

Email to PSC from PSC Commissioner Chris Smith, June 4, 2018

Colleagues,

I want to draw your attention to what I believe is an intersectional issue between RIP and several of our affordability, transportation and access goals.

I believe there is consensus on the Commission that one of our RIP objectives is to provide the ability for some people of middle income (we discussed nurses, teachers, police officers) to live in some of our higher opportunity inner neighborhoods, which have excellent access to jobs and services.

I'm convinced that parking policy is one of the key tools to help make this work. My thinking stems from two trends:

- 1) Median family income will no longer support home ownership in these neighborhoods (stated another way, the average household income in these neighborhoods is going up), and
- 2) Transit ridership is down in these neighborhoods.

[Cogent analysis suggests that these are connected, specifically that the higher income families now in these neighborhoods can readily afford automobiles, resulting in the reduction in transit ridership](#) (and by inference, possibly bicycle usage as well).

To put it another way, the population most likely to take advantage of our most bikeable, transit-friendly neighborhoods can no longer afford to live there! They are being forced further from the city center lengthening their commute and other trips, possibly beyond practical use of the modes our policies would prefer that they take advantage of.

I would suggest that one of the strongest tools we have to mitigate this is to de-emphasize parking associated with the new units we hope to create through RIP. Units with parking are going to command higher rents/purchase prices than units without, making them less affordable and less attractive to the income group we are targeting. At the same time, units without parking are likely to be more attractive to potential residents interested in taking advantage of the convenient transit and bicycle access in these neighborhoods.

I would also suggest that there is an equity issue in creating new off-street parking.

On-street parking is a public asset available to all the residents of a neighborhood. When we allow creation of a curb cut for a new parking space for a single car, we are essentially allowing one public parking space to be replaced with one private parking spacing, privatizing a public asset.

For these reasons I have suggested several policies as amendments:

- 1) Not requiring any new parking for development in single-family neighborhoods
- 2) Only allowing curb cuts for parking if more than one parking space is created
- 3) Creating some mechanism for accountability for use of the off-street space (i.e., if you remove a parking space by creating a curb cut and then fill your garage with something other than an automobile,

it's questionable whether you should then have the right to use another on-street parking space for your car).

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these ideas.

Chris