

Protecting Customer Parking

A Guide for Businesses near Light Rail Stations in Seattle



Produced by the City of Seattle
January 2009

How to Use This Guide:

The City of Seattle created this “tool kit” to help you manage the existing off-street parking in your business districts. This guide explains two strategies for using existing parking more efficiently:

- Protecting Customer Parking
- Creating a Park Once, Shop Twice network

What is Included:

Each strategy includes: a brief description, guidance on when to use the strategy, its advantages, an implementation checklist and any related rules or regulations.

Who to Contact:

If you have any questions or need help, please contact:
Yun Pitre, Southeast District Coordinator, at 206-386-1924 or Yun.Pitre@seattle.gov.

More Strategies:

For information on other ways to improve your business district, see the City of Seattle’s “**Create a Thriving Business District Guide**,” available at: <http://www.seattle.gov/economicdevelopment/files/NBDGuideFinal.pdf>. Topics include beautification, maintenance, parking, signs, traffic control, use of public areas, public safety and funding.

For a glossary of parking terminology, visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/parking/parkingterms.htm>

STRATEGY 1: *Protected Customer Parking*

This strategy is designed to protect your existing parking for customers.

The Basics:

- Businesses and property owners post “2-hour Parking for Customers Only” signs in their private parking lots.
- Someone monitor how people use the lot.
- If a car is parked for too long, then action is taken (see Checklist on this page).

When to use this Strategy:

Consider using this strategy if you have or anticipate having these types of problems:

- Commuters park in your lot.
- Employees of other businesses park in your lot.
- Unknown cars park in your lot all day.

Advantages of this Strategy:

- Relatively inexpensive, yet effective.
- Ensures parking lot is only used by customers for short lengths of time.
- No permit is needed (if parking is free).
- Can be converted to paid parking over time (see Rules & Regulations).

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST:

1 Initial decisions

Do you want to use this strategy? Yes. No.

If yes, who will manage it?

- I will (my business alone).
- The Business Association (with other businesses).

2 Decide on the details

MONITORING OPTIONS

Who will monitor the parking?

- Hire someone.
- Find a volunteer (maybe a high school student).
- Business owners will take turns.
- Other idea: _____

How often will the lot be monitored?

- Every day.
- Once a week.
- Every day for one month after the light rail opens, and then occasionally thereafter.
- Other idea: _____

ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS

What will happen if a car is parked for too long?

- Put a (friendly) warning note on the car.
- Tow the car.

3 Make it happen

THINGS TO DO

- Get funding for signs, monitoring and enforcement (see Funding Opportunities section).
- Work with property owners to post signs.
- Arrange for monitoring and enforcement.
- If towing, sign contract with towing company (see Sample Towing Contract in this packet).
- Contact the City of Seattle for help: Yun Pitre, Southeast District Coordinator, 206-364-1924 or Yun.Pitre@seattle.gov.

RULES & REGULATIONS

Will you charge customers to park in your lot?

The City of Seattle has regulations for posting parking prices in public garages and parking lots. These rules specify:

- The information that needs to be on the sign.
- Where the sign must be located.
- The required size of the words on the sign.

Complete text of this regulation can be found in the Seattle Municipal Code 6.48.040, “Signs – Posting of rates” and is included in this packet.

STRATEGY 2: *Park Once, Shop Twice network*

This strategy is designed to make parking easy for your customers and encourage them to visit neighboring businesses.

The Basics:

- Businesses create a parking management program for a network of customer parking lots.
- Customers can park once and visit multiple shops.
- Signs on roadways, brochures and on-the-ground directories direct customers to parking lots.

When to use this Strategy:

- After you have implemented the Protected Customer Parking strategy.
- If you or neighboring businesses want to use joint marketing to attract customers.
- If you want to help your customers find available parking lots.

Advantages of this Strategy:

- Creates a welcoming environment for shoppers.
- Helps you advertise your business and attract new customers.
- No permit is needed (if parking is free).
- Can be converted to paid parking over time (see *Rules & Regulations*).

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST:

1 Initial decisions

Do you want to use this strategy? Yes. No.

If yes, which businesses will participate? (Make a list.)

2 Decide on the details

ADVERTISING OPTIONS

How will customers know where they can park?

