

**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY
FIRST HILL PARKING WORKGROUP
JULY 24, 2003
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
6:00 – 7:30 PM**

ATTENDEES

Judi Carter, Yesler Terrace
Tamara Bunnell, Resident
Linda Johnson, Harborview
Stephen Jones, First Baptist Church
Karen Lee Kimber, Swedish Hospital
Esta Pekow, Stewardship Committee
Michael Sletten, Seattle University
John Stowell, resident

Ross Leonard, Seattle Police Department,
Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO)
Meghan Shepard, Seattle Department of
Transportation (SDOT)
Randy Wiger, SDOT
Mark Troxel, Department of Design,
Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)

Notes prepared by Randy Wiger

ACTION ITEMS

- Meghan will ask Julie Erickson if the existing parking data for First Hill is sufficient to verify the need for longer RPZ hours, and if it could be used in lieu of an RPZ Study.
- Meghan will send out an e-mail to decide the date of the August meeting.

MEETING SUMMARY

Review of RPZ Ideas

The "Quick Reference Sheet for RPZs" was distributed.

OFF-STREET PARKING

As an example of how off-street parking lots can be managed differently, Meghan described the customer parking spaces available in the Nordstrom parking facility south of Madison. These spaces could be more fully utilized by customers if way-finding signs directed shoppers to it.

Harborview's lots

Tamara asked if we know what the usage rate is at Harborview's garage. Linda said they don't have figures for the daytime usage but that the main lot is always over-filled. She went on to say that Harborview directs evening visitors to the lot at Jefferson and 9th that is kitty corner from the emergency room. Harborview's evening escort service is busy accompanying departing staff here and to other locations where they park. However this lot will be eliminated in one year when construction begins. The new underground spaces that will be created will mostly be used by the increase in staff that will occur when the expansion is completed. The new Harborview building will have 650 spaces - more than the code requires. Tamara asked what the construction impacts will be. Linda said that most of the staging areas are off-street and workers will be bused into the site. Linda added that Harborview is attempting to work out a lot-sharing

agreement with 24-Hour Fitness (at Stewart and Boren) because it is next to a remote garage of Harborview's, which is already served by a shuttle service.

Other Institutional lots

Karen said that Swedish is packed until around 6:00 pm and that the biggest problem is when the evening shift arrives before the day shift leaves.

Meghan said that she believed Virginia Mason's lots were at capacity during the day, and that they have a lot-sharing arrangement with the Stimson Green and the Panorama House. It was added that Virginia Mason also rents employee parking spaces at the Metropolitan Park building and use shuttles on a 15-minute schedule.

Michael commented that Seattle University has off-street spaces available from 3:00 pm on weekdays, and all day on weekends. However, the parking must be paid for at a location off of 12th Avenue, and may be inconvenient for some users.

Stephen said that the church still has a lot-sharing agreement with the PolyClinic.

Yesler Terrace's lots and nearby parking

Judi says that Yesler Terrace lots are full of hospital visitors despite posted warning signs and patrols by Judi and other Yesler Terrace residents. Even in the evening when nearby on-street spaces are available, their lots are still occupied by a lot of hospital visitors. Michael asked if it would be possible for Yesler Terrace to install gated arms with pass-cards at their lot entrances. Judi agreed that it is possible, but expensive.

Tamara said the evening was the worst time for parking around her building. She said she knows a lot of evening-shift Harborview employees use on-street parking around her building because she sees them wearing their scrubs. Linda said that Harborview lots have a lot of spaces in the evening and that employees should be using them - the fee for employees for the evening lots is \$27.50 per month. Randy asked if would be possible to send someone out maybe once a month to flyer the evening shift employee cars that park on-street alerting them to the option of using the Harborview evening lot. Linda said that Harborview does not have the labor available for that. Meghan added that the Making the Parking System Work program has other resources available, so we should write down all good ideas whether or not there is an immediately identifiable way to implement them.

PARKING & THE LAND USE CODE WITH MARK TROXEL, DCLU

Mark announced that the Mayor and the Department of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU) are proposing changes to the Land Use Code for First Hill in order to encourage development. More parking is required of new residential developments in First Hill than would be used by residents of those units. Currently, the code requires a minimum of from 1.1 to 1.4 spaces per unit for non-subsidized residential units. When a project is subject to State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) analysis, mitigation is imposed on a project solely to prevent spillover parking, causing planners to "err on the safe side" and require 1.5 spaces per unit. Car

ownership rates are at .6 cars per household in First Hill, which is down from .75 cars per household in the 1990 Census.

The proposed changes would 1) require only one space per unit, 2) remove SEPA authority to require more than one space per unit, and 3) change the open space requirement from an amount per unit ratio to an amount per total square foot of the lot (the net result is that developer would be required to build less open space as a way of encouraging development). Mark distributed copies of the "DCLU Director's Report and Recommendations: Modifications to Minimum Parking and Open Space Requirements within the First Hill Urban Village".

