

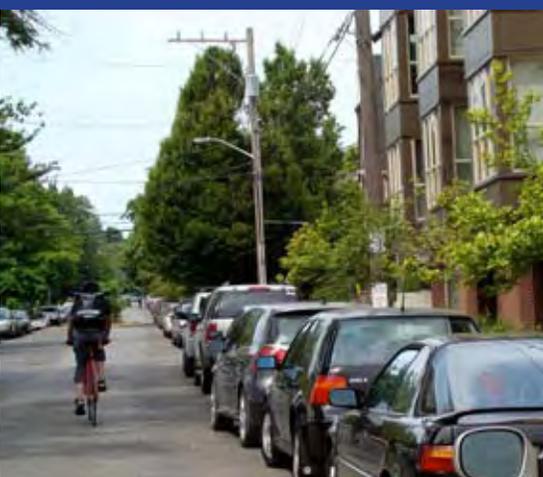
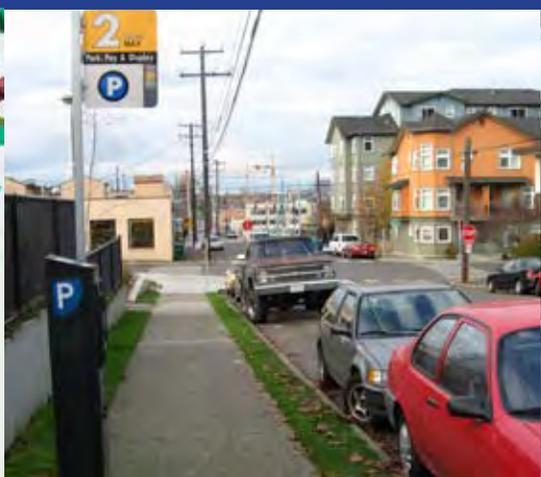


Residential Parking Zone Policy Review Project Draft Final Report



Prepared by
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July 31, 2008



RPZ Policy Review Project

Draft Final Report

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Chapter 1

Residential Parking Zones in Seattle

Introduction

Too many vehicles competing for too few parking spaces. This is the basic problem residents want solved when they petition the city to create a Residential Parking Zone (RPZ).

When stated that simply, the solution seems equally straightforward: reserve on-street parking on residential streets for the people who live there. Sometimes it is just that simple and the solution works exactly as designed, protecting a neighborhood from the traffic, parking, pollution, noise and safety impacts of commuters working for or students attending a nearby institution.

More often than not, however, it is not that easy. Residents alone may own more vehicles than there are spaces to park them and so they compete for space, not only with ‘outsiders’ but also with each other. ‘Outsiders’ can be their own visitors, customers of nearby businesses who depend on on-street customer parking for success, and many others with legitimate business in the neighborhood.

Even more complexity is introduced when the definition of the problem is expanded to include fundamental questions about how people in Seattle want to live and travel. Seattle is committed to building communities where people can live closer to the places they need to go, where streets invite people to walk and cycle, where transit service is convenient and reliable, and where it is not only possible to live without owning a car, but a desirable lifestyle.

Taken together, these are the challenges and opportunities this project is intended to address while taking into account that, regardless of whether the zoning is residential, commercial or other, streets are public rights-of-way, any restrictions on their use should produce a broad public benefit, not a limited and personal one.

This chapter provides an introduction to the Residential Parking Program in Seattle, its legal framework and how it operates. At the end of the chapter is a brief summary of each of the zones now in place.

The work of the RPZ Policy Review Project is detailed in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 details the challenges the RPZ program now faces, the changes in context over the last thirty years, the goals of this project and how the work was done.

RPZ program established in Seattle

The first Residential Parking Program in Seattle was established in 1977, although the program was not formally created until 1979. The first zone was around the Fauntleroy Ferry Dock, where ferry riders from Vashon Island would keep a second car parked so they could walk on the ferry, and then drive to and from work on the mainland. Their parked cars filled residential streets, and the traffic effects of their coming and going brought noise and pollution to the neighborhood. Zone numbers were not assigned

until after the zones in Montlake and around Providence Hospital were created in 1979 and 1980, at which time the Fauntleroy zone was numbered “3,” forever hiding its status as the first zone.

In the thirty years between 1977 and 2007, the residential parking zone program has grown from one zone to 27. Two zones operate only on University of Washington Husky game days, but the other 25 are enforced five to seven days a week, at varying hours, many hours of the day. The three newest zones were created in 2007 and currently, in 2008, several new zones are under consideration.

Legal Framework

U.S. Supreme Court – Allowable Purposes and Conditions for RPZs

In 1977, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the County of Arlington, Virginia’s residential permit parking law, which had been challenged under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, as discriminatory to non-residents. The ruling stated:

“To reduce air pollution and other environmental effects of automobile commuting, a community reasonably may restrict on-street parking available to commuters, thus encouraging reliance on car pools and mass transit. The same goal is served by assuring convenient parking to residents who leave their cars at home during the day. A community may also decide that restrictions on the flow of outside traffic into particular residential areas would enhance the quality of life there by reducing noise, traffic hazards, and litter. By definition, discrimination against nonresidents would inhere in such restrictions....The United States as amicus curiae notes that parking restrictions to discourage automobile commuting have been recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency to implement the Clean Air Amendments of 1970.”¹

In addition, the Court upheld Arlington County’s conditions for establishing RPZs:

“The average number of vehicles [operated by persons whose destination is a commercial or industrial district] is in excess of 25% of the number of parking spaces on such streets and the total number of spaces actually occupied by any vehicles exceeds 75% of the number of spaces on such streets on the weekdays of any month. . .”

This test is now reflected in code language governing residential permit parking in cities across the United States, including Seattle.

Seattle Municipal Code

The Seattle Municipal Code (SMC), for the most part, defines a general approach to the RPZ program describing how it should operate. There are elements in the code that were added early on and never removed, for example the first six RPZ zones are detailed with lists of every included block face, but the subsequent twenty-one zones are not mentioned.

With regards to the details of the how the program is managed and operates, the SMC authorizes the SDOT Director to establish policies and procedures, and to decide whether or not zones should be created.

¹ U.S. Supreme Court, County Bd. of Arlington County, Virginia v. Richards, 434 U.S. 5 (1977) No. 76-1418, Decided October 11, 1977

This report recommends a number of language changes in the SMC. Some recommended changes are substantive, most significantly modifying the eligibility criteria for permits in ways that both tightens and expands it, by limiting the number of permits allowed to each household. Other recommended changes will clarify language to match current practices, for example removing references to, and the assigned responsibilities of, boards and staff positions that no longer exist.

RPZ Program Goals

Seattle's RPZs were created to protect residential neighborhoods from the parking and traffic impacts of major generators located in their midst, and in so doing to protect the neighborhoods as a whole from potential changes in land use and loss of property values.

Seattle Ordinance 108354, adopted in 1979, detailed the RPZ program. Of particular relevance to this project and its recommendations, the ordinance defines generators to include business districts, along with schools, hospitals and factories. The parkers that need to be controlled are defined as visitors and shoppers, as well as employees and students. The ordinance specifically addresses encouraging transit use and high occupancy vehicle commuting. The policy intent of the ordinance is for RPZs to address the following parking issues:

- Parking problems where residents in the neighborhood have difficulty finding a place to park their own vehicles due to traffic generators (e.g., business districts, universities, high schools, hospitals and factories).
- Congestion and parking problems for home delivery, construction and emergency vehicles.
- Disruption to the quality of life in the neighborhood that may lead to a deterioration in property values.

Existing RPZ program operations

Zone structure

Seattle currently has 27 zones. They are each structured to address specific high impact areas that were created in response to parking studies that identified particular problems, and that showed the area met the criteria established by the U. S. Supreme Court, codified in the Seattle ordinance.

In each zone, residents with permits may park without regard to posted time restrictions that apply to other vehicles, but they must comply with all other parking rules, including moving their vehicle at least once every 72 hours. Resident permits are only good in the zones where they live, and privileges do not extend to other zones in the city.

Resident Permits

In addition to vehicle permits, for as many vehicles as they wish, residents may purchase one guest permit, valid at all times. Temporary permits are also available, with documentation, for home care providers and contractors working on their home.

Business Permits

In Zone A, which is in Montlake and operates only on University of Washington Husky game days, businesses are eligible for two permits. In addition, businesses in Zone 1, also in Montlake and in operation Monday through Saturday, are issued one temporary one-day permit when there is a football game on a Saturday. Businesses are not eligible for permits in any other zone.

Parking restrictions

Permit parking is in effect at different times of day and on different days of the week, which varies among zones and can vary within a zone. Parking restrictions for non-permit holders vary from No Parking, to 2-Hour Parking, to 4-Hour Parking, and also vary between and within zones.

Fees

The basic price for a vehicle permit is \$35. Guest permits cost \$15 with a vehicle permit, or \$35 without a vehicle permit. Permits are valid for two years, except in three zones around the University of Washington where they are valid for one year. Permits renew on a staggered basis, with each zone on an established schedule, which spreads out the work for City staff. The share of the fees paid by residents ranges from 100% to zero, depending on the role of nearby institutions.

Role of institutions

In twelve of the 27 zones, major institutions pay all or part of the residents' permit fees. These arrangements are worked out on a case by case basis between the City and the institution, with the institution required to mitigate its parking impacts through support of the program. In some zones multiple institutions share in paying the fees, and in only three zones are all fees, for all the residents in the zone, paid by an institution. In addition, institutions pay for parking studies and other administrative costs, and the University of Washington pays for a Parking Enforcement Officer.

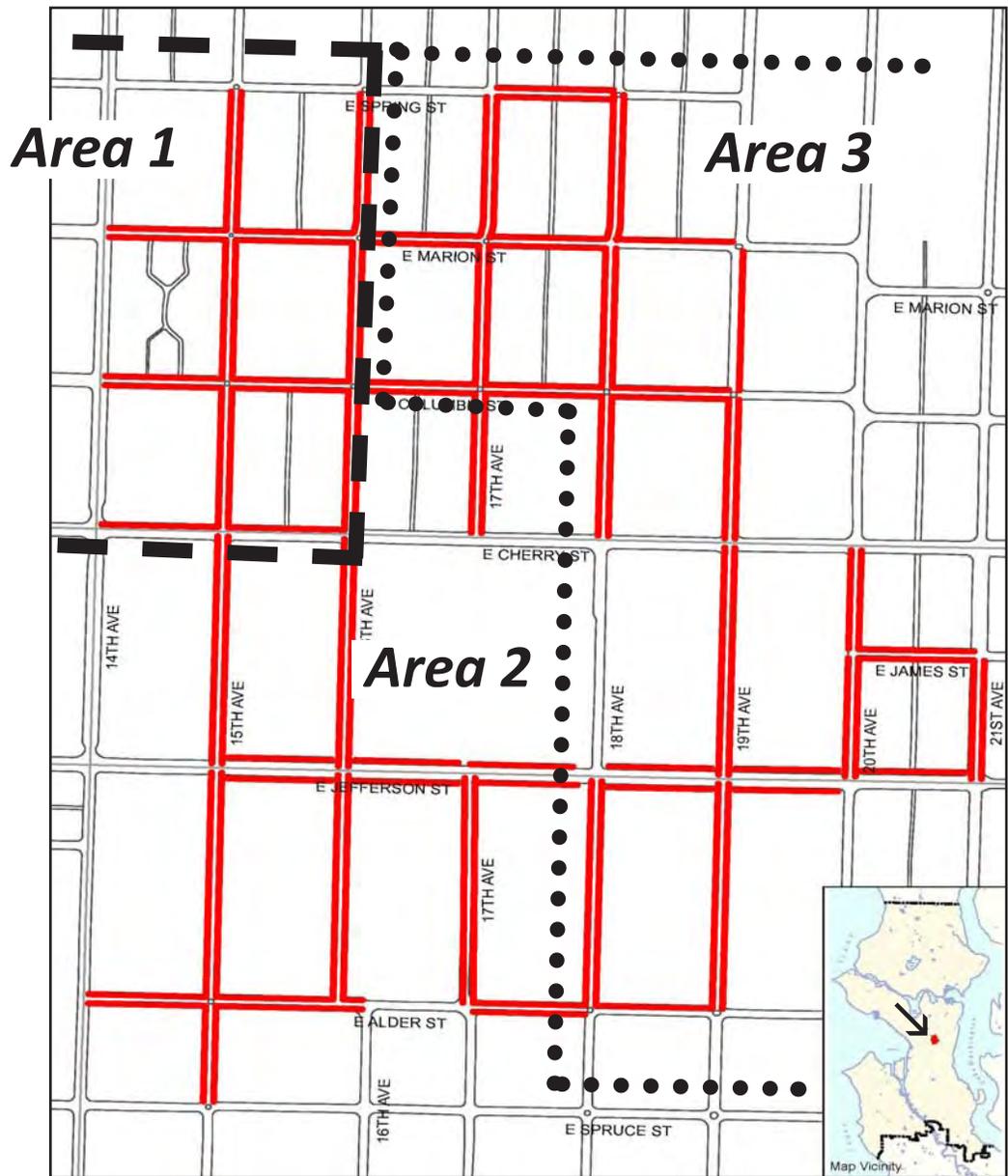
Program growth

Starting with just one zone in 1977, the RPZ program now has 27 zones, more under development, and about 12,000 individual permit holders with about 18,000 permits.

Residential parking zones currently operating

The following pages include abbreviated fact sheets for each of the residential parking zones now in force in Seattle. They are included here to illustrate exactly how the program works, and as a reference for recommendations relating to zones, in later chapters of this report.

**Chapter 1: Residential Parking Zones In Seattle
RPZ ZONE MAPS AND BRIEF FACTS**



Zone 2: Squire Park / Cherry Hill

- Established** 1980
- Subareas** YES - 3
- Generators** Providence Hospital
Seattle University
- Renews** July, even years
- Hours / Days** 7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Sat
- Non-Permit Parking** 2 Hours

Who pays fees

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3
Providence	100%	50%	100%
Seattle U		50%	

Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 3: Fauntleroy

Established	1977
Subareas	NO
Generator	Vashon/Fauntleroy Ferry Commuters
Renews	December, even years
Hours / Days	2 AM to 5 AM /Every Day
Non-Permit Parking	NO Parking
Who pays fees	Residents

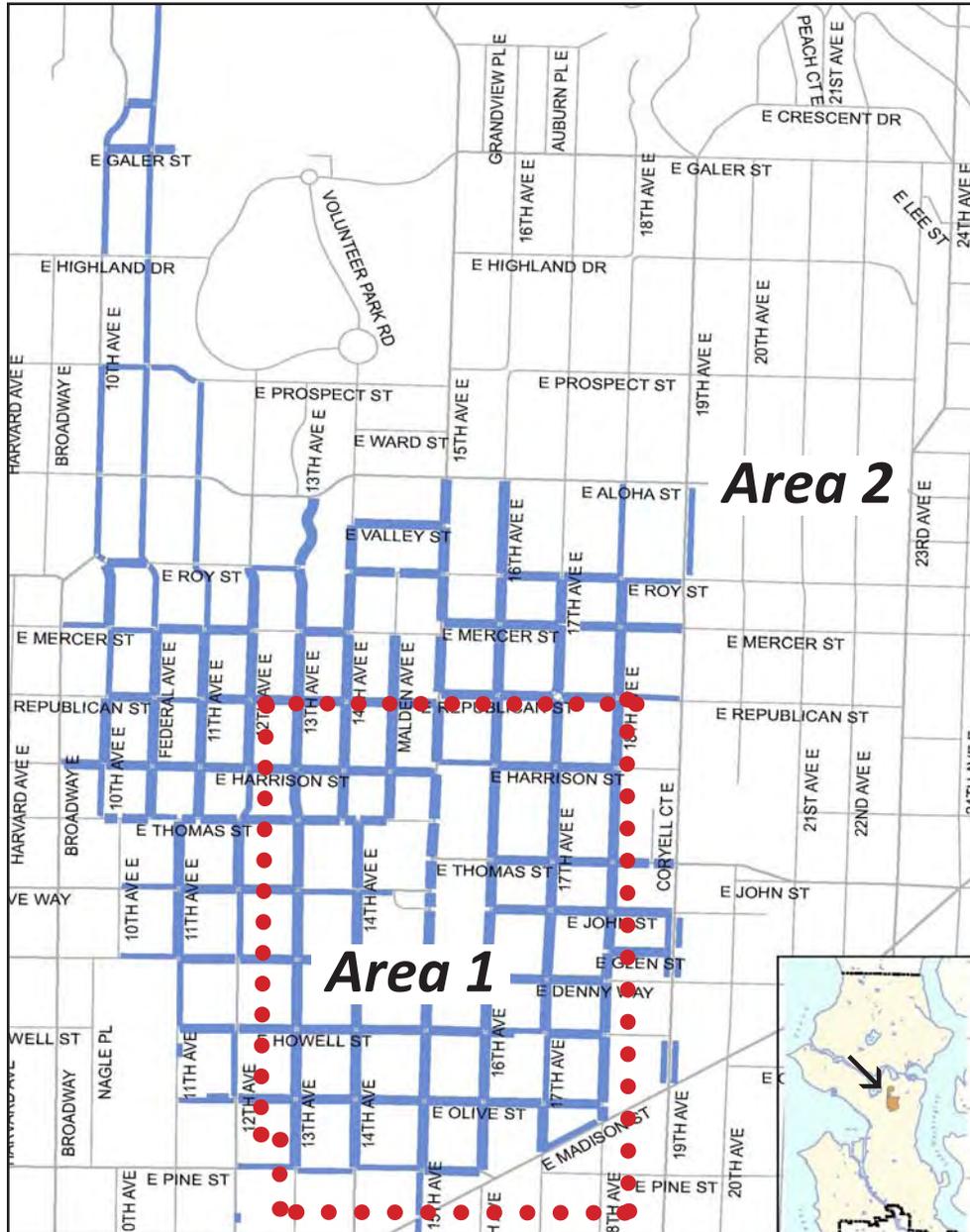


Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 4: Capitol Hill



Data as of June 2008

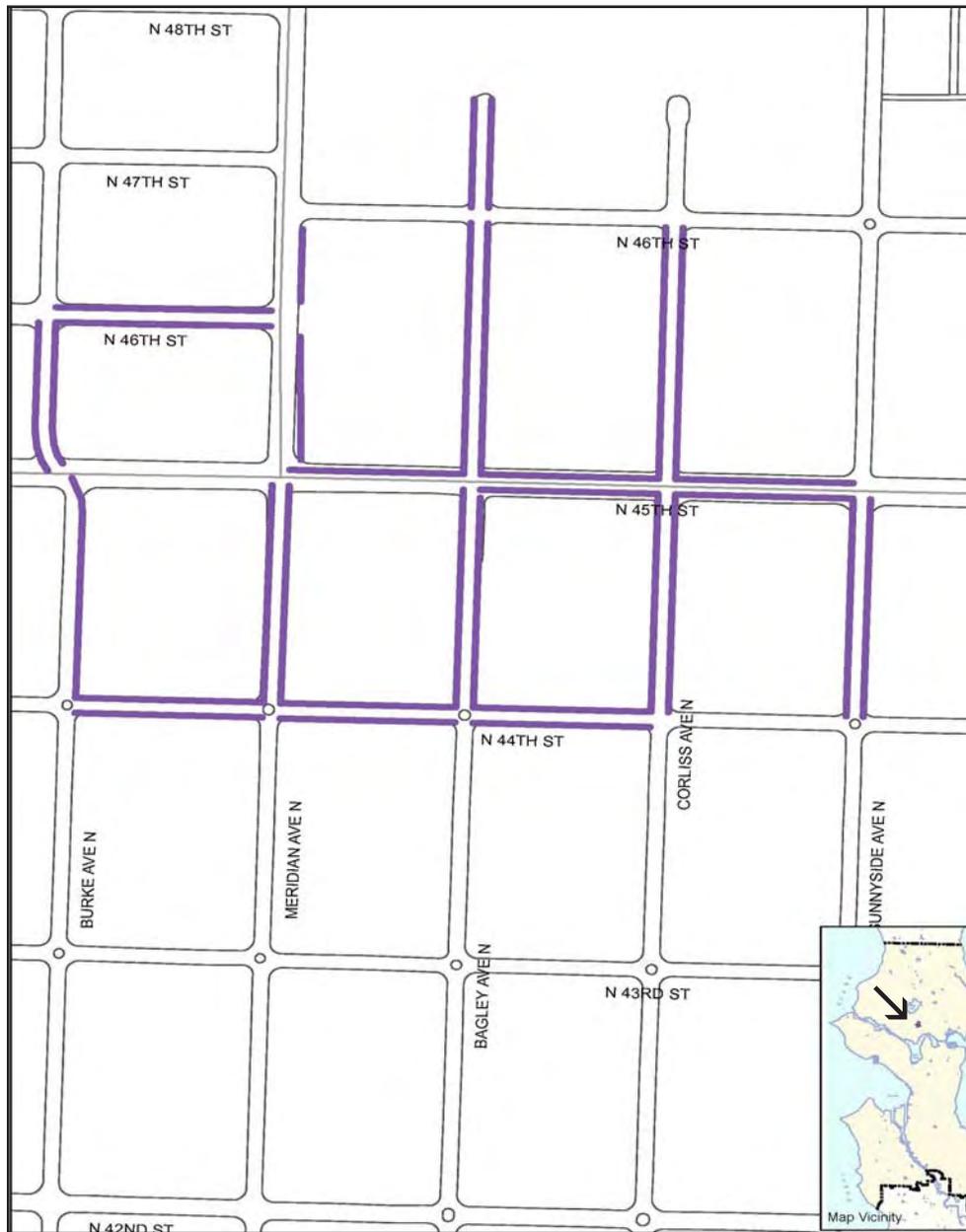
Map provided by: City of Seattle

- Established** Area 1 - 1983
Area 2 - 1994
- Subareas** 2 for Who Pays
2 for Parking Restrictions
- Generators** Group Health Cooperative
- Renews** April, odd years
- Hours / Days** 7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Sat
- Non-Permit Parking** Varies
2 Hours
or 2 Hours or 4 Hours (3 blocks only)

Who pays fees

	Area 1	Area 2
Group Health	100%	
Resident		100%

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Zone 5: Wallingford

Established	1988
Subareas	NO
Generator	Movie Theater
Renews	May, even years
Hours / Days	5 PM to Midnight / Every Day
Non-Permit Parking	NO Parking
Who pays fees	Residents

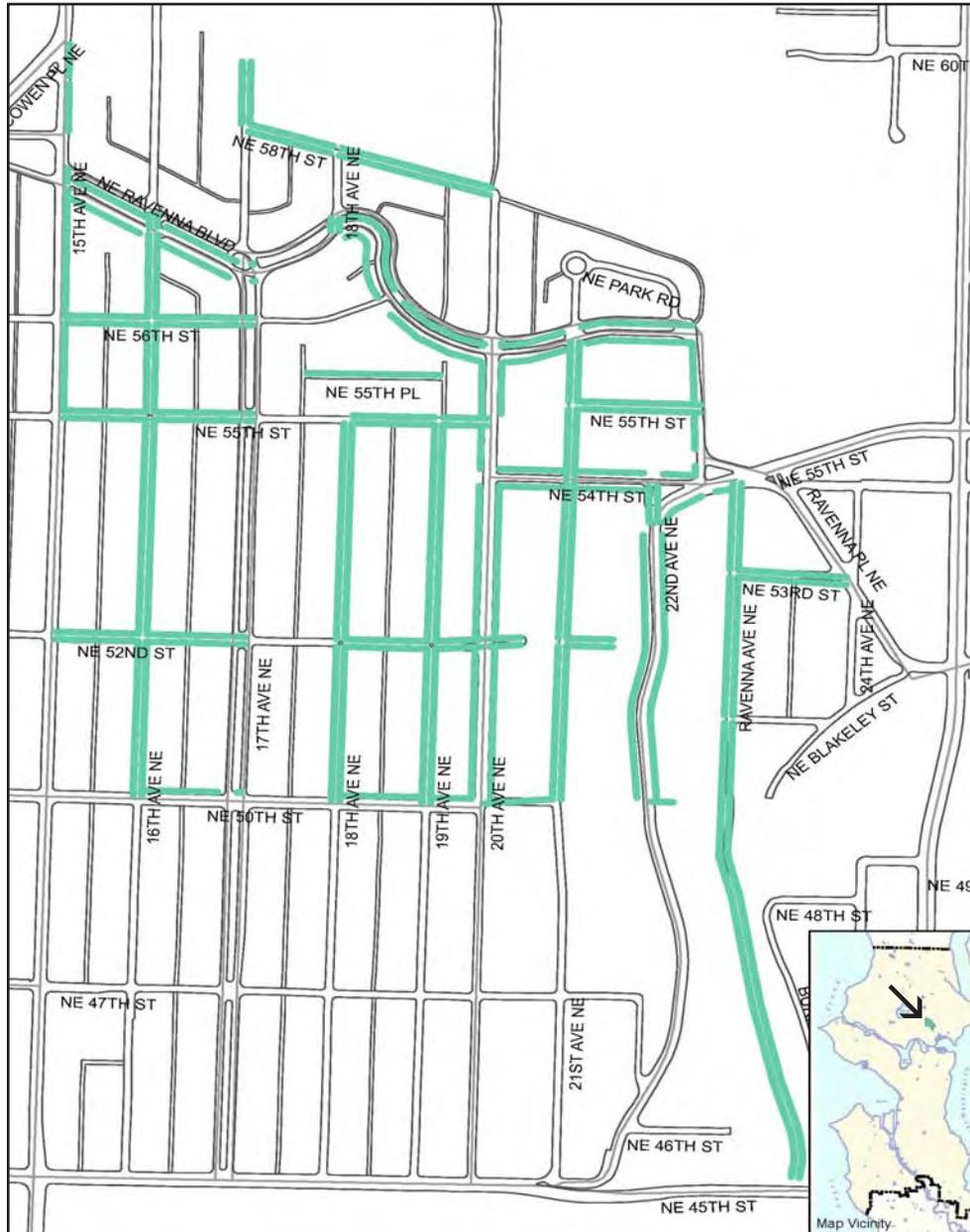
Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 6: University Park

