

PARKING

YOUR GUIDE TO PARKING MANAGEMENT



**City of Seattle
Strategic Planning
Office**



P A R K I N G

YOUR GUIDE TO PARKING MANAGEMENT

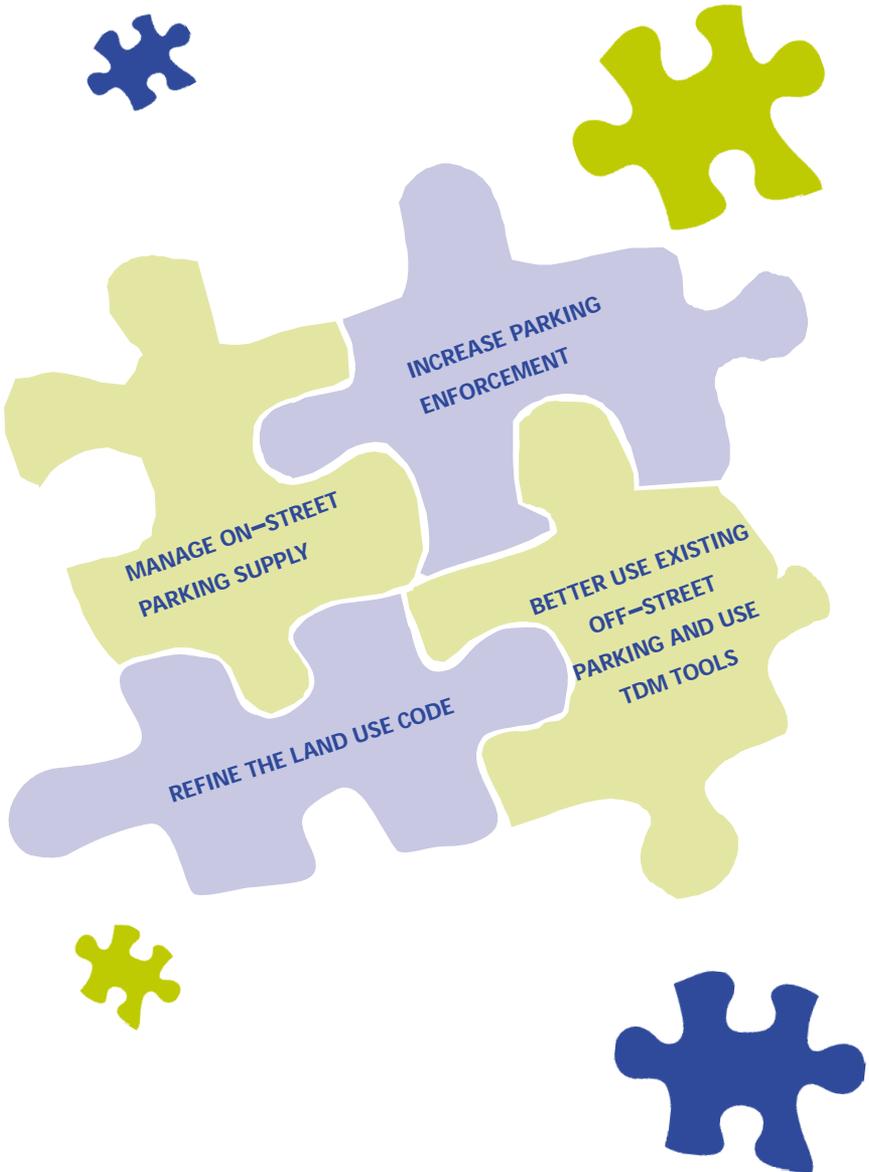
What can you do to improve parking in your neighborhood? The best way to improve parking is to manage the parking we have more efficiently. City departments and neighborhoods throughout Seattle are working together to make parking work better for everyone. This Guide to parking management was prepared by the Seattle Strategic Planning Office to help residents, businesses and community groups that are trying to improve parking in their neighborhoods and business districts.

