

South Lake Union On-Street Parking Plan



January 2006



South Lake Union On-Street Parking Plan Executive Summary

Plan Overview

This report presents the findings and recommendations from the ongoing South Lake Union On-Street Parking Plan being conducted by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). The Plan outlines short- and long-term strategies for addressing on-street parking needs in the neighborhood and supports Mayor Nickel's City Center Strategy. In June 2005, SDOT began this work with consultant resources. Key project goals are to:

- ✘ gain a better understanding of existing on-street parking characteristics through detailed data collection and analysis
- ✘ develop on-street parking management and pricing strategies that give SDOT tools to respond effectively to dynamic and evolving development patterns, and
- ✘ integrate on- and off-street parking programs to achieve neighborhood traffic and transportation benefits.

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting was hired to assist SDOT in the Plan development. This brief summary outlines key findings and recommendations of the South Lake Union On-Street Parking Plan. The project timeline provides a chronological outline of project activities.

Project Timeline

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| June 2005 | ✘ Project Begins |
| July 2005 | ✘ Review of Land Use and Parking Policies ✘ Development Review |
| August 2005 | ✘ Parking Inventory ✘ Survey of On-Street Parking |
| September 2005 | ✘ Draft Plan development |
| November/ December 2005 | ✘ Outreach with SLU Stakeholders |
| January 2006 | ✘ Incorporate Outreach Comments ✘ Final SLU On-Street Parking Plan released |
| 2006 - 2007 | ✘ SDOT addresses procurement, installation and legislative issues ✘ Public outreach and information campaign if and when pay stations are scheduled to be installed |





Why Change Parking Regulations in SLU?

South Lake Union is expected to grow tremendously in the next 20 years and will continue to see an increasing influx of new jobs and residents. If current trends in development were to continue, the neighborhood would see potentially 13,000 more vehicles daily by 2025, the equivalent of adding an additional Mercer Street with all the traffic it carries today. New approaches to managing on-street parking will be critical, to ensure that the short- and long-term needs of South Lake Union businesses, residents and visitors are met.

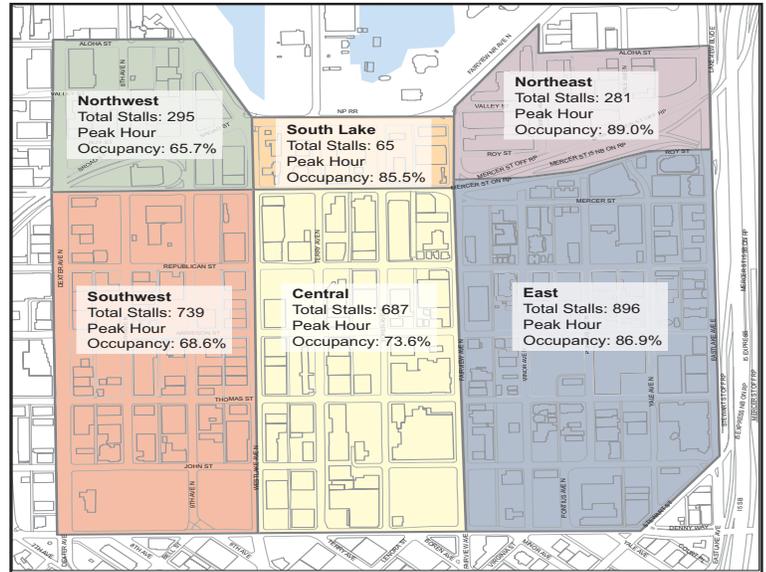
Parking Data Findings

An analysis of data collected during the inventory and utilization survey conducted in August 2005 produced the following important findings:

