

**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY  
FIRST HILL PARKING WORKGROUP  
MAY 29, 2003  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
6:00 – 7:30 PM**

**ATTENDEES**

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Mike Brewer, resident  
Judi Carter, Yesler Terrace  
Linda Johnson, Harborview Hospital  
Stephen Jones, First Baptist Church  
Karen Lee Kimber, Swedish Hospital  
Kristin O'Donnell, Yesler Terrace  
Community Council  
Esta Pekow, Stewardship Committee  
Michael Sletten, Seattle University

John Stowell, resident  
John Valentine, Polyclinic  
Billy Jack, Seattle Department of  
Transportation (SDOT)  
Meghan Shepard, SDOT  
Randy Wiger, SDOT  
Mark Troxel, Department of Design,  
Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)

Notes prepared by Randy Wiger

**ACTION ITEMS**

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- The City will assess the feasibility of restoring angled parking in front of the First Baptist Church (on Harvard) across from Polyclinic.
- City staff will investigate the current need for load zones by the Medial Examiner's office at Harborview (on Alder), and will remove them if possible.

**MEETING SUMMARY**

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**Updated First Hill Parking Matrix**

An updated version of the First Hill Parking Matrix was distributed that incorporated the priority ratings given to each item by the Workgroup at the May 24, 2003 meeting. Three themes for focus have emerged: 1) Make changes to the RPZ so it works better in the First Hill environment, 2) Exercise the City's option to establish time limits on use of Disabled Placards, and 3) Increase the consistency of on-street parking restrictions in First Hill.

**ON-STREET PARKING WITH BILLY JACK, SDOT TRAFFIC CONTROLS**

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Billy Jack, manager of SDOT's Traffic Controls division, addressed the meeting topic of on-street parking. He explained SDOT's parking philosophy. SDOT has calculated the value of each on-street parking space to be about \$20,000 a year in terms of the benefit it provides to citizens. SDOT's prioritization of uses for curb space are:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: transit – buses, layover, etc.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: load zones – for passengers and deliveries
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: short-term parking – for customers
- 4<sup>th</sup>: long-term or unrestricted parking – for residential and employee parking

### **Decisions About Parking Changes Made Case-by-Case**

SDOT recognizes the value of each space and attempts to balance the use based on the mix of needs in a particular neighborhood. Even with prioritization and guidelines, SDOT makes decisions on a case-by-case basis rather than by rote formula. For example, not all businesses are alike: some may need 15 minute parking for drop-off and pick-up while others may need 2 hour parking for dining. Generally SDOT tries to petition the people most affected, but sometimes this is tedious. SDOT had recent success with load zone and bus stop consolidation in Capitol Hill where a petition process was not used – and received not a single complaint about the changes that were made.

### **Back-in Angled Parking**

In the right circumstances, back-in angled parking can increase the number of stalls available on a particular street or block. However, it does change the visibility between the street and sidewalk, and/or nearby businesses. Drivers may have more trouble seeing a storefront from the street when looking across an area with back-in angled parking, and shoppers exiting a business may have more trouble seeing the street.

### **Update on City's Meter Installation**

The City is installing more meters to increase turnover within short-term parking spaces, and revenues. When the City begins using new pay station meter technology on blocks that are already metered, older parking meters will be “liberated,” which can then be re-deployed elsewhere in the City. Neighborhoods most likely to get pay stations first are Broadway, First Hill, the U-District, the Central Business District (Downtown), and the Waterfront. Each pay station will liberate about 7 old-style mechanical or electronic meters. New meters cost about \$400 each to install (with cost of poles, etc.), whereas each pay station may cost around \$6,000 to \$6,500.

New (or re-deployed) meters will be generally be installed in areas where time restrictions already exist. Typically meters are not installed in front of residential buildings, unless the area is very dense. In that situation, meters are employed in front of residential buildings to provide short-term parking for unloading groceries, etc., and then the driver would move the vehicle to an appropriate long-term parking space.

### **Disabled Placards**

It is timely to have a discussion with the disabled community about exercising the City's option to establish time limits on disabled placards. The level of abuse of the placards has reached a point where the disabled people who most need nearby spaces can not get those spaces because less- or non-disabled people are taking them all. Frank Nelson (SDOT Traffic Management) recently did an informal survey around several downtown blocks and found that 41% of vehicles parked in on-street spaces had disabled placards. (The Swedish and Harborview representatives present said that the rate is virtually 100% around their hospitals). The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) requires that placards can be used in the “nearest available space”. Drivers with disabled placards are required to obey load zone time limits.

