

March 7, 2016

Planning & Sustainability Commission:

I am both a member of the Northwest Parking SAC and on the Board of the NWDA. NW Portland is a great place to live. I've lived here 42 years and I think everyone knows that we've had a parking problem in NW for a long time. But new development is happening fast and the problem is getting worse.

In the last several years 761 units have been built in buildings of 10 units or more inside the Northwest Parking Program boundaries. Fifty percent of those buildings meet or exceed the proposed parking requirements. However, when you add off-street parking in these buildings plus on-street parking permits issued it shows that at least 70% of the units have a car. This is consistent with other city studies on car ownership in rental units in the city.

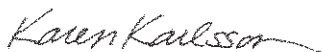
Under construction right now are an additional 406 units with 153 parking spaces. If you assume a 70% car ownership, these developments bring another 130 cars will need to find spaces on the street. How does this look? While the new buildings occupy roughly 1300 lf of street frontage, the 130 cars will occupy 2600 lf of street – TWICE the street frontage of the buildings. This is unsustainable.

A pre-application was announced yesterday in the DJC for a six to eight story mixed-use building in NW with 140-190 residential units and about 7 parking spaces. Under the proposed code this development would be required to have 46 to 63 spaces, quite a bit more than 7. Even if they provided the number of required spaces, assuming 70% car ownership that means another 52 – 70 cars will need to find parking on the street and this from one proposed development alone. And several other projects are in the pipeline.

You have heard that the Parking SAC and NWDA are asking that the exceptions in code section 33.266.110.E be dropped. You can see by the statistics I have just provided that we need every one of the spaces required. New buildings are already providing more bicycle parking than required by code, even under code 1.1 spaces per unit is required. The new Title 11 tree code is more than encouraging retention of trees. The car sharing language is out of date (Uber is far more popular and accessible than Zipcar). I doubt the bike sharing and transit supportive plazas incentives have ever been used. The exceptions may have made sense at one time but now, like housing bonuses in the Central City, we do not need these incentives. These need to be re-visited for the City as a whole. It may be more appropriate to allow reduction of spaces when affordable housing is being built or another type of City benefit. The existing exceptions are counter-productive to the need to increase parking supply.

I understand that maybe it isn't popular or politically correct to support increasing parking supply but I believe for now it is important to do this. We need these minimum parking standards and more. Every tool in the toolbox needs to be used. The shared parking as proposed in this code amendment is one of those tools. I ask you to please support the proposed amendments before you.

Thank you,



Karen Karlsson