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Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission

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March 9, 2016

Commissioner Novick and Director Treat,

At our February 23, 2016 meeting, we were briefed on the Citywide Parking Strategy, consisting of Central City and Centers and Corridors components.

We understand the direction of the Central City strategy and are in agreement with the core streamlining and performance management approaches. We look forward to reviewing it in more depth as it comes back to us in the form of Central City zoning code.

There is much to commend the Centers and Corridors Toolkit:

- Addressing residential demand, rather than just commuter parking impacts
- Tying a permit cap to the supply of on-street parking
- Use of pricing above and beyond level of service costs to maximize community benefit
- Tiered pricing based on number of vehicles and access to off-street parking
- Equity provisions for low income residents and affordable housing

However, we have significant concerns about some of the framework, particularly with respect to using the line between residential and mixed use zoning as a significant determinant in parking access.

Designing for the correct time frame

We appreciate that the plan responds to the push back from nearby neighbors to overflow parking from corridor development. We understand that the rapid development of some corridors has significantly impacted the surrounding neighborhoods. However, we also believe that is a reflection of the experience of current residents. Future residents moving to those neighborhoods will both understand parking conditions and are likely to be drawn to the amenities provided by the corridor development.

We would prefer to see a plan that addresses the long-term future of these corridors, holistically addressing both mixed use and surrounding residential, rather than creating permanent entitlement for a subset of properties. Possibly such a plan could include short-term mitigation for the rapid change we are now experiencing.



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1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 7100, Portland, OR 97201 | phone: 503-823-7700 | fax: 503-823-7800 | tty: 503-823-6868

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Ownership of the Public Realm

We are concerned that the differential entitlement for residential zoning reinforced the idea that the curb zone “belongs” to nearby properties rather than the community as a whole. This idea is not supported by the Comprehensive Plan and Transportation System Plan policies that are in the process of being adopted.

Treatment of current residents of the mixed use corridors

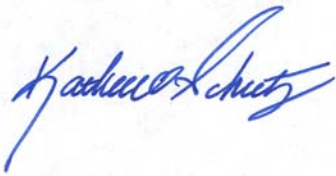
It is one thing to make clear that future development (or even future occupancy of current buildings) meeting certain conditions may have curtailed rights to access on-street parking. It is a different matter to remove the parking rights of current residents in existing buildings that lack off-street parking. The plan does not provide a transitional strategy for current residents who may now be relying on nearby parking capacity in a different zone.

Governance model risks reinforcement of historical inequities

We strongly suspect that the income, racial and ethnic demographic characteristics of the residents of corridor development and the surrounding neighborhoods are significantly different. The model that allows the surrounding neighborhoods to form and govern (even if only in advisory capacity) parking districts that limit the access of corridor residents raises a strong concern of reinforcing historical patterns of privilege.

We urge serious consideration of these concerns. While much of the implementation of these tools will not be in the zoning code, we request that PBOT return to brief our Commission on approaches to address our concerns before taking the plan to City Council for adoption.

Sincerely,



Katherine Schultz
Chair