Established 1988
Subareas NO
Generator University of Washington
Renews September, every year
Hours / Days 7 AM to 8 PM / Mon - Fri
Non-Permit Parking 2 Hours

Who pays fees

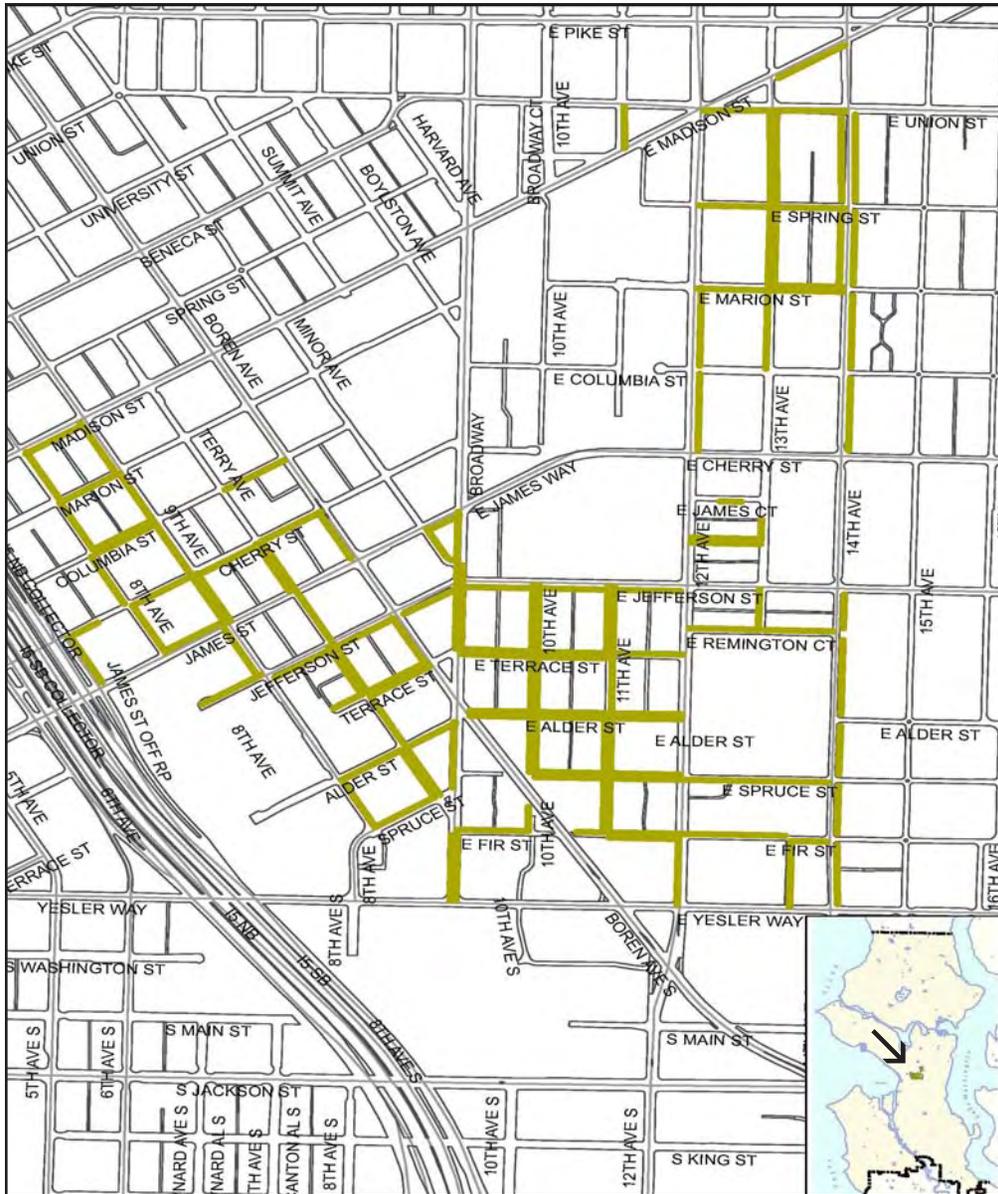
	UW	Resident
1st Permit	50%	50%
2nd Permit	25%	75%
3rd+ Permit	Resident	Resident
Guest Permit	Resident	Resident



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Zone 7: First Hill

Established 1990

Subareas YES - 5

Generators Harborview Hospital
Swedish Hospital
Seattle University

Renews February, odd years

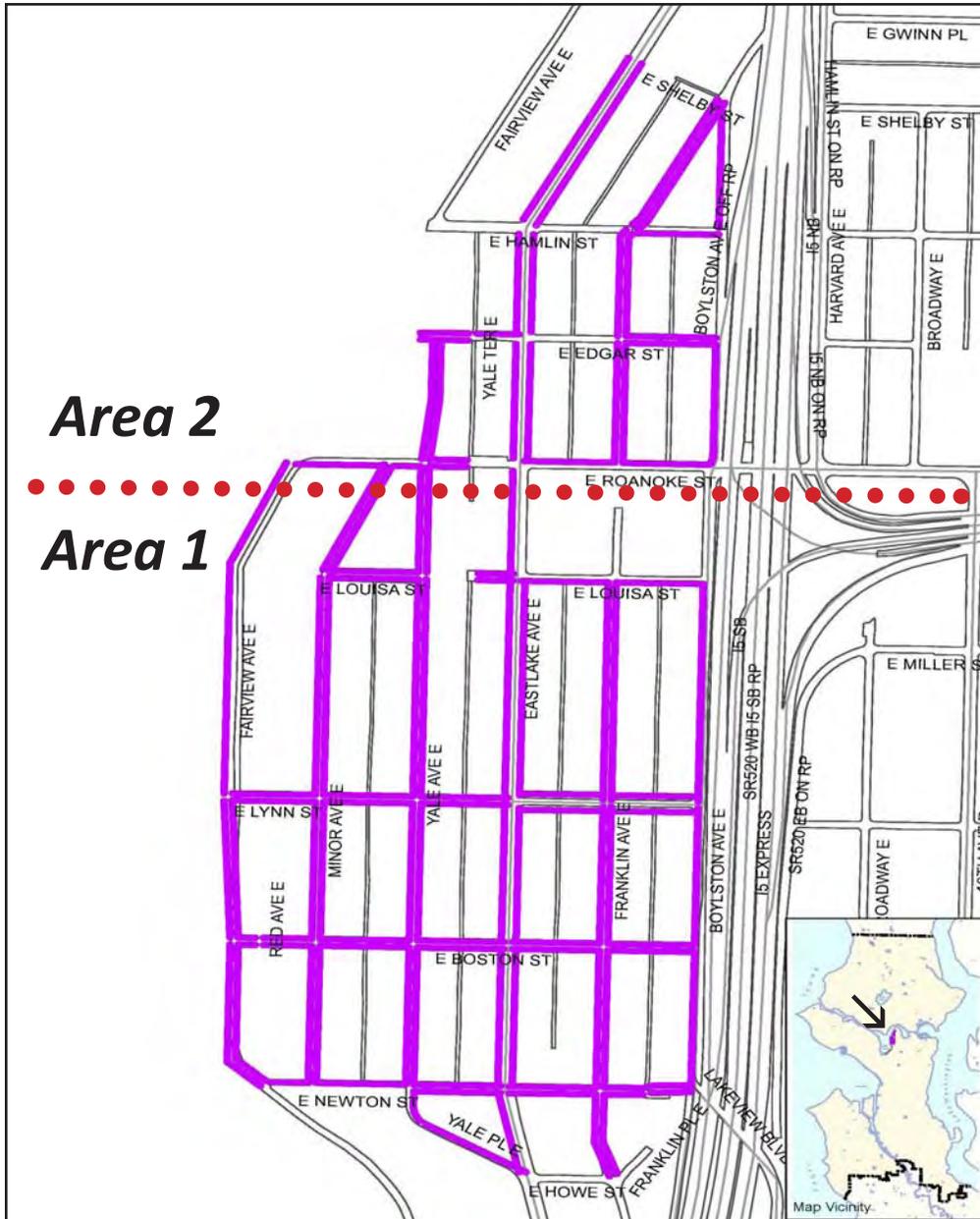
Hours / Days 7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Sat

Non-Permit Parking 2 Hours / No Parking

Who pays fees

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5
Harborview	100%	50%		50%	
Swedish		50%			
Seattle U			100%	50%	
Resident					100%

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.



Zone 8: Eastlake

Established 1994
Subareas YES: 2 for Who Pays
Generators University of Washington
 Eastlake Businesses

Renews June, even years
Hours / Days
 Monday-Saturday 7 AM to 6 PM
 Every Day 6 PM to Midnight

Non-Permit Parking
 7 Am to 6 PM One side 2 hours
 One side 4 hours
 6 PM to Midnight NO Parking

Who pays fees

	Area 1	Area 2
1st Permit	Resident	UW 75% / Res 25%
2nd+ Permit	Resident	Resident
Guest Permit	Resident	Resident

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Zone 9: Magnolia

Established	1988
Subareas	NO
Generator	Informal Park-and-Ride
Renews	January, odd years
Hours / Days	7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Sat
Non-Permit Parking	4 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Zone 10: University Dist. W.

Established Area 1: 1995
Area 2: 1997

Subareas YES - 2

Generators Metro Cinemas
University of Washington

Renews July, EVERY year

Hours / Days / Parking Restrictions
Area 1 7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Sat
2 Hour Parking
Area 2 6 PM to Midnight / Every Day
NO Parking

Who pays fees

	Area 1	Area 2
U. of Washington	38.7%	27.4%
Metro Cinemas		27.4%
Resident	61.3%	45.2%

Note: Odd percentages make fees come out to even dollar amounts at current pricing. UW does not pay for guest permits.

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 12: North Capitol Hill



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Established	1996
Subareas	NO
Generator	Seattle Prep High School
Renews	October, even years
Hours / Days	7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Fri
Non-Permit Parking	2 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 13: Lower Queen Anne



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Established	1997
Subareas	No
Generator	Seattle Center
Renews	March, odd years
Hours / Days	7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Sat 6 PM to Midnight / Every Day
Non-Permit Parking	NO Parking, where signed
Who pays fees	Residents

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 14: Central District



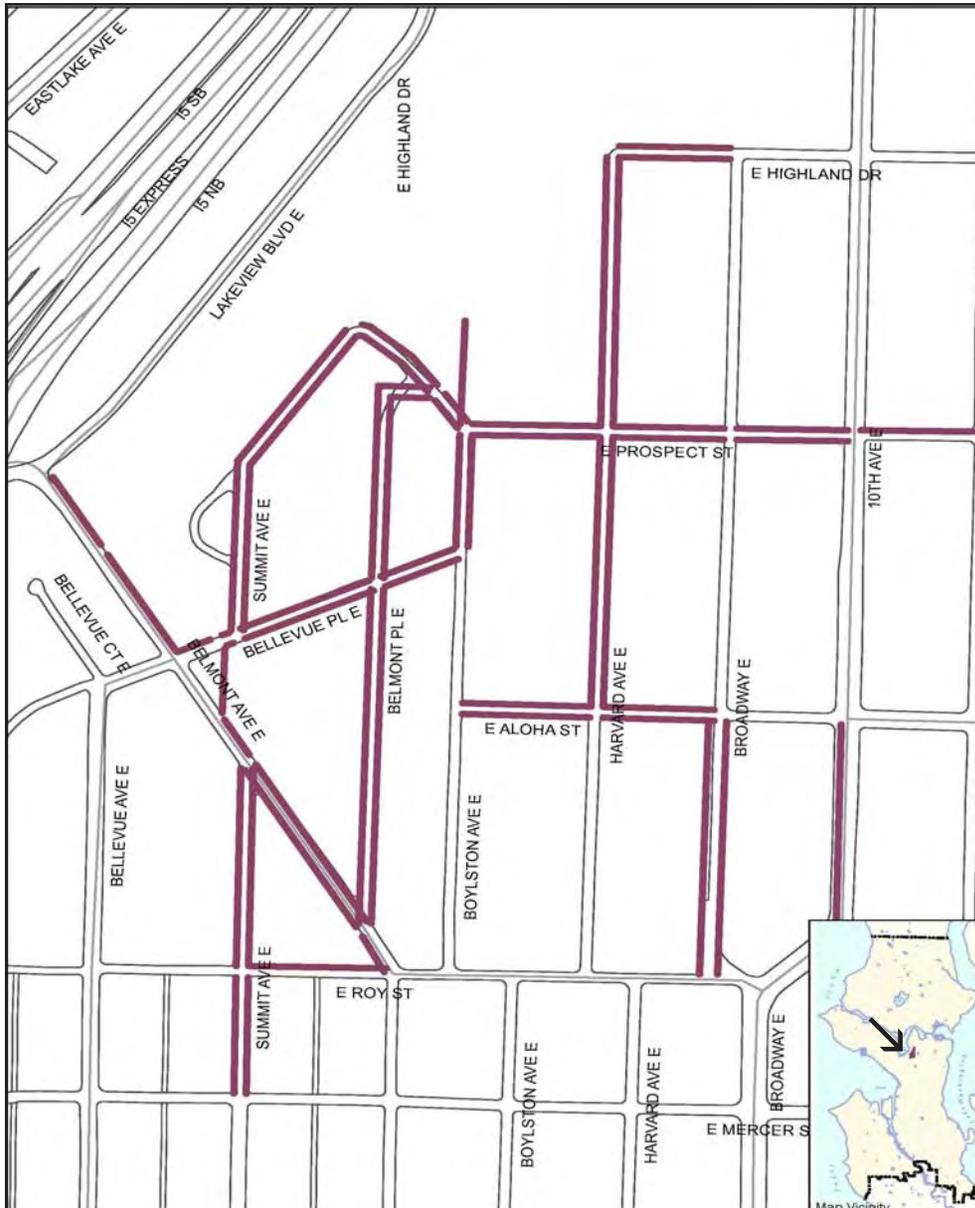
Established	1998
Subareas	NO
Generator	Garfield High School
Renews	October, even years
Hours	7 AM to 4 PM / Mon - Fri
Non-Permit Parking	2 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents

Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

*Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit.
It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.*

Zone 15: Belmont/Harvard



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Established	1999
Subareas	NO
Generator	Scottish Temple
Renews	June, odd years
Hours / Days	Noon to 6 AM / Every Day
Non-Permit Parking	4 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 17: Beacon Hill

Established	2000
Subareas	NO
Generator	Amazon.com
Renews	April, even years
Hours / Days	7 AM to 6 PM / Mon - Sat
Non-Permit Parking	2 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents



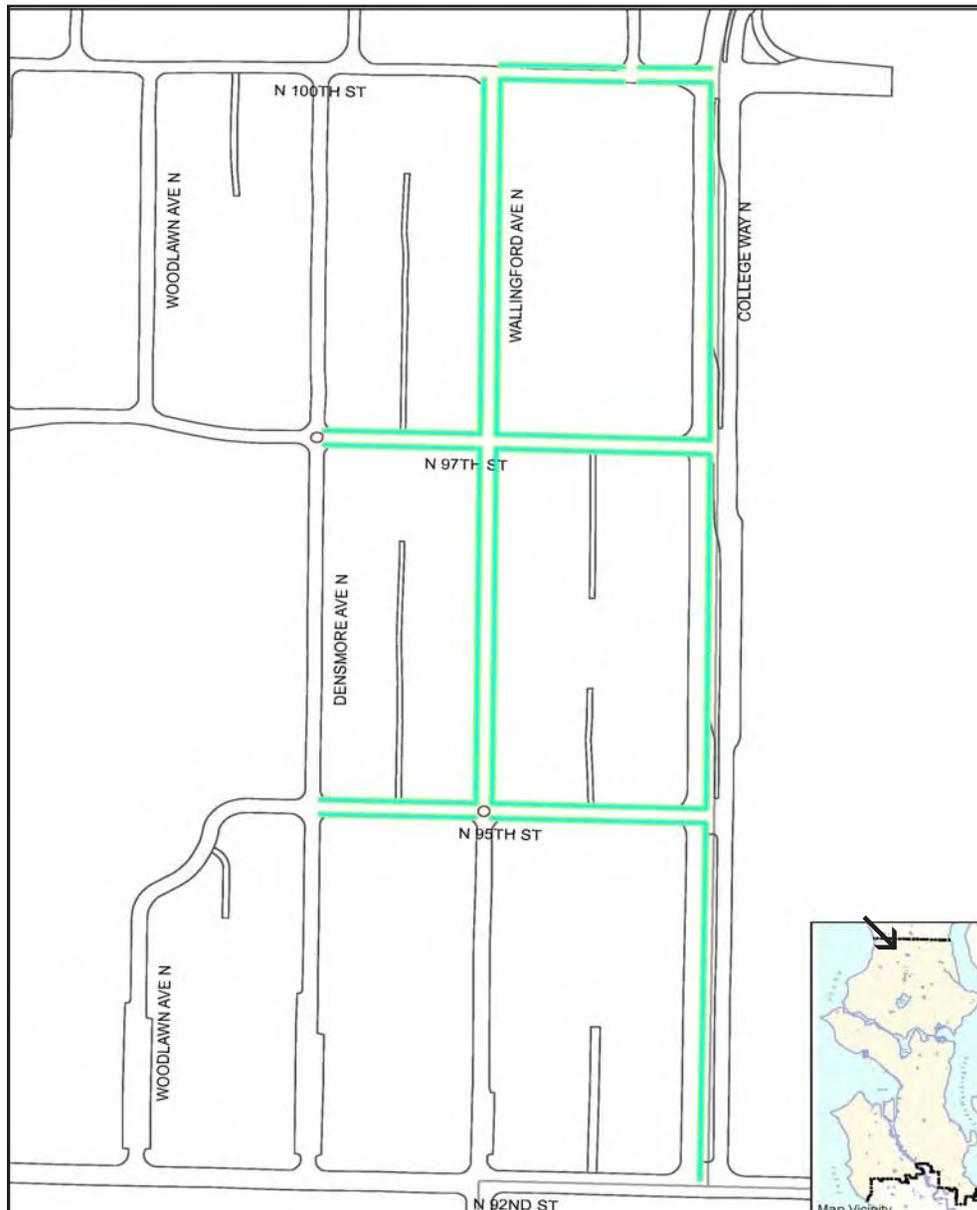
Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 18: Licton Springs

Established	2000
Subareas	NO
Generator	North Seattle Comm. College
Renews	April, even years
Hours	7 AM to 9 PM / Mon - Fri
Non-Permit Parking	2 Hours
Who pays fees	North Seattle Comm. College



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

*Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit.
It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.*

Zone 19: Roosevelt

Established 19XX
Subareas YES - 2
Generators University of Washington
Roosevelt High School
Renews May, even years
Hours 7 AM to 7 PM / Mon - Fri
Non-Permit Parking 2 Hours

Who pays fees

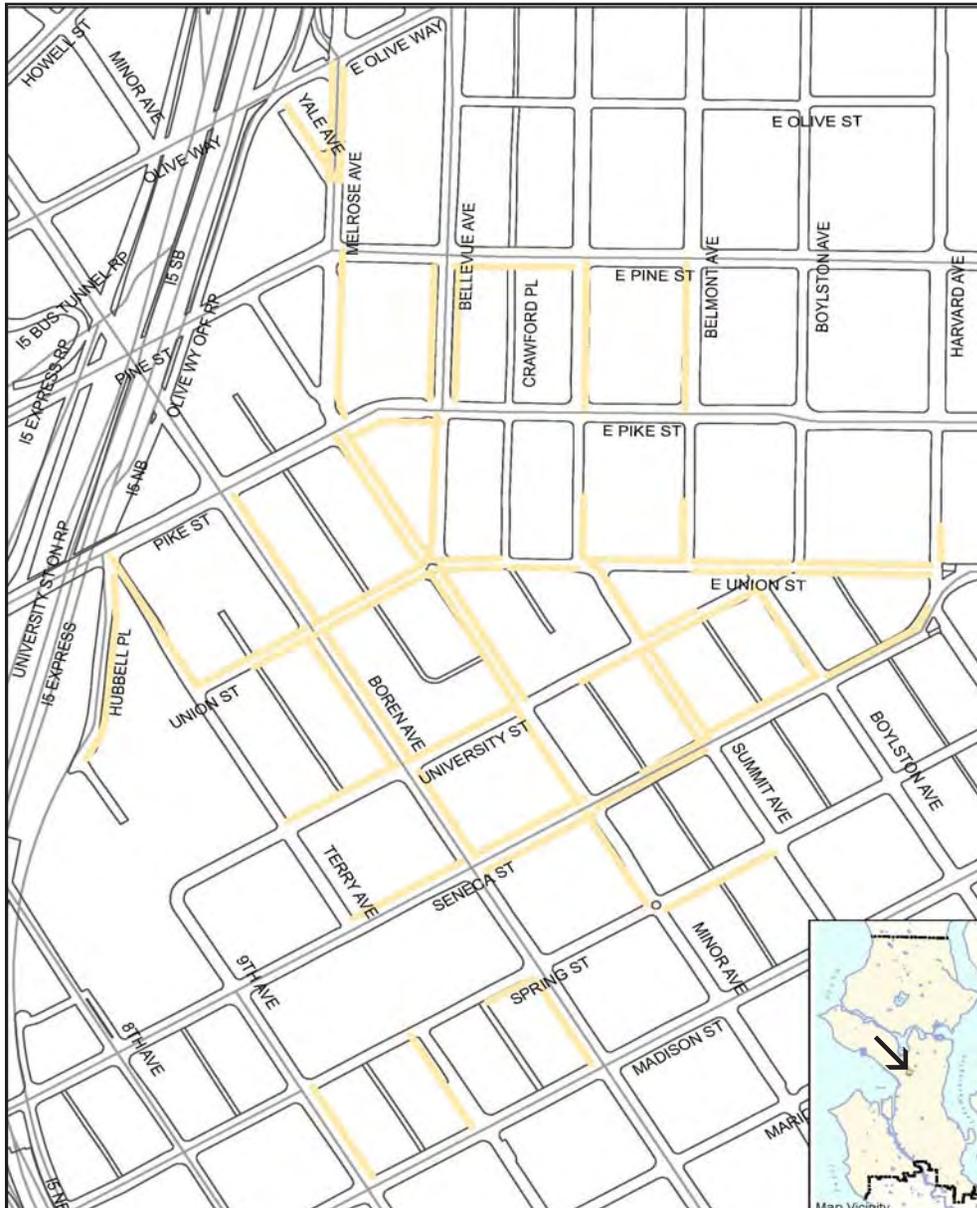
	Area 1	Area 2
1st Permit	UW 75% / Resident 25%	Resident
2nd+ Permit	Resident	Resident
Guest Permit	UW 75% / Resident 25%	Resident



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.



Zone 21: Pike/Pine

Established	2003
Subareas	NO
Generator	Business District Informal Park-and-Ride
Renews	May, odd years
Hours	7 AM to 10 PM
Days	Every Day
Non-Permit Parking	2 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents

Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

*Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit.
It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.*



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Zone 22: Wallingford / Lincoln HS

Established	Area 1 - 2005 Area 2 - 2007
Subareas	YES - 2
Generator	Lincoln High School (Note: Lincoln is being used as a temporary home for other high schools that are being refurbished/rebuilt)
Renews	July, even years
Hours / Days	Area 1 (N. of 42nd) 7 AM to 4 PM / Mon - Fri Area 2 (S. of 42nd) 8 AM to 5 PM / Mon - Sat
Non-Permit Parking	2 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Zone 23: Madison Valley

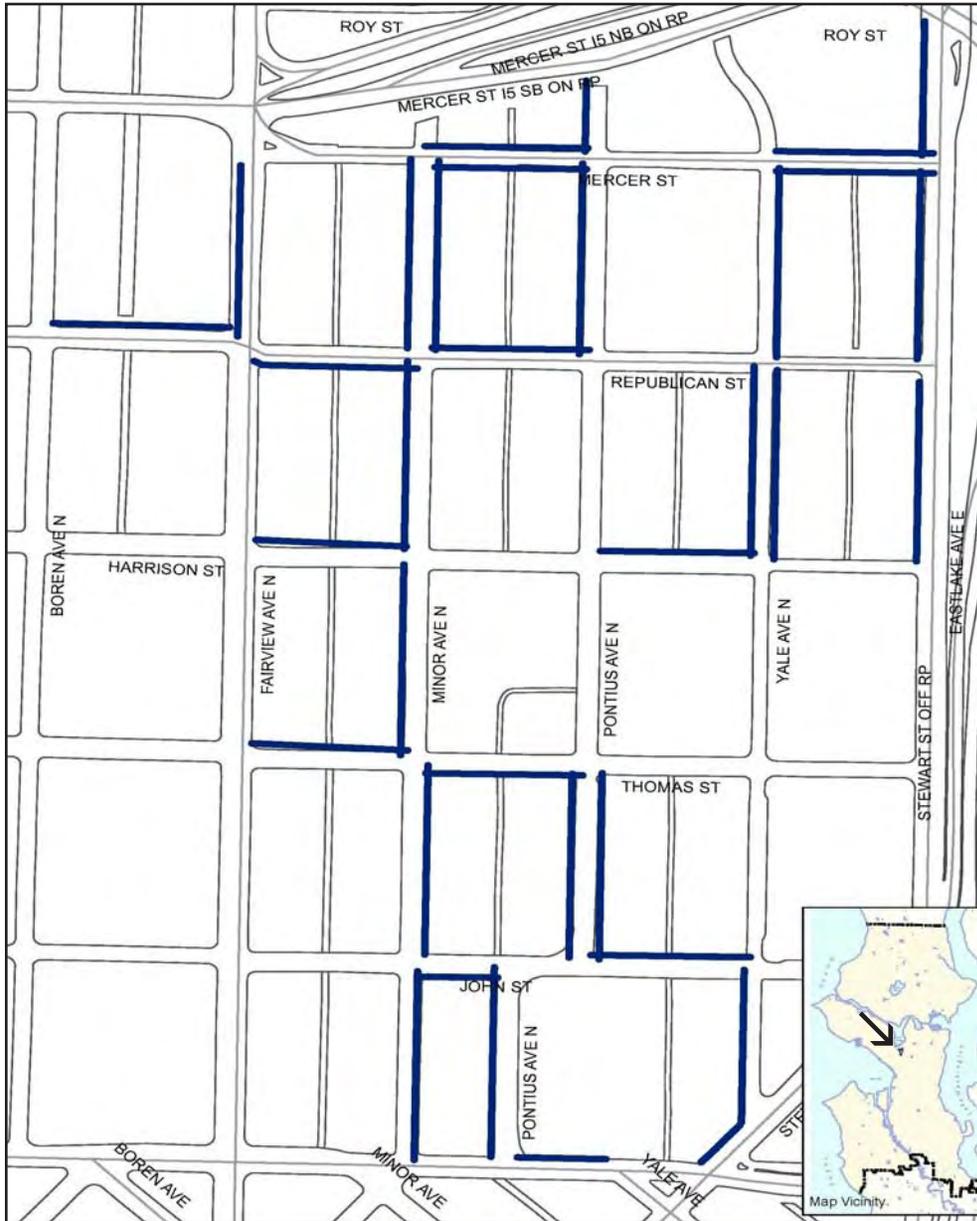


Established	2007
Subareas	NO
Generator	Business District Employees
Renews	July, odd years
Hours / Days	7 AM to 7 PM / Mon - Sat
Non-Permit Parking	2 Hours
Who pays fees	Residents

Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.



