



## RECOMMENDATION NUMBER 17

December 3, 2020

In 2019, the Parking Technical Advisory Group recognized that some specific block faces continued to have occupancies below 55% while the larger area they were in had more healthy occupancies of over 70%. To address this, the PTAG began exploring a temporary permit for extended time stays that would still prioritize short-term users over the long term. The new temporary permit is referred to herein as an Interim Use Permit or IUP.

The PTAG looks to its priority guiding principles to assist in managing downtown parking:

- Manage on-street parking to a 15% vacancy (or 85% occupancy) to ensure one stall is available on every block face.
- Keep the customer, client, & visitor as the primary user of on-street parking to ensure maximum use of the right-of-way.
- Make the system easy to use and easy to understand to avoid misunderstandings for infrequent users.

Some areas (even before COVID-19) had occupancies well below 85% while adjacent block faces were over 85%. PTAG wants to keep the system simple while still maximizing use of the right-of-way. The Interim Use Permit is intended to raise block face occupancies to 70-85% of the available stalls by increasing flexibility in the short-term while still being adaptable to future changes.

The new Interim Use Permit:

- Allows "All Day" parking in a designated zone with shorter time limits, including pay station areas;
- Are non-transferrable and may not be used in other paid or time regulated areas;
- Can be purchased at either at a paystation or through the Flowbird app; and
- Are initially priced at \$6/day in the paid areas, \$3/day in the unpaid, time regulated areas.

Block faces eligible for consideration of an Interim Use Permit zone:

- At least 20 general use stalls (not including loading or ADA zones);
- Parking occupancies of less than 55% during peak hour parking (using most recent occupancy data, including September 2020 data); and
- A majority of non-retail, non-restaurant, non-customer-focused uses at ground level.



To ensure there is not overuse of the permits and a reduction in the available customer focused parking, the PTAG is recommending staff review peak hour occupancies quarterly and recommend any changes to the IUP. Potential changes may include:

- Limiting number of all-day permits available for purchase;
- Adjusting the permit pricing; or
- Ending the permit zone for an area.

Three pilot areas were developed in coordination with the parking enforcement team. This allowed us to identify areas where there were a significant number of available stalls in different parking environments. There was a fourth area considered (7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> on Pacific Ave), but both parking occupancies were too high and adjacent uses were heavily customer focused. With higher occupancies, there is significant risk of creating an overparked situation. The adjacent customer focused businesses are also at risk of losing all customer parking to employees and residents. For these reasons, we are not recommending it be considered as part of the pilot.

The PTAG recommends the Interim Use Permit system should be rolled out in the following three areas as a pilot during 2021:

- South A Street, between South 8<sup>th</sup> and South 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - o Adjacent uses include and office building, parking garage, and park.
  - o Paystation Area: Existing regulations: \$1/hr for up to 2hrs.
  - o Occupancies are less than 55% on all block faces.
  - o Approximately 25 stalls
- Pacific Avenue, between South 13<sup>th</sup> and South 17<sup>th</sup>.
  - o Adjacent uses include parking lots/garages, offices, a bank, and one coffee shop.
  - o Paystation Area: Existing regulations: \$1/hr for up to 2hrs.
  - o Occupancies are less than 55% on all block faces.
  - o Approximately 20 stalls
- Fawcett Avenue, between South 17<sup>th</sup> and South 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - o Adjacent uses include vacant land, parking lots, offices, housing, a small manufacturer, and religious services.
  - o Time Regulated Area: Existing regulations: 3hr parking at no charge.
  - o Occupancies are less than 55% on all block faces.
  - o Approximately 100 stalls

The PTAG recognized the limited resources available right now and the recent successes using a targeted approach. During the roll out of the pilot program, communications around the new permit should be made using changes to the paystations (where available), the time regulation signage, and possibly



flyers on the vehicles. We trust the Parking Services Group to lead this effort based on their past success with the Flowbird rollout.

## BACKGROUND

The conversation around a solution for underparked areas initially started as part of the Parking Technical Advisory Group's work with parking consultant Rick Williams. In the areas around the University of Washington-Tacoma campus there was a disconnect between the immediate parking needs and the growth actively underway. Rather than make significant changes to the on-street system only to change them again in a couple of years, there was a desire to find an interim solution that would allow for additional flexibility.

With the Town Center, Brewery Blocks, and UWT expansion projects all underway, the PTAG recognizes there will be significant future demand for customer, client, and visitor parking. However, based on conversations with employers, UWT, and residents in the area, currently there is more demand for a longer-term parking solution. The PTAG took up the concept of an Interim Use Permit recognizing that it could be rolled out and rolled back with less impact to the on-street system users.

The IUP area initially focused on was the 3-hour zone from S. 17<sup>th</sup> to S. 21<sup>st</sup> just west of UWT. This area had been significantly over parked (in excess of 100%) when there were no time limits. In 2019, the PTAG was rolling out a 3-hour limit to provide a better solution for shorter-term customers and single-class students. However, the PTAG was also working on the IUP to backfill any drops in occupancy.

The PTAG wanted to address the following questions in the development of the IUP:

- Where should this be applied? (criteria & decision making authority)
- Who should be allowed to purchase? (restricted to specific user group)
- What type of permit? (how long & pricing structure)

Based on the guiding principles, the PTAG focused on areas with low occupancies compared to nearby blocks [where]. This implied there was demand, but the low occupancy areas were not meeting it with current regulations.

Additionally, to provide maximum flexibility the PTAG chose not to restrict the user groups, but rather keep it open to anyone [who]. This would also allow it to support tweaks to the existing system rather than becoming a substitute for other parking needs or specific user groups.

Finally, the PTAG chose to limit the permit to a single day rather than a weekly, monthly, or longer permit period [what]. This will allow the maximum number of people to use the permit, including potentially being useful for longer term customers or clients – the priority user of the on-street system.



The PTAG also recognizes that a daily permit better supports the City’s multi-modal goals by not encouraging permit purchasers to drive every day, knowing that the sunk cost of monthly permit encourages more driving/parking.

In considering the pricing structure, on-street parking is currently available at a rate of \$1 per hour, while off-street facilities start at \$2 for 3 hours. At the same time, we already know there are limited users of the off-street system at that price point and the \$1 per hour has maintained low occupancies on the blocks being considered. To provide a competitive option at the outset of the pilot we are recommending the permits in the paystation area are priced at \$6 for the day, a modest discount from the hourly rate on-street. In the unpaid area, a further reduced rate seemed appropriate at \$3 for the day, though this may need further adjustments.

While the parking environment has changed drastically during 2020, there were challenges with some underparked areas even before 2020 began. The PTAG took up the idea of an Interim Use Permit at that time to improve use of the right-of-way while still being flexible to changing conditions. The pressures of 2020 have further increased the need for such a tool.

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Date