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Technical Paper #1 (DRAFT): NW District Parking Plan Development

This memorandum is intended to provide a brief background for discussions scheduled to occur among stakeholders in the Northwest District Plan area on the topic of parking management. The area under consideration for more directed parking management is generally bounded by West Burnside (south), NW Thurman/Vaughn (north), NW 23rd merging to NW 25th (west) and I-405 (east). This paper will strive to context information and recommendations for consideration within work previously completed and direction recently provided by the Portland City Council. The purpose here is not to presuppose outcomes related to how parking might be managed in this area in the future, rather to create a foundation for a process that would be stakeholder driven.

BACKGROUND

The *Northwest District Plan* was readopted on October 21, 2009 by the Portland City Council. Contained within the readopted *Northwest District Plan* is guidance and direction for creation of a Northwest District Parking Plan. Much of the language related to a parking management district is contained in Policy 4: Parking, of the November 5, 2003 *Northwest District Plan* document. Additional information and guidance is contained in a January 28, 2002 "Concept Plan" for a Northwest Portland On-Street Parking Plan. Though not adopted as a part of the *Northwest District Plan*, the Concept Plan was developed and endorsed by the Citizen Advisory Committee that was working on this element of the *Northwest District Plan*. The Concept Plan also provides detailed recommendations for specific elements of parking management (e.g., boundaries, rates, time limits, residential/employee permits, etc.) that are complementary and supportive of Policy 4: Parking of the *Northwest District Plan*.

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT ISSUES AND EXPECTATIONS

Pertinent to development of a parking and transportation management plan for the Northwest District, City Council approved Resolution 36744 on October 21, 2009. Specific language related to this issue called for appointment of a "Northwest Parking and Transportation Management Association work group to begin implementation of a comprehensive on-street parking plan" for the Northwest District. The Resolution also specifically directed the Bureau of Transportation to bring an ordinance to City Council that would accomplish four specific tasks. These tasks require:

1. Creation a meter district
2. Creation of a permit district
3. Establish a meter fee
4. Creation of a Northwest Portland Transportation and Parking Management Association (TPMA) with an approved revenue allocation plan.

Based on the Resolution, it appears that an excellent basis of information exists within the *Northwest District Plan* parking policy and within the On-street Parking Concept Plan to inform and guide a “work group” process toward development of a workable and effective parking plan. These documents will provide useful guidance, though it will be important to recognize current issues associated with the economy, potential changes in employment and residential mixes and/or changes to the parking and access environment that have evolved since the original *Northwest District Plan* and Concept Plan processes concluded in 2002 and 2003.

CURRENT PARKING ENVIRONMENT

As a work group forms to complete the tasks outlined in Resolution 36744, it will be important to consider the current parking environment. The timing for implementation of programs, strategies and plans developed can be affected by constraints, or lack of such, in the parking supply.

To this specific issue, several on- and off-street parking space inventories have been conducted in the Northwest District over the years as a means to assess the extent to which parking is both formatted and utilized. A variety of studies have been conducted in 1983,¹ 1995,² 2000,³ 2001⁴ and most recently in 2009 (for an area that focused on PGE Park, but examined parking utilization for a large section of the area under consideration here).⁵

Each of these studies has consistently arrived at the same conclusion that parking is “a problem,” “congested,” and negatively impacting residential livability and/or business vitality. The 2001 Office of Transportation Study found that average percent occupancy in on-street time limit zones ranged from 88% to 100% and 98% in unrestricted time zones.⁶ The recently concluded 2009 study for PGE Park found on-street occupancies

¹ Study conducted by Portland State University.

² Studies by Gilmore Research and Bureau of Traffic Management.

³ Parking inventory was part of Northwest land use inventory conducted by PDOT.

⁴ Northwest On-street Parking Existing Conditions Report conducted by City of Portland Office of Transportation.

⁵ PGE Park Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan, Kittelson & Associates. The Kittelson report examined parking occupancies for the PGE Park area as well as a “zone” that extended from Burnside to approximately Kearney between NW 16th and NW 24th.

⁶ A more detailed breakout of occupancies by time of day can be found in the Northwest On-street Parking Existing Conditions Report, City of Portland Office of Transportation (January 17 2001).

ranging from 87% - 93% between 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the Northwest District zone examined.⁷

Within the parking industry, occupancies that routinely and consistently exceed 85% in the peak hours suggest the need for more targeted and sophisticated parking management. Based on the number of studies that have been conducted over the years, and the recurrent findings, it does not appear that additional data collection and/or utilization analyses of the parking system are necessary at this time. To do so would (a) likely result in similar findings of constraint and (b) be an unnecessary expenditure of resources that might be best directed into specific strategies and/or programs to improve access within the parking supply.

ADOPTED PARKING POLICIES – NORTHWEST DISTRICT PLAN

Parking Policy Objectives

The parking policies approved in the *Northwest District Plan* call for a parking management system that will “serve the community while protecting and enhancing the livability and urban character of the district.” To this end, the policy lists nine specific objectives.⁸ These include:

- A. Reduce the demand for automobile parking.
- B. Provide for efficient use of on- and off-street parking through such means as “shared use” of parking facilities and minimizing the number and size of curb cuts.
- C. Accommodate a limited amount of additional structured off-street commercial parking while preserving the overall pedestrian –friendly character of the district, and mitigating for negative impacts.
- D. Minimize the impacts of off-street parking along main streets and the Portland Streetcar line.
- E. Discourage parking in the district by PGE Park patrons and Central City commuters.
- F. Encourage turnover of on-street parking.
- G. Focus short-term parking along NW 21st and 23rd Avenues.
- H. Encourage new off-street parking to locate within structures.
- I. Limit the size of new surface parking lots.