- Install signs on roadways directing them to parking.
- Develop a brochure that shows the parking lots and nearby businesses.
- Install directories.
- Other idea: _____

MONITORING OPTIONS

Who will monitor the parking?

- Hire someone.
- Find a volunteer (maybe a high school student).
- Business owners will take turns.
- Other idea: _____

How often will the lots be monitored?

- Every day.
- Once a week.
- Other Idea: _____

ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS

What will happen if a car is parked for too long?

- Put a (friendly) warning note on the car.

3 Make it happen

THINGS TO DO

- Recruit businesses to participate in the network.
- Get funding for signs and advertising materials (see *Funding Opportunities* section).
- Design a logo and pick a name for the network (see *Sample Materials*).
- Develop a brochure.
- Work with property owners and SDOT to post signs and install directories.
- Arrange for monitoring and enforcement.
- If towing, sign contract with towing company (see *Sample Towing Contract* in this packet).
- Contact the City of Seattle for help: *Yun Pitre, Southeast District Coordinator, 206-364-1924 or Yun.Pitre@seattle.gov.*

RULES & REGULATIONS

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Code 6.48.040, "Signs – Posting of rates" and is included in this packet.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:

The following funding sources are programs of the City of Seattle:

Neighborhood

Business District program

The Office of Economic Development (OED) has a Neighborhood Business District grant program. Through a competitive application process, this program provides funds to nonprofit organizations to complete projects or provide services that benefit a Seattle neighborhood business district. Projects that focus on the following areas are encouraged to apply:

- Outreach
- Marketing materials
- Physical improvements
- Organizational development

Applications are accepted during the first quarter of each year.

Business Improvement Area

A Business Improvement Area (BIA) provides an ongoing source of funds for improvements in neighborhood business districts by assessing property and/or business owners who benefit from the improvements. BIA funds can be used for many things, including:

- Parking services
- Joint marketing
- Cleanup and maintenance
- Special events
- Beautification

The Office of Economic Development (OED) supports BIAs. For more information see the *Business Improvement Handbook* available at: http://www.seattle.gov/economicdevelopment/pdf_files/BIA_Handbook_08-07.pdf

For more information about the above funding opportunities, please contact: **Karen Selander, Neighborhood Business District Program, at 206-733-9256 or Karen.Selander@seattle.gov.**

Other Sources of Funds

Businesses could voluntarily contribute to a joint fund. Expenses for signs, monitoring and enforcement could be paid for with proceeds from this fund. Alternatively, these expenses could be paid for by a business association with proceeds from member dues.

Sample Towing Contract

Columbia Towing provides service to many businesses in Southeast Seattle. A contract is required and must be signed by the property owner. There is no charge to the property owner or business for this service; only the owner of the towed vehicle pays. Only people listed on the contract are authorized to call for a tow, and they must be present when the tow truck driver arrives.



5907 M. L. King Way South
Seattle, Washington 98118

24 Hours – 206-722-2535
Fax – 206-723-9847

Washington State Approved Registered Tow Operator #5169

PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPOUND CONTRACT

PRINTED NAME

SIGNATURE

Owner/Agent of property located at the following address:

doing business as: _____

NAME OF BUSINESS / APARTMENT / ETC.

have authorized *Columbia* Towing to post impound signs on the above mentioned property.

Columbia Towing will impound unauthorized or improperly parked vehicles at the property owner and/or agents request 24 hours per day, 7 days a week with a signed authorization of a person listed below:

Printed Name

Signature

Phone Number

The current charges for a private impound are \$ 160.00 impound and \$ 50.00 per day storage until the vehicle is redeemed or auctioned. All incurred costs will be charged to the registered owner of the vehicle. This agreement shall remain in effect until cancelled in writing.

Agreement entered into on this: _____ day of _____, 200_____.