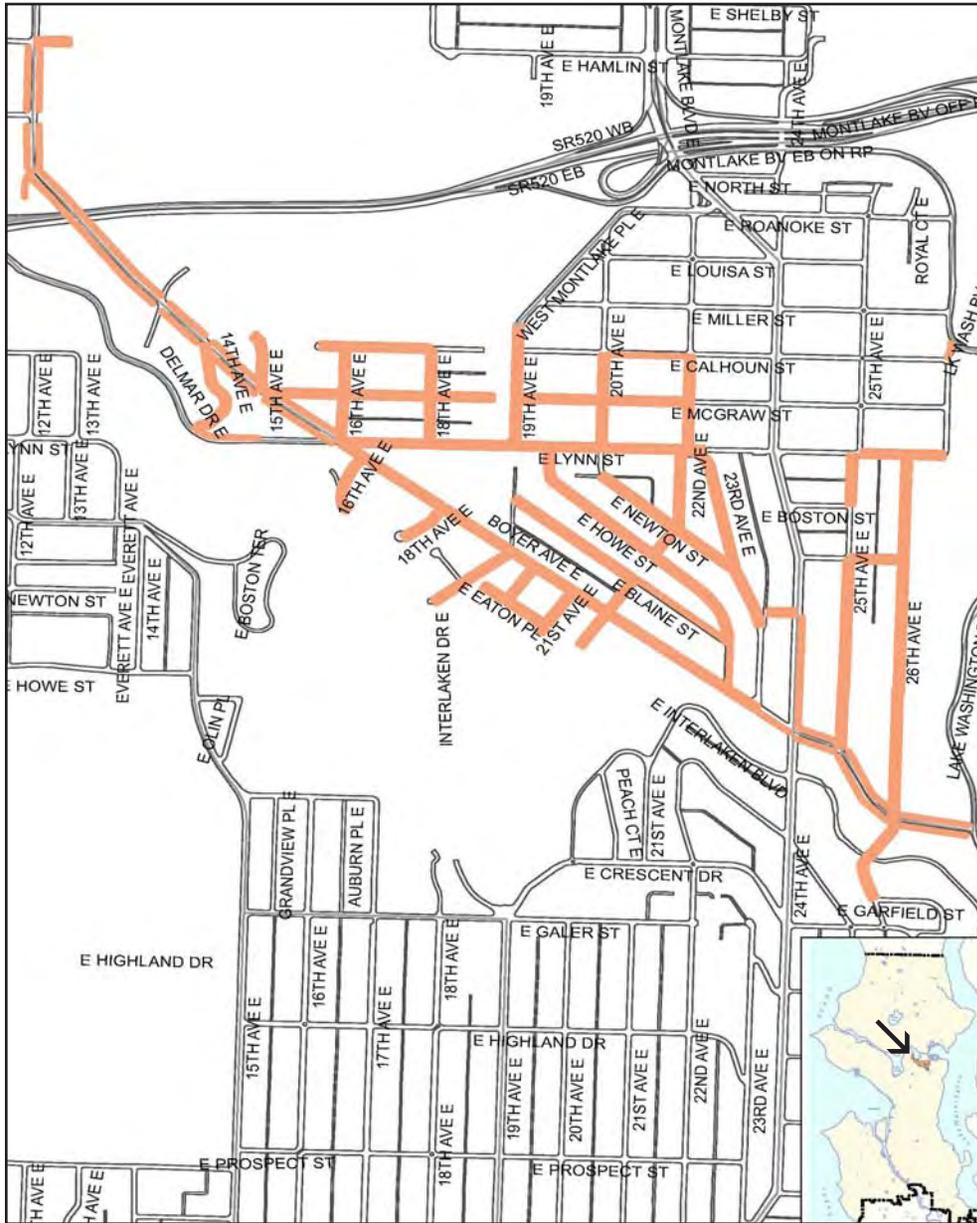
Zone 24: Cascade

Established	2007
Subareas	NO
Generator	Business District Employees
Renews	August, odd years
Hours / Days	8 AM to 6 PM / Every Day Permit holders are exempt from pay station parking fees
Non-Permit Parking	Controlled by pay stations
Who pays fees	Residents

Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.



Data as of June 2008

Map provided by: City of Seattle

Zone A: Montlake / Husky Game Days

Established	1979
Subareas	NO
Generator	Husky Football Game Fans
Renews	August, even years
Hours	No parking on game days
Non-Permit Parking	No Parking
Who pays fees	Special arrangement The City Admissions Tax on Husky tickets is intended to cover the fees. UW pays the tax to the city, but it goes into the general fund and is not credited to the RPZ program.
Unique:	Businesses are eligible for two permits

Note: Map shows where residents are eligible for a permit. It does not show where curb is signed for RPZ parking.

Chapter 2

RPZ Policy Review Project

Introduction

RPZ Policy Review Project

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) has undertaken a comprehensive review of the RPZ program just once, in 1994. A great deal has changed since that time. The most prominent changes in these ensuing fourteen years include:

- More than 50,000 new residents.
- Construction of major transit improvements including Link Light Rail, South Lake Union Streetcar, and Bridging the Gap/Transit Now bus improvements.
- Adoption of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, with the urban village strategy, linking strong business districts to residential neighborhoods through improved pedestrian and transit access.

For this project, the project team reviewed Seattle’s recent plans and studies that address RPZs. A consistent theme across all of them is the need to find ways to balance the growing and competing needs for on-street parking. The project focuses on finding this balance as well as improving customer service, effectively managing and enforcing RPZs, improving the processes and tools used to determine where RPZs should be implemented, and refining the rules under which they should operate.

This document summarizes the recommendations for RPZ program policies, design, management and operations. Separate documents included as appendices detail Existing Conditions, Best Practices, Public Outreach, and Business Practices.

City plans and studies addressing RPZs

There are a number of relevant plans and studies used to inform the work of this project. They include the Seattle Parking Management Study, the “Making the Parking System Work” and the “Community Parking Program” and the SDOT *Transportation Strategic Plan* (TSP). All are important foundational documents for the work of this project.

Seattle Parking Management Study

The RPZ Policy Review project builds on the *Seattle Parking Management Study*, prepared in 2002. Among the tasks of that study were to document and analyze how SDOT currently manages parking, how other cities manage parking and monitor programs to ensure that policy goals are met, and whether changes are necessary in both how Seattle makes decisions and the parking tools that it uses.

The *Seattle Parking Management Study* included recommendations for the RPZ program, developed in the context of the City’s overall parking management practices:

- In areas with high-density residential, allow a neighborhood group (e.g., neighborhood planning committee or community council) to recommend the establishment of an RPZ. In lieu of a petition process, establish minimum outreach and publication criteria that would need to be met before SDOT would consider an RPZ.
- Consider use of a “mail-back” approval form in lieu of a petition in high-density neighborhoods.
- In areas with more permits than parking spaces, establish a permit limit per household. The limit could vary by RPZ area.
- Increase permit fee to cover the City’s full cost to set up, manage and enforce the RPZ programs.
- Tighten restrictions on guest permits to reduce abuse. Set guest parking permit to the same rate as the permanent permit. Consider Internet registration of guest vehicles with a limit on number of days the guest permit will be in effect.
- Consider programs similar to Portland, Berkeley and other cities where businesses located within an RPZ are allowed to purchase a limited number of parking permits.

After the work of the RPZ Policy Review Project, focused specifically on the RPZ program and involving outreach to more than 1,000 people, all of the recommendations from the *Seattle Parking Management Study* have been incorporated into the proposed RPZ program recommendations.

“Making the Parking System Work” and the “Community Parking Program”

The Making the Parking System Work (1998-2002) and now the Community Parking Program (2008-) are two of SDOT’s efforts to work with neighborhood business and community organizations to identify and implement on-street parking management and access strategies. The partnerships between the City and community and business organizations also create and employ techniques to reduce demand for parking spaces by promoting travel by foot, bike, bus and carpool. Among the strategies evaluated are residential parking zones. The new “Community Parking Program” is a six-year program to work in 35 neighborhoods, including the new light rail station areas, to manage on-street parking to provide access for customers and deliveries, ensure parking for residents, and support a sustainable transportation system. It is anticipated that RPZs will be among the strategies that will be implemented in these light rail station neighborhoods.

Seattle Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP)

Seattle’s *TSP*, originally adopted in 1998 and revised in 2005, addresses residential parking zones in parking strategies P5 and P8. Strategy P8 specifically references the 2002 *Seattle Parking Management Study* and its recommendations. Following are excerpts from the policies (emphasis added):

P5. Use Residential Parking Zones (RPZ) to Address Resident Parking Needs.

... An RPZ may be appropriate where the parking congestion is caused by proximity to a business district with limited parking, as well as constraints caused by parking generated by visitors or employees of a hospital, school and other institutions, or rail transit system.

P5.1 Address Residential Parking Concerns Through Residential Parking Zones.

Continue to evaluate and install RPZs, as described above.

P5.2 Evaluate the Residential Parking Zone Program.

*As recommended by the Seattle Parking Management Study (2002), evaluate SDOT's RPZ program, to ensure that these policies match with citywide goals, serve the citizens who are most affected by the zones, and incorporate best-known technology, information and resources into Seattle's RPZ practices. **The recommendations to be reviewed include modifying the RPZ program purpose to address the competing demands for parking in Seattle's mixed-use neighborhoods, RPZ establishment procedures, and RPZ program administration. Incorporate findings and recommendations from SDOT's "Making the Parking System Work" program into the review.***

P8. Increase Parking Enforcement Resources.

*Increase parking enforcement resources, as recommended by the Seattle Parking Management Study... As on street parking regulations are expanded throughout the city, additional enforcement resources are necessary to ensure parking turnover in business districts and to **monitor residential parking zoned areas.***

RPZ Policy Review Project Purpose and Goals

Project purpose and goals

The overall purpose of this RPZ Policy Review Project is to analyze, evaluate and redesign the City's residential parking zone program to support Seattle's goals in the areas of parking management, transportation, economic development, land use, and race and social justice.

The RPZ Policy Review project goal is to design a new RPZ program that address the following:

- Protect residential neighborhoods from traffic impacts of large generators, including hospitals, schools, colleges, major employers, and transit stations.
- Ensure that these protections are distributed equitably without discrimination based on racial or social make up of neighborhoods.
- Support a shift from driving to walking, biking and transit.
- Support mixed-use, high density neighborhoods and local business districts where proximity substitutes for travel, particularly for daily needs.
- Reduce overall use of resources and vehicle emissions.
- Finally, in the interests of clarity, equity, and the ability to competently implement and enforce the RPZ program, the objective of each recommendation is to create a program with **simple rules, that are easily understood, and clearly applied.**

RPZ Policy Review Project Approach

The RPZ Policy Review Project consisted of four major tasks: program research, evaluation, analysis and design; best practices from other cities; business process redesign and public outreach. All overlapped and informed each other as the project progressed.

Research, evaluation, analysis and design

The project team began by gathering information about Seattle's current RPZ program, working extensively with City staff who manage the program through Traffic Permits section, who enforce it through the Parking Enforcement Division of the Seattle Police Department, and who work with neighborhoods to create RPZs through SDOT's Parking Management Division.

A comprehensive set of issues developed from previous work was expanded and then organized into major themes, reflected in the organization of this report: overall program policies; how zones are created and designed; how zones operate; customer service and information technology; and enforcement. The major issues in each of these areas informed the best practices research and public outreach, which in turn informed the analysis and design of solutions.

Best practices from other cities

Best practices research was organized around the major issue areas that emerged early in this project as key to developing a policy framework for Seattle's RPZ program. In all, about twenty cities in the United States, Canada and abroad were researched; of these thirteen are reported on in detail in *Appendix B: Best Practices*. The project team looked for the most common practices in each area, and also explored practices in cities that do things in unusual or different ways so as to get the broadest possible understanding of what works and what doesn't, and why.

Information was gleaned, first, from documents available on-line. Individuals in various cities were then contacted by phone and email to further explore the history and policy framework of their parking programs, the problems they face, their successes and failures, and public opinion about the programs.

RPZ lessons from other cities

As part of the project, consultant resources investigated best practices in other cities. The trajectory of residential parking zone programs in other cities is very similar to Seattle's: first, early implementation of residential parking restrictions to address the problem of commuters flooding residential neighborhoods; then, incremental extension of restricted parking zones to other neighborhoods across the city; and finally a reexamination of the overall structure and operation of the program to solve the problems of growth and to realign program goals and objectives with broader city goals addressing growth, land use, transportation and sustainability. At the end of this progression, other cities generally continue to put preserving residential parking front and center, but emphasize many other goals.

In addition to preserving the ability of people to park near their homes, common themes in other cities' residential parking ordinances include: reducing auto use, increasing transit use, promoting walking and cycling, improving air quality, keeping neighborhoods livable, peaceful, tranquil, attractive and pleasant, and preserving the safety and health of citizens.

Business process redesign

The project team for this work included the staff from the Traffic Permits Counter who have been directly involved from beginning to end. One-on-one in depth interviews were held, along with workshops to map business process, and identify desired improvements and how to accomplish them,

Public outreach

SDOT has initiated public outreach to inform RPZ-related stakeholders about the project and generate ideas for new approaches and solutions; obtain input regarding key issues and conflicts in the current program; and build consensus for project recommendations.

Three sounding boards – comprised of residents, businesses and institutions – were formed to help define issues, identify program strengths and weaknesses, and propose program changes. Meetings were held in April and in May to get input.

An on-line survey conducted in April and early May reached over one thousand survey-takers who responded to multiple choice questions and also offered extensive comments about RPZs and parking in Seattle.

Working sessions were also held with the Seattle Planning Commission, neighborhood groups and others.

SDOT will be conducting proactive public outreach on the draft report recommendations with a final report and legislation issued by the end of 2008.

Crosscutting RPZ issues

There are three crosscutting issues that are highlighted here.

Mixed-use development

A consistent theme from the work to date is the challenge of balancing the competing needs of residents and others who want to park. Seattle’s urban village strategy is based on the intention of building neighborhoods throughout the city where people live near places where they can meet the needs – and pleasures – of daily life: a rich mix of grocery stores, banks, pharmacies, coffee shops, restaurants, bakeries, and other retail and services. Mixed-use development can mean literally living over the store, but it can also mean separate but close proximity between residential streets and commercial streets. In a thriving business district on-street parking spaces “right in front” are often insufficient to meet the needs of those customers who drive, and parking spills over to spaces in front of nearby residences.

The proposed recommendations in this report are intended to address these more complex areas, with policies about where and how zones should be formed, and once they do exist, who should be eligible for a parking permit and how many should they be allowed.

Climate change

In the ideal world, when people can’t find parking, they walk, bike, take a bus or train, sign up for carsharing, ride with friends, and/or move closer to the places they need to go. In the short term, they tend to drive around and around looking for a parking place. Research conducted across the country has

demonstrated that it is not unusual for as much as thirty percent of the traffic in a dense urban area to be people who have already arrived at their destination, cruising around looking for parking. The traffic, noise, pollution, carbon emissions, energy use and time impacts are enormous.

RPZ policy recommendations proposed in this project are designed to reduce cruising for parking either by ensuring that there are adequate on-street spaces to meet the routine turnover needs of nearby businesses or, alternately, to make it immediately clear that there is no on-street parking so that drivers won't waste their time and gas, but will quickly choose off-street options and possibly, next time, other means of travel.

Race and Social Justice

The current process for initiating and creating zones works well for neighborhoods where citizens are used to working with government and each other, and are fluent in English. It is not designed to meet the diverse needs of the city as a whole. Proposed recommendations are designed to ensure that citizens who might otherwise be disenfranchised because of cultural and language barriers, or lack of familiarity in working with government are included in the program and have an equal voice, and that neighborhoods where they live are considered for RPZs or other parking management improvements.

Summary of issues

The next four chapters detail current practices, issues and options, best practices, and the results of public outreach in four major program areas. Key questions in each area that the proposed recommendations address are:

- Chapter 3: Policy Concepts
 - How can residential parking zones be structured to address different needs in different places?
 - Who should be eligible for permit parking?
 - How can scarce parking be equitably allocated among users, including residents and others?
 - How can guest parking can be made more convenient for residents and their guests?
 - Where is it appropriate to allow businesses to share in permit parking?
 - What should permits cost?
- Chapter 4: Zone Operations
 - What should be the technical warrants for an RPZ? What combinations of parking, transportation and land use conditions define where RPZs can be successful?
 - How can the needs of conflicting users be balanced in an RPZ?
 - How can the City ensure that all areas of the city receive equal attention and that all citizens have an equal voice?
 - How can zone operations including parking restrictions and days and times zones are in effect be fine-tuned to optimize effectiveness?
- Chapter 5: Business Practices
 - How can customer service be improved and streamlined to make it easier to apply for and renew permits?
 - How can the work of Traffic Permits Counter staff be streamlined to increase staff satisfaction and reduce the time required to operate the program?

- How can information technology be improved to support program operations for both staff and customers?

- Chapter 6: Enforcement
 - How can on-street enforcement be more effective?
 - How can fraudulent use of permits be reduced or eliminated?
 - How can technology be improved to support RPZ enforcement?

Other report elements

Finally, this report also includes:

- Chapter 7: Recommendations for improvements in customer service that can be accomplished in the short term with existing resources.

- Chapter 8: Discussion of long term issues including anticipated future advances in the technology that will be available to manage the program in new ways, and possible future conditions that will continue to exacerbate the difficulty of accommodating on-street parking demand.

- Chapter 9: Implementation time line.

Chapter 3

RPZ Policy Concepts

Introduction

This chapter proposes draft recommendations for a set of residential parking policies that address:

- A. Zone classification: How zones can be structured to better fit specific conditions
- B. Permit eligibility and limits
- C. Guest permits: How guest permits can be made more convenient
- D. Business permits: Parking allocation and balance among residents, business customers, area employees and others
- E. Permit fees

The policy recommendations proposed here work together to optimize the performance of the RPZ program in Seattle.

Each section is organized to include:

- Current practice
- Issues and options for consideration
- Best practices review from other cities
- Public comment to date
- Proposed recommendation

Summary of Proposed Recommended Policies

Proposed policy recommendations are summarized below to provide a context for the detailed discussion of issues and options that follows. The proposed recommendations are presented in more detail at the end of the chapter.

Develop Zone Classifications

- Classify each existing residential parking zone as high impact, medium impact or low impact.
 - A. Establish framework for zone classifications.

Revise Permit Eligibility and Limits

- Tighten resident eligibility to require that vehicles be registered at the applicant's address.
- Establish different rules for each zone classification governing who is eligible for a permit and how many permits they may have.
 - A. High Impact Zones: One per household limit.
 - B. Medium Impact Zones: Two per household limit.
 - C. Low Impact Zones: Four per household limit.

Revise Guest Permit Program

- Replace the permanent guest permit with a program of multiple, single-use permits.
 - A. Set a maximum of 100 days of guest parking per year per household.

Revise Permit Fee Structure

- Vehicle permits: Set fees to cover the administrative costs of the program; increase the fees for permits above two per household.

A. Zone Classification – Current Practice

Today, all zones are governed by one set of operating rules for permit availability and eligibility. In part related to the number of parking permits issued versus the available designated on-street RPZ parking, some residential parking zones work well under the current program design and operating rules, while others fall short. This section addresses the range of differences among zones and looks at options relating to how zones operate to optimize performance.

The discussion examines variations between zones; what zone characteristics should determine permit availability; and what improvements can better balance parking demand and supply and equitably share a limited resource – on-street parking.

Effectiveness of existing zones

Existing zones that work well

Residential parking zones have been most effective in Seattle in areas where a single major generator is located in an otherwise residential neighborhood, with no more than moderate commercial activity. In these zones, if the parking impacts of the generator can be controlled, the supply of on-street parking is ample for everyone else. Residents can park with a permit, and there are enough spaces left on the street to accommodate short-term parkers visiting local businesses or engaged in other errands.

Two examples of Seattle zones that work well are:

- Zone 3, Fautleroy. The permit restrictions prevent ferry commuters from permanently parking a vehicle overnight in a primarily single-family neighborhood with no other parking pressures.
- Zone 18, Licton Springs. A small residential area between a community college and a park is signed for RPZ permit and two-hour parking. The small size of the zone works because the walking distance is about the same between the college's most remote on-campus parking space (which requires a low cost permit) and the nearest neighborhood street allowing free all-day. Looking just at the number of permits issued relative to the number of on-street spaces available it would appear this zone would be failing; there are over two permits issued for every on-street space. But because North Seattle Community College pays for residents' permits in this zone, many who routinely park off-street in driveways and garages are likely to accept the free permit, "just in case," skewing the numbers.

Existing zones where parking problems persist

Residential parking zones are not a perfect solution. While they may help, they cannot completely solve the supply/demand problem in dense residential and mixed-use areas where:

- Residents without off-street parking own as many or more vehicles than available on-street parking spaces can accommodate.
- Business district customers need more parking than is available in off-street lots and garages and along arterial streets, and must compete for spaces on already crowded residential streets.
- Paid parking may be available for short-term parking, but customers and others sometimes avoid them in favor of searching for free parking in the neighborhood.

Two examples of existing zones that experience some or all of these conditions are:

- Zone 4, Capitol Hill. The RPZ helps to control commuter parking related to Group Health Hospital and area businesses. Short-term parking is available in the commercial areas. At the same time, some workers could choose to park on-street and move their cars throughout the day.
- Zone 24, Cascade. This fast-changing area combines older apartment buildings (some built with no or little parking), new apartments and mixed-use buildings (where off-street parking may be available, but expensive), small and large employers, and small and large retail. Already, there are slightly more permits issued than on-street spaces, and looking ahead this imbalance is likely to become one of the worst in the city. If growth projections for 2030 are realized there could be as many as thirty registered vehicles for every on-street space; fortunately many of these vehicles will be parked in garages.

A. Zone Classification – Issues and Options

Currently, there is no flexibility to either restrict or expand the number of permits issued in a zone in proportion to the availability of on-street parking. Except in one zone, businesses cannot obtain permits even where there is surplus of on-street parking.

This project evaluated potential impacts of applying different rules for permit eligibility, who is eligible for a permit, how many permits each household may have, and how much permits cost. The results are as follows.

There are two ends to the permit eligibility spectrum. At one end are the zones where the numbers of people who want to park, either with permits or short-term, exceed the available spaces. At the other end are zones where, with the RPZ in place and working, there remains unused parking capacity on-street and people who would like to use it.

The challenge then becomes how to identify where each zone falls along the spectrum, and what the rules should be in each zone.

Classifying zones

Zones can be divided into three groups characterized as low impact, medium impact and high impact areas, based on a range of factors that determine how a zone operates. Three groups will adequately capture the differences among zones, and allow the rules to vary along a broad enough range to address the different situations in each zone.

Characteristics of low impact zones

Low impact zones are characterized primarily by single-family and small apartment residential development, with a single traffic and parking generator.

Primary RPZ-related characteristic: If not for the presence of a single large generator and the related impacts of commuters, patients and/or students who would park on-street all-day if allowed, curb space can easily accommodate vehicles parked by residents, their visitors, and customers of local retail and commercial businesses.

In addition to moderate density development, most residences in these types of neighborhoods have off-street parking available in driveways, garages and alleys.