Mark went on to say it would be appropriate for this group to send a letter commenting on these proposed changes (either for or against or whatever) as long as it comes from the citizens in the Workgroup. The City will be taking SEPA comments until August 4th, 2003, and then later in August these changes will go to the City Council, who will hold a 30-day comment period. People can review the handout and discuss whether or not to endorse the changes at the next meeting.

Related Questions and Comments:

1. *Even though the proposed reduction to the number of spaces per unit will still result in more parking spaces than current car ownership rates, there is still a problem when residents of a building choose not to rent a space in their own building and park on the street instead.*
Mark said that the short-term impact of “unbundling” parking from rents (i.e. not including parking as part of unit rental agreement and allowing it to be rented separately) is that on-street parking increases. However, the long-term consequences of unbundling allows people to see the actual costs of car ownership and to decide whether or not they want to own a car.
2. *How many Flexcars are there on First Hill?*
The website www.flexcar.com shows three locations: 7th & Seneca (behind Town Hall), Madison & Minor, and Minor & Seneca. There are many more Flexcars located in the downtown and Capitol Hill areas adjacent to First Hill.
3. *While there is general support in the idea of car-sharing, concern was expressed that cars are important to many First Hill residents because there are fewer services (restaurants, retail, etc.) in First Hill and residents have to drive to other neighborhoods. The City's intent in encouraging new residential development was questioned in light of current high vacancy rates.* In the long run, increasing the density of residential units will bring new goods and services to the neighborhood. A Harbor Properties Market Analysis has shown that there is demand for “workforce” housing that serves households earning approximately 80% of the area's median (current median income is \$62,000 for a household of four). A rule of thumb developers use is that retail follows residential.
4. *What about ensuring a pedestrian-friendly corridor?*
Yes, this is something that would encourage more shopping and activities.
5. *A comment was made that First Hill is really two communities: north of James Street is higher income and south of James is lower income.*

PARKING ENFORCEMENT WITH ROSS LEONARD, SPD

Disabled Parking Placards

Supervisor Leonard began by addressing disabled placards. Politicians are resistant to make changes to the rules governing disabled placards - the first politician to restrict the use of disabled placards will not get re-elected. Citizens will have to lobby their politicians strongly to get changes - they will have to write letters and make phone calls. There is a very high rate of fraud with estimates that as much as 80% of the placards in use are given out to individuals who are not disabled. Also, disabled placards do not entitle people to park for more than the time limit in 3-minute load zones, or in the yellow-headed commercial load zone meters, and they cannot park during peak zone restrictions.

Meghan stated that the City Council has the ability to restrict disabled parking (using placards) to 4-hours, and is preparing to change the necessary ordinances. Supervisor Leonard added that the City Council may have the ability to restrict disabled parking, but Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) have difficulty enforcing 4-hour restrictions of any sort.

Linda commented that Harborview has a lot of indigent disabled patients but their disabled parking spaces are used by disabled employees who park all day, so those spaces do not have turnover.

Abandoned and Inoperable Vehicles

Ross then spoke about abandoned and inoperable vehicles. He said there are a lot of repeat offenders. Recently, the City Council changed the time period a car is allowed to be parked on the street from 24 to 72 hours with the effect that this gives the offenders more time to move their car around the corner. The repeat offenders do not care about how many tickets they get - they drive the vehicle till they rack up so many violations that they cannot renew their car tabs, and then they just get a new clunker. He said the fines do not increase with each violation for the same vehicle.

Another problem is that no one wants an impound lot in their neighborhood, yet the law says you cannot locate impound lots too far away because people have to be able to retrieve their property. Ross clarified that when a car is inoperable on an off-street lot, it is a DCLU issue, and that when it is in an on-street space, then it is a PEO issue. This raises the issue of whether there could be any improvements in coordination between the PEOs and DCLU (to prevent someone from moving their car from the street to the driveway and back to evade first DCLU, then the PEOs, then DCLU, etc.).

Supervisor Leonard was asked if there are any abandoned vehicle hotspots in First Hill. He identified the following areas: Main and 12th, 13th between Jefferson & Columbia, 12th from Yesler up to E. Cherry, and around O'Dea Boys Catholic School (between Marion & Columbia, and Terry & Boren).

Supervisor Leonard added that the PEOs have been doing occasional concentrated enforcement sweeps in areas of the City. While effective at reducing violations in restricted parking zones, these sweeps do generate a lot of complaints. Workgroup members present are not supportive of

similar sweeps in First Hill at this time because on-street parking is already so tough it is more likely that residents will get ticketed because they are parking too close to a stop sign or partially inside of a load zone, etc.

NEXT MEETING

Meghan suggested scheduling 30 minutes at the next meeting to develop a plan for making changes to the RPZ.

Topics at the next meeting will include Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and various follow-up items.

Meghan will send out an e-mail to decide the date of the August meeting.

Meeting Adjourned