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THE PARKING PUZZLE

All these pieces together make the parking system work.





Is there a parking problem in Seattle?

The quick answer is: it depends. The parking "problem" depends on who you are. Residents, businesses, shoppers, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders all want parking for different purposes. Residents want long-term spaces to "store their car," while businesses want short-term spaces in front of their business for their customers. Transit riders want space for buses to unload and pull back into traffic quickly, while delivery trucks want loading zones. Building all the parking we want would cost more than we can afford and negatively affects neighborhood traffic and livability. The best solution to the parking "problem" is to use the parking we have as effectively as possible.

The best way to improve parking is to manage the parking we have more efficiently.

MOST NEIGHBORHOODS HAVE PARKING AVAILABLE

The City of Seattle conducted a city-wide parking study in 1999-2000 that showed the majority of neighborhoods do have parking available at no or low cost within a few blocks of the parker's desired destination. While most areas were using between 40 and 70 percent of their parking, some areas were using much more parking all day or during peak periods.

THIS GUIDE OFFERS SOLUTIONS

When available parking goes unused, or when cars are parked for longer than the time allowed, we look to parking management strategies for help. This Guide covers some steps you can take to make parking work efficiently in your neighborhood. For example:

- Unneeded load zones can be changed into short-term parking (see pages 6-7).
- Parking signs may be installed in cooperation with SeaTran to direct people to available off-street parking (see page 11).
- Announcements can be posted to remind employees not to park in close-in parking designed for customers (see page 13).
- Residential areas can apply for a Restricted (residential) Parking Zone, or RPZ, to discourage long-term parking of non-residents (see pages 18-19).

This Guide is intended to help you address parking issues for your business and community. What you want depends on who you are and we hope this Guide helps you and your neighbors develop solutions to the parking issues in your community.

PARKING MANAGEMENT DEFINED

Parking Management is a set of programs and regulations that affect the supply, demand, location and price of parking. On—and off—street parking, transportation demand management, and parking enforcement are all pieces of the parking puzzle that fit together well when decisions are made collaboratively and in recognition of trade-offs between different users and the entire transportation system. Parking management can lead to efficient and more cost-effective land use management, educate drivers about the true costs of parking and driving, encourage shifts to transit and other non-single occupancy vehicle modes (SOVs), and promote environmental sustainability with less reliance on SOVs and surface parking lots.

WHY SHARE OR REDUCE PARKING?

1. Efficient parking = less sprawl.

If we use our urban land efficiently, we will prevent the expansion of urban areas into sprawling developments with underutilized parking lots. This will also help us preserve farm land and forests outside the urban city limits.

2. Parking spaces are not cheap.

Structured and underground parking can cost between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per space.

3. Land is not cheap. And land prices keep rising.

A large parking lot can be much more valuable for housing or a commercial use. Enough parking is important to avoid traffic problems but it is also important to not construct unnecessary parking lots.

4. Do it for the salmon.

Parking lots, with their huge expanses of asphalt, create storm water runoff that is polluted with oil, radiator coolant and asbestos brake linings. This untreated water can go directly into streams and rivers and affect the creatures that live there.

5. Do it for the pedestrians.

Large parking lots are intimidating to walk through. If it is uncomfortable to walk between destinations, people may drive very short distances from parking lot to parking lot to avoid a pedestrian-unfriendly experience.

6. Do it to reduce traffic congestion.

The price and availability of parking is the number one reason people decide to drive alone.

7. Where did Mt. Rainier Go?

Pollution from cars reduces the visibility of this Puget Sound icon. Encouraging pedestrian and transit connections to popular destinations can cut down on driving time and reduce air pollution.

8. Do it for the flora and fauna.

With the space saved by using our existing parking most efficiently, we can devote larger areas to parks, green space and open space.

9. Do it for your health.

America's sedentary life style is contributing to heart disease, obesity and a whole host of other health problems. Parking a few blocks from your destination and running several errands in the same area helps reduce driving, and is good for your health!