Zone 18 Licton Springs, is an example of this type of zone. The RPZ discourages students and staff from North Seattle Community College from parking on residential streets, not only leaving room for residents' cars, but protecting the neighborhood from the noise, pollution and other impacts of traffic.

In this type of area the RPZ program as it is currently designed works well. It also encourages staff and students to commute by modes other than driving alone.

Characteristics of medium impact zones

Medium impact areas are characterized primarily by medium to higher density residential development, with one or more traffic/parking generators and local businesses.

Primary RPZ-related characteristic: Even without the traffic generated by commuters, patients and/or students who would park all-day if allowed, curb space would still be limited for vehicles parked by residents, their visitors, and customers of local retail and commercial businesses.

The Wallingford zone would be classified as a medium impact area. Residential development is a mix of single family and apartments, with denser housing clustered along the arterial streets.

In areas of this type residential parking zones help to reduce commuter traffic and preserve on-street parking for residents, but parking remains tight because of the high demand generated by the combined needs of residents, customers, employees, students, patients, and other visitors.

Characteristics of high impact zones

High impact neighborhoods are characterized by high density residential use, large employers, and vibrant business districts including many mixed-use buildings, and likely a large institution. On-street parking on commercial streets may be metered or pay station controlled.

Primary RPZ-related characteristic: Even without the traffic generated by commuters, patients and/or students who would park all-day if allowed, curb space is still extremely limited for parking by residents, their visitors, and customers of local retail and commercial businesses.

An example of this type of zone is Zone 7 First Hill. Many large apartment buildings have on-site garages, but not necessarily with enough space to park every car owned by residents of the building. There are several hospitals, as well as churches, high schools, and retail businesses and services along the arterials. On-street parking is extremely limited and demand is very high. Residents with RPZ permits compete with visitors who prefer to park on-street in un-metered time-limited spaces, rather than pay for off-street commercial parking or buy tickets at pay-stations.

Neighborhoods in transition

Clearly the three types of neighborhoods described above are not necessarily static. What might be a ‘non-impact’ area now, such as around some of the Link stations, could be transformed overnight with the opening of a light rail or bus rapid transit station. An already ‘medium impact area’ can be trending to a ‘high impact area’ as residential development continues to build to zoned maximums and employment and commercial activity increases.

Developing a quantitative measure to classify zones

It is important to classify each zone, first, to optimize the performance of the residential parking program, and second, to be fair to everyone citywide, whether they live, work, or travel to a residential parking zone, in allocating a scarce public resource – on-street parking – among all those who would like to use it.

The proposed categories use the following criteria:

- on-street parking
- available permits in use
- population, land use and growth factors

CHART 3.1: COMPARATIVE DATA FOR EXISTING ZONES

Source of data: SDOT

Data Year	2008	2000	2000	2000	2000	2008-2030	
Zone	On-street spaces per permit	Population Density (Pop/Acre)	Vehicle Density (Veh/Acre)	Vehicles/HH (inverse)	Multifamily	Projected Growth	“Score”
1*	●	○	○	○	○	○	4
2	●	●	●	●	●	●	18
3	○	○	○	○	○	○	2
4	●	●	●	●	●	○	16
5	○	○	○	○	○	●	8
6	●	●	●	○	○	●	16
7	●	●	○	●	●	●	20
8	○	●	●	○	●	○	12
9	○	○	○	○	○	○	4
10	●	●	○	○	●	●	18
11	○	●	○	○	○	○	8
12	○	○	○	○	○	○	6
13	○	●	○	●	●	●	20
14	○	○	●	○	○	○	10
15	○	●	●	○	●	○	16
16	○	○	●	○	○	●	10
17	○	○	○	○	●	○	12
18	●	○	●	○	○	○	12
19	○	○	○	○	○	○	4
20	○	○	●	○	○	○	12
21	●	●	●	●	●	○	22
22	○	○	●	○	○	○	12
23	○	○	○	○	○	○	4
24	●	●	○	●	●	●	20
25	○	○	○	○	●	○	10

*Zone numbers in bold are zones where institutions pay all or part of permit fees.

Measures

	High	Medium	Low
Spaces per Permit	< 0.5	0.6 – 1.8	> 1.8
Population Density	> 19	9 - 19	< 10
Vehicle Density	> 39	20-39	< 20
Vehicles/HH*	< 1.0	1.0 – 1.9	> 2+
Multifamily	> 70%	40% - 69%	< 40%
Projected Growth	> 30%	20% - 30%	< 20%

* Note that the Vehicles/Household the measure is counterintuitive; more vehicles per household correlates with less congested neighborhoods.

Scores

High = 4

Medium = 2

Low = 0

CHART 3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CLASSIFYING EXISTING ZONES

Zone	Name	Score H / M / L	Rationale
1*	Montlake	4 – L	Consistent with its score.
2	Providence	18 – M	Consistent with its score.
3	Fauntleroy	2 – L	Consistent with its score.
4	Capitol Hill	16 – H	The largest zone in the city. The northern portion would probably work well with two permits/HH but parking in the southern portion is extremely tight. If, in the future, the zone is split into two zones, the classifications could be different.
5	Wallingford	8 – M	This zone is experiencing extensive new housing construction, not reflected in the data, with a number of new apartment and townhome developments. These added households and their parking needs push the zone to a Medium.
6	University East	16 – M	Consistent with its score.
7	First Hill	20 – H	Consistent with its score.
8	Eastlake	12 – M	Consistent with its score.
9	Magnolia	4 – L	Consistent with its score.
10	University West	18 – M	Consistent with its score.
11	N. Queen Anne/SPU	8 – L	Consistent with its score.
12	N. Capitol Hill	6 – L	Consistent with its score.
13	Lower Queen Anne	20 – H	Consistent with its score.
14	Garfield High School	10 – L	Consistent with its score.
15	Belmont/Harvard	16 – M	Consistent with its score.
16	Mount Baker	10 – L	Consistent with its score.
17	North Beacon Hill	12 – M	Consistent with its score.
18	Licton Springs	12 – L	This zone scores Medium, but permits are subsidized and it is likely this has skewed the spaces/permitted vehicle ratio. There are no other parking pressures on this area, which should operate well with four permits/HH.
19	Roosevelt/Cowan Park	4 - L	Consistent with its score.
20	Ravenna/Bryant	12 – M	Consistent with its score.
21	Pike/Pine	22 – H	Consistent with its score.
22	Lincoln High School	12 – M	Consistent with its score.
23	Madison Valley	4 – L	Consistent with its score.
24	Cascade	20 – H	Consistent with its score.
25	Westlake Roadway	10 – L	Consistent with its score.

**Zone numbers in bold are zones where institutions pay all or part of permit fees.*

Default total scores

High = 20 and above

Medium = 12-18

Low = 10 and under

Process for classifying new zones

In the future as zones are created they will need to be classified as high, medium or low impact areas in order to determine which rules will apply – using the classification definitions and the quantitative factors.

A. Zone Classification – Best Practices

Different rules for different zones

Boulder, Colorado – Zone by zone, commuter permits if space allows

Boulder does not formally designate different zone types, but each zone is evaluated periodically and, if excess on-street parking space is available, up to four permits per block may be sold to commuters. Areas are reevaluated periodically; if overfull the commuter permits are not renewed.

Melbourne and Sydney, Australia – One or fewer permits in high impact areas

These Australian cities vary permit eligibility and numbers of permits per household based on the demand/supply balance in a zone. In the tightest zones, permits are limited to one per household, or none if the household has off-street parking available.

Toronto, Canada – In the hardest zones, get on the waiting list

Toronto takes a different approach from any of the other cities researched. It not only varies the permit rules in zones by the demand/supply balance, but in the zones with the greatest problems it issues on-street spaces on a first-come, first-served basis. When the streets are ‘full’ the parking program is closed, even to visitors. When a space opens up, the next person on the waiting list gets the much coveted permit.

Portland, Oregon– Citizens decide what the rules will be in each zone

Portland varies rules zone-by-zone in response to different conditions, relying on citizen parking committees in each zone to make decisions. Portland’s program is designed for both residents and businesses, and zones are distinguished by the number of permits a business may have. In some zones, it is “half a permit” per full time employee, in other zones it’s “three-quarters of a permit per employee,” and in at least one zone there are no limits.

Arlington, Virginia – Different rules where there are multi-family buildings

Arlington carefully balances the needs of apartment buildings and adjacent businesses, allowing just enough residential permit spaces (and only if there is room on the block), to bring old buildings up to current code equivalents. That is, if a similar building now would require 50 off-street spaces, and the existing building has only 35, Arlington will allow up to an 15 on-street spaces for permit parking. Arlington will not convert curb space in front of retail to permit parking during the hours the retail is open.

A. Zone Classification – Public Comment

RPZ Survey

The on-line survey was designed to be completed in about ten to fifteen minutes, and because of the complexity of classifying zones survey respondents were not asked about it. Survey responses, in both the multiple choice questions and in the comments, reflected strong support for limiting the number of permits one household may get, particularly where parking is particularly tight. Briefly, the most popular choice in answer to a survey question about permit eligibility was to limit the number per household.

Sounding boards and others

Discussions with the sounding boards and others were inconclusive. After the project recommendations have been circulated and the sounding boards have met a second time, there should be a clearer indication of whether people believe this approach has merit.

A. Zone Classification – Proposed Recommendations

Develop Zone Classifications

P.1 Classify each residential parking zone as: high impact, medium impact or low impact. The basic characteristics of each classification are:

High Impact: On-street parking is extremely limited and cannot accommodate all of the vehicles of residents, their visitors, and customers of local retail and commercial businesses who do not have off-street parking alternatives available to them. Long-term parking by commuters, employees, patients and/or students cannot be accommodated and must be controlled.

Medium Impact: On-street parking is limited, but can accommodate the vehicles of residents, their visitors, and customers of local retail and commercial businesses who do not have off-street parking alternatives available to them. If long-term parking by commuters, employees, patients and/or students is controlled, the zone will work reasonably well for other users.

Low Impact: On-street parking can easily accommodate vehicles parked by residents, their visitors, and customers of local retail and commercial businesses. If the traffic and parking impacts of a major generator are controlled, the zone will work very well for other users.

Final decisions regarding zone classifications will be made by the SDOT Director or designee, based on qualitative and quantitative measures, public comment, and professional judgment.

A. Establish framework for zone classifications, based on a matrix that includes and cross references multiple factors that describe parking needs and usage for residents and others, and that considers existing and future land use and demographic patterns, including growth projections. See recommendation *4.1 Expand technical warrants for establishing residential parking zones.*

- i. Parking and vehicle ownership characteristics
 - Parking utilization rates. (For existing zones use permitted vehicles per on-street space.)
 - Number of residential vehicles licensed in the zone, and vehicles per acre.
 - Number of on-street parking spaces signed or proposed to be signed for RPZ parking.
- ii. Non-residential pressures on and needs for parking
 - Presence of major institution/employer/public facility whose parking demand could be controlled by RPZ restrictions.
 - Presence of customer-oriented commercial businesses that depend on on-street parking, quantified as the total number of businesses on any block face of a block in the proposed or existing RPZ, and the ratio of businesses to blocks for the zone as a whole.
- iii. Land use and demographic characteristics
 - Population density.
 - Share of multi-family housing and presence of older housing stock without parking
 - Zoning and zoned capacity.
 - Growth projections.

- B. Establish different rules for each zone classification governing who is eligible for a permit and how many permits they may have. (See Recommendation 3.3 below.)**
- i. High Impact Zones: One per household limit on permanent resident permits.
 - ii. Medium Impact Zones: Two per household limit on permanent resident permits.
 - iii. Low Impact Zones: Four per household limit on permanent resident permits.

B. Permit Eligibility and Limits – Current Practice

Defining who is eligible for a permit and how many each person or household may have is one of the key factors that determine how well RPZs work, the other two being parking restrictions for non-permitted vehicles, and enforcement.

Who qualifies for a vehicle permit

Currently in Seattle, with only one exception, permits are issued to residents or to people who have business at a resident’s home. An exception is made for people who own or manage residential property and who need to be able to visit that property either for routine day-to-day management, or for maintenance and repairs.

Following is a summary of who qualifies for a permit and what documentation is required.

Vehicle permits – permanent and temporary

<i>Who Qualifies</i>	<i>Permit type</i>	<i>Documentation</i>
Resident	Vehicle decal	Proof of address, vehicle registration
Guest	One-Day permit	Sold to residents who give to guests
Business owner	In Montlake Zone A only, 2 vehicle decals, and in Zone 1 Montlake 1 vehicle decal (for parking on Husky game days only.)	
Building Owner/Manager	Vehicle decal	Proof of ownership/management role
Contractor	Temporary (90 days) May be renewed 5 times Good for commercial vehicle, not employee parking	Contract or work order from resident
Home Health Care Home Child Care Housesitter	Temporary or Vehicle decal	Letter from resident
Shelters, Hospices etc.	Temporary (90 days) Renewable	Documentation of temporary residence

Current Vehicle Permit Details and Exceptions

A resident who applies for a permit must be the owner of the vehicle, which must be registered at the resident's address, with the following exceptions:

- Students may apply for a permit for an out-of-state vehicle, with proof of out-of-state residency status from their college or university.
- One family member may apply for a permit for a vehicle registered to another family member, and the vehicle may be registered somewhere else. "Same last name" is considered adequate documentation; those with different last names need to provide confirmation of the arrangement from the vehicle owner.
- Anyone may apply for a permit for a vehicle belonging to another person (including an out-of-area vehicle) with documentation from the owner that they have loaned the vehicle to the applicant.
- Active duty military, in compliance with federal law, may apply for a permit for a vehicle registered at a permanent address out of the area.

B. Permit Eligibility and Limits – Issues and Options

By definition, residential parking zones are characterized by too many drivers who want to park and too few on-street spaces for them to park in. Currently only seven of Seattle’s residential parking zones have more on-street spaces than permit holders, while ten have more than two vehicles vying for every space. Residents, of course, do not represent everyone who wants to park. While long-term parkers are specifically excluded by RPZ parking restrictions, customers of local businesses, visitors to parks and public facilities, guests of residents and others, all compete for limited on-street parking.

Discouraging temporary residents from bringing a vehicle to Seattle

With the severe parking imbalances today, residents consistently complain about their inability to find an on-street parking space, even with an RPZ permit. Limiting the permits per household is intended to equitably share out a scarce resource, on-street parking. Another way to help accomplish this is to discourage temporary residents from bringing their cars with them to Seattle.

Some of the most severe parking imbalances in any of the zones occur around universities. Subsidized transit pass programs exist at all the major schools and have been extraordinarily successful in increasing non-drive-alone mode share to campuses. For students and other residents in the immediate campus areas, however, relatively low vehicle ownership rates are counterbalanced by the high density of student households.

Restricting eligibility to vehicles registered at the RPZ address would affect all temporary residents with cars, but would likely disproportionately affect students. On the plus side for students, the neighborhoods around Seattle’s universities tend to contain everything needed for daily life within easy walking distance and to be well served by transit.

Requiring vehicles to be registered at the RPZ address will encourage students and others to leave their vehicles at their permanent homes and, while they are in Seattle, travel by walking, cycling, transit, carpooling, carsharing and rental cars.

Requiring a vehicle to be registered where it is being driven, and parked, is not a burdensome requirement, particularly given Washington’s low vehicle license fees. (While it might increase insurance premiums for some drivers, the premiums would fairly reflect the risks of where the vehicle is actually being driven.) Finally, asking that people who are requesting a privilege – the right to park long-term where others are restricted from parking – register their vehicle at the address where they want that privilege, can be considered inherently fair.

Limiting permits per household

The *zone classification* section above has amply shown the parking imbalances in most zones; in most zones there are already fewer on-street spaces than there are permits issued. For example in Zone 24 Cascade there are about 240 on-street spaces, but about 450 permits issued, just under two cars for every parking space. By 2030, residential density in the area is expected to increase by more than ten times, but not one new on-street parking space will be created.

Even in the lowest impact areas, where parking is not so tight, a fair allocation would argue for allowing one residence to have no more permits than there are parking spaces in front of the house. Few houses have more than three on-street spaces along their property frontage, and many have two. Apartment buildings and boarding houses typically have many fewer on-street spaces than residents.

The permit limits recommended here are intended to fairly allocate a limited resource, and in some cases an extremely limited resource, among residents who need to store their cars, and others who drive to an area to visit residents, or shop at local businesses, eat at local restaurants, and conduct other business and errands.

Defining a household

A definition of a household does not factor into Seattle’s current RPZ program because any resident of a zone may register any number of vehicles. However, in order for a limit on permits per household to be effective, a household must be defined. Consistent with the Seattle Municipal Code, a household is a single address, which may house up to eight unrelated individuals.

Although each member of a household may need a car, the available street space in front of a single building remains limited. Requiring all households to abide by the permit per household limits equitably shares the available on-street parking among all residents.

B. Permit Eligibility and Limits – Best Practices

Permit Eligibility

Residents only, no exceptions

A number of cities issue permits only to residents; some limit permits to those without off-street parking. Their reasoning is simple: there is not enough on-street parking even for residents, and other people need it too. **Boston** makes no provision for guests and permit zones are permit parking only. Guests must find paid parking or a space nearby on a commercial street. **Denver** is also resident only, though residents may go to the city and make a special plea for guest parking if they really need it.

...and guests

Most cities appear to make accommodations for guests, many very simply with a single, transferable guest permit as in Seattle, but others in much more complex ways. **Washington DC** allows guests but the resident must ask at the police station for a permit on an as-needed basis. **Melbourne** allows 600 hours of guest parking a year, but residents must purchase it in a complex collection of hourly and all-day permits that come as a set, and only one set may be purchased every other month.

...plus people who serve residents

Most cities allow home health care and child care providers, along with contractors working on a resident's home to get their own permits, or to be issued special or temporary permits. **San Francisco** has a permit just for contractors, good in any zone in the city, but it costs \$500 a year. **Washington DC** says yes to nurses but states on its website that babysitters "should make other arrangements or take public transportation."

...and in some cities, businesses

Some cities offer limited permits to businesses and others are more generous. **Berkeley** will issue one permit for a commercial vehicle good only in the block where the business is located. **San Francisco** allows one general business permit plus three for delivery vehicles. **Boulder** allows three per business, no questions asked, and larger businesses may apply for more. **Portland** is one of the most permissive and the program there is specifically designed to accommodate both residents and businesses.

To prove eligibility you will need...

Seattle's requirement – proof of residency and vehicle registration, with some flexibility about who owns the vehicle – is common in other cities. However many cities are much more strict; many require a driver's license. **Vancouver** requires proof of car insurance and **Berkeley**, **Denver** and **Madison** will not issue a permit to anyone with outstanding parking tickets

Students

Many of the cities surveyed initially created residential parking zones in response to parking problems around a college or university campus. Many of these try to limit student parking in some way, although none of the surveyed cities allocate permits based on resident's occupation. **Berkeley** will not issue permits for any address that is a dormitory (all the UC dorms are off-campus), and requires vehicles to be registered at the resident's address. **Austin** limits boarding houses to two permits, which it does by defining a household as one utility hookup. As of 2006, the city of **Melbourne** stopped issuing permits to residents of student housing.

Permit Limits

Arlington, Virginia allows all households one free FlexPass, which is a dashboard placard that can be used either for a household's own vehicle or for a guest's vehicle. In addition, households are allowed up to three vehicle-specific permits which are decals placed on the rear bumper. Residents in each zone may use a petition process to ask the city to increase or decrease the allowable number of permits per household.

Melbourne, Australia has different permit limits for different areas, ranging from a maximum of three to one or fewer. In some areas, Melbourne reduces the number of permits allowed by the number of off-street parking spaces available to the residence. In some areas the city also excludes residential properties constructed after January 1, 2006 from eligibility for residential parking permits.

Sydney, Australia specifically limits or denies permits altogether to people in some zones in some new developments, with 'new' defined back to 1996. New developments can be permitted with the proviso that residents will not be eligible for permits. In some areas Sydney limits permits per household to two, with all permits subject to "the MINUS rule." This states that the number allowed is the zone maximum less the 'number of on-site parking spaces available or which may reasonably be provided at the household.' In 'restricted access' areas permits are limited to a maximum of one. The maximum for boarding houses is two, which are issued to the manager; it's up to the manager to share them out.

San Francisco, California after much study – sparked partly by the revelation that one celebrity had 27 permits and that 700 households had more than four each – set a limit of four per address, though residents can apply for a waiver to get more.

Toronto, Canada both limits permits and, in the most difficult areas, establishes a waiting list, issuing new permits only when an existing permit is surrendered or not renewed. The number of permits issued also reflects the availability of off-street parking. If off-street parking is available on a property but not available to the applicant, the applicant must provide proof of other vehicles registered at the address that are using the off-street spaces. Residents of apartments and condominiums must provide proof that they do not have access to on-site parking. To further limit permits issued, Toronto sets a special rate for a "convenience permit," where the resident has off-street parking but wants the convenience of being able to park on-street. These permits are not issued in the highest impact zones.

Vancouver, Canada varies the number of permits allowed by zone, with the options either unlimited permits, or two permits.

B. Permit Eligibility and Limits – Public Comment

RPZ Survey

The RPZ survey asked a number of questions that relate to the numbers of permits each household needs or should qualify for. Keeping in mind that the survey is not scientific because respondents were self-selected, following are some of the results of those questions.

Numbers of vehicles owned: Only 8% of households own three or more vehicles, 55% own only one.

Availability of off-street parking: 24% have fewer spaces than vehicles; 35% have none.

Limit permits per household: Survey takers living in RPZs responded as follows:

- 41% Each household should be allowed no more than 2 permits
- 15% Each household should be allowed no more than 3 permits
- 10% Each household should be allowed only 1 permit
- = 66% Permits per household should be limited

- 35% Permits per household should not be limited

Representative comments include:

- It's amazing the sheer amount of cars exist/parked around my property, due to the amount of permits issued per household. The house next door has 5 tenants and SIX cars per one house!!!
- I live in lower Queen Anne and there's just not enough room for households to have more than 2.
- Where else are we supposed to park?

Permit Limits – Sounding Boards and others

Resident representatives, for the most part, felt that there needs to be a balance between the numbers of permits issued and the number of on-street spaces, and that it doesn't make sense to issue more permits than there are parking spots. They commented that even though eight unrelated people are allowed to live in one housing unit, the number of street spaces for the building is fixed. If sixteen people live in a duplex, there may be room to park only two or three cars on the street in front.

Residents supported the idea of having different rules for different areas, and of looking at the supply of both on-street and off-street parking, including off-street paid parking, to establish rules.

Some people commented that the city needs to create more parking, rather than ration what's already there, and that one way to do that is to restrict parking for non-permitted vehicles to two hours or less, instead of four hours.

Business representatives supported limiting the number of permits one individual may have, while recognizing that in some areas, because of lack of transit, families may need more than one car.

Both groups commented that new residential construction is going in with limited parking and that both builders and residents assume a second car, or even a first, can be parked on the street. While opinions varied, many supported the idea of using price to discourage people from having multiple permits, with some suggesting the price of a second or third permit should be “sky high.”

B. Permit Eligibility & Limits – Proposed Recommendations

Revise Permit Eligibility and Limits

- **Tighten resident eligibility to require that vehicles be registered at the applicant’s address.**
 - A. Active Duty Military: Exempt from requirement to comply with federal law.
 - B. Vehicle Ownership: Continue to allow the vehicle to be owned by someone other than the resident, so that title transfer is not required in situations where a family member or friend has permission to use a vehicle owned by another person.

- **Establish different rules for each zone classification governing who is eligible for a permit and how many permits they may have.**
 - A. High Impact Zones
 - Permits for residents, their guests, home health aids and contractors.
 - Permanent resident permits limited to one per household.
 - B. Medium Impact Zones
 - Permits for residents, their guests, home health aids and contractors.
 - Permanent resident permits limited to two per household.
 - C. Low Impact Zones
 - Permits for residents, their guests, home health aids and contractors.
 - Permanent resident permits limited to four per household.
 - D. Define a household as one address, consistent with the Seattle Municipal Code.
 - Permit limits per household, which will range from one to four, will apply to all households regardless of size, including boarding houses, roommates and families.

C. Guest Permits – Current Practice

Seattle allows one guest permit for each household in an RPZ, both for those with vehicle permits and those without. The guest permit is a tag that hangs from the rear view mirror of a guest's vehicle, and is good all the time. People who buy a vehicle permit receive the guest permit for \$15; for others the cost is the same as for a vehicle permit, currently \$35. As with vehicle permits, the actual cost to residents varies; in several zones some or all of residents' fees are paid by institutions. A resident may not use a guest permit on their own vehicle on either a temporary or permanent basis.

It is explicitly allowed for neighbors to share guest permits among themselves to accommodate people with multiple guests. However, it is not permitted to give away or to sell guest permits, a rule that appears to be frequently violated. Anecdotally, RPZ permits, including guest permits, have been advertised for sale on-line and in the employee newsletter of at least one local hospital.

C. Guest Permits – Issues and Options

There are two major issues with the current guest permit program: first, it presents problems for residents who have multiple guests; and second, it is open to fraudulent use of the permits. The specific issues surrounding fraudulent use are addressed in *Chapter 6: Enforcement*; this chapter addresses customer convenience.

Based on the results of the RPZ survey and comments from the Sounding Boards, the current guest permit program works well for many people. Many survey participants say they rarely or never have more than one guest at a time, and when they do they can rely on neighbors to loan them extra permits. For these residents, the only major failing of a single annual guest permit is the likelihood their guest will inadvertently drive off with it. Of course it can be brought or mailed back but in the meantime they are without a permit for the next guest.

