

MEMORANDUM

To: Council President Richard Conlin
Councilmember Nick Licata
Councilmember Jean Godden
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen
Councilmember Sally Clark
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Councilmember Tim Burgess
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw
Councilmember Mike O'Brien

Via: Tracy Krawczyk
Cristina VanValkenburgh

From: Peter Hahn, Director of Transportation 

Date: July 25, 2011

Subject: **Interim Report on Business Permit Pilot Program in Light Rail Station Area Restricted Parking Zones**

Purpose

Ordinance 116507 authorized the Director of SDOT to establish a four-year Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) business permit pilot program in the LINK Light Rail station areas and directed SDOT to report to Council on the effect of the program in 2011 and 2013. SDOT conducted an on-street parking study in the fall of 2010 to determine how occupancy in and around the RPZs had changed since 2008 and to evaluate the business permit pilot. The full report is attached to this memo.

Recommendation

Based on findings from 2010 data, SDOT recommends making no changes at this time with regard to the RPZ business permit pilot program. On-going monitoring will continue in late 2011 and 2012. SDOT will submit a second report to City Council in 2013.

Background

In April 2008, SDOT, in partnership with Sound Transit, launched an on-street parking planning and public engagement effort around the Central LINK Light Rail station areas. This effort included a parking study in the fall of 2008 to measure occupancy of blocks within the quarter- and half-mile radii around each station area. This established baseline measurements before light rail service began. In general, the study showed capacity for additional on-street parking use.



SDOT attended nearly 70 community meetings, distributed mailings, hosted open houses, and conducted door-to-door outreach to obtain feedback from area stakeholders. Community outreach and findings from the 2008 data led to the proactive installation of RPZs in five of the light rail station areas: Beacon Hill, Mt. Baker, Columbia City, Othello, and Rainier Beach. In the spring of 2009, SDOT established the RPZs with the goal of prioritizing resident and business parking needs over potential commuter parking use.

In June 2009, Council approved changes to the RPZ policy and authorized SDOT to establish a four-year RPZ permit pilot program for businesses and institutions in the station areas of the initial LINK light rail segment. The pilot was primarily put in place to ease the transition to the new parking regulations and support small business owners and employees around the light rail stations areas – many of whom use their personal vehicles for business purposes.

Ordinance 116507 also set forth the following monitoring parameters for SDOT: when annual monitoring or survey indicates that 25% or more of RPZ blocks in a zone are at least 75% occupied and more than 35% of those vehicles can be attributed to non-residents, then SDOT shall cease to renew business permits for the 2011 – 2013 permit cycle. The parking study found that none of the station area RPZs met the threshold of 25% or more of RPZ streets being at least 75% full, and the existence and use of business permits does not appear to be outweighing residential parking needs. The study also found that parking use around the station areas did not change substantially from 2008 to 2010.

To date, 5,322 permits have been issued in the light rail station area RPZs. Of those, 15% (796) are business permits. Implementation of the pilot is consistent with RPZ goals of supporting mixed-use neighborhoods and local business districts, reducing neighborhood traffic impacts by large parking demand generators, reducing overall energy use and vehicle emissions, keeping parking demand from exceeding parking supply, and contributing to implementation of a customer-oriented permit program.

Next Steps

SDOT continues to engage with and respond to residents and businesses in the light rail station area RPZs through community meetings and an on-line survey. SDOT will collect additional parking occupancy data in late 2011 and 2012, and will again report to Council in 2013, at which point the four-year business permit pilot will sunset and Council will need to determine whether to continue the program.

For more information, please contact Allison Schwartz at SDOT at 6-4654 or allison.schwartz@seattle.gov.