- ❏ There are about 3,000 on-street parking spaces in the study area between Dexter Ave N, Lake Union, I-5, and Denny Way. The actual amount of available on-street parking will fluctuate in coming years as new construction projects come on line or are completed.
- ❏ Just 75 spaces are currently metered, mostly around Westlake Ave N and Denny Way (near the Seattle Times), with very low average utilization (occupied just 20%-30% of daytime hours).
- ❏ There are approximately 900 1-hour and 2-hour time-limit signed spaces, with decent utilization (60-75% weekday), but very low turnover and a high abuse rate of the time limit.
- ❏ The remaining 2,000 spaces are unrestricted and very full during daytime hours, with average length of stay about 5 hours. The majority of spaces are being used for long-term parking.
- ❏ Data show that people parking in the neighborhood either understand that parking is not actively enforced or do not understand the posted time limits. For example, parkers in 1 and 2-hour signed spaces stay an average of almost three hours over the posted time limit.

The following map shows on-street parking occupancy at the peak daytime hour.

Parking Occupancy by Study Zone



Source: GIS Data provided by City of Seattle

Plan Recommendations

The South Lake Union On-Street Parking Plan recommends adopting a market-rate pricing scenario to ensure that on-street parking is available for business customers, residents and employees at all times. The dynamic and changing built environment in the South Lake Union neighborhood will require a flexible management system, which is able to adapt quickly and efficiently to changes in parking demand resulting from new commercial and residential development.

The core recommendation of the plan is to manage short- and long-term on-street parking demand in South Lake Union through market-based pricing strategies. The SLU On-Street Parking Plan recommends the elimination of time-limits and proposes to charge hourly rates for most on-street parking. Rates will be set and adjusted using market-rate pricing to ensure that an average of one space on every block is available at all times. Additionally, a residential parking zone would be established to provide a minimum amount of exclusive parking for existing Cascade residents.

The plan creates important TDM benefits by encouraging parking price-sensitive employees to change their travel behavior. As demand for on-street parking increases, rates will go up and more drivers will be encouraged to use other modes.

Based on our analysis of on the parking inventory and utilization data, we are making the following recommendations:

Recommendations Summary

| Recommendations | Implementation Logistics |
|--|---|
| Pay Station Installation Rollout | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan recommends a one-time roll-out of pay stations in 2007 to achieve the most effective results from demand-responsive pricing strategy. A full neighborhood installation could require 300-400 pay stations and take four to six months. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan will require new graphic designs for pay stations and signage. New educational materials will need to be developed to explain the flexible rate structure. |
| On-Street Parking Pricing | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan recommends that on-street parking rates be set to achieve an optimal 85% occupancy rate and that time limits be removed to allow pricing to work effectively. Premium rates or time limits on certain stalls near key retail can be used to ensure short-term parking is available for business access. SDOT will conduct regular data collection occupancy checks (using available technology) and adjust rates accordingly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDOT is working to determine whether Seattle Municipal Code changes are required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grant SDOT authority for demand-responsive rate changes. If Plan is approved, SDOT will finalize a data collection and monitoring process to set hourly parking rates based on demand. |
| Parking Enforcement | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add three enforcement personnel and required equipment to ensure high levels of compliance (brings total area patrol staff to four). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City will need to consider this potential budget increase in the 2007-08 budget planning. |
| Residential Parking | |
| Short-Term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDOT is pursuing whether SMC changes may allow limits on RPZ permit sales. These limitations have been requested from U-District and other RPZ zones. Any changes will need careful review to avoid setting unacceptable precedents. Short-term residential parking strategies are aimed at accommodating current Cascade neighborhood residents. SDOT will determine legal and logistic feasibility of offering monthly market-rate residential passes, outside of SDOT's RPZ program. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Plan recommends the implementation of a 2-year "pilot" Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) that sets aside a minimum amount of on-street parking for residential use. (An upcoming SDOT RPZ Policy Review will address how to effectively implement RPZs in mixed-use neighborhoods). | |
| Longer Term | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement appropriate tools from RPZ Policy Review, including potentially limiting the number of permits per household or grandfathering in existing residents. Charge a monthly "market-rate" for on-street parking for residents. SDOT would make a monthly parking pass available to park anywhere in neighborhood and not pay daily rate at pay station. | |