For many, however, the current system is inconvenient because they often have multiple visitors and without multiple guest permits there are limited options for their guests to park. Some people say they avoid having guests, even family, visit them because they cannot park.

For people who live in zones that are enforced at night, this is a particular issue, although many report that their party guests simply park without permits and rely on lack of nighttime enforcement to avoid getting a ticket. Others, both day and night, play musical cars, moving their own vehicles on-street so their guests can park off street; having their guests park outside the zone; or having guests move their cars during the time they are visiting.

A review of practices in other cities offered a wealth of different approaches to handling guest permits, with a range of policies designed to equitably share limited on-street parking – which in some cities means no guests at all; provide convenience for a variety of types of visitors, from short term to long stay, and from one at a time to very large parties or events; and to reduce fraud.

C. Guest Permits – Best Practices

Like Seattle, a number of cities have permanent guest permits that can be moved from car to car to be used by different guests on different visits. It appears to be equally common, however, to issue permits that can be used only once. Most cities that do the latter generally require that **the date and the visitor's license plate be written on the permit**. Some cities **print the resident's address on their guest permit** and require, through language in the city code, that the visiting vehicle to be parked near the resident's home.

The most restrictive cities are **Denver, Colorado** which does not accommodate guest parking at all, except by special appeal to the parking office, and **Boston, Massachusetts** which never accommodates guests.

Washington, DC offers guest permits but the resident has to go to the police station and apply for one, which would certainly reduce the convenience for drop-in company.

Austin, Texas coordinates its entire residential parking program through neighborhood coordinators who handle all the administrative tasks, including selling permits, and collecting and banking the money. In this context, the limit of two permanent guest permits per household works well; a resident who needs more for a special event can contact the neighborhood coordinator two weeks ahead of time and get temporary permits.

San Francisco, California accommodates long term guest, with two, four, six and eight week permits, but does nothing for short term guests.

Berkeley, California allows up to **20 one-day permits per year**, that may be purchased at any time. In addition, up to **three fourteen-day permits per year** may be purchased no more than three weeks in advance and must include the **license number of the guest vehicle**. No guest vehicles may have outstanding parking tickets.

Chicago, Illinois sells up to thirty one-day passes a year, at \$5 for 15.

Vancouver, Canada allows housesitters to obtain a temporary permit, but the resident needs to apply at City Hall and must show a travel itinerary and/or a plane ticket to prove they're leaving town.

Portland, Oregon issues both annual and per-use guest permits. The single-use permit is a scratch-off hang-tag, where the user scratches off the month and day. Single-use guest permits come in tear-off books of ten sold for \$3 (the books cost the city just under \$3 each). Residents may order up to three books at a time with a limit of 12 books per year.

In addition to the regular guest permits, **Portland, Oregon** allows “up to **99 complimentary permit hours** per year to use for special occasions (guest, parties, funerals, etc.)” These temporary permits must be applied for through the parking office with the specific dates and times. The permits are then printed with the valid dates and the resident's address.

C. Guest Permits – Public Comment

RPZ Survey

On a question that allowed respondents to pick multiple responses (so the percentages add up to more than 100%), 58% of respondents said they almost never have more than one guest during the hours the RPZ is in force. Just over half of respondents, however, answered that they borrow guest permits from their neighbors or have their guests park off-street on their property, and 28% tell guests to park further away outside the RPZ boundaries.

The issue of guest permits generated about 150 comments, most of them ranging from negative to even more negative, though a few took the time to comment that it is not a problem for them.

Representative comments include:

- I feel like a bad hostess when people tell me later that they had very expensive tickets when they came to my house.
- There is so little zone parking ... that people generally don't visit me.
- My guests have to move their car every two hours.
- There are expensive pay-lots nearby.
- It would be nice to have the option to buy more guest permits.
- I dislike the RPZ program precisely because of this problem. Residents should have a reasonable alternative for their guests.
- I encourage guests to bus or get dropped off here to avoid parking all together.
- Maybe for each permit you get 100 for the year so that people don't have to remember to give it back to you and if you have a party or something you can have multiple people using them at the same time.

Guest Permits – Sounding Boards and others

Resident representatives reported that people routinely use guest permits for their own cars, which is not allowed, although people may not be aware of that. One resident mentioned that she and her neighbors understand that if one of them has ten people over and all of them park on-street, that is ten fewer spaces for everyone else.

C. Guest Permits – Proposed Recommendations

Revise Guest Permit Program

- **Establish a guest permit program that allows residents to have multiple guests at the same time, but that does not increase the opportunities for fraudulent use of permits.**
 - A. Replace the permanent guest permit with a program of multiple, single-use permits.
 - B. Set a maximum of 100 days of guest parking per year per household.

D. Permit Fees – Current Practice

Seattle has one of the simplest permit fee structures of the cities surveyed, but in execution it becomes one of the more complex.

- A resident’s vehicle permit is \$35 for a two-year period, except in the University District (Zones 6 and 10) where permits renew every year because of the huge turnover of residents. There is no limit on the number of permits per household and all permits cost \$35.
- A guest permit is \$15 with a resident’s vehicle permit, or \$35 without a resident’s vehicle permit.
- For low income residents, a permit is \$10.

In execution, however, there are twelve different fee schedules, based on whether an institution or other parking generator pays all or some of residents’ fees for them.

Seattle Permit Fee Options

Each horizontal row represents one variation, in effect in one or more zones

1st Resident Decal	2nd Resident Decal	3rd+ Resident Decal	Guest Permit Only	Guest Permit w/ Resident Decal
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15	\$0
\$0	\$17	\$35	\$15	\$0
\$9	\$35	\$35	\$9	\$9
\$9	\$35	\$35	\$15	\$9
\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10	\$10
\$15	\$15	\$15	\$15	\$15
\$17	\$26	\$35	\$15	\$17
\$21	\$21	\$21	\$15	\$21
\$35	\$17	\$35	\$15	\$0
\$35	\$35	\$35	\$15	\$35
\$35	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$35

The current language in the Seattle Municipal Code establishes that the RPZ program is a cost center and it was assumed in this work that it will continue to be one.

D. Permit Fees – Issues and Options

At the end of 2008, the RPZ program is expected to have built up a deficit, over the last six years, of approximately \$280,000. Assuming this deficit is not recovered, but that going forward the cost of new equipment and other program improvements will be covered, along with the cost of routine operations, it will require a fee increase of approximately thirty percent.

In zones where institutions pay for the permits, there is no link at all between the permit holder and the costs of the program or the value of parking. On the other hand, many residents in neighborhoods affected by institutions tend to see the institution's affect on parking as something that has been 'imposed on them' and from which they derive no direct benefit (unless they themselves are associated with the institution). This is different from the perceptions of other sources of parking problems such as living in a vibrant, mixed-use central city neighborhood which people are likely to see as a positive personal choice.

D. Permit Fees, Best Practices

For the most part, in the cities surveyed permits are inexpensive, certainly compared to the market value of a parking space. **Sydney** and **Melbourne, Australia** use moderate pricing to discourage permits for second cars and Sydney also uses pricing to discourage permits in the most congested zones. Their ordinary permit is \$43 a year, but in the most congested zones the cost goes to \$112 a year.

Only **Toronto, Canada** charges ‘serious’ fees. Their ‘convenience’ permit, issued to those who have on-site parking but want to be able to park on the street, is priced at over \$450/year. Toronto lists their fees based on monthly rates on their website, as a way to show that it is not *that* expensive. The permits are only good for six months but residents may buy two permits at a time. A regular permit for the first vehicle is \$132 a year, and for the second vehicle it is \$336 a year – both these rates assume the resident has no off-street parking.

None of the U.S. cities surveyed charge significant fees for residential parking permits. **San Francisco’s** \$60 a year (and \$500 for contractor permits) was the highest found.

Boulder, Colorado which charges \$17 a year for the residential permit, sells up to four commuter permits per block (good only in that block) on a space-available basis for \$78 a quarter or \$312 a year. Residents support these permits because the commuter fees cover the costs of the program and without them the resident permit fees would need to be raised significantly.

Permits are **free** in **Denver, Colorado** and \$15 to \$35 in **Portland, Oregon, Berkeley, California, Austin, Texas, Madison, Wisconsin, Chicago, Illinois, and Washington D.C.** These are annual rates, so for the most part they are just slightly more than the permit fees in Seattle. In **Austin**, permits come in a set of two regular permits and two guest permits for \$20 a set.

D. Permit Fees – Public Comment

RPZ Survey

The RPZ survey asked people how much they thought a permit should cost. There was strong agreement that the first permit should be low cost, and about half thought the second should be as well. But by the third permit more than half thought it should cost \$100 or more a year, and by the fourth permit almost half of respondents thought the permit should cost \$200 or more, although over a quarter of respondents stuck with the lowest price even for a fourth permit.

This chart shows the detailed responses. Because early project analysis suggested that fees might need to be doubled, the lowest price included in the survey was \$35 per year. The 2007-2008 fee is \$35 for two years except in two zones where permits are good for one year only. Analysis finalized after the survey was conducted has resulted in a smaller recommended fee increase than originally anticipated.

How much do you think people should pay for an RPZ permit?

	\$35/year	\$60/year	\$100/year	\$200/year	More than \$200/year
First Permit	79%	11%	6%	2%	2%
Second Permit	50%	29%	11%	5%	5%
Third Permit	31%	16%	24%	12%	16%
Fourth+ Permit	26%	8%	18%	19%	29%

Sounding Boards and others

Resident representatives at the sounding board meeting felt that the fees should be break even, enough to cover the city’s costs but not to make a profit.

Business representatives were split on what RPZ permits should cost, with opinions ranging from “keep it cheap,” to “raise the prices for everyone.”

Institution representatives noted that the neighborhoods would not be happy if the institutions stopped supporting the RPZ program, but they also suggested having the residents pay their own fees and using the institution dollars in other ways to reduce vehicle use.

Others: This is one area where civic groups consulted expressed a strong opinion not directly reflected in the sounding board discussions. They strongly supported raising the fees, particularly for multiple permits, which they felt should be “at a very high level.”

D. Permit Fees – Recommendations

Revise Permit Fee Structure

- **Vehicle permits: Increase fees to cover the administrative costs of the program.**
Increase permit fees periodically in the future to cover increases in program costs.

Chapter 4

Zones

Introduction

Chapter 3, RPZ Policy Concepts, discusses at length a proposal to evaluate and classify both existing and future Residential Parking Zones with regards to how zones can be structured to address different needs in different places. This chapter expands on zone-related issues. It is organized into two parts:

- A. Creating and Modifying Zones
 - Technical warrants for zones.
 - Strengthening the partnership between SDOT and neighborhoods in creating zones.
 - Considering Race and Social Justice to ensure the RPZ program serves the diverse needs of the city and that all citizens are able to participate in the decision-making process.

- B. Zone Operations
 - Days and times zones are in force and the parking restrictions for non-permitted vehicles
 - Nighttime zones and the challenges of balancing parking demands of an around-the-clock city.

The following summary of proposed recommendations is provided as context for the discussion.

Zones – Summary of Proposed Recommendations

Technical Warrants for Zones

- Expand technical warrants for creating residential parking zones.

Process for creating and modifying zones

- Revise design and petition process for creating zones.
- Evaluate all existing zones, modify boundaries and operating rules where appropriate, and classify as high, medium or low impact.
- Allow SDOT to modify, enlarge, combine or divide zones administratively, based on professional judgment, with appropriate outreach to affected areas.
- Removing a zone. Where zones routinely sell only a small number of permits, SDOT should work with citizens in the zone to confirm whether it is still needed and, if not, remove the zone.

Evening Parking

- In existing or proposed evening zones, explore ways to increase parking availability, and to share parking between residents and patrons of evening activities.

A. Creating and Modifying Zones – Current Practice

Seattle's existing residential parking zones have been created in response to requests from residents affected by the parking impacts of a major institution, or in anticipation of future impacts because of new construction. A few have been created around business districts or movie theaters. Currently, zones may be initiated by residents, by SDOT, or start from a major institution's master use permit, master plan or transportation master plan process. Zones can be modified using procedures similar to those followed to create zones, although adding on to a zone is generally less complex than creating one.

Final decision rests with SDOT Director

The existing process to establish a neighborhood-initiated residential parking zone is complex, and takes about a year. At the end of the process, the SDOT Director makes the final decision about whether to create a new zone, with procedures for appeal. As a practical matter, to date, SDOT has not allowed a zone creation process to get to the stage of canvassing residents for petition signatures without subsequently approving the zone.

Technical warrants for zones

The current technical warrants for a residential parking zone are:

- There must be a significant degree of parking by non-residents and 75 percent of on-street spaces must be in use for at least eight hours.
- At least 25 percent of those spaces must be in use by non-local vehicles.
- The area of the proposed RPZ must include at least five contiguous blocks.
- A "parking generator" needs to be identified: an event, an institution, or something other than the residents that is causing the high amount of non-local vehicles parking in the residential area

The SDOT director may authorize creation of an RPZ where these thresholds are not met, if there are other compelling reasons to do so.

Zone creation process

SDOT has a formal process for neighborhoods to follow if they believe a residential parking zone will help solve their parking problems. The following description summarizes the directions provided on SDOT's RPZ website.

Typical RPZ Timeframe

- Month 1: Letter from neighborhood Community Council or 25 residents.
- Month 2: SDOT conducts preliminary parking analysis to determine if 75% of streets are

occupied, there are at least five contiguous blocks, and there is an identifiable traffic generator.

- Month 3: SDOT schedules a parking study and convenes neighborhood design committee.
- First month after study begins: Neighborhood committee assists in zone design.
- Third month after study begins: If criteria met, petition process begins.
- First month after petitioning is done: SDOT reviews petition, plans signs and permits.
- Third month after petitioning is done: SDOT installs signs and begins issuing permits.

How SDOT currently works with neighborhoods

SDOT staff begins working with neighborhoods interested in forming an RPZ from the earliest stages of the process. Even before a formal request has been received, staff will meet with neighborhood associations or interested residents to discuss the requirements for establishing RPZs and the pros and cons of establishing and living within a zone. In some cases, once neighborhoods better understand how RPZs work and are enforced, they will decide not to go forward with a request. Particular issues of concern to residents that occasionally make them reconsider and even drop their requests for RPZs include:

- Enforcement. This is both a plus and a minus. Once an RPZ is established, parking enforcement officers enforce all parking rules, including the new RPZ. Residents can more likely be ticketed for illegal parking – for example parking across their own driveways, or too close to stop signs or corners, or blocking the sidewalk.
- Guest parking. People can no longer drop over without needing a guest permit. Hosting multiple guests at one time can be more difficult.
- Having to pay to park on-street. Many residents do not realize that if they form an RPZ, they will have pay for a permit and guest permit to park on-street.

Community parking plans with RPZs

In some cases, SDOT initiates the process to create a residential parking zone, although the impetus may have come from community groups or citizens. Two examples of RPZs recently created by SDOT outside of the formal neighborhood-initiated process are the expansion of Zone 13 in Lower Queen Anne/Uptown, and the creation of Zone 24 in South Lake Union's Cascade neighborhood.

Uptown zone expansion process

Uptown area residents had tried on more than one occasion to create a residential parking zone, or expand the existing Zone 13, but had difficulties in designing a workable proposal because of the complex development patterns around the Seattle Center. In 2005, SDOT commissioned a parking study that found moderate to very high parking utilization and good to poor compliance with posted time limits. Recommendations included creating an RPZ as one measure, among a menu of ways, to increase available parking, improve parking turnover to support local businesses, and better control time limited

parking. SDOT designed a comprehensive parking approach for the entire area, including expanding the Zone 13 RPZ to include new block faces. A letter was mailed to all residents in August, 2006, requesting comments on proposed changes, and after reviewing comments, SDOT decided to install the RPZ in late 2006.

Cascade zone creation process

Zone 24 Cascade was created as part of a parking plan for the larger South Lake Union area. In 2006-2007 SDOT conducted a comprehensive parking study in the area and subsequently developed a draft plan for public review that included both paid parking and an RPZ. An RPZ was subsequently implemented in a portion of the study area.

How SDOT currently works with major institutions to create or modify zones

RPZs can be developed as part of a Major Institutions' Master Plan and transportation management program effort. Ten major institutions have agreements with the city that require them to participate in some way in RPZs, for example by funding the studies done to create or modify zones, paying for set-up costs, signs and program administration, paying the permit fees of residents in the zones, and/or paying for enforcement.

As a part of working out these agreements and implementing their provisions, the City and institutions work with each other and also with neighborhoods. For example, **Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center** agreed to fund RPZ studies for the life of its Master Plan, upon submittal of request by the residents in the Parking Impact areas, and to pay all or part of residents' permit fees should a residential parking zone be installed which, to date, has not occurred.

The **University of Washington** pays portions of residents' fees in six zones, including the first RPZ, Zone 1, Montlake. It also pays for one parking enforcement officer position, dedicated solely to parking enforcement around the university. The UW has been a full partner in helping to establish RPZs around the campus, to define their boundaries and operating rules, and to support their operation.

Strengths and weaknesses of current approach

- + Residents take a leading role in creating a parking solution for their neighborhood and become invested in the outcome through petitioning for the RPZ, helping to design it, and collecting petition signatures for zone approval.
- Residents take on the burden of contacting their neighbors one-by-one to achieve consensus and approval. Secure apartment and other buildings may be hard to canvas; parking areas that may need to be managed by RPZ may be left out because residents could not be contacted.
- The established process works well for English speakers, citizens comfortable working within established city programs, and people who want to reach out to and work with their neighbors. It does not provide good options for neighborhoods where people speak many languages and may not have experience working with government programs or with each other across language and cultural barriers.
- + The established process allows all interested stakeholders to attend meetings and invites them serve on the neighborhood committee.

A. CREATING/MODIFYING ZONES – CURRENT PRACTICE

- The established process only invites residents to express final approval through the petition process; other voices are not counted at the final stage.
- + The 75% / 25% threshold test provides a good benchmark for defining parking conditions, and sets a clear starting point.
- The 75% / 25% threshold test only works where parking problems have already occurred. Neither the test, nor the process as a whole, are designed to address problems before they occur, for example in around the new light rail stations.
- The 75% / 25% threshold test doesn't capture who the out-of-area parkers are, what their business in the neighborhood is, or whether restricting their parking options works for or against other neighborhood and city goals. If, for example, the main parking generator is a park where youth sports are hosted, the data would not differentiate between these parkers and commuters.
- There is no set of technical warrants comparable to the 75% / 25% test that broadens the factors considered to measure and evaluate non-residential parking needs.
- The zone creation process does not emphasize trying other approaches before implementing an RPZ, or specifically taking advantage of opportunities to solve parking problems through redesign and other means that don't require intensive ongoing program management.
- + The process takes a long time; neighborhoods are not rushed through the design and decision process. As people become more informed about the RPZs they have time to reconsider their positions, for or against a zone, based on new knowledge.
- The process takes a long time – and there is a backlog of neighborhoods wanting to be considered for a zone – which makes it take even longer.
- The current process specifically addresses expanding RPZs but does not address other modifications to existing zones such as eliminating them, shrinking them, or dividing or combining zones
- + SDOT now has a city wide community parking program with a schedule that will allow it to work with about six neighborhoods a year on a broad range of solutions to parking problems, including forming RPZs. The program is focused on customers, businesses and residents, and includes multi-modal analysis and solutions.

A. Creating and Modifying Zones – Issues and Options

Complexity of cityscape, mixed-use neighborhoods, Race and Social Justice

The existing RPZ procedures do not necessarily meet the needs of dense, mixed-use neighborhoods, where potential parkers are not divided into two distinct groups: residents and commuters. They also do not address the City’s Race and Social Justice Initiative. There are no specific actions to ensure that neighborhoods city-wide have equal access to the program or that when zones are created, residents with limited English language skills, or lack of experience working with government programs, are fully involved. The challenge of ensuring the RPZ program addresses the broader needs in mixed-use areas, and in areas with immigrant and refugee populations, reflects solutions appropriate to changing land use and transportation patterns, is discussed in this section.

Technical warrants for zones

The existing technical warrants for creating a zone are a good starting point, but fall short of capturing the complexity of parking problems and their causes, and fail to answer the key question, “Why should residents in the study area be given priority parking over others who would like to park on-street.”

In most existing zones, the answer is clear: Without a zone, commuters, including staff and/or students, would drive into a residential neighborhood and park all day on-street, and it is in the public interest both to protect residential neighborhoods from these traffic and parking impacts, and to encourage people to leave their cars at home and commute by other means.

Increasingly, however, neighborhoods may look to residential parking zones to protect them, in some respects, from themselves. Dense, mixed-use neighborhoods attract not only commuters and their cars, but a wide array of customers, clients, patients and others who need short-term parking. Some businesses can provide surface lots or garages, but many, including the smaller businesses that give the city its rich fabric, cannot. The denser the neighborhood the more likely it is that most customers will come by foot, bike or bus. But some will drive, and need to park. Residents in vibrant urban villages benefit enormously by living in close proximity to all that they offer; one of the trade-offs is being obliged to share the parking with others.

In this context, the warrants for creating a zone need to consider:

- **Parking generators and who’s parking**
What are the parking generators and what kind of parking demand do they generate? Distinctions need to be made between all-day parking by commuters, and short-term parking by people with business in the neighborhood, whether it’s running errands, attending religious services, visiting parks and community centers, or other activities. Consideration would be needed for other parking demand in the area and the access to off-street parking.
- **Travel alternatives**
If people don’t drive and park, how else can they travel? Can visitors leave their cars at home? Can residents live without a car? Is there good transit service? Can people walk or cycle?

- **Optimum parking utilization ratios**
Currently a 75% total utilization and 25% of non-resident parked vehicles are the parking data used to investigate an RPZ. Other cities also use this methodology based on the US Supreme Court case. No changes are proposed to the utilization rates.
- **Demographics and land use**
Demographic and land use measures are useful to the extent that they correlate both with parking demand, and provide guides, from correlations with data for existing RPZs, about where they work well. The discussion in *Chapter 3. Policy Concepts*, regarding classifying zones, reviews demographic and land use measures relative to RPZs in detail.

Trying other approaches first

As a parking tool, RPZs can be a blunt and often unsatisfactory approach to complex parking problems in mixed-use neighborhoods. In addition, they are expensive and labor intensive to operate, year after year.

SDOT's Community Parking Program is a new multi-year effort to engage communities to improve on-street parking management in Seattle business districts and adjacent residential areas. Over a seven-year period SDOT plans to work with 35 neighborhoods. The program works with community members to identify on-street parking challenges and opportunities, develop parking recommendations, and implement on-street regulation changes. Outcomes may include new time-limit signs, load zones, paid parking and/or residential parking zones.

Revise design and petition process

The recommendations would revise the community process for developing a zone proposal, with SDOT taking more responsibility for the technical analysis. SDOT would ensure a strong public voice in decisions to design and install a zone.

Modifying zones

There are a number of problems with the current zones and their structure, and not all of these are specifically addressed in the recommendations, as they cannot be solved by global actions applied across the program as a whole. Rather it will take work at the zone and neighborhood level, to clear up some of the gaps, overlaps, inconsistencies and complications with the current zones.

Following is a brief summary of some of problems with existing zones.

Enforcement

Seattle's residential parking zones have grown and been fine-tuned over the years, with the result that many zones have multiple sub areas that are in effect on different days of the week, at different times of day, and operate with different parking restrictions.

The Seattle Police Department's Parking Enforcement Office has asked that, to the extent possible, the operating rules be consistent within a single zone. In some areas this may not be achievable, but in others, zone boundaries could be changed, and/or zones broken up or combined with other zones, to create greater consistency within zones.

When zones abut each other

In another area of complexity, as new zones have been added and existing zones have been expanded, there are at least six boundaries where zones abut each other. One side of the street may be one zone, while the other side is another zone. Permit holders on or near these borders may only park in their own zones and so, even if there are no open spaces on their side of the street but there are open spaces across the street, they have to drive further away to find a space. In at least one area two zones literally wrap around each other, creating confusion for residents, parking enforcement and, should a sign need to be replaced, for the sign installers. (See **Figure 4.1**, next page.) In a few cases, residents have been given multiple permits when their house is on a corner with street frontage in two zones.

Some of these complexities can be cleaned up, for example, by restructuring zones to break at ‘natural’ boundaries such as major arterials, rather than cross them and, again, by breaking up large zones and combining smaller ones.

Zones have obvious holes or gaps

The current neighborhood process for creating zones requires citizen volunteers to get 60% of the residents of each block to sign a petition approving the zone. If they are unable to contact enough residents, because they cannot get access to apartment buildings or for any other reason, the zone can end up with missing block faces. Often the people living there, or people who move in later, are not pleased to be excluded from the RPZ. As with the issue of abutting zones and other problems, these zone boundaries can be cleaned up on a case by case basis. (See **Figure 4.2**, below.)