One-hour parking helps shoppers run quick errands.



ON-STREET PARKING

On-street parking is just as it sounds: the parking available on the street (versus a parking lot or garage). Managing on-street parking can ensure a community is making the most of the parking that is already available. Because there is a finite amount of curb space, the City has policies established in the *Transportation Strategic Plan* for giving priority to certain needs. In commercial areas, preference is given to bus zones, load zones and short-term parking, in order to support neighborhood business districts. Short-term parking serves the maximum number of people in a limited amount of curb space, thereby improving the economic vitality of an area.

In residential areas, the priorities for on-street parking are bus zones, loading zones, and long-term parking (intended for residents).

Loading zones provide very short-term parking to drop off passengers or make deliveries. Property owners can request loading zones or other special-purpose zones by calling 684-ROAD.

What you can do!

1. Call SeaTran at 684-ROAD for further information.

Need a parking space instead of a loading zone? Want a Restricted

(residential) Parking Zone (RPZ)? You can ask for it! Usually, residents or businesses initiate parking revisions. Typically you will need other property owners and/or tenants on a given block to agree to a parking change. The City may also implement a parking management strategy when it's supported by a neighborhood community group.

2. Eliminate unused driveways (curb cuts).

On occasion, a property owner may not need some of the driveways (curb cuts) which are sometimes left over when property is redeveloped. The owner could convert the unused curb cuts to parking spaces, a change which would help increase the supply of on-street parking. SeaTran, however, has no direct jurisdiction over the modification of curb cuts on private property. The matter is entirely up to the property owner, who would bear the cost of the project. One activity of a chamber of commerce or community group could be educating property owners about the value of creating parking spaces by eliminating unneeded curb cuts.



What are your options? See the On-Street Parking Options on pages 16–19 for all the types of on-street parking and if they're the right options for you.



At this location in Wallingford, a bank parking lot is used as a pay lot after banking hours. A simple sign also alerts customers that a local restaurant validates parking.



SHARED PARKING

Shared parking provides the best opportunity to promote the most efficient use of a neighborhood's parking resources, to facilitate more compact development, and to promote pedestrian friendliness and livable communities (with fewer surface parking lots). Businesses can share underused parking lots if they have similar customers or different peak periods. In the “park once, shop twice” strategy, existing businesses with a similar clientele can promote parking and walking to shop. With different peak periods, a restaurant and a bank can share a parking lot as dinner patrons visit after the bank closes.

What you can do!

1. For a new development

The Seattle Land Use Code (LUC) allows shared parking for uses with different peak hours and categorizes various land uses as either weekday or nighttime/Sunday. For instance, customer service and administrative offices are daytime uses and restaurants are nighttime/Sunday uses. The LUC permits up to a 90 percent reduction in the parking requirement where shared parking opportunities exist between businesses with different hours of operation. Shared parking is also allowed between different categories

of land uses. For example, if an office and a residential building share off-street parking they can reduce their parking by 50 per cent.

2. For an existing development

Since the LUC requirements apply only to new development, existing businesses and residential buildings can work together to use their parking more efficiently and maximize the parking in the community. A certain amount of the on-site, off-street parking is required for the sole use of a specific development or for different businesses within a building. But, any additional off-street parking can be informally used for the convenience of neighboring businesses. The owner of the additional parking can also formally arrange to designate it as required parking for a nearby use that needs parking under the LUC.

If you have questions about whether you are eligible to share parking, please contact the Department of Design, Construction and Land Use's (DCLU) Compliance Service Center at (206) 615-0808.



HOW TO INVESTIGATE PARKING CONDITIONS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Studying the parking in your neighborhood can dispel misconceptions and help everyone find a common understanding. Then, your neighborhood can develop effective solutions to parking problems or issues.

