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To: Neighborhood Centers PEG members  
c/o Bill Cunningham, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Those who have been following recent events will note the growing acceptance that Climate Change is real, and that human actions are the primary cause. The City of Portland is committed to **reducing carbon emissions** within the city and the region, in the adopted Climate Action Plans. Oregon's Transportation Planning Rule requires that Portland reduce the number of Vehicle Miles Traveled, as well as reduce the number of parking spaces within the city, as another way of reducing vehicle travel. Allowing development along transit streets to be built **without parking** requirements is a **key strategy** the city is using to meet these mandated requirements and to achieve these goals. But this strategy has other benefits:

Cities can provide compact places to live your life and satisfy your daily travel needs. Building compact neighborhood centers helps reduce the number of auto trips to the store, to school and to work. The work commute is one key trip. Locating these centers along High Frequency Transit streets, and/or along well-used bicycle routes, helps divert commute trips from single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs).

Building compact, diversified neighborhood centers also helps reduce the 90 percent of auto trips that are not commute trips. The many short auto trips characteristic of typical suburban neighborhoods are replaced in many traditional neighborhoods with walking and bicycle trips, for those who are able to do so. Some, of course will need to drive, and the roads are less crowded for their use.

An important goal of the city is housing **affordability**. The city's Parking Studies show that adding parking increases the cost of apartment units, leading to higher rents (perhaps \$200 more per month). This will be true, of course, only in an apples-to-apples comparison. Of the buildings studied, some of those without parking do have higher rents than those with. A higher rent example is the 3810 SE Division building, with no parking, which is primarily composed of one- and two-bedrooms units with courtyards and balconies that drive up costs. On the other hand, the pleasant but more compact and basic Irvington Gardens apartments has much lower rents, likely possible because no parking is provided. For like housing, costs are lower if no parking is provided. This affordability is helpful to many seniors as well as the younger folks who are often assumed to live in these buildings.

Neighbors concerned about parking overflow onto neighborhood streets have cited the need to accommodate the disabled and seniors in neighborhoods and in the new buildings. But, residents of nearby single-family homes who have need a disabled parking space can call the city, who will install one on the street in front of their house.

Some are concerned about **seniors** who need cars and will live in the new buildings. The city study shows that quite a few apartments with parking are being built, so there are places to rent and own that offer parking. The regulations allow developers to target different markets if they desire. Of the 10 apartment buildings planned or recently finished on Division, six will have access to parking, so some developers are targeting that market.

Adding parking for the **disabled** within the building will raise the costs for all the units. The number of residents who because of disability need a car, is considered in the ADA regulations, which mandate that when parking is provided, one ADA space is required for each 25 spaces provided. None is required if no parking is provided. However, this ratio could be used in another way. For instance, disabled parking spaces could be provided on-street, adjacent to buildings without parking. Providing one on-street space for each 25 units in the building would seem a reasonable approach that would provide accommodation without raising building costs. An on-street loading zone would help for taxis, Lift vans, and friends assisting residents of the buildings.

The neighborhood density that will be a result of these buildings will have many **benefits for the disabled and seniors** who have difficulty driving, or can't afford a car. The number of shops and services in the vicinity will rise to serve all the additional residents. Transit can be more frequent because of the increased number of riders. These will make it easier for seniors and the disabled to live independently. And all nearby residents benefit from the amenities this density of residents provides.

There has been much talk by neighbors about the potential impacts of these buildings to the on-street parking on adjacent single-family blocks. Indeed there may be some more cars on these streets. But the city's study shows that this effect is not that severe, with spaces still available on most blocks. I visited the Irvington Gardens site on a Sunday afternoon recently (the "most impacted" of the sites studied), and found two spaces right across the street, and several at the end of the block. A recent letter from Portland Neighbors for Sustainable Development (which the PEG should receive) lays out many **parking management ideas** that could also reduce impacts.

Some question the effectiveness of the rules, as most residents seem to own cars anyway. The key difference, though, is **they don't drive them** to work. While the city average is 52% of commute trips by car, only 36% of the respondents to the study drove to work, a significant reduction.

The parking exemption is needed along Frequent Service Transit Streets to move our city and the region toward lower carbon emissions, as well as less fuel use. With Portland being a model for the country, what we do here is influential nationwide, and the benefits for the planet as well as Portland residents far outweigh the minor inconveniences some neighbors might anticipate in the near future, which will lessen as auto use and ownership continues its current decline.