**FIGURE 4.1 ABUTTING, DISCONNECTED AND INTERTWINED
RESIDENTIAL PARKING ZONES**

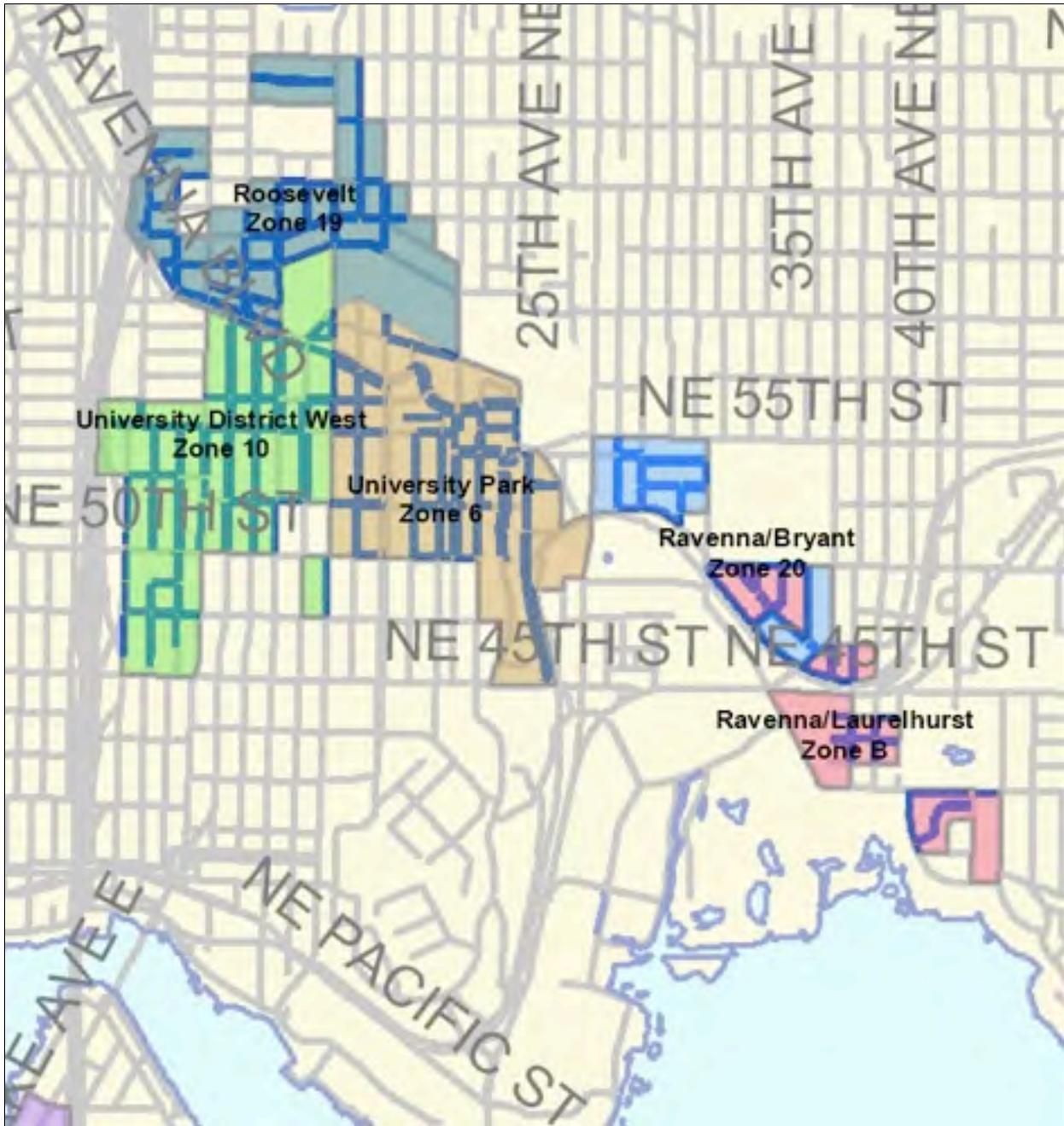
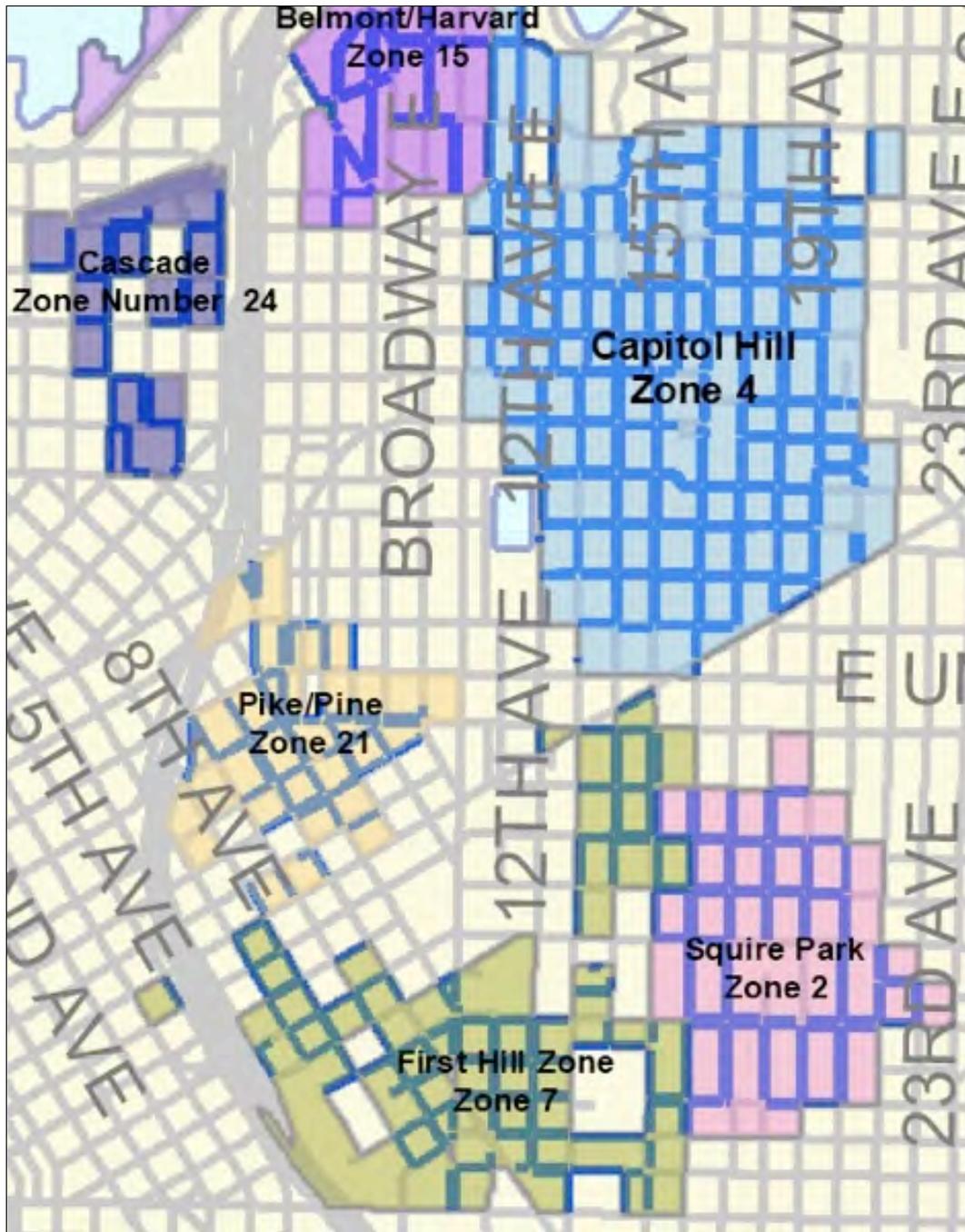


FIGURE 4.2 ABUTTING RESIDENTIAL PARKING ZONES, WITH GAPS AND HOLES



Size of zones

The size of the existing zones ranges widely from a couple square blocks to over eighty. In the larger zones, particularly Zone 4 Capitol Hill, a resident can easily decide to drive across the zone to shop, see a movie or eat out, parking for an unlimited time in front of someone else's house. Zone 4 is also an example where the operating rules vary in different areas of the zone. For all of these reasons it may be appropriate to split this zone and possibly others.

Another very large zone is Zone 3 Fauntleroy. It however, works well. It is entirely residential, is in effect only for three hours in the middle of the night, and has a single purpose—discouraging Seattle-Vashon Island commuters from leaving cars overnight in the neighborhood. So even though it is very large, there would be nothing gained by splitting it up.

Who pays the permit fees

Nine different parking generators, primarily hospitals and universities, pay all or part of the permit fees for some or all of the residents in eleven different zones. Within a single zone there can be as many as five subareas, with different payment arrangements with a variety of institutions in each of the different subareas.

The arrangements for institutions to pay RPZ permit fees, and in some cases other costs, are not necessarily defined by the zone structure. For example, the identified impact area of Group Health Hospital is only a portion of Zone 4, Harborview Hospital's agreement with Seattle defines certain street boundaries that do not match the boundaries of Zone 7 First Hill where it is located, and so on.

Changing the boundaries of individual zones, therefore, would not jeopardize existing agreements with institutions to pay permit fees and other costs.

A. Creating and Modifying Zones – Best Practices

All of the cities surveyed in the United States have some variation of the “75%/25%” rule that was blessed by the 1977 U.S. Supreme Court decision – that is 75% of the parking is in use and 25% of the vehicles parked are from out of the area. Some cities change the percentages slightly; some require the test to be met five days a week and others fewer. It is also extremely common to have a petition process, requiring majority approval of residents in the zone before a zone is finalized. With those elements as a starting point, the methods use to establish zones and the rules for those zones vary widely. Another common element, however, is generally a strong role for citizens. As one parking manager put it, “They’re the ones who are going to complain, so we let them take responsibility for it.”

Arlington County, Virginia – Residents are in charge

In Arlington County, Virginia, the creation of zones and control of how they operate is completely within the control of citizens. The city’s rationale for this is that the zones can be quite controversial and the city does not want to impose them on residents.

In addition to forming zones, residents may petition the city to break up zones (so that people don’t drive within them and use their permits to park away from home); to increase or decrease the number of permits allowed per household; to remove the permit parking zone from their block (but if they do so and then change their minds they must wait a year before petitioning to have it restored); and to allow two-hour non-permit parking in their zone (the default is permit parking only).

Zones may be established adjacent to multi-family buildings, but if the building has parking, in order for the zone to be established the rent for that parking must be less than the permit fee (that is less than \$20 a year).

Austin, Texas – Residents do the work

Zones are formally created by the city traffic engineer but the neighborhood association takes the lead in determining whether there is support for the zone. A public meeting is held and a petition is circulated that must be presented to 100% of residents (at least three tries each if not successful the first time) and signed by at least two-thirds of them. The residents identify the problem area and the time period the zone should be in effect. Representatives from the neighborhood association work with the city staff to detail the boundaries.

City staff conducts a review and uses the common 75%/25% rule, but only requires it be met two days of the week. Zones can be removed with the same petition requirements.

Berkeley, California – Defines resident-initiated process and council-initiated process

Berkeley’s city code defines two processes for establishing a zone. Residents may submit a standard petition form to the city council which must be signed by adult residents in 51% or more of the housing units in the zone. Prior to preparing the petition, ‘neighborhood organizers’ must consult with city staff to ensure the proposed zone meets city guidelines. The petition must include a description of the program and the fees, so residents know what they’re signing up for. The technical test for the zone is that: “At least 80% of the block fronts with unlimited on-street parking must be residentially zoned, and at a minimum, 75% of all unlimited on-street parking spaces within the proposed area must be occupied during any two one-hour periods between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.”

The city council may initiate a zone with the same technical requirements. The approval process requires notification of all households by mail; preparing a resolution that cites all studies performed; and holding a public hearing on the resolution with notice posted at least ten days ahead of time on all block fronts

being considered for the zone. With the council-initiated process, the public hearing substitutes for the petition process.

Portland – Needs support of neighborhood or business association; city helps with the work

In Portland, any resident may start the zone creation process with a “community-initiated petition” with signatures from at least 50 percent of the affected addresses. The petition is submitted to the area’s neighborhood or business district association. If there is no association in the area, residents may work directly with the city’s Department of Transportation. The petition, which is the first step, already describes the boundaries.

On request, city staff will help a resident design the petition, establish the boundaries, and advise on collecting signatures.

After the petition is submitted, the city conducts a technical study to confirm that parking spaces in the area will be 75% occupied, 25% by commuter parking, at least four days a week and nine months per year. Also, the City Traffic Engineer must agree that the Area Parking Permit Program (APPP) would promote benefits that may include:

- Increased access to area residents and businesses.
- Reduced traffic congestion.
- Increased traffic/pedestrian safety.

The city traffic engineer can also find there might be reasons not to form a zone including:

- Lack of alternative modes of transportation.
- Availability of simpler, cheaper solutions.
- Legal existence of more than one firm with 50 or more employees that could not operate under the permit system constraints.

If the traffic engineer agrees to go ahead, he or she may alter the boundaries, for example to conform to natural barriers, and then will schedule a public meeting and mail announcements to all addresses in the proposed area. After the public meeting, or meetings, a ballot is mailed to all addresses.

At least 50% of the ballots must be returned and at least 60% of those voting must vote yes, which translates into a minimum approval requirement of **30% of all addresses**. If the vote is negative the area must wait at least a year before trying again.

If approved, the new APPP zone is submitted to the city council for approval. Once the zone is formally established, permit applications are mailed to all addresses, and **at least half the fees have to be collected before signs will be installed, inaugurating the zone.**

Annexations and zone changes follow a similar process but take less time, about three to six months.

A. Creating and Modifying Zones – Public Comment

Because of the complexity of this issue, it was not addressed in the **RPZ Survey**.

Sounding Boards and others

This topic generated a lot of discussion among community groups, residents and business owners. Issues and comments included:

- **Pitting people against people.** “It’s an unhealthy dynamic when it sets up one group against others, but we’re concerned about it being too top down. We don’t have the answer.”
- **A broader circle.** “It’s important to bring people in from a big circle and speak to the larger community interests. It’s not just the guy across the street, he doesn’t run the process. In some areas it’s nearly caused a civil war between those who want it and those who don’t.”
- **Rules are changing.** “We’re moving into an era where the state is mandating a reduction in vehicle miles traveled; PSRC may restrict the number of vehicles we can own. It’s all linked.”
- **It’s a lot of work.** “It’s very labor intensive and time intensive for citizens to do all the work. It was worthwhile, but it took a lot of time and some buildings we could not get into.”
- **Flexibility.** “It should be a flexible process to account for differences in different neighborhoods.”
- **SDOT has tools the community doesn’t.** “I like the idea of SDOT helping. It still gives the community options but they can get the help they need from SDOT. SDOT can contact people more easily.”
- **If we do the work, say yes.** “Don’t let the process get too far and then turn it down. Decide up front if you’re going to do it or not. Then focus on how and where, not if.”

A. Creating and Modifying Zones Proposed Recommendations

Warrants for zones

- **Expand technical warrants for creating residential parking zones.**

Data collection and mapping

- A. Parking generators. Map generators, including residential, describe type, and estimate demand by day of week, time of day, and duration of parking.
- B. Customer parking. Count customer-oriented businesses on block faces in proposed zone, including any block face on a block in which a portion of the block is in the zone, and calculate average businesses per block for the total area.
- C. Parking supply. Inventory on-street supply and prepare a windshield survey of off-street supply, including private residential, and public and private lots/garages, including days/hours when they are normally underutilized.
- D. Travel alternatives. Describe transit service, bicycle access and other transportation modes.
- E. On-Street parking utilization. Map by block face, by time of day, with resident/non-resident shares, depending on traffic generator impacts.

Data evaluation

- F. Calculate share of residential parking demand that is not and cannot be met by off-street parking available to residents on their property.
- G. Calculate share of non-residential parking demand that is generated by long-term out-of-area parkers who are either working in the neighborhood or driving to transit/carpool match-ups and commuting out of the neighborhood.
- H. Based on performance of existing zones with similar demographics, estimate residential demand for parking permits.
- I. Complete zone classification matrix for proposed zone (See recommendation 3.2) and score proposed zone.

Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

Based on professional judgment, combining all elements A through I, rate proposed zone: Strong Candidate for No Action; Strong Candidate for RPZ; Strong Candidate for Parking Management Strategies other than RPZ.

Process for creating zones

The key ways in which the proposed revised process differs from current practice are:

- **All users:** A greater emphasis on the parking and transportation needs of all community stakeholders, in addition to the problems experienced by residents, supported by a more broadly based technical analysis.
- **Mixed-use development:** Developing tools to specifically address the competing parking needs of all users in mixed-use areas.
- **Areas in transition:** Including steps to address problems before they happen, for example in fast-developing areas or around new transit hubs such as light rail, streetcar, or bus rapid transit stations.
- **Race and social justice:** Ensuring that citizens who might otherwise be disenfranchised because of cultural and language barriers, or lack of familiarity in working with government are included in the program and have an equal voice, and that neighborhoods where they live are considered for RPZs or other parking management improvements.
- **Professional judgment:** Emphasizing the role of SDOT staff at key technical steps to help ensure that adopted solutions will be effective solutions.
- **Institutional support:** More assistance from SDOT in outreach activities, both to overcome barriers that face all citizens (such as locked apartment buildings that cannot be surveyed), and to ensure that language, race and social barriers are overcome.
- **Explore other options first:** Introducing an up-front exploration and analysis of ways to solve parking problems through strategies other than RPZs, in order to implement more effective solutions, as well as to avoid the negative impacts of RPZs including the long term complexity and costs of operating zones.
- **Revise zone design and petition process.**

The proposed process would **use the tools of the web and email in addition to traditional community communications methods** from the first step to the last. Each RPZ proposal would have a project website and a listserv for communication. The web-based elements should be translated into whatever languages are appropriate for the area being considered and translators should be available, as needed, at public meetings or when staff is working one-on-one or in small groups with citizens.

A. Request to consider residential parking zone.

May be a request from the at least 25 residents, a community organization—both of which necessary to demonstrate support. A zone could be considered in a parking planning effort initiated by SDOT as well. For example, a request from a neighborhood group or merchant’s association or in response to plans of a major institution or other traffic generator (for example new transit station or hub).

B. Conduct informal parking study to determine if request has merit.

Parking analysis would include available data about zone characteristics, identification of generators, and field study to document conditions. (See Recommendation 4.1.)

C. Develop menu of non-RPZ approaches and explore feasibility.

If it appears that parking issues can be addressed using other strategies, SDOT will work with those who requested the RPZ and others (including businesses) to develop a plan to implement other strategies. If this step is pursued, any identified strategies would be reviewed and discussed with community stakeholders.

D. SDOT prepare RPZ feasibility study.

If an RPZ is pursued, SDOT would conduct a parking study using the 75% / 25% test, but augment the effort with additional analysis (see Recommendation 4.1). The parking study could extend the data collection beyond the likely boundaries of an RPZ to capture as complete a picture of the area as possible, and to provide data that can be used to optimize boundaries.

E. SDOT takes the lead to prepare proposed boundaries and draft operating plan for RPZ.

Boundaries will be based on results of feasibility study, and operating plan will describe days, times and detailed placement of parking restrictions proposed.

F. Hold community meeting(s).

SDOT will schedule meeting(s) and mail notification to all addresses in area. Notification and accompanying materials will be translated into appropriate languages, and additional efforts will be made to inform non-English speaking and others through community, cultural, ethnic and religious organizations. Materials will describe intention to consider implementation of an RPZ (or other strategies, see (C) above), and proposed boundaries.

Mailing should include report of work done to date, and brochure on RPZ program detailing how it works, what impacts it can have, and the pros and cons of living, working and conducting business in an RPZ. SDOT and area stakeholders may also work together at this stage to discuss proposed RPZ informally with community and business groups and others. Meeting will be a forum for explaining the proposed RPZ, and an opportunity for citizens to work with each other on boundaries, operating rules, and whether to go forward with an RPZ.

G. SDOT incorporates comments and prepares final proposed boundaries and operating plan. Additional outreach if necessary.

SDOT takes the lead in modifying zone boundaries and operating plan as appropriate based on community comments and on-going work with stakeholders. Hold another community meeting or engage in other outreach, if necessary.

H. SDOT prepares final description of RPZ Plan and mails draft proposal to all stakeholders in proposed zone.

Community stakeholders are welcome and encouraged to work in the neighborhood to achieve a positive response, but will not be required to gather petitions. SDOT will lead outreach as necessary to ensure that hard-to-reach residents, businesses and others are contacted.

I. Approval of the RPZ.

RPZ will be approved if the overall positive response is positive. A majority positive response will not be required from each block for a block to be included in the zone, as **the RPZ boundaries should reflect a rational design of the zone** that addresses the parking needs of the area, based on technical work and public outreach. Final determination, to be made by SDOT Director, can be appealed within 30 days.

J. Implement RPZ.

Existing zone assessment and modification

- **Evaluate all existing zones, modify boundaries and operating rules where appropriate, and classify as high, medium or low impact.**
 - a. **Develop a schedule to assess all existing zones**, coordinated with permit renewal schedule.
 - b. **Review zone boundaries** and rationalize them with regards to blocks and block faces included and not included, size, edges and, natural boundaries. Conduct parking studies if necessary. If proposed changes are significant engage current permit holders and, if appropriate, notify all addresses in the zone.
 - c. **Review zone operations** including days and hours zone is in force and parking restrictions.
 - d. **Classify zones high, medium or low impact. Notify all permit holders of classification and effects on their permit eligibility, and allow a public comment period before implementation.** Classifying zones should be done after the review of boundaries and operations (though not after any intended changes have been implemented), to ensure that the classification takes into account any differences in how a zone will operate based on changes in boundaries and operations.

Future zone modification and removal

- **Allow SDOT to modify, enlarge, combine or divide zones administratively, based on professional judgment, with appropriate outreach to affected areas.**
- **Removing a zone.** Where zones routinely sell only a small number of permits, SDOT should work with citizens in the zone to confirm whether it is still needed and, if not, remove the zone.

In Zone 8 Eastlake, for example, from Monday to Saturday parking restrictions in the zone are enforced from 7 AM to 6 PM, with one side of the street signed for Two-Hour Parking, and the other side signed for Four-Hour Parking. Then, from 6 PM to Midnight, the entire zone is signed No Parking for non-permitted vehicles. In addition, on Saturdays and Sundays only the 6 PM to Midnight the No Parking for non-permitted vehicles restrictions are in effect. In Zone 1 Montlake, parking restrictions are in force from 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday in the north part of the zone, and from 7 AM to 6 PM Monday through Saturday in the south part of the zone.

In most zones RPZ parking restrictions are consistent on each block face, but there are locations where one part a block face will be signed with RPZ restrictions and a second part may be unrestricted parking.

Evening zones

Eleven zones operate after 6 PM. The reason for evening hours varies. Following is a summary by zone:

Zone	Hours	Evening Generators	Evening Restrictions
3 Fauntleroy	2 AM – 5 AM	Ferry dock – overnight parking	No parking
5 Wallingford	5 PM - Midnight	Movie theater, restaurants and bars	No parking
6 University Park	7 AM – 8 PM	University of Washington	2 Hours
8 Eastlake	7 AM - Midnight	Restaurants and bars	No parking
10 University District W.	6 PM - Midnight	Movie theater	No parking
13 Lower Queen Anne	7 AM - Midnight	Seattle Center, restaurants and bars	No parking, some block sections only
15 Belmont/Harvard	Noon – 6 AM	Scottish Temple (Parties, weddings, etc.)	4 hours
18 Licton Springs	7 AM – 9 PM	North Seattle Community College	2 hours
19 Roosevelt	7 AM – 7 PM	University of Washington, Roosevelt HS	2 hours
21 Pike Pine	7 AM – 10 PM	Restaurants, clubs and bars	2 hours
23 Madison Valley	7 AM – 7 PM	Business district	2 hours

Note: Some evening hours are in effect only in parts of the zones.

B. Operating Zones – Issues and Options

Complexity in zone operations

Zone days and hours of operation have been crafted to meet the perceived needs in each zone, but the current complexity creates problems for everyone.

Residents with vehicle permits are not subject to time limited or no parking restrictions, so they are generally not affected by the complexity of zone operations. But when they have guests, particularly if they live on the border of two zones or of different areas within a zone where different rules are in effect, they need to know when their zone is in effect to ensure their guests will not be ticketed.

People who drive into a zone and park may assume that the sign on one block, with a prominent zone number, describes the parking restrictions for the entire zone when it may not. Or they may have experience with another zone and not be aware that all zones are different.

Parking Enforcement needs to be aware of the posted sign restrictions on a block by block basis. If the block is improperly signed or the sign is damaged or missing, citations cannot be issued.

Evening parking

Comments from the RPZ Survey demonstrate a strong interest in some neighborhoods to extend the hours of existing RPZs, or to create new zones to manage the visitor and employee parking impacts.

The effect of evening zones on residents and those who drive into the zones varies. For example, in Zone 5 Wallingford, there is no parking for non-permitted vehicles for one to two blocks around the Guild 45th movie theater. The theater is located on an arterial that is also lined with popular restaurants and bars. Patrons who cannot park off-street or on NE 45th Street can still find parking in the neighborhood, they just have to walk a little farther, which also spreads out their parking impact. For residents without off-street parking, the RPZ preserves their ability to park on-street, but requires that they provide guest permits for evening visitors or warn them to park out of the zone.

In Zone 13 Lower Queen Anne, the RPZ restrictions reduce the already very limited on-street parking available to non-residents, but there is an abundance of off-street parking, as well as excellent bus service, for people visiting Seattle Center or area businesses.

The issues of RPZs and the evening parking needs of local businesses echo those of mixed-use neighborhoods addressed in *Chapter 3 RPZ Policy Concepts*. Residents have a strong interest in being able to park near their homes, especially at night for safety reasons. At the same time, it is not the intention of the RPZ program to make it impossible for nightlife to operate in areas appropriately zoned. With or without other people driving into a neighborhood, many zones have more permit holders than on-street spaces; residents who resent visitors using ‘their’ parking spaces may actually be competing not with ‘outsiders’ but with each other for this scarce resource.

Approaches to this problem need to both reduce demand and increase supply. The proposed recommendation to limit the number of permits per household may help reduce demand in some areas. Ways to increase parking include looking to expand shared use of off-street parking, converting blocks with one-side-of-the-street parking to parking on both sides, and perhaps others.