Begin your investigation by answering the following questions:

- Where do people park today? for what reasons (shopping, parking vehicles overnight, etc.)?
- What parking needs and problems do residents, business people, employees and their customers tell you they have?
- Where are there parking crunches?
- How do parking patterns vary by location and time?
- How long do vehicles need to park in various locations and at what times of day?
- Where and when do businesses and residents need passenger and truck loading areas?
- Are there large facilities (like hospitals, schools) that attract many visitors by car? How do they manage parking demand?

Developing recommendations: Use the strategies in this Guide or look at the Resources section for other ideas.

Where to start? You can find parking data on 26 Seattle neighborhoods at www.cityofseattle.net/planning/TSTparkingstudy.htm

(excerpted from The Parking Tool, City of Seattle, 1996)

Sign directing shoppers to free parking in West Seattle's Alaska Junction business district.



**FREE
PARKING**
WHILE SHOPPING IN
THE JUNCTION
3 HOUR LIMIT
PROVIDED BY
JUNCTION MERCHANTS

MARKETING AND PARKING VALIDATION

How do you market off-street parking? While on-street parking is perceived as more attractive (and cheaper!), parking is often more likely available in off-street lots or garages. People may not be aware of locations where parking is available. A business district could provide validation tokens for off-street parking for its customers, as in West Seattle's Alaska Junction, the University District, the International District, and Fremont. Parking validation encourages shoppers to park off the street and prevents wasted time and gas as people circle to find that last on-street parking space. Good signage is important to direct people to the public parking and let them know of the validation program.

What you can do!

The following marketing strategies can be partnership opportunities with local chambers of commerce.

1. Develop neighborhood parking, transit and transportation maps.
2. Place advertising in local or electronic media to inform people about parking resources, validation programs, or commute options in the neighborhood.
3. Develop easily understood, concise brochures to educate the public about parking and commute options.

4. Work with SeaTran to develop signs that direct people to available off-street parking.
5. Develop merchant parking validation programs to enhance a community approach to parking.
6. Implement TDM (Transportation Demand Management—see upcoming section) to provide employees, residents and even shoppers a way to get to the neighborhood other than driving.





ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement of on-street parking is key to the success of the other parking management strategies. No policy can achieve the desired results without effective and consistent enforcement. While resources for parking enforcement in the Seattle Police Department are limited, citizens can play a role by reporting parking violations and doing their own enforcement reminders.

What you can do!

1. Report a parking violation

Non-emergency parking violations can be reported to the Seattle Police Department Communications Division at (206) 625-5011. Abandoned vehicle complaints can be reported to the Parking Enforcement Unit at (206) 684-8763.

2. Citizen participation

Your neighborhood chamber of commerce can design a flyer or postcard to remind employees not to park in areas more desired for customer or residential parking.



It's about moving people, not just cars. In the U-district, about half of the shoppers on The Ave arrive via bus.



TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT/TRIP REDUCTION

Transportation Demand Management, or TDM for short, is a very cost effective way to affect parking. By reducing the number of trips people are taking in single-occupancy vehicles, and, therefore, need to park, you can reduce the demand for parking. TDM is the energy conservation of transportation. Carpooling, biking, walking and riding transit are all ways to reduce car trips to a neighborhood business district.

The City is working with several business districts including Wallingford, U-District, and Capitol Hill to manage employee commutes so that more parking stays available for customers and residents. At a program's launch, City staff conduct a transportation survey to find out how employees get to their jobs and what some preferable alternatives may be to driving alone. Alternatives are transit passes, bicycle racks, and preferential carpool parking spaces, as well as a guaranteed taxi ride home in case of emergencies. Results often show that many employees are interested in these incentives. The City, King County Metro and your chamber of commerce can help provide a transit ticket book distribution program, parking and transportation maps, and bicycle racks.

What you can do!

