



## Parking Technical Advisory Group General Meeting Minutes

Zoom Remote Meeting Hosted in Tacoma, WA 98402  
Thursday April 4, 2024 - Occurs First Thursday, Monthly

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- Call to Order**            The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.
- Members Present**        Steph Farber Co-Chair, Joe Loran Co-Chair, David Schroedel, Stephanie Sarber, Robyn LaChance, James Sinding
- Members Absent**        Noah Struthers, James Sinding
- City Staff Present**      Rachel Barra (Public Works), Eric Huseby (Public Works)
- Guests Present**         Eric McMillan (Republic Parking NW)  
Natalya German (Republic Parking NW)  
Ida Saucedo (Republic Parking NW)  
Lee MaCclellan (Public Works)  
William Reynolds (Rick Williams Consulting)
- Regular Business**
- PTAG Update:
- Recruitment is now closed.
  - 3 applications received. Co-Chairs will review and set up interviews soon.
- Transportation Commission:
- Bruce Morris and Matt Stevens re-elected as Co-Chairs for next year.
- City Updates:
- Pacific Plaza- Construction has started for a gate. Installation will take place in the next 2-3 weeks.
  - TMP Amendment- TMP Technical Advisory Group has been established. All members are city staff representing transportation planning, Comprehensive Planning, Sustainability, Public Art, Tribal leadership, Public Health, and



selected agency partners. Role is to provide guidance, research, review, comment on docs as SMEs. A project schedule has not been shared yet. The curb management framework will be a tool that will be referenced in the new Curb Management element. TC will need to provide feedback and approve the CM framework to incorporate into the TMP.

- Home in Tacoma- PTAG and TC submitted petition letters. March 8 was the cutoff date for the public comment period. TC appreciated the insight PTAG had to offer, and no concerns were voiced. Parking requirements was one of the top forum topics with differing perspectives. On April 17 the Planning Commission will provide direction to city staff on amendments. The project is on track for the July 2024 Council adoption.
- Quick Stop Zone Assessment- The Rick Williams team collected the data late March per the approved scope and methodology from the March meeting. They are currently combing through the data and will be ready to share the results in May.

**4:30 p.m.**  
**Public Comment**

- No public comment

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**Agenda Items:**

*William Reynolds, consultant, Rick Williams Consulting*

**Informational-  
Off Street  
Parking  
Assessment**

**Key points in the presentation included:**

- Key Survey Themes- Employees
  - Employees Park long term in the on-street parking
  - Perception of expensive parking options.
  - Strong desire for more 4+ hour parking options.
- Key Survey Themes- Residents
  - Personal safety concerns with vehicle break ins
  - Perceive a need for more affordable and secure off-street parking options.
  - Strong desire for more 4+ hour parking options.
- Takeaways:
  - There is capacity in the off-street system to serve more long-term parking needs.



- The on-street rates could be increased slightly to encourage more the short-term use in the off-street system.
- Promotion for the “A few days a week permit option” could result in employees making fewer trips per month due to the benefit of flexible use.
- Strategies for Consideration- Immediate Term
  - Promote the Discounted Daily Permit Option as a Preferred Option for Commuters
  - Introduce Interim 10-Hour On-Street Limits in the County CBD Subzone
  - Refresh the Website with Updated Parking Information and Rates
  - Resume Enforcement of Time Limits
- Strategies for Consideration- Near Term
  - Increase On-Street Rates (\$1.25/hour?)
  - Introduce Consistent Hourly Rates at City-Owned Facilities for Stays of 4 Hours or Less

**Questions:**

- David S- *Could you talk more about the best practices how that daily rate is done? Logistically? And how that looks from the user perspective and observations on the operations side?* I think the last time I was downtown and inquired for this, I was sent a form that needed to be filled out, then sent back for approval and it was a whole thing. I decided I wasn’t going to that because I’d rather just swipe my card in the machine and get it done.
  - William R- Digital systems have really transformed the operations standpoint and could be a great tool. Managing paper permits, operationally, is expensive and inefficient. A big benefit to digital apps such as Flowbird, is that you can essentially get a package of codes and allow people to activate sessions. However, I can’t speak much to how it operates today.
  - Eric H- I’m gathering from the question is that the process is rather cumbersome. I will note that the program was put together in that pilot vein. We put together a group of stakeholders during early COVID to get insight on future permit needs. The response was that people weren’t what that should look like so the program was rolled half baked as we tried to take a swing at finding something that will align with



new commuting habits. Currently I don't think we have the right tool or application for it. We have put more horsepower into the admin piece of permit management and very little in the marketing piece. As William pointed out, one thing we have struggled with is the rollover minutes aspect to these products. We are looking to lean on the Rick Williams team for their exposure with other municipalities and how they are playing around in this space. I am aware of parking wallets and those types of things. But we need to unpack that front end user experience because I think that may be a barrier to entry as well.