B. Operating Zones – Best Practices

Non-Permit Parking Restrictions

Many cities operate as Seattle, with time-restricted parking where permit holders can ignore the time restrictions. Many, however, do not allow non-permitted vehicles to park at all, setting aside a certain amount of parking just for permit holders. Enforcement hours range all over the map; many cities, like Seattle, will have a wide range of hours and days when the zones are enforced, varying from location to location.

Vancouver, Canada shares parking block by block

Vancouver manages parking within Resident Parking Zones on a block by block basis, with a mix of unrestricted parking, permit-holder parking only at all times, time-restricted parking except for permit holders, and parking meters. They attempt to maintain a guaranteed minimum share of parking for residents during peak times, while portions of the street marked for residents-only-at-all-times reduces the need for residents to hunt for spaces. **Figure 4.3** is a detailed map of one Vancouver Zone.

Figure 4.3 OAKWEST RESIDENT PARKING ZONE AND RESTRICTIONS, VANCOUVER, BC



B. Operating Zones – Public Comments

RPZ Survey

The RPZ survey did not ask specifically about zone operating days or hours or about parking restrictions for non-permitted vehicles. However many people chose to comment, specifically about the problem of parking at night. In some cases the problems are related to the fact that a zone is not in force at night, and in others the problem is lack of enforcement for night zones. Representative comments include:

- If I come home in the evening, there often is NO spot available for me to park within 8 blocks of my apartment.
- If I dare to drive home between 7pm and midnight on a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday night I search FOREVER and have more than once parked in a red zone out of desperation (searching for 20 minutes or more).
- As far as I can tell there is no night time enforcement and it doesn't take long for the students to figure that out and consequently the RPZ is not effective at night.
- The hours of enforcement are too limited, highest demand times are nights and weekends
- Due to having so many bars and the Community College, sometimes parking at night is difficult.
- Evening times it is all but impossible to find a space within a few blocks of my apartment. Which is after the RPZ hours are in effect.
- Some neighbors have started blocking off free parking for themselves. It can be really frustrating.

B. Operating Zones – Proposed Recommendations

These recommendations from other chapters and from Part A of this chapter also address operating zones.

- **Increase Parking Enforcement.** Add resources for more coverage on weekdays as well as enforcement on evenings and weekends.
- **Parking restrictions: Limit non-permit parking to a maximum of two-hours.**
- **Establish consistent hours for all daytime zones.**
- **Modify signs to emphasize parking restrictions and hours and days of operation.**
- **Replace signs quickly when needed and ensure they are in clear view, free from obstructions.**
- **Evaluate all existing zones, modify boundaries and operating rules where appropriate, and classify as high, medium or low impact.**

Evening Parking

- **In existing or proposed Evening zones, explore ways to increase parking availability, and to share parking between residents and patrons of evening activities.**

Step C on page 4.17 outlines an approach for exploring non-RPZ strategies to parking problems, before creating a new zone. These approaches should apply equally to the creation and management of evening zones. SDOT should work with neighborhoods and businesses to explore ways to increase parking availability. Two promising approaches can be negotiating shared evening use of private daytime parking, and implementing both-sides-of-street parking where there is now one-side. Where evening zones are in operation, consider RPZ-only parking on one side of the street and open parking on the other, to balance business and residential needs.

Chapter 5

RPZ Enforcement

Introduction

Enforcement is ultimately the key to whether Residential Parking Zones (RPZs) work as they are designed. This chapter details a range of issues with current enforcement practices and proposes a set of straightforward and easily implemented solutions to existing problems.

Summary of Proposed Enforcement Recommendations

Proposed enforcement recommendations are summarized here to provide a context for the detailed discussion of issues and options that follows. The proposed recommendations are presented in more detail at the end of the chapter.

On-street Enforcement

- Increase the number of Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) dedicated to enforcing RPZs.
- Eliminate four hour parking in RPZs; set a non-permit parking maximum time of two hours.
- Establish consistent hours for all daytime zones.
- Modify RPZ signs posted on-street to clarify parking restrictions and hours and days of operation.
- Replace RPZ signs posted on-street quickly when necessary and ensure they are in clear view.

Statutory Measures

- Revise Seattle Municipal Code to improve enforcement.
 - A. Establish a fine for “improper display of RPZ permit.”
 - B. Establish a fine for fraudulent use of a decal or guest permit.
 - C. Require non-permit holders to move at least four blocks when re-parking within a zone.
 - D. Make guest permits valid only when visiting a resident and only near the resident’s home.

Technology

- Employ new technology.
- Give PEOs access to RPZ data in the field through new software in handheld units.

Physical Permits

- Redesign physical permits to support enforcement and reduce fraudulent use.

Motorcycles and Scooters

- Allow motorcycles and scooters to park in RPZs without a permit.

Enforcement – Current Practice

Enforcement Presence

The Seattle Police Department's Parking Enforcement Division currently employs 79 Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs) who are assigned to 44 parking enforcement districts throughout the city. Some of the districts are very large, as much as a few miles square, while the smallest district is roughly six by six blocks. As a result, PEOs are unable to enforce every RPZ on a regular basis. Drivers who learn they are unlikely to be ticketed regularly violate the RPZ restrictions.

Enforcing Nighttime and Weekend Zones

Some zones operate in the evening to ensure that all residential parking is not taken up by patrons of restaurants, theaters and bars. These zones are harder to enforce because of PEO staffing levels in evenings and overnight, consequently enforcement relies more on police officers.

Evening zones also present problems for residents who want to have parties and must borrow guest permits from their neighbors, or simply rely on the zone not being enforced. There is a similar problem with zones that operate on the weekends, with the exception of the Husky Stadium zones where enforcement is provided on game days through voluntary overtime.

Permit Fraud

RPZ decals and guest permits can be, and are reportedly, sold or given away. Use of the permits by commuters or others who drive into a neighborhood and park all day undermines the effectiveness of the program and leaves less parking for valid permit holders, as well as customers, clients, patients and others who park within the legal time limits.

One field test found that up to 25% of vehicles parked with an RPZ decal in one zone were using decals or guest permits that had not been issued to that license plate. Anecdotally, the project team has heard that decals and guest permits have been advertised for sale on-line and in at least one hospital's employee newsletter.

Currently, vehicles using a permit fraudulently can be ticketed only for a parking violation. If the Traffic Permits staff becomes aware of fraudulent use, the Seattle Municipal Code allows them to invalidate the permit. There are no monetary penalties, however, for fraudulent use.

PEOs do not currently have a database available to them in the field with a listing of valid permits and the license numbers of the vehicles to which they've been assigned.

Physical Permits, Placement, and Enforcement

Drivers do not consistently place the RPZ decal in the same place (the desired location is front lower window on driver's (street) side). Dark decals can be hard to see through tinted glass and all decals can be hard to see in the dark.

Permits are colored by zone, and the colors change with each renewal cycle. SDOT staff work to ensure that adjacent zones will always have different color permits, and that the colors will not repeat in a zone

for at least two cycles. Although any static map can be colored using only four colors with no abutting areas having the same color, the complex requirements set for RPZ permits requires many more, with the result that dark, hard-to-see colors are used for some permits.

Permit information sheets are printed for each zone separately, and are two pages of small print. Some zone sheets call for the decal permit to be placed in the lower center of the rear window, and others call for it to be placed in the lower front driver's side window. There is no drawing to show correct placement.

Guest permits are hangtags and hang only three inches below the rearview mirror post. If not placed carefully so that they hang facing front, or if the windshield is tinted, they can be hard to see.

With the permanent decals, even if PEOs can confirm there is a permit, it can be hard or impossible to read the permit number, particularly if the decal is placed partly below the tinting on a windshield. As mentioned above, PEOs do not currently have a database available to them in the field with a listing of valid permits and the license numbers of the vehicles to which they've been assigned. Even if they can read the permit number on the decal, they have no way of checking, in the field, whether the permit was issued to the vehicle that is using it.

Permits on Motorcycles and Scooters

It is difficult to establish a consistent location for motorcycle and scooter permits because of the different designs of the machines. In addition, because the permit decal is placed on the exterior of the vehicle it is vulnerable to being stolen. PEOs report that it is difficult to confirm whether a motorcycle or scooter is permitted or not, because though they sometimes can't find the decal even though there is one. Motorcycle owners report getting tickets, which they then must take the time to contest, even though they have permits.

Four-hour Parking Difficult to Enforce

If a zone allows four-hour non-permit parking between 8 AM and 5 PM, employees of a school, institution or neighborhood business can park before 8 AM, move their cars at noon, and park for the rest of the day with very little likelihood of being ticketed. Because of their work hours and the size of the zones, PEOs cannot effectively enforce four-hour parking limits.

This is exactly what happens in some zones, where employees commute in and park all day, taking up all the available on-street parking. This is also a problem in some areas with two-hour parking, but fewer employees have the flexibility to leave work to move their cars mid-morning, noon, and mid-afternoon.

Currently, with any time-limited parking in the city, the code requires that people who move their cars and 're-park' must move at least one block away.

RPZ Survey respondents complained that even employees with available, but paid on-site parking, prefer to park on-street for free and only those who arrive after all the spaces are filled will use the company lot or garage.

Sign clarity, posting and visibility

Each of the 27 residential parking zones needs different signs, and within a single zone parking restrictions may vary from one part of the zone to another. The signs need to communicate the parking restrictions for non-permitted vehicles, the hours and days the parking restrictions are enforced and the

zone number so permit holders know where they may park. Zones may operate during one of six different time-of-day ranges, one of four different day-of-the-week sets, and non-permit parking can be restricted in one of three ways: two-hour, four-hour or no-parking. Many zones abut each other, with one side of the street one zone and the opposite side a different zone.

Parking enforcement signs are manufactured on an as-needed basis. It takes three to five weeks to replace a sign. Whenever a sign is missing, PEOs cannot enforce parking restrictions in that block. In addition to the long delay in making and posting new signs, it also happens on occasion, because of the complexity of the parking zones and restrictions that signs are posted in the wrong place with the wrong information.

Seattle has many streets with large trees located in the planting strip. Although they are beautiful and enhance the streetscape, the branches often block drivers' view of the signs.

As the RPZ program grows, more zones will result in an even more complex set of signs, more abutting zones, and greater potential for delay and error.

Driver confusion about what the restrictions are and when they are enforced

There is considerable inconsistency from zone to zone and even within one zone, regarding when non-permit parking restrictions are in effect. It is confusing for parkers and complicates enforcement.

FIGURE 5.1 RPZ PARKING SIGNS ON-STREET



Two Zone 4 signs about 100 feet from each other.
The one on the left shows the correct times and days.
The one on the right shows the correct times but wrong days.



A Zone 4 sign in the same block,
obscured by tree branches.

Enforcement – Issues and Options

Enforcement Presence

Without enforcement, drivers soon learn they will not be ticketed and park without regard for parking controls. When this happens, RPZs do not work as they are intended and residents in the zones become frustrated. The simplest option for improving on-street enforcement of RPZs is to increase the number of PEOs available to do the work. Revenues from parking citations cover the salary, overhead and equipment costs of PEOs.

Enforcing Nighttime and Weekend Zones

Finding the right enforcement balance at night and weekends that may require some trial and error to find new ways to adequately accommodate both residential and customer parking. *Chapter 4, Zone Process Concepts*, includes a set of recommendations regarding how nighttime zones might be structured to balance the parking needs of residents with the parking needs of customers of adjacent commercial areas and attractions.

Zones that operate on six or seven days of the week present a challenge on the weekend days because of the lack of PEO hours on Saturdays and Sundays. Added enforcement hours on these days, and targeted enforcement where PEOs focus strongly on one area for a succession of days, can educate drivers that if they violate the RPZ parking restrictions they will be ticketed.

Permit Fraud

The new SPD handheld units will support a range of new functions and will increase the data available to PEOs in the field. With this capability, experience in other cities suggests it should be possible to reduce permit fraud for regular vehicle decals to almost zero and to greatly reduce permit fraud associated with guest permits. Any program changes to reduce permit fraud must be backed up with significant fines for fraudulent use.

The most effective measure taken in other cities to prevent permit fraud is to print the license plate of the vehicle on the permit as it is issued. This would seem to require that PEOs visually match each permit to the license plate of the vehicle but, in practice, people stop trying to cheat the system when the permits are personalized in this way.

Misuse of guest permits will be somewhat harder to combat. If the recommendations of this project are implemented, Seattle will convert from a permanent guest permit program to single-use one-day permits. The following discussion assumes this approach will be adopted. The Seattle Municipal Code will need to be amended to require that guests must be visiting the resident who bought the permit, and be parked within a few blocks of their home.

Single-use guest permits with scratch-off months and days, in use in other cities, are hard to re-use and appear to be effective in reducing fraud. Other methods, such as punch out days and months (which can be punched out and then carefully replaced so another set can be punched out), or requiring the guest to write the date of use, also help reduce fraud but don't prevent it.

Printing guest permits with the host's address – or writing it in with a permanent marker – is very effective, but works better on annual permits where it only has to be done once. However, there could be

privacy concerns with this method, and it's more difficult with one-day permits, where it would have to be printed on each permit, or written in at the time of use.

Another approach is to print or write the resident's permit number on the guest permits. This would not allow PEOs to enforce the permits easily by just looking at them, but if they suspected fraud or it was reported to them, it would be easy to check if a vehicle is parked near the address of the resident who was sold the guest permit. This method also has the advantage of making it difficult for a commuter, say, to buy guest permits and use them to park on-street near work, unless they worked within a couple blocks of the person who sold them the permit.

Combining methods that make the permits harder to misuse, with significant financial penalties for fraud levied on both the person who is parked with a fraudulent permit and the resident who allowed them to use it, may not eliminate all fraud but should reduce it to a very low level.

Four-hour Parking Difficult to Enforce

Seattle Police Department's Enforcement Division has suggested that four-hour parking be eliminated in RPZs because it is effectively unenforceable. This would leave the options of two-hour parking or no parking, from the current menu of choices.

Physical Permits, Placement, and Enforcement

With the new handheld units the PEOs can carry with them a database of permits, addresses and license numbers, making enforcement easier, even if the permit cannot be clearly read through the windshield. For example, if a permit appears to be in place but is unreadable, the PEO will be able to check, using the license plate number, to determine if the vehicle is in the RPZ data base.

That said, there are several simple steps that can be taken to improve the in-the-field performance of physical parking permit decals and guest permits, and make the work of PEOs a little easier.

Color is now used to distinguish one zone from another, which is most important where zones abut each other. As a result, some permits are dark colored. Selecting a small set of day-glo type colors would make the permits easier for PEOs to see. Printing the zone number on the permit in much larger type and more prominently than at present would allow the PEOs to use the number, rather than color, to confirm the vehicle is parked in the right zone. Changing colors in each zone with every renewal cycle would alert the PEO to whether or not the permit is current. With these changes, three or four easily seen colors could be used for all permits in the city.

Permits on Motorcycles and Scooters

It is difficult to establish a consistent location for motorcycle and scooter permits because of the different designs of the machines. PEOs have suggested working with Washington State Department of Licensing to create a place on the motorcycle permit to adhere an RPZ decal. Another option is to allow motorcycles and scooters to park in RPZs without permits; this approach is common in other cities. There is precedent in Washington for exempting motorcycles from restrictions that apply to other vehicles, for example they are allowed to travel in HOV lanes on state highways.

Enforcement Technology

Currently, Parking Enforcement Officers chalk tires and visually check for valid RPZ permits. This approach to parking enforcement is likely to be transformed in coming decades through “electronic chalking.” The Seattle Police Department has now acquired vehicle mounted license plate recognition units. These are cameras mounted on cars attached to software that reads license plates. Currently they are being used very effectively to find stolen vehicles.

Early tests suggest that it is possible to use this equipment for parking enforcement with about 85% accuracy. The camera-equipped vehicles can simply drive down the street collecting the license numbers of all the parked cars, and return later and in the same manner find all the overtime parkers. With a database of RPZ-permitted license plates, physical permits would no longer be required. Eighty-five percent accuracy, however, is not good enough for implementation, but the technology will certainly improve.

In another technological advance, new cars are now manufactured with built-in transponders, although they generally are not activated. The transponders are designed for security systems and electronic tolling but can be read automatically by a specially-equipped passing vehicle. This technology could also be used for electronic chalking, again with a database of RPZ-permitted vehicles used to exclude them from time restrictions.

Posting and visibility

Reducing the variations in RPZ hours and days, as proposed in Chapter 4, would reduce the number of different signs required, although some signs would continue to be unique to one area. For example, only Zone 3 Fauntleroy, operates from 2 AM to 5 AM. If the zone number could be added to an already manufactured sign on an as-needed basis, signs such as the variations in Figure 6.1 above, could be manufactured in advance of need with at least a several month supply kept on hand. SDOT could then adopt a policy to replace signs on a just-in-time basis, that is within two or three days of a report that a sign has been damaged or removed. Similarly, keeping tree branches trimmed away from signs, or posting them where there are no branches, needs to be a policy for all on-street signage.

Driver confusion about what the restrictions are and when they are enforced

In addition to improving the signs, establishing single DAYTIME zone and NIGHTTIME zone definitions should help people comply with the restrictions, and help PEOs plan their enforcement routes. This area is addressed in *Chapter 4 RPZ Zone Operations*.

Enforcement – Best Practices

Day-to-day enforcement of parking restrictions

Enforcement appears to be a universal problem across cities with residential parking zones. Other cities report not having enough parking enforcement officers to ensure non-permitted vehicles observe no-parking or timed-parking restrictions. Some acknowledge that, due to insufficient staffing, their RPZs are almost unenforceable and rely primarily on voluntary compliance, or intensive spot enforcement.

Serial parking

Many cities report that serial parking is a problem – that is employees who work in an RPZ leave work to move and re-park their cars all day. **Washington DC** and other cities handle this by allowing a non-permitted car to park in a zone only once per day. This works best where zones are quite small, so that people running errands are able to do so, particularly if they are disabled and unable to walk long distances. **Palo Alto, California** does not have a residential parking program in the downtown, but has established ‘color zones’ – a vehicle may park in any color zone only once per day. Thirty-minute zones are exempt from color-zone rules. Each color zone is roughly two blocks by three blocks and each has four or more off-street lots and/or garages, so there is no shortage of parking.

Permit Fraud

Permit fraud appears to be a problem in virtually every city surveyed. Most, like Seattle, do not have a statute creating a civil penalty for fraudulent use of permits. However, some cities do have penalties for permit fraud, and they tend to be quite steep. Following is a range of approaches:

- **Berkeley, California:** \$500 for fraudulent application or fraudulent use.
- **Portland, Oregon:** \$150 fine to permit holder if their guest permit is used fraudulently. Parked vehicle gets a parking ticket.
- **Perth, Australia:** Permit is revoked if misused, copied or sold.
- **Vancouver, Canada:** Financial penalty is \$45 parking ticket, plus not eligible for a permit for two years.

Preventing fraud – print the license plate number on the permit

The most effective way found for cities to prevent fraud is to print the license plate number on the permit itself. **Portland**, for example, does this automatically as the permits are printed and mailed. Other cities write the numbers in with a sharpie and report that as a printing method, “it works pretty well.” All the cities that put license numbers on their permits said that it is highly effective in stopping fraudulent use, although some recounted creative ways drivers still use to forge permits... which will not be detailed here.

Preventing fraudulent use of guest passes

Guest passes come in a wide variety of forms, with the two most common being rear-view mirror hang tags, or single-use tickets that are either placed on the dash or affixed to a window. **Portland** issues one-day-use scratch-off permits that come in books of 10. Each is a hang-tag with the twelve months and 31 days printed on it; the user scratches off the appropriate month and day. These are hard to re-use. A number of cities require that the visitor write their license number on the guest permit, and some cities print the guest permits with the resident’s home address on it and, by statute, limit guests to parking within a few blocks of that address.

Enforcement – Public Comment

RPZ Survey

Almost half of all survey respondents think enforcement is working well, but nearly four in ten think there is not enough. Responses to the question, “Do you think current enforcement of RPZs is about right, too much or too little?” were as follows:

46%	About right
39%	Too little
15%	Too much

Over 200 people chose to comment on this question. Representative responses include:

- “I am not at all certain that there is enforcement of the RPZ on my block but the signs have done the work and the parking is much better.”
- “Most of the cars belong to Harborview employees who have obtained their passes or guest passes illegally. They use addresses in the neighborhood to get passes or just purchase guest passes from residents.”
- “I very rarely see parking enforcement or tickets on vehicles. It's extremely frustrating. I don't wish tickets on people, but if there's the threatened punishment never materializes what's the point?”
- “People often park longer than the 2 hour limit and moving of cars every 2 hours along the street is very common, defeating the purpose of the RPZ.”
- “The RPZ program on our street (Interlake Ave. North) has had a tremendously positive impact on our neighborhood. Frustration levels are WAY down as residents can come home and find a parking spot near their homes. I do hope enforcement is increased so that we may maintain this!”

Sounding Boards and others

Resident representatives were very strong about defining enforcement as the number one issue that makes RPZs work or not work. As one said, “When an RPZ works, it's the best thing since sliced bread... and you need enforcement to make it work.” One participant noted that when the school in their zone goes back into session enforcement is stepped up right away; the students learn not to violate the time restrictions and the zone works well. Residents also commented about the problems with fraudulent use of permits, and people using guest permits for their own vehicles, which is not allowed.

Business representatives were also concerned with enforcement, including the problem of employees using parking needed for customers and moving their cars every two hours.

Enforcement – Proposed Recommendations

On-Street Enforcement

- **Increase the number of Parking Enforcement Officers dedicated to enforcing RPZs.** Add budget for more hours on weekdays as well as enforcement on evenings and weekends.
- **Establish consistent hours for all daytime zones.**
- **Modify signs to emphasize parking restrictions and hours and days of operation.**
- **Replace signs quickly when needed and ensure they are in clear view, free from obstructions.**

Statutory Measures

- **Change Seattle Municipal Code to improve enforcement.**
 - A. **Establish a fine for “improper display of RPZ permit.”**

Model ordinance language on SMC 11.76.005 which defines proper display of proof-of-payment receipts for pay stations. Require permit to be displayed in the lower front windshield on the driver’s side, above any tinting that would obscure visibility. Require removal of all previous permits.
 - B. **Establish a fine for fraudulent use of a decal or guest permit to help reduce misuse of permits.**

Keep current penalty, which is loss of eligibility for a permit, and add a monetary fine, both for the person using the permit and the person to whom it was sold. Establish a requirement that people who do not receive, in the mail, permits for which they have applied, or who lose them, must notify the Traffic Permits division so that the lost permit(s) may be cancelled.
 - C. **Require non-permit holders to move their vehicle at least four blocks when re-parking within a zone,** to reduce the convenience of ‘re-parking’ for commuters who work in a zone.
 - D. **Make guest permits valid only when visiting the resident who purchased the permit, and only within a few blocks of the resident’s home.**

Technology

- **Give PEOs access to RPZ data in the field through new software in handheld units.**

Transmit from the Traffic Permits division to Parking Enforcement, on a daily basis: a list of all vehicle permits, the license numbers of the vehicles to which they are assigned; a list of any permits that have been cancelled for fraudulent use and the address of the permit holder.
- **Employ new technology.**

License-plate recognition technology, vehicle-mounted cameras, scan license plates and automatically check a list of plates valid in that RPZ zone (as applied to RPZs). Because names and license plate

numbers are validated against address prior to issuance, any license plate in the zone will be a resident of that zone. Any invalid plate would be discovered and the LPR system will prompt the PEO to stop and issue a citation.

Physical Permits

- **Modify to support enforcement and reduce fraudulent use. Use bright colors, print license number on permit, and redesign guest permits.** Redesign the vehicle decal to prominently display the license plate number of the vehicle, and print the zone number large enough to be read from a distance. Number permits for the entire city sequentially, so every permit number is unique, and not duplicated in another zone. Work with Parking Enforcement to select three or four day-glo type colors that are easily seen through windshields, for vehicle decals and guest permits. Include a reflective element on the vehicle decal. Work with vendors to design a low-cost guest permit that displays the month and day of use, that cannot be reused and that is clearly visible from outside the vehicle. Ideally, it should be placed in the same location *on the windshield* as the vehicle decal permit. If it is a hang tag, it needs to be clearly visible from outside the vehicle, including on vehicles with tinted windshields.

Other Program Operations

- **Motorcycles and scooters: Allow to park in RPZs without permits.**

Chapter 6

Business Practices

Introduction

This chapter discusses and makes recommendations about ways to improve customer service and the information technology needs to support those improvements. *Appendix B: Business Practices* expands on this chapter with additional technical detail, including software systems in use and recommended, detailed work flow diagrams for the Traffic Permits division, and additional detail on the proposed recommendations.

Most of the recommendations from this project will require a multi-year process for implementation as they require changes in the Seattle Municipal Code, new budget authorization, and adoption of new software, all of which are anticipated to start in 2009 (see *Chapter 10 Implementation Time Line*). There are several short term customer service improvements, however, that can be implemented with existing resources and staff, in some cases independently of others, and in other cases in cooperation with others, including the Washington State Department of Licensing and Seattle City Light. These “early wins” have been highlighted in *Chapter 7 Customer Service Short Term Recommendations*.

Summary of Proposed Business Practices Recommendations

Software

- Transfer the Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) program from FoxPro to Hansen

Web based permitting and information

- Establish on-line permitting, fee payment and program information
- Establish web pages for Residential Parking Zones under consideration and development.

Traffic Permits Counter Customer Service

- Install customer computer at the Traffic Permits Counter.
- Install new telephone system at the Traffic Permits Counter.

