



Parking Technical Advisory Group

728 St. Helens; Room 16

Meeting #87 – October 2, 2014, Notes

4:10

Meeting called to order by Co-Chairs

Steph Farber, one of the co-chairs, called the meeting to order.

4:15

Review: Residential Parking Program Feedback

The PTAG members who were able to attend the Residential Parking Program Community Discussion on September 18th shared their thoughts with the group. They were positive and felt like a lot of good feedback on how the current system could be improved was gathered.

David Schroedel, a consultant, went over the variety of feedback given to the PTAG through the three primary types of opportunities: public discussion, email, and online survey. Through these methods, the PTAG received feedback from about 75 people. The complete feedback was presented to the PTAG in printouts including the words of the commenters. In summary:

Residential Parking Program Community Discussion (~25 participants):

Small Group Discussions of Existing Conditions:

- Multicare/Group Health Area:
 - Employees are not using existing parking options
 - Current permit enforcement is broken
 - Multifamily buildings are disadvantaged in current permitting process
 - Evening parking is plentiful
- School Areas (Annie Wright, Stadium, St. Patrick's, University of Puget Sound):
 - Not all residential permit stalls are being used
 - Staff parking is impeding on residents outside of permit stalls
 - Better school/resident balance is needed
 - Parents block access during drop-off & pick-up
 - Student parking is not sufficient to meet demand resulting in impacts to residents
 - Event parking at schools (like high school football games) needs to be considered
- 6th Avenue Entertainment Area:
 - Night time parking is constrained
 - Poor behavior of users is biggest part of the problem
- East Tacoma:
 - Needs better enforcement & more permits
- Commercial Uses:

- Home based businesses with customers using residential parking is a problem
- Need a way to mitigate residential permit impacts to small business owners
- Businesses shouldn't be taking up parking in front of residential houses
- Development/Construction:
 - New development doesn't require enough parking
 - Need parking restrictions during (private & public) construction
 - Parking requirements need to acknowledge state of transportation infrastructure
- General Thoughts:
 - Parking restrictions may need to be flexible for different areas to address specific needs
 - Need increased parking supply, preferably free
 - Long-term parking (weeks at a time) of commercial vehicles, RVs, boats, etc, is a problem
 - Too many vehicles with one residence can be a problem for whole street
 - Some specific changes to certain blocks could be made now to improve the system
 - 2 parking passes per household is too few

Top 10 Items from Residential Parking Program Toolbox (in order of preference):

- Do them all (see complete list)
- Visible/Regular enforcement
- Resident agreement to boundaries & controls
- Resident status required for permit
- Clear signage
- Non-transferable permits
- Tied:
 - Acknowledge needs of employers & service providers
 - Focus control on high occupancy periods
 - Initiated by community
 - Regular permit renewal required

Online Residential Parking Survey:

Demographics:

- Majority are residents (75%)
- Most were interested in 3 neighborhoods: Stadium (41%), 6th Ave (38%) & North Tacoma (33%) [multiple areas allowed]
- 77% can currently park within 1 block of destination

Improved System Goals:

- Top 5 features (of 10 choices) in order of preference:
 - Online permit management (73%)
 - Ability to find a space within walking distance of destination (71%)
 - Improved permit enforcement (71%)
 - Ability of residents to request review of their area (54%)
 - Reduce the misuse of permits (51%)
- 64% feel that enforcement should be several times per week
- Additional comments were provided that reflected many of the comments gathered in the community discussion or via email.

Direct Emails to Parking Services Manager:

Resident near South Tacoma Way Business District:

- Business taking parking in front of residences
- Poor parking behavior

Business in 6th Ave Business District:

- Customers need more available parking
- Need comprehensive look at parking to extend beyond residential permits and include business concerns

Resident near Annie Wright School:

- Use citation revenue to support enforcement
- Current call for enforcement model doesn't work

Resident near Stadium High School:

- Students are parking in residential areas
- Would like to see more residential parking zones
- Need better enforcement, even if that comes with annual permit fees

Tacoma Resident and Business Owner:

- The current program should include more flexibility for parking by non-residents
- Consider charging non-residents to park in residential areas
- Residential parking permits should not be allowed in commercial areas
- Consider a 2hrs or by permit type solution

Resident near 6th Ave Business District:

- Parking availability is limited, particularly in the evenings on Friday and Saturday
- Poor behavior by parkers from outside the area, particularly from 11PM to 2AM
- Concerns about crime related to late night activity
- Parking permit areas need better enforcement

4:45 Discussion: 6th Ave Business District Status

Shari Hart, Economic Development Specialist for the City, shared her experience in working with the 6th Ave Business District on parking issues. She noted that there had been a parking study completed in early 2007 that looked at on-street occupancy, demand, and where demand was being generated from. This study from the Tilghman Group noted the distinction between the parking situation and the reality.