- David S- In the past the group supported the creation of an interim use permit program. An understanding how that is performing might influence the introduction of the 10 hour on street limits in the county CBD. Generally, in those areas the occupancy was low and then we offered the option to buy an all day permit. *Do we have data from that to influence the discussion around the CBD area?*
  - Eric H- We can bring that data to the table. Anecdotally it is a relatively successful program. We have folks that are in the periphery of those areas that are willing to walk a block or two. We did ask Republic to draw up some quick numbers recently and the average usage was 4.5-5 hours.
- David S- I think it's going to be hard pressed to move long term parkers off the street. Looking at the hourly program and we're only charging \$0.67 an hour for the base permit of 3 hours. You only need someone to pay \$6 a day to park for 9 hours if they are willing to feed the meter. *What percentage of the off-street facilities are selling the daily or short-term parking? What do the sales look like?*
  - Eric H- We do have that, but I don't have it on my fingertips. We do share the observations of shuffling behavior. The 3-hour regulation was created out of that index. We were trying to fill a gap for folks that feel between the short term demands and long term. I remember when we talked about doing the 0-3-hour option in the garages and we were concerned with people playing the



shuffling game. COVID certainly blew those up and right now we don't have high occupancies, so we aren't sensitive to that. I will talk to Republic NW and see what kind of activity we have percentage wise in the garage.

- David S- That idea struck a chord with me too. To William's point its easier to say .75 an hour for the first 4 hours in a garage. But if you are only going for an hour, you are still going to pay less by parking off street. *Would the 4-hour cycle be too easy for people that want to park all day? At .75 hour?* That seems absurdly cheap to me.
- Stephanie S- *Is there a way for us to access or overlay various crime data regarding car theft and breaks in?* To see if there is any correlation between the sub zones and facilities.
  - Rachel B- Data is available to use but we haven't performed an assessment on that yet. Assessing maintenance and safety measures were folded under the branding phase of the curb management action plan. This is set to kick off once we implement the annual performance report. Since our schedule has shifted back 8 months from our original schedule, I imagine this will kick off in 2025. TPD is also working on a data set that looks at the downtown core.

#### **Comments & Observations:**

- Ida- I completely agree that promoting the discounted daily permit is lacking. Better outreach could be done.
- Robyn L- I agree with the thoughts around communication with discounted daily rates. Most of my perspective has to do with monthly parking with employees so that's a slightly different lens. With hybrid work schedules we walk the line of doing what is right for employees while also balancing cost without creating a huge administrative nightmare for daily rates.
- Stephanie S- I like the consistent hourly rates at the facilities. An improvement to the change of perception around off-street parking would be a really great change.



- David S- It's interesting because it does come back to me, the marketing aspect. If I am a visitor and I drive into town I'm not going to know it's \$2 for 3 hours in that parking garage. I don't know if we could reach those visitors without a very intentional campaign around pricing. Whatever we are looking to leverage, I think a key thing we are not spending enough resources on generally is the marketing piece.
  - William R- Absolutely agree. Looking back at the action plan, one of the ideas that we have listed is looking at branding and marketing. First doing a facility improvement plan and then launching a big branding campaign is exactly what we are talking about. But in the interest of efficiently, it wouldn't be logical to design new logos and design that you might have to redo soon. Once you branded your facility in a way that connects with people, you want to just leave and not continually spend money on updating it.
  
- Steph F- Up until now we have been very careful about change; in keeping with one of our guiding principles 'Keep it simple.' Pre-Covid we were dealing with overparked areas with over 85% occupancies. Not too long ago we thought things would return to normal once Covid passed. And last fall we heard from employees who believed they were not returning to work in the full capacity they were doing before. I think it's worth taking the time to wrangle each of these issues to discuss potential unintended consequences. For example, the county city building area where you proposed a quick fix with 10 hours and a flat rate. My concern as a retailer is that sometimes your decision quickly become outdated in a matter of 6 months or sometimes a year. And we might not know how to unfix the fix. We probably won't face those problems, but we should remain thoughtful in our approaches.



## *Adjournment*

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### Acronyms and Terms Used:

- PTAG- Parking Technical Advisory Group
- SME- Subject matter expert
- TMP – Transportation Master Plan
- Public Hearing- an opportunity for citizens to provide and receive information associated with the decision to be made by the Planning Commission or City Council.
- TC- Transportation Commission
- CM- Curb Management
- CBD- County Building District (in the context of the downtown subzones used for occupancy studies)
- HIT- Home in Tacoma project
- TPD- Tacoma Police Department