Sample Park Once, Shop Twice Materials

SAMPLE LOGOS:



Portland, Oregon



Boulder, Colorado



Austin, Texas



Toronto, Canada

SAMPLE ROADWAY SIGNS:



Champaign, Illinois



Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Moncton, Canada



Calgary, Canada



Sacramento, California



Gainesville, Florida



Colorado Springs, Colorado



Raleigh, North Carolina



Wichita, Kansas



Fargo, North Dakota



Stillwater, Minnesota



Kirkland, Washington

*Title 6 - BUSINESS REGULATIONS**Subtitle I License Code**Chapter 6.48 - Public Garage or Parking Lot***SMC 6.48.040 Signs -- Posting of rates.** *(Current as of August 2008)*

A. Except as otherwise provided in subsections B and C of this section, it is unlawful for any person to demand or collect any charge for parking or for keeping or storing any motor vehicle in any public garage or parking lot unless there is erected and maintained at or near each entrance to such public garage or parking lot a permanent sign which is adequate to apprise anyone entering for the purpose of using such garage or parking lot of the following information and conforming to the following standards:

1. The word "park" or "parking" shall be clearly displayed on the sign, and the true or assumed name of the licensee shall be clearly identified at the top or the bottom of the sign, and such signs shall contain no other advertising. Any licensee using a trade or assumed name shall, when applying for a license or renewal thereof, furnish the Director with a certified copy of the filing with the County Clerk showing such trade or assumed name.
2. Signs shall contain numbers and letters indicating the time units and rate or rates for parking which are clearly readable and visible from a distance of fifty (50) feet; provided, that, if a rate charged for any time period is higher than the rate usually charged for that time period the higher rate shall be designated on a sign in letters and numbers not less than one and one-third (1/3) times the size of the largest letter or numeral indicating the rate usually charged, and the sign shall clearly indicate that a special rate is being charged.
3. Signs indicating more than one (1) rate and time interval shall contain figures for each rate and time interval; rates shall be listed with the shortest time interval on the top and the all-day rate on the bottom.
4. Signs shall indicate any hours when the public garage or parking lot is not open for public parking and shall specify the night parking rate or weekend parking rate when such rate(s) differ from regularly posted rates.
5. Signs shall indicate specific hours when a night rate is applicable and/or specific days and hours when a weekend rate is applicable.
6. If any rate other than an all-day rate is to be charged, the maximum rate for all-day parking must be posted.
7. All numbers and letters on such signs shall be of a contrasting color to the background thereon.
8. The bottom line of rate information shall be at least six (6) feet above the sidewalk level; provided that it may be lower if rate information cannot be obstructed at any time.

B. As to indoor parking facilities, such signs shall not be required to be erected and maintained at or near each entrance thereof and may alternatively be erected and maintained inside each entrance if:

1. Such signs are clearly readable and visible from a point within the indoor parking facility and from which point a motor vehicle can immediately and conveniently exit;
2. Such signs conform to the standards set forth in paragraphs 1 through 7 of subsection A, and in addition contain a statement indicating the immediate exit to be taken by a driver desiring to leave after reading the sign; and

3. No charge is demanded or collected for any motor vehicle which immediately exits following the reading of such a sign.

C. As to accessory parking facilities, such signs shall not be required to be maintained at or near the entrances thereof and may alternatively be erected and maintained within or immediately adjacent to each area in which motor vehicles are parked, stored or kept if:

1. Each such sign is clearly readable and visible from all points within each such area; and
2. Each such sign conforms to the standards set forth in paragraphs 1 through 8 of subsection A.

D. It is unlawful for any person to demand or collect any charge for the parking, keeping or storing of any motor vehicle in a public garage or parking lot in excess of the rates posted; provided, however, that the provisions of this section pertaining to the posting of parking rates shall not apply to rates which are determined by weekly, monthly, or longer periods of time, or to rates determined by written contract.

E. It is unlawful to demand or collect any charge for the parking, keeping or storing of any motor vehicle in a public garage or parking lot unless there is posted and maintained upon the premises of the public garage or parking lot at or near each place of payment, a public notice approved by the Director of Executive Administration.

Such notice shall contain the following public convenience information:

1. The name and phone number of the licensee and the street address of the garage or lot;
2. Parking rates posted in the same order as listed on the parking sign;
3. The appropriate locations for making payment;
4. The name, address, and telephone number of the person, firm or agent authorized to impound in place or remove vehicles from the garage or lot; and
5. Any other information pertinent to the operation of the public garage or parking lot as specified by administrative regulations promulgated by the Director of Executive Administration.

(Ord. [120794](#) Section 168, 2002; Ord. 117169 Section 83, 1994; Ord. 106967 Section 1, 1977; Ord. 105177 Section 2, 1975; Ord. 104297 Sections 4 and 5(part), 1975; Ord. 91059, 1962; Ord. 48022 Sections 148-A and 148-B, 1924.)