current policy regarding RPZs, and the process used by SDOT staff for doing so appears to be thorough, inclusive, and comprehensive.

We recognize that curb space on public streets is a limited resource. In most cases that resource is equally available to all. An RPZ designation creates an exclusive and dedicated use of that resource for residents when there is a compelling reason to do so. Traditionally, RPZ's have been created to try and help ease parking congestion in residential neighborhoods to discourage long-term parking by non-residents. RPZ's have also been created in places where parking congestion is caused by being near a business district with limited parking, and/or is caused by parking generated by visitors or employees of a hospital, school, sporting or cultural event facility, or factory.

The Commission has developed some specific comments regarding the draft recommendations for the Residential Parking Zone policy review:

#### **RPZ's should be consistent with City's Comprehensive Plan policies**

We view parking, both on private and public property, to be one element in a broader land use and transportation context. In implementing the goals found in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan, parking represents a vital aspect of the City's effort to encourage density in certain areas while increasing use of transit, bicycling and walking citywide and encouraging decreasing dependency on automobiles. With this in mind, the Commission believes Seattle should continue working to develop a more comprehensive Parking Management Strategy. RPZs can be an important tool in an overall strategy in solving neighborhood and business conflicts.

### **Fairly Price RPZ's**

We support increasing the cost of permits to reflect the true cost of such a program, including staff time, public meetings, monitoring and enforcing, processing and mailing, etc., and set the price high enough to cover this cost while balancing the potential negative and regressive impacts of a drastic fee increase.

### **Strengthen Eligibility Requirements**

We support limiting the number of permits provided per household citywide. The potential need for parking of the up to eight unrelated people allowed to live together in one home in Seattle should be balanced with efforts to encourage reduced automobile ownership and use in favor of increased transit use, especially in denser areas with transit availability. We encourage SDOT to explore ways to better ensure that the number of permits issued in an RPZ better correlate with the amount of curbside parking spaces available within the RPZ.

### **Reduce Fraud Potential and Increase Enforcement**

We strongly support enhanced efforts to reduce permit fraud. These should be aimed at discouraging people from forging and reselling permits or from otherwise abusing the system at the expense of their neighbors who are legitimately using this system. It is worth exploring the best practices used by other cities to determine the best course for ensuring RPZ's are used for their intended purpose. Concern also exists about enforcement. We support hiring more Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) to enforce use of permits.

### **Revisit Process for Creating and Maintaining RPZ's**

We have concern regarding the creation process. Zones need to be created with adequate input and support by neighborhoods and with adequate study by SDOT. The City should consider a sunset provision for each zone. Prior to the date of the sunset, SDOT and the neighborhood could analyze the zone to determine if it is successful in achieving its objectives and to ensure residents want to continue its existence.

Please don't hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Barbara Wilson, at (206) 684-0431 if you have any further questions about our comments. And once again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important initiative.

Cc:

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