Business Practices – Current Practices

Finding information about the RPZ program

People who need information about the Residential Parking Zone program in Seattle may call the Traffic Permits Counter or search the web. Figure 6.1 displays the first screen that comes up on a web search.

Figure 6.1 SDOT’s Residential Parking Zone Program Home Page



On this site the first link is information about the RPZ Policy Review Project and the last link is how to get a permit. If a viewer scrolls down the first page, the next topic describes how to form a Residential Parking Zone and the final topic on the opening page describes how to get a permit. The viewer must scroll down three or four screens to find a phone number to call.

It is not possible for a new applicant to obtain a permit without calling SDOT as there are no links to a permit application form, no links to maps of the zones or the addresses included in them, no address specific information about what the fees are, nor any direct email link to SDOT staff.

The main web page is titled “Residential Parking Zone Program,” but on the permit fees page, and on the sidebar on the main page that provides a link to it, the program is called by its legal name in the Seattle Municipal Code, “Restricted Parking Zone.” On the opening page the reader is told the permit fee “...can vary up to a maximum of \$35 per vehicle depending on what zone you live in (or what part of zone),” but there is no information about the role of institutions in paying fees for residents of some zones. On the permit fee page the fees are listed with no variations. The reader is invited to call “for particulars.” Traffic Permits division staff, therefore, likely must respond to at least one phone call from every potential permit applicant.

Applying for and renewing a permit

Residents may renew by mail or in person. An application will be mailed if requested by phone. A unique application form is provided for each zone. Applicants also receive a two page information sheet with program rules, which is also unique for each zone. The information sheet for the newest zone, Zone 25 Westlake, is available through an on-line link from the “Westlake Avenue North Corridor Parking Management Plan” webpage, but otherwise these information sheets are not posted on-line.

Once the resident has the application, they must return it by mail or bring it to the Traffic Permits Counter with a copy of their current Washington State vehicle registration and proof of residency. Proof of residency must be dated within the last thirty days and may be a utility, phone or cable bill, a bank statement, or a rental agreement. The applicant also must provide the make, model, color and license plate number of each vehicle for which they are obtaining a permit.

Potential customers can complete the application process by phone and email, assuming they live in an area where an institution pays for their permits and they are able to fill out and then make a PDF of the application form and send it back as an attachment, along with PDFs of their vehicle registration and proof of residency. They also must call to get the email address of a specific staff member. Some customers have completed all the paperwork and submitted it by email and then called with a credit card number to pay the fees or mailed a check separately. However, even if the Traffic Permits staff receives the application information electronically, it is not ‘electronic information’ that can be automatically entered into a database. Each applicant must be entered manually.

Renewing a permit

SDOT sends a renewal letter to each current permit holder at the time of renewal. The letter provides all the information they need to renew their existing permit(s), and may be returned by mail with payment, if payment is required.

Telephoning the Traffic Permits Counter

The Residential Parking Zone program is only one of many responsibilities of the Traffic Permits staff and it is not unusual for all available staff either to be on the phone or helping customers at the counter. In this case messages are left on voice mail, and then listened to, taken down by hand, and responded to

as time allows. Staff have expressed frustration with the current telephone system and the messaging system, and have asked for a system that would allow automatic call backs so that any staff person with a free moment could begin clearing the backlog of calls.

Seeking information about a proposed or pending new RPZ

Normally, the City does not maintain web pages about pending RPZs while they are being developed through the resident-initiated process (see *Chapter 4 Zone Operations*). However, in cases when the RPZ is part of a larger parking plan, as with Zone 25 Westlake mentioned above, there will be information on-line. Other examples of new or expanded zones with information on-line include: Zone 13 Lower Queen Anne; Zone 7 First Hill; and Zone 21 Pike/Pine.

Information technology barriers to changing customer service practices

The RPZ program currently uses a Microsoft FoxPro database. Microsoft has discontinued developing FoxPro and plans on dropping support for the existing versions after 2015. Thus, FoxPro may not run on new equipment or under upgraded operating systems. The City of Seattle Information Technology Department (IT) contracted out the RPZ FoxPro work, but as of February 2008 that contractor is no longer available, leaving the City without in-house expertise in FoxPro.

The RPZ system is not integrated with the Finance Department or with vehicle registration and address verification via the Washington State Department of Licensing or Seattle City Light. This means that staff must transfer data manually from paper copies to the computerized data base, making for extra steps and introducing the possibility of errors.

Most SDOT systems use Hansen Information Technologies from Infor (www.hansen.com), an application that helps manage the operations of government. Hansen's software modules aggregate citizen and business requests for services and business transactions with web portal, kiosk, front counter, telephone, email, and secured access to back-office functions.

The RPZ permitting application depends upon Hansen's city-wide building database that resides in a Hansen database, is accessed through a Hansen front end, and is updated through a Hansen form. The RPZ system requires additional building information, including unit numbers which are not maintained in the Hansen database. Now, if an apartment number is entered with an address, Hansen returns an error message. Rather than create a table which references the Hansen database, the RPZ system maintains a separate building database. Duplicating databases introduces maintenance, updating and accuracy challenges as well as creating more work for staff. Requiring on-line applicants to enter their apartment numbers in some complex way – that is in a field outside the data read by Hansen – would generate constant errors and frustration for customers and staff. This problem should be solvable under Hansen version 8, which allows more latitude in interfacing with the database via custom server scripts.

Business Practices – Issues and Options

Finding information about the RPZ program by phone or web

More and more people, if they have a phone book, seem to have long since forgotten where they put it. Increasingly, when people need information they turn to the web first. Finding a web page about Seattle's RPZ program is easy, but actually using the web to find out if you live in a zone, what your permit fees will be, or to apply for and purchase a permit is currently not possible. On-line permitting would result in fewer trips to downtown (which most applicants now make by car), and provide greater convenience to a majority of residents, as well as reduce paper use and demands on staff time.

Applying for and renewing a permit

The RPZ Survey asked participants if they would be interested in applying, renewing and paying for permits on-line and the overwhelming majority said that they would be. Following is an outline of how an on-line application and payment process could work.

Do I live in a zone?

Some customers will know they live in an RPZ and could go directly to the on-line application, or all customers could start with an address look-up as a way of entering themselves in the database. An address look-up feature is common on many cities' websites for parking permits and other uses. The customer simply enters their address and the system returns an answer telling them whether they live in a zone and if so which one. The customer then has the option of proceeding directly to an on-line application process. Several cities that do not yet support on-line application provide a zone look-up feature, and it is also common to post a map or maps of the parking zones on-line. A number of cities have interactive whole-city maps that allow the customer to click on a zone for a detailed map showing the addresses eligible for permits. Other cities post static maps and/or lists by block of all the addresses eligible for permits.

If the Hansen database is modified to include apartment numbers, an on-line address look-up function can be added, allowing anyone in the city to find out if they live in an RPZ.

Am I eligible for a permit?

To be eligible for a permit, an individual needs to prove their vehicle is licensed at their address, and that they live at that address. A vehicle registration form from Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) proves the former and one way to prove the latter is with a bill from Seattle City Light. A test run for this project documented that it would be a simple matter, with the cooperation of both those agencies, to establish an automatic verification function for most applicants. The applicant would enter their vehicle license number, their name and address. DOL would return a positive match (or negative) to the applicant, and the same information would be stored in the Traffic Permits database. Similarly, Seattle City Light would confirm that that person has a City Light account at that address.

If both matches are positive, confirmation would be forwarded to staff and they would be prompted to mail the RPZ permit to the new customer. The vehicle permit would be printed with the vehicle license number, making it good only on the vehicle that was submitted on the application. If the registration match were negative, the applicant would be directed to the DOL website where they can change their vehicle registration address on line.

If the applicant failed one or both of these tests, applicants would be asked to contact the Traffic Permits division, and staff could then walk them through the eligibility requirements and determine if they have other documents that they could provide to prove eligibility.

How many permits may I have?

The second eligibility issue will be how many permits one household is allowed and whether those permits have already been sold to someone else in the household, for example in the case of roommates or boarding house tenants. The Hansen database would need to track number of permits sold by address, so that if the household is already at its limit, the system will not allow more permits to be sold.

How much does a permit cost?

Customers should be able to look up the cost of permits for their address, independent of the application process. The cost of permits can be tied to the address look-up function – anyone who looks up their address would also be told what permits cost for that address, how many are allowed, and whether or not the limit has already been reached.

How do I apply?

For customer convenience, the RPZ website should explain how to apply on-line – and give a link for doing so – but also include information about how to apply in person or by phone.

How do I pay for the permit(s)?

On-line payment was another feature that was very popular in the RPZ survey, although some people said they would like to apply on-line but pay by sending in a check. The City of Seattle already accepts credit card payments on-line in other divisions; this can be extended to the RPZ program.

How do I renew?

Through the on-line or paper application process, the Traffic Permits division can invite customers to submit an email address and future renewals can be sent out by email, along with a link to an on-line renewal and payment site. SDOT does not require permit holders who renew to prove their vehicle registration or residence. The current process of sending a letter can be used for those without email addresses in the database and for all those whose emails will be returned as undeliverable.

Program Information On-Line

In addition to being able to find a zone, check an address, or apply for a permit on-line, customers need access to clear information about the program; how the vehicle and guest permits work; when, where and for whom permits are valid; how to display a permit; and other legal information. Other people who live, work, drive and park in the city should also be able to get information about the RPZ program, including the days and hours zones are in force and the parking restrictions for non-permitted vehicles.

All of this can be displayed on-line in clear, easy to understand fact sheets, illustrations and detailed maps. An illustration is particularly needed showing where on the vehicle to display the permits.

Reorganizing the website

In addition to adding information to the website, the website needs to be reorganized to put the most frequently sought information first, that is how to apply for an RPZ permit, followed by information about how the current program works; information about how to form a new zone should come last.

Traffic Permits Counter – Serving Customers

RPZ Survey respondents gave high marks and positive comments to the staff at the Traffic Permits counter and most reported that getting a permit was relatively hassle free. Ideally nine out of ten customers will no longer need to go downtown, but for those who do a few simple changes can make the experience even more convenient. A customer computer, possibly in a stand-alone kiosk because of limited counter space, would allow customers to begin entering their own information into the database and change their vehicle registration if necessary.

A new telephone system for the Traffic Permits Counter staff would shorten response time, thereby streamlining operations and improving customer service. The system would those without computer access the ability to complete on-line permitting process over the phone with Traffic Permit counter staff.

Seeking information about a proposed or pending new RPZ

SDOT could use the existing RPZ webpage to link to individual web pages created for any new zones that are under consideration or existing zones where there are proposed changes, such as changes in the boundaries, changes in parking restrictions, or changes in the hours and days of operation.

As the recommendations from this project are implemented, a link should be created for every existing zone, saying how the zone has been classified – high, medium or low impact – how many permits each household will be eligible for, and any other changes that will be made.

Updating software to support customer service

There are many software programs that could replace FoxPro and meet the needs of the Residential Parking Zone program operations, but only one, Hansen Technologies, is in use throughout SDOT for its other programs, and is supported by in-house IT staff knowledgeable in its operation and maintenance. This makes Hansen the obvious choice for the RPZ program.

As a starting point, Hansen’s all-city database of addresses needs to be upgraded to include apartment or unit numbers. It would be possible to create a workaround for this problem for the RPZ program, but it would require a separate database of apartment numbers linked only to the RPZ program. If a customer entered their address, with the apartment number in a separate box on the screen that would be created for it, the program would work. But if a customer added the unit number to the main address line, Hansen as it is now configured would not be able to find the address and would determine that it did not exist.

In addition to this modification, Hansen needs to be programmed to link each address to: allowable number of permits; number of permits already sold (vehicle and guest permits); resident and institution share of each permit fee; permit renewal date; and email addresses of permit holders who supply them. It will also need to be able to routinely query the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) to handle the problem created by the DOL requirement that people periodically replace their physical license plates. Permit holders who don’t choose to pay extra to keep their license plate number will then have an RPZ permit that no longer matches the plate on their car. Hansen can routinely query the DOL to collect this information so that these people can be issued new permits, and so that the information uploaded to the Parking Enforcement Officer’s handheld units is accurate.

Business Practices – Best Practices

On-line permitting

Seattle sits about ‘in the middle’ on the ease/difficulty of application and renewal spectrum. Increasingly, cities allow residents to apply for parking permits on-line, eligibility is verified automatically, payment is taken by credit card and permits are mailed out. Some cities, however, still require all residents to come into the office and present proof of eligibility in person, including photo identification.

For those cities with on-line application and payment, the forms tend to be very simple. Just during the course of this project, some cities that did not have on-line permitting when first researched had inaugurated it a few months later.

Business Practices – Public Comment

RPZ Survey

All but five percent of survey takers found getting a permit easy or “not too bad.” Comments included:

- I find the service provided by the City RPZ staff to be excellent.
- I had an exceptionally good experience obtaining a parking permit. I went in the middle of the day, and dealt with a very pleasant woman at the counter, in the absence of lines.
- The folks I have dealt with in your office have always been very friendly and easy to deal with!

There was one substantial complaint about the current process, however, the requirement to go downtown.

- Time consuming to go downtown - wanted to do this over the internet
- It was easy, but a hassle to have to go downtown. There was no ability to purchase the permit online.
- It is a little annoying to have to go downtown during business hours. We needed a permit right away and couldn't wait for the mail.

Asked if they would like to be able to apply for and purchase permits on line, eighty-four percent said yes, with representative comments including:

- Awesome!
- Being disabled, this would help a lot.
- Love this idea
- This is a fantastic idea and one that should definitely be implemented immediately.

Nine percent said they would like to apply on-line but would prefer to pay by mail, six percent said they don't like to conduct business on line, and one percent said they didn't have access to a computer.

Business Practices – Proposed Recommendations

Software

- **Transfer the RPZ program from FoxPro to Hansen**
 - Restructure RPZ database so that it uses the existing building database in Hansen. Add unit numbers and RPZ zone data to the existing Hansen database.
 - Add a function to query the Seattle City Light billing database to determine whether a resident's name is matched to the address for the utility bill, in order to verify residency. Negotiate an agreement with Seattle City Light to support this function.
 - Add a function to query the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) database to determine whether a resident's name and vehicle license plate are matched to the address in the vehicle registration. Negotiate an agreement with the Department of Licensing to support this function.
 - Add a function to query the DOL database to determine whether a permit holder has received a new license plate number for a vehicle with an existing RPZ permit. Negotiate an agreement with the DOL to support this function.

Web based permitting and information

- **Establish on-line permitting, fee payment and program information**
 - Establish on-line address look-up, fee look-up, eligibility verification and payment.
 - Post detailed maps and information for the Residential Parking Zones, including which addresses are eligible for permits, which institutions pay permit fees and what they pay for, how many permits each household in a zone is eligible for, and where RPZ parking restrictions are in effect.
 - Post permit-holder information detailing rights and responsibilities, with a prominent illustration showing where to place a permit on a vehicle.
- **Establish web pages for Residential Parking Zones under consideration and development.**
 - Include information about the proposed boundaries, results of the parking studies, time and place of any public meetings, who to contact, and other appropriate information.

Traffic Permits Counter Customer Service

- **Install customer computer at the Traffic Permits Counter** to access on-line RPZ application and Washington State Department of Licensing address update pages.
- **Install new telephone system at the Traffic Permits Counter** to improve customer response and streamline operations.

Chapter 7

Customer Service – Near Term Actions

Introduction

Some of the recommendations in this report can be implemented almost immediately, while others require changes in the Seattle Municipal Code, new budget authorization, developing new software, or purchasing new equipment and will take longer. Complete implementation of the program changes proposed here, depending on the final implementation schedule, will take several years. Any changes to the permit allocation or other like recommendations will take affect at the different zone renewal times.

If agreed upon for the final recommendations, the following steps could be taken almost immediately to improve customer service and to help streamline Traffic Permits Counter staff efforts.

Website improvements

Currently a potential customer who searches on some combination of “Seattle” and “RPZ” or “residential parking” will be directed a website where the first information discusses this project or how to form an RPZ. The last choice on the opening web page describes how to get a permit. Customers need to call the city to confirm they live in a zone and to ask for an application form. They then must mail back the form with copies of their eligibility documents or go to the office to get a permit.

The Traffic Permit Counter staff requires paper copies of the documents that verify eligibility, including vehicle registration and proof of residency.

Simple improvements to the website could streamline this process almost immediately, while waiting for the longer term improvements that will allow customers to complete the application and renewal process entirely on-line.

Short-term recommendations include:

- **Better information and presentation**
 - Reorganize the website to feature information about how to obtain or renew a permit as the first choice.
 - Rewrite and illustrate the customer information to make it clearer and easier to understand, and offer it in a printable format.
 - Create a new information sheet/brochure that describes how the RPZ permit system works, where to place the decal on your vehicle, and the other terms and conditions of the program.
- **Do I live in an RPZ?**
 - Post the RPZ zone maps on line and list the eligible blocks. (An address look-up function requires converting the existing system to new software and will take longer.)
- **Simplify the application form and post it on-line**
 - Create a form that can be filled-in on-line and then printed for mailing or bringing into the office. (Complete on-line application and payment will be available after new systems are implemented.)

- **Simplify the RPZ rules sheet and post on-line**
 - Create a new brochure of the RPZ rules and responsibilities that can be posted on-line.
 - Standardize directions of where to place the vehicle decal (driver's side lower front windshield, above any tinting), and prepare illustrations.
 - Ask permit holders to remove all old decals.
- **Make phone system improvements**
 - Install a new phone system that “parks” calls and tells customer estimated wait times, as well as routes calls in order received to available staff. A new phone system would provide menus of possible information available to the caller.

The following proposed improvements could be achieved before 2010, but require more resources than the above recommendations.

- **Create links with Washington State DOL and Seattle City Light to verify eligibility**
 - About nine out of ten customers probably could verify their eligibility on-line through confirmation that there is a City Light account in their name at their address, and that their vehicle is registered with DOL at their address. Both of these could be queried on-line and a confirmation number entered into the application form and independently transmitted to the Traffic Permits staff who could then validate it when they receive the application.
 - For customers who call or come to the office, Traffic Permits staff would also have access to these databases and could verify eligibility without paperwork for most customers.
 - For customers who need to change their vehicle registration address, link the DOL query function to DOL website that allows vehicle owners to change their vehicle registration addresses on-line.

Traffic Permit Counter improvements

- **In-office customer kiosk**

Install a computer for customer use so that customers who come to the office can complete as much as possible of the application themselves. Because of limited counter space, this may have to be a stand-alone kiosk. This arrangement is already in use in other customer service areas in the city.

Enforcement improvements

- **RPZ database in PEO handheld units**

The new handheld units acquired by the Seattle Police Department have a wealth of capabilities not available in the previous units. One that can be taken advantage of immediately is to create a database of RPZ permit numbers linked to license plate numbers and upload this daily to the handheld units. The PEOs in the field would then have a much stronger tool to check for fraudulent decal use on their normal rounds. While there is not yet any monetary penalty specifically for using a decal on a vehicle other than that to which it was issued, the PEOs can issue a parking citation, and can inform the Traffic Permits staff, who can then notify the permit holder that the permit has been cancelled.

Chapter 8

Long-Term Opportunities

Introduction

A number of issues and opportunities related to the Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) program arose during the course of this project that are not addressed in the proposed recommendations in this report, for various reasons. These are addressed briefly here. They represent both opportunities that may be possible in the future with advances in technology, and approaches that are not necessarily needed now, but may be required in the next decade or so to manage the **growing imbalance between too many cars and too few parking spaces**.

Simplifying complexity with enforcement technology

The discussions in *Chapter 3 Policy Concepts*, and *Chapter 4 Zones*, highlight some of the problems with the current zone structure. In the long-term, whole-scale changes to the permit program could be addressed with different enforcement technology.

“One zone”

When more advanced license plate recognition technology becomes workable, two major changes could occur in the RPZ program. First of all, it would no longer be necessary to designate individual zones on street signs. Instead of a permit being good to park within a particular zone, a permit could be good to park within a certain distance from one’s residence. To avoid arguments, the limit might be ten or fifteen blocks (depending on the difficulty of finding parking) but the enforcement boundary would be set several blocks further out. Using GPS technology, the license plate reader or transponder sensor would know that a vehicle had a permit, and would know exactly how far it was parked from its residence. Some distance limitation would be necessary because otherwise any permit holder could drive anywhere in the city and park in an RPZ.

In addition to simplifying permitting, enforcement and on-street signage, such a system would solve the problem of people who live on the boundaries of abutting zones. Instead of driving around and looking for a parking space in their zone, while there’s an open space across the street in the neighboring zone, they could simply park anywhere within a certain distance of their home.

A future with more cars but no more parking spaces

The other future opportunities discussed here are somewhat more controversial choices that might have to be made at some time in the future. Even now, in some areas of the city, there are simply too many cars for the spaces on the street. For now, it is hoped that restricting the number of permits per household will help restore some balance. But even as vehicle ownership rates continue their downward trend, more housing units bring more vehicles, but no more curb space is created.

Grandfathered buildings, grandfathered people, and waiting lists

One approach to sharing out scarce curb space that was analyzed as a part of this project is an idea

borrowed from other cities: grandfathering in current buildings, but not allowing residents in newly constructed buildings to qualify for permits. Other cities implement these schemes in different ways.

In **Berkeley, California** new buildings can be permitted with little or no parking for residents, but the permit conditions include a provision that people living in the building will never be eligible for parking permits. Berkeley also declared residents of already existing University of California dorms, all of which are off-campus, ineligible for permits.

Arlington County, Virginia uses a complex calculation for existing multi-family buildings which calculates a parking deficit based on available on-site parking versus current code requirements. The County will assign spaces on street to permit-only parking to make up the deficit, but only up to the available spaces *on the curb alongside the building*. (Multiple multi-family buildings in one block can be counted as a unit.) Any curb space in front of ground floor retail is not included. Furthermore, if parking in the building is rented separately, a building is eligible only if the parking rent is the same or less than the County's permit fee, \$20 a year.

Melbourne, Australia declared that any building built after 2006 is ineligible for permits, and **Sydney** did the same in certain areas but set the date as 1996.

Toronto, Canada uses a waiting list approach – once there are as many permit holders as there are on-street spaces, no more permits are sold. There could be a certain appeal to this approach in Seattle, because it would be possible to grandfather in all current permit holders, and then create a waiting list. If the parking situation in an area deteriorates to the point where people simply can not find parking anywhere near their homes, all current permit holders could be granted permanent renewal rights. As they moved away or gave up their permits, the number of permits could be allowed to decrease until an acceptable balance was reached between vehicles and spaces. Only then would permits be issued to new applicants, starting at the top of the waiting list, as existing permit holders didn't renew.

Factoring in off street parking spaces

Another approach that is equitable and simple to understand, but complicated to implement, is adding off-street parking availability to eligibility criteria. **Toronto, Canada** and **Melbourne and Sydney, Australia** all use this approach in at least some areas. In these situations, households are eligible for one or two permits, as the case may be, less the number of off-street spaces on their property. Sydney defines their "Minus Rule," as any off-street space that "may reasonably be provided." In other words, if there's room on the property for an off-street space, the resident must "reasonably provide it" to themselves because they are not eligible for a parking permit. If there is a space but the resident's vehicle is too large for it, the resident is advised to enlarge the space or get a smaller vehicle. Toronto combines this approach with pricing and issues 'convenience permits' for on-street parking to people who have off-street parking, but at a much higher price than charged to those who don't have off-street parking, and only in areas where there is adequate curb space for more vehicles.

Pricing

One potential option where financial disincentives were put in the permit rate pricing was not included in the draft recommendations. There was both support and opposition for this approach from the RPZ Survey. Some people commented they would gladly pay much higher fees if it would guarantee them a parking space; others said it is just wrong to have to pay to park in front of your own house.

In addition to the voices raised against the idea, the project team also was concerned that in some parts of the city it is the oldest buildings, and potentially those that charge the lowest rents, that do not have off-

street parking. Significantly raising the price of residential parking permits could disproportionately hit lower income renters who already have the fewest options, whether for finding off-street paid parking, or living without a car.

That said, looking to the future, the question of pricing may have to be revisited as another way to balance supply and demand.

Chapter 9

Implementation Timeline

Introduction

The next page presents a brief implementation timeline for the RPZ Policy Review Project.

Major changes proposed in the Residential Parking Zone program will need to occur in sequence, after three early steps: enacting legislation that supports the proposed changes; obtaining budget authority for program improvement costs; and transferring the program over from the FoxPro system to Hansen Technologies, which is required to support new program features.

There are however, a number of tasks that can be completed during the remainder of 2008 and in 2009.

2008 Implement short term customer improvements that are not budget related, and that can be accomplished with existing resources and staff. These include website redesign and improvements, and posting the permit application, RPZ zone maps, and program rights and responsibilities on-line.

Conduct community outreach for plan recommendations.

Continue work on zone classification and modification plan.

Prepare legislation to support program changes.

2009 Enact legislation.

Implement Hansen Technologies software.

Complete work on zone classification and modification plan.

Redesign physical vehicle permits and guest decals, acquire stock and printer. Traffic Permits division staff will need time to work with vendors, in cooperation with the Parking Enforcement Division, to design, specify and purchase new permit stock. The vehicle decals need to be designed to be run through a printer so that the vehicle license numbers can be printed on each one, with an accompanying letter. Guest permits need to be designed to be usable only once. Both need to be fraud-resistant.

2010-2011 Zones will be classified and modified – with appropriate boundary changes, if any – on a rolling cycle with each zone being changed over to the new program on its renewal date. As the zones renew over a two year cycle, this will be a two year process. Zones that are deemed unnecessary will be decommissioned.

Implementation Timeline