The study acknowledged that Anderson Street was the most heavily parked street but that overall utilization in the business district (from N. 8th to S. 8th, Steele to Lawrence) never reached capacity. The core of the area (Steele to Pine) did exceed 85% targets on Friday and Saturday nights reaching as high as 102% occupancy. The study did make several recommendations on how to better utilize existing on- & off-street supply as well as opportunities to increase supply on some selected side streets.

[SH] also shared some information on the Stadium Business District. They are interested in a more flexible permit system but does not want to see a reduction in the amount of parking available. They are particularly concerned about impacts of construction from private and public projects. They want to make sure that whatever program is put in place is not just about the resident's interests.

The PTAG discussed how to better reach business owners, and in particular, restaurant owners. The sense was to target the 2-3PM window between lunch and dinner while acknowledging that there would also be people who would not be able to make one time or another.

5:05 Public Comment

The PTAG asked for public comment from those people attending the meeting who were not PTAG or parking staff. Two commenters shared their thoughts/concerns on the parking system:

Resident near Annie Wright School:

- Near 9th & G students & faculty park from 8AM until 5PM. It makes it very difficult for residents to come and go throughout the day
- Should be possible for residents to park one car in front of their house during the day

Downtown Employee:

- Lost off-street parking in the Rialto garage with ownership change
- Looking for employee parking for some employees – 3?
- Use a total of 30 employee spaces
 - City staff & Republic Parking staff were going to try and work with commenter on potential solutions

5:25 Staff Update

City of Tacoma staff gave an update on some of the things they had been working on:

- Rate changes for on- & off-street parking in the downtown core were implemented on August 25th:
 - \$1/hr on-street
 - \$2 for first 3hrs off-street
 - Data for the first week of September (i.e. after the change) showed that the number of on-street transactions increased from the year prior by 22%. Over the same period, the average length of stay was down 7mins. This implied that more people were having an opportunity to park, in part because users were staying a little shorter.
 - During a walk-through of 923 Commerce Garage (Park Plaza North) today, Thursday 10/5, showed only 14 spaces available out of nearly 500 total spaces.
- New paystations have been deployed around UWT. They have color screens and are well-lit. The City will be doing a survey in January to measure customer satisfaction.
- The City has produced and deployed A-Boards reminding users to pay until 8PM. These have been more popular with restaurants than expected and the City has produced more.
- The City rolled out paystations on Tacoma Avenue near the County-City Building on 9/22.
 - The rollout went well and enforcement officers are currently issuing warnings to users who fail to pay or to pay for enough time. Next week, “no pays” will be cited and “overtimes” will get warnings. The PTAG discussed how to best structure the continued use of warnings around the CCB with infrequent visitors.
 - There have been some concerns about placing paystations in front of Worksource – a facility for retraining and coaching unemployed. However, demand continues to exceed supply of these stalls and stalls on the block immediately south are unrestricted – no time limits, no paystations – for those with concerns over payment.

5:45 Discussion: Staff Direction

The PTAG was asked to provide additional direction to staff on how to move forward with the feedback received on the residential parking program. The hope was to have the staff draft a residential parking program plan based on the feedback and prior discussions with the PTAG for the PTAG's review at their 11/6 meeting. If the staff was successful, this would allow additional feedback to be gathered in November/December to report back to the PTAG in January.

Some of the feedback from the PTAG included:

- Need to make sure there is good education on what the program means and what types of problems it is trying to solve.
- Quality communication materials to the public are a must have.
- Need to see how the PTAG's draft skeleton program meshes with the comments from the public. Some type of way to see how the comments are being addressed – or not.
- Biggest question from public is, "How do I get a permit?" This includes the set up of a new zone and/or transition of an existing area. We need to be able to clearly answer this question.
- Any residential program needs to tie the recommendations back to the comments to show that we were listening.
- The program must be sustainable, and as such, we need to articulate the cost of the program. How much of the program cost will be borne by permit fees & how much will be from citation revenue?

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 with the next meeting on 11/6/14.