⁷ See, PGE Park Remodel – Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan, Kittelson & Associates, Inc., January 2, 2010, page 11.

⁸ See, *Adopted Northwest District Plan*, Policy 4: Parking, page E-26.

Parking Policy Elements

These objectives are supported within the policy with language that describes their intent within five elements deemed “essential for successful parking management and neighborhood livability and vitality.” These elements are listed and only briefly described below and include:⁹

1. Manage the Supply of On-street Parking

Specific actions related to this policy element include creation of a “pay-to-park” district, tailored time limits to encourage turnover and discourage commuter parking, creation of a permit program to facilitate district residents and employees access needs and a revenue allocation plan that would keep “part of the revenues generated” in the district for transportation demand management programs and parking improvements.

2. Establish a Transportation Management Association.

The establishment of a Northwest District Transportation and Parking Management Association (NW-TPMA) is seen as “a key component” to implement strategies and programs called out in the objectives of the parking policy. An NW-TPMA would serve as a common forum of “diverse stakeholders” from the district to deliver direct management of parking and permit programs, facilitate shared use arrangements, encourage use of alternative modes and monitor the impact of programs implemented.

3. Increase the Supply of Off-street Parking

The Policy sees a need to optimize “use of the on-street supply” through a marginal increase in the supply of off-street parking. The Policy provides specific language on the size, location and amount of off-street parking allowed.

4. Make Efficient Use of Existing Off-street Parking

More efficient and strategic use of existing parking resources (off-street) is called for within this policy element. The issue of sharing parking is considered essential as is work related to new allowances for the use of accessory parking and the role of a NW-TPMA in overseeing and coordinating an off-street “shared use” resource.

⁹ Each element contains numerous bulleted recommendations that would activate and support the intent of the Policy. For purposes of discussion in this memorandum, a partial description is provided. The entire Parking Policy can be found in *Adopted Northwest District Plan*, Policy 4: Parking, pages E-21 – 25.

5. Protect Neighborhood Character and Promote Better Design

This element calls for more clarity in development standards and design strategies for both structured and surface parking.

As adopted, the Parking Policy in the *Northwest District Plan* provides a very clear framework for engaging the community in a process to develop a parking plan for the district. However, detailed specifics for how to fully activate the policy elements into implementable practices is lacking in this section of the adopted Plan. For instance, specifics related to management district boundaries, fees associated with a “pay-to-park” district and management and fees related to district “permits” (for residents and “a certain number of employees”) are not specified.

For this reason, the recommendation to form a “work group” of diverse district stakeholders to more fully develop a parking plan that delivers on the tasks called for in Resolution 36744 makes sense. Significantly, the Northwest Portland On-street Parking Concept Plan, endorsed by the original *Northwest District Plan* Citizen Advisory Committee provides very specific recommendations toward the above referenced Policy elements. This document should serve as a foundation piece for a new parking work group.

NORTHWEST PORTLAND ON-STREET PARKING CONCEPT PLAN

A review of all the documents approved with adoption of the *Northwest District Plan* does not show that the Northwest Portland On-street Parking Concept Plan (2002) was incorporated into the final plan. Nonetheless, the Concept Plan received the endorsement of the Citizen Advisory Committee in place at that time and is structured to specifically address policy elements 1 (on-street supply), 3 (new off-street supply) and 4 (existing off-street supply). For instance, the Concept Plan provides specific recommendations related to boundaries for meter and permit areas, hours of operation, time limits by area and pricing (for permits and pay stations).

In short, the Parking Concept Plan should serve as a key foundation piece for initial discussions with the appointed parking plan work group. It is clear that a great deal of time, effort and strategic thinking went into the Concept Plan. Given that parking conditions (i.e., constrained supply) do not appear to have materially changed, the recommendations in the Concept Plan are consistent with reasoned efforts to meet the parking policy objectives outlined above.

SUMMARY

The Council directive is very clear as regards launching a work group effort that concludes in recommendations that activate the policy elements for parking in the *Northwest District Plan*. A great deal of information and guidance exists in previous efforts and documents that led to adoption of the final plan in 2009.

The information provided herein is intended to serve as foundation material for prospective work group members and as a way to order thinking in a manner that supports timely creation of a parking plan that meets the intent and objective of the parking policy and can be implemented.

With that said, it is also important to recognize that the information contained herein is general in nature. Conversations with the community will result in refinements, changes, requests for additional information and revisions to elements within the plan.

Draft

TABLE 1
Northwest District Parking Plan
Overview of Existing Information

	Resolution 36744	NW District Plan Policy 4: Parking	2002 NW Portland Parking Concept Plan	Industry Best Parking/Transportation Practices	Existing Inventory Analysis (Need to Update?)		NOTES
					Yes	NO	
Create Permit District	Specifically called for in resolution	Calls for permit program for residents and employees	Draft boundaries and pricing proposed	Need to be discussed in planning effort		N	Based on numerous previous studies and information on existing permit districts
Create Meter District	Specifically called for in resolution	Recommends "Pay to park" with "tailored" time limits	Draft boundaries, fees and time limits proposed	Need to be discussed in planning effort		N	Based on numerous previous studies and information on existing meter districts
Revenue Allocation Plan	Specifically called for in resolution	Use "part of the revenues generated" for local TDM programs and parking improvements	"Majority of net revenue will be dedicated to transportation and parking projects that benefit the neighborhood"	Need to be discussed in planning effort	Y		Need updated information on stall revenue generation estimates. Discuss revenue allocation options
Create a NW Transportation and Parking Management Association (TPMA)	Specifically called for in resolution	"Key component" offering full range of programs & services.	No reference in Parking Concept Plan	Need to be discussed in planning effort		N	TPMA models are available to review and evaluate