Document Summary and Major Policy Questions

March 1, 2013

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Document Summary

The Portland Bureau of Transportation has created two documents to assist City staff, Council, and stakeholders have a more educated discussion about new apartment developments and their potential parking impact:

1. **Response to Donald Shoup's editorial.** In January, Dr. Donald Shoup, a professor at UCLA, proposed an overnight parking permit program as a solution to potential parking issues created by apartments being built with little or no parking. City staff have reviewed the editorial and responded about the practicability of such a program.

2. **Parking Permit Primer.** City staff has created a primer that explains various types of parking permits, the City's current parking permit program (the Area Parking Permit Program), and a summary of how other cities across the country implement overnight parking permits (the suggestion put forth by Dr. Shoup).

Policy Questions

In developing these two documents, City staff repeatedly came upon major policy questions that need to be answered before creating and/or implementing a parking permits program. These questions are below, in addition to related information and staff discussion.

1. What is considered a parking problem?

    a. An industry standard for well-used right of way is 85% occupancy, about one space open per block face.
    b. For the City's Area Parking Permit Program, 75% occupancy (with 25% of the 75% being commuter parking) is needed to justify an APP Zone.

    This question is more difficult than face value may indicate. While an occupancy rate of 75% or 85% might be optimal from an operational and functional aspect, it needs to be acknowledged that these rates are higher than what most residential neighborhoods in Portland experience. Therefore, defining when a parking situation becomes a "problem," may communicate that change up to a certain point is not considered a problem. This change, at any rate, is often unwelcome by residents and policymakers need to be ready to explain how and why a problem is defined in order to help residents better understand the role that change fills in our City's development.

2. How should parking privileges be distributed?

    a. What are the equity implications of distributing parking privileges by housing type?
    b. What are the equity implications of distributing parking privileges by ownership or rental status?

In stakeholder discussions, the implementation of the permit system (e.g., residents in homes get permits, apartment dwellers get permit at a reduced rate) implies privilege. This implication, and any variances on this implication, raise equity concerns that should not be ignored.

The City of Portland has created the Portland Plan which looks to move the City forward in an equitable fashion, prioritizing in ways that benefit communities that have been discriminated against in the past; any foreseen discrimination is unacceptable, especially if the discrimination perpetuates inequities of the past along racial, income, and ability lines. Given that home owners in the Portland area are more likely to be wealthier, whiter, and more abled than renters, a permitting system based on housing type would further the inequities of the past and not be a productive step in creating a Portland where all residents have equitable access to City resources.

To better relate this discussion to the current situation, staff has pulled the following Census data which shows the variation of housing types, vehicle ownership, and renter/ownership rates per race and ethnicity in Portland.

	Total Households	Owner Occupied Households	Percent	Renter Occupied Households	Percent
White Alone	197,376	112,551	57%	84,825	43%
Black Alone	13,761	4,480	33%	9,281	67%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,710	562	33%	1,148	67%
Asian	13,313	8,012	60%	5,301	40%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders	771	217	28%	554	72%
Other	463	204	44%	259	56%
Two or More	6,295	2,385	38%	3,910	62%
Hispanic or Latino	14,857	5,091	34%	9,766	66%

Source: Census, 2010

	No Vehicle	One or More Vehicles	Percent of households w/o vehicles
White Alone	25,033	157,915	16%
Black or African American	3,780	10,200	37%
American Indian & Alaska Native	401	1,843	22%
Asian	1,238	11,309	11%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders	sample too small	sample too small	n/a
Other	322	2,383	14%
Two or More	1,166	4,556	26%
Hispanic or Latino	1,078	6,353	17%

Source: US Census, 2005

Units in Structure	Total	Single Family	% of Total	attached - 9 units	% of Total	10 to 19	% of Total	20 to 49	% of Total	50 or more	% of Total
White Alone	196,086	118,492	60%	30,223	15%	10,294	5%	11,395	6%	19,671	10%
Black or African American	14,455	5,744	40%	4,875	34%	1,038	7%	1,027	7%	1,716	12%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,973	824	42%	632	32%	70	4%	137	7%	277	14%
Asian	13,890	8,626	62%	2,299	17%	730	5%	780	6%	1,359	10%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders	825	305	37%	321	39%	154	19%	-	0%	-	0%
Other	4,582	1,947	42%	1,207	26%	445	10%	281	6%	468	10%
Two or More	7,110	3,391	48%	1,577	22%	566	8%	663	9%	797	11%
Hispanic or Latino	14,617	6,258	43%	4,156	28%	1,145	8%	1,235	8%	1,253	9%

Source: ACS 5-year estimates, 2011

> The data shows that Portland's communities of color live in rental developments, have lower rates of vehicle ownership, and choose multi-family units disproportionately more than their white counterparts. Given the City's goals to become a community where communities of color can thrive, and discontinue past inequities, any proposal to limit multi-family units in neighborhoods with high access to services should be questioned.

In addition, it should be stated that the parking we are talking about is in the PUBLIC right-of-way. The City is the owner of the right-of-way. An owner of a home does not

own the right of way in front of their home, as renters or the developer of an apartment building do not own the right of way surrounding the building. The public right of way should be designed and used to best benefit the public, and the perception of private ownership should be discouraged.

Summary

Before PBOT moves forward on defining any parking permit program, these questions must be answered. Until these questions are answered, any permit program produced will not be effective in creating the parking environment that best compliments the City's evolving urban landscape.