

To Whom It May Concern:

The undersigned residents of various close-in, increasingly parking-constrained Portland neighborhoods, in order to reduce our carbon footprint and help build more sustainable, economically diverse and prosperous neighborhoods and commercial corridors, have informally associated as Portland Neighbors for Sustainable Development. We believe the City should aggressively pursue carbon-reduction efforts, including compliance with State and regional requirements to reduce auto travel and auto parking spaces in the city.

The people listed below do not believe that the perceived parking crisis in our neighborhoods can effectively be addressed by imposing minimum parking requirements on new developments; in fact, we consider such requirements counter-productive, as they simply attract more vehicles (and associated traffic). We believe that the existing on and off-street parking supply should be actively managed in accordance with modern parking management principles as outlined by Donald Shoup in his well-known book on the subject, [The High Cost of Free Parking](#)<sup>1</sup>.

Specific measures that the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability should consider implementing include:

- installing dynamic parking meters along the busiest stretches of every close-in commercial strip, and pricing these meters to achieve 85% occupancy.
- establishing a neighborhood parking permit program to give residents and their guests the exclusive right to park on neighborhood streets overnight.
- establishing one or more Parking Benefit Districts<sup>2</sup> to collect revenues from local meters and neighborhood permits, and stipulating that all funds collected net program management costs be spent on neighborhood improvements as prioritized by an oversight board made up of local residents and business owners.
- encouraging the rapid establishment of an active marketplace in off-street parking supply by a) promoting a locally-focused peer to peer parking e-marketplace; and b) encouraging rental property owners to de-bundle parking space leases from residential leases.
- requiring new developments to establish “loading and unloading zones” in front of their buildings, so that elderly or disabled persons visiting apartment dwellers can park at the curb, and have the person they’re visiting “valet park” their in a nearby space.

The above approaches will better serve the neighborhood, its residents and its businesses than a return to minimum parking requirements because:

- parking requirements are expensive -- and regressive. They result in higher rents and raise prices for everyone, even residents and shoppers who don't own cars and don't need off-street parking.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.powells.com/biblio/61-9781884829987-0>. A summary of Shoup's approach is available here: <http://www.uctc.net/papers/351.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.sonic.net/~woodhull/trans/Pkg\\_Benefit\\_District.htm](http://www.sonic.net/~woodhull/trans/Pkg_Benefit_District.htm)

- car ownership rates are declining across the developed world, especially among young people, as more people are working from home, shopping online and locally, and relying on alternative transportation.<sup>3</sup>
- the supply of car share vehicles in Portland is increasing dramatically, making car-lite lifestyles increasingly convenient and less expensive. Whereas there were 185 Zipcars in January 2012, today there are also 300 Car2go and 435 Getaround vehicles, for over 900 car share vehicles in all.
- a lot of off-street parking spaces are currently either un-utilized or under-utilized ( i. e. used only during evenings and weekends). We encourage the rapid deployment and aggressive promotion of an e-marketplace to bring these spaces into the overall supply and manage them to maximize their utilization.

Increased demand for housing is a compliment to our neighborhoods. Others want to live here, too! This increased demand will result in more investment and development, better local services -- and higher property values. As more detached homes are renovated and converted back from rentals to owned homes, demand for affordable housing should be accommodated via steady, market-driven increases in the local rental housing supply: Accessory Dwelling Units in single-family residential areas as well as well-designed, high quality apartment buildings, condominiums and townhouses along high frequency transit corridors such as SE Powell, SE Division, SE Hawthorne, SE Belmont and E Burnside and N Williams.

Meanwhile, parking management efforts should reflect and take advantage of the basic laws of supply and demand. If parking demand begins to exceed local supply, the cost of parking in the public right of way should be allowed to increase from zero to a level where it begins to influence shoppers' decisionmaking. (I.e. "Does my household really need two cars?" and "I'm going to run in, do my shopping quickly, and split!" Or, "maybe I'll walk or bike to the bookstore this time." Similarly, putting a price on residential neighborhood parking via a permit system will either bring new demand into the market (i.e. developers will voluntarily add off-street parking to their developments if it's needed in order to successfully rent out their apartments<sup>4</sup>), or it will dampen parking demand as more current and future residents opt to sell their cars.

The "parking problems" facing our neighborhoods are not inevitable. They are management problems with readily-available and well-known solutions that have been successfully implemented in cities around the world. We believe that this problem can and should be managed to maximize the overall benefits to residents and local businesses. We believe that desired reductions in auto travel and attendant carbon emissions can be achieved by working with the market. With modern parking management techniques and technologies a supply-demand balance can be achieved nimbly and thoughtfully with price-nudges, rather than with the blunt, counter-productive tool of minimum parking mandates.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/commute/2012/10/end-car-ownership-developed-world-least/3452/#>

<sup>4</sup> Note that the D Street Village development is already adding parking for their residents and commercial tenants, even though they're not required to do so. They believe that providing on-site parking will be a long-term competitive advantage.

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