1. Ask your employer about transit passes, carpooling and other programs to reduce driving. Some employers provide subsidies for transit passes or carpooling. For more information contact King County Metro at (206) 553-3000 or go to transit.metrokc.gov/programs_info/employer/empcommute.html.
2. Ride your bike, bus or walk to your destination.
3. Sell your car! To find out how much you'll save by selling your car, do the Car Cost Worksheet at www.cityofseattle.net/waytogo.htm. You can save up to \$85 a week—that's a nice vacation. If you need a car on an occasional basis, join Flexcar. For more information, go to www.flexcar.com or call (206) 323-FLEX.
4. Check out the City's Car Smart Community Challenge Grants, which are available to fund projects designed to reduce car trips by encouraging transportation choices (For more information go to www.cityofseattle.net/carsmart/).



COMPARISON OF ON

	PURPOSE	RESTRICTION	AREA REQUIRED
PARKING METERS	Encourage turnover	Time-limits are generally set to reflect an average shopping or business visit in an area.	At least 100 spaces preferred for a new area. Existing metered areas may be expanded.
TIME-LIMIT PARKING	Encourage turnover	Time limits of one or two hours	A $\frac{1}{2}$ block minimum is desirable
PASSENGER LOAD ZONE	Quick passenger pick-up and drop-off	3-minute time limit	One per block is desirable, 20'-40' long space
LOAD/ UNLOAD ZONE	For businesses and multi-family residences with rapid turnaround time (a dry cleaner, for instance) and rapid delivery requirements	30-minute time limit	Determined by need
TRUCK LOAD ZONE	Used primarily for business delivery	30-minute time limit; for truck-licensed vehicles	Variable length—one per block is desirable
COMMERCIAL VEHICLE LOAD ZONE	Used primarily for business delivery in metered areas	30-minute time limit; for truck-licensed vehicles	Variable length—one per block is desirable

-STREET PARKING OPTIONS

AREA CONDITIONS OTHER REQUIREMENTS ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES

<p>A relatively dense business base; heavily used, existing time-limit parking; off-street parking is limited or costly; and low risk of spillover parking</p>	<p>Meters are installed only in commercial areas where the explicit support of area business owners has been obtained.</p>	<p>Easier to enforce than signed parking restrictions. Meters may be removed incrementally when usage drops below 25 percent. They may not be effective in areas where streets must also accommodate resident parking. Revenue generated provides essential services such as Police and Fire.</p>
<p>Appropriate for business districts</p>		<p>Not as easy to enforce as meters; people can dodge enforcement</p>
	<p>Happens at the request of adjacent business or property owners</p>	<p>May be shared by several properties on a block</p>
<p>Business districts or highly dense neighborhoods, either with or without parking meters</p>	<p>Happens at the request of adjacent business owners</p>	<p>May be shared by several businesses or apartment buildings on a block</p>
<p>Truck access is available only in the street (there is no alley); non-metered areas</p>	<p>Happens at the request of adjacent business owners</p>	<p>May be shared by several businesses on a block</p>
<p>Metered areas where truck access is available only in the street (there is no alley)</p>	<p>Happens at the request of adjacent business owners; yellow parking meters</p>	<p>Annual permits may be purchased to eliminate the need to put coins in the meter.</p>

COMPARISON OF ON

	PURPOSE	RESTRICTION	AREA REQUIRED
NO PARKING ZONE	Traffic movement, passage of emergency vehicles only or for safety reasons	Limits on-street parking during specified hours (peak commute hours) or all day	Length as needed
TAXI ZONES	Provide additional transportation options		Determined by need
ANGLE PARKING	Provides maximum parking in the available right-of-way	Back-in, angled parking only	Length as needed
REMOVE PARKING RESTRICTIONS	Additional parking spaces are created	Adds parking to both or one side of the street	Length as needed
RESTRICTED (RESIDENTIAL) PARKING ZONES (RPZS)	Ease parking congestion in residential neighborhoods by discouraging long-term parking by non-residents on residential streets	Limits parking beyond time limits to permit holders only	At least five contiguous blocks

-STREET PARKING OPTIONS

AREA CONDITIONS OTHER REQUIREMENTS ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES

Normally found along arterials	Zones may be installed to improve transit speed and reliability	Can improve traffic, including transit
Normally found in business districts	Zones may be installed without strong objections from adjacent property owners	Decreases traffic congestion and demand for parking
Business, residential or mixed-use areas. Trees, driveways and sidewalks may impact the feasibility of angle parking.	For angle parking on one side and parallel on the other, a commercial street should be a minimum of 42 feet wide and a residential street should be a minimum of 33 feet wide. Other factors to consider include planting strip and sidewalk width, street trees and utility poles.	The number of available parking spaces will increase. Traffic congestion on a non-arterial may increase if a travel lane is taken away.
Parking may or may not be in high demand	Non-arterial streets must be 25 feet wide.	There will be an increase in the number of parking spaces; traffic will be slowed down; traffic congestion may be created; it may be more difficult to enter and exit driveways
Parking congestion is caused by being near a business district with limited parking	Requested by an active neighborhood community council or 25 residents equally representing five blocks and a study done by SeaTran to determine if neighborhood is appropriate for an RPZ. This is a 3-6 month community-driven process.	An RPZ won't work where residents themselves own more cars than there are parking spaces available. More information at http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/td/rpznew.asp



FOR MORE INFORMATION

To discuss changes to the on-street parking system, please contact Seattle Transportation (SeaTran) at (206) 684-ROAD.

For more information about neighborhood parking management, please contact Mary Catherine Snyder at the Strategic Planning Office, (206) 684-8110, marycatherine.snyder@ci.seattle.wa.us or go to <http://www.cityofseattle.net/planning/TSTParkingStudy.htm>

Resources

Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study, City of Seattle, 2000.

Provides information on your neighborhood's parking conditions. Please contact the Strategic Planning Office at (206) 684-8080 or go to <http://www.cityofseattle.net/planning/TSTParkingStudy.htm> to get a copy.

Transportation Strategic Plan, City of Seattle.

The City of Seattle's adopted *Transportation Strategic Plan (TSP)* outlines strategies and actions to help achieve the City's *Comprehensive Plan* goals, including the maintenance of the transportation infrastructure and how to make transit, biking, and walking more attractive. There is an annual report released each year to report back on the progress made in implementing the TSP. Please contact the Strategic Planning Office at (206) 684-8080 to get a copy, or go to <http://www.cityofseattle.net/td/tsp.asp>

The Parking Tool, City of Seattle, August 1996.

Prepared by the Office of Management and Planning, the Seattle Engineering Department and the Department of Construction and Land Use as part of neighborhood planning. This handbook outlines how to plan for parking from a local perspective. Please contact the Strategic Planning Office at (206) 684-8080 or go to <http://www.cityofseattle.net/planning/parking/parkingtool.htm> to get a copy.

Shared Parking Handbook, Portland Metro, 1997.

Sixteen-page handbook, written for planners, developers, citizens and business people. It includes the details of sharing parking, examines shared parking case studies and provides ideas for managing parking on a district-wide basis, such as a town center or downtown area. <http://www.multnomah.lib.or.us/metro/growth/doclibrary.html>

Parking Management Made Easy, Transportation and Growth Management Program, June 2001.

This parking guide from Oregon's Transportation and Growth Management Program outlines a step-by-step process to identify problems, undertake a parking study, analyze the results, and determine the strategies to resolve the problem, including options for making better use of the existing parking supply. <http://www.lcd.state.or.us/tgm/publications.htm>

CITY GOALS FOR PARKING MANAGEMENT

WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO DO

- Coordinate parking solutions such as managing on and off-street parking, making better use of existing parking, and introducing more flexibility to meet land use code requirements.
- Work directly with neighborhoods to tailor parking solutions that achieve the right amount of residential and retail customer parking, while discouraging long-term commuter parking.
- Implement effective and low-cost recommendations to provide more efficient use of existing parking supply before pursuing more expensive options.



City of Seattle Strategic Planning Office
Denna Cline, Director
Paul Schell, Mayor
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