## **NEW TOPICS**

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### **Load Zones**

Karen Kimber said Swedish is contacting their tenants to see if they need the load zones at their buildings and, if not, she is working to replace them with meters. Linda said the load zones by the Medial Examiner's office at Harborview (on Alder) may no longer be needed. No one at the meeting was opposed to taking action to remove these and replace them with short-term parking spaces.

### **Enforcement on RPZ Guest Permits Changing**

Meghan said that Parking Enforcement Officers are starting to check vehicle registration of cars displaying RPZ Guest Permits, and ticketing those vehicles if it can be determined that the Guest Permit is being used on the resident's 2<sup>nd</sup> car.

### **Construction Impacts to On-Street Spaces**

Mark explained that large construction vehicles need to have stable ground/shoring and therefore cannot park too close to the edge of construction areas due to the danger of the walls caving in where trenches are dug, etc. Before a construction project begins, a plan has to be on file describing construction worker employee parking. Often workers park at a remote site and are shuttled in to minimize parking impacts on the neighborhood surrounding a project.

### **Metro Bus Turn at Jefferson & 9<sup>th</sup>**

Metro buses have trouble turning at this intersection due to traffic flow and often add to congestion by blocking lanes. Cars accessing I-5 at this intersection often get caught behind the bus, adding to the congestion. There was discussion at the May 24, 2003 meeting as to whether the bus stop could be moved to eliminate the need of the buses to turn there. The workgroup also discussed whether this intersection could be changed to a two-lane intersection with wayfinding signs directing drivers to access I-5 at the next intersection rather than getting backed-up behind buses.

Kristin O'Donnell says moving the current bus stop location to one which is even just one block farther away would be a hardship on people who use walkers and canes to get around. Billy said the idea of directing people to use the next intersection to access I-5 has been examined before and the City does not want to run that much traffic down a residential street.

## **QUESTIONS FOR BILL JACK AND COMMENTS**

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1. *There used to be angled parking in front of the Church (on Harvard) across from Polyclinic. Could this be restored?* The City will look into this possibility and report back to Workgroup.
2. *Can meters be combined with RPZs?* Not in a way that allows people with RPZ permits to park for free during meter hours – this will not create turnover in those spaces.

3. *How many polling places in First Hill are there (There is a perception is that there is only one polling place and this causes lots of congestion and traffic on polling days)?* The City will look into this and report back to the Workgroup.
4. *Could meters be put on Yesler Ave where it crosses I-5, and surrounding blocks be made 'No Parking' except with an RPZ Permit?* Yes, possibly some blocks of the RPZ could be either 'No Parking' or '1 hour Parking' except with RPZ Permit. Judi Carter commented that, since the 'Carpool Parking' signs were removed on Yesler where it crosses I-5 (and is now unrestricted?), people without RPZ Permits are parking there more often instead of on blocks in the RPZ. It is now a bit easier for people with RPZ Permits to find spaces on blocks in the RPZ."
5. *Could meters be put in on Yesler Ave (further east of the I-5 overpass)?* The City is concerned that installing meters there may cause people to go elsewhere with the result that no one uses those on-street spaces.
6. *Are Smart Cards for Pay Stations in use anywhere in the U.S.?* Yes.
7. *Could Pay Stations and Smart Cards be used in conjunction with RPZs?* It would depend on the specific circumstances. RPZs are not currently combined with meters of any sort except in a very few blocks around the City.
8. *Can on-street spaces be zoned or "reserved" for specific people such as tenants of a particular building for example?* No. On-street spaces can only be zoned for a 'class of vehicle' such as Police Vehicles or Consulate Cars, not for individual people.
9. There was appreciation expressed for the prompt responses by SDOT to recent parking issues at Swedish and Harborview.

The Workgroup concluded by agreeing that:

- 1) They would like to have RPZs as the featured topic for the next meeting (with Julie Erickson of SDOT presenting), and
- 2) It would be a good idea to schedule a second walking tour for those who did not attend the first.

**Meeting Adjourned**