Parking Supply

There is a deficiency in private parking supply in downtown Kirkland. While downtown Kirkland is pedestrian friendly businesses decry the lack of convenient parking for their customers. Most of downtown Kirkland developed prior to the advent of strip malls wherein parking for patrons is provided on site. Most downtown land parcels are small and completely occupied by one or two story buildings. This legacy of small buildings on small parcels makes redevelopment difficult. Even if redevelopment were to occur, it is unlikely that the private parking deficiency would be reduced as explained here.

Currently, there are 439 private non-residential parking spaces downtown. There is 430,464 sf of commercial floor area downtown. If private parking supply met current code requirements, 1 space per 125 sf for restaurants and taverns and 1 space per 300 sf for other commercial uses, there would be 1,590 private spaces, 1,151 more than is currently provided. However, 552 stalls are provided through the public parking supply in the form of on-street parking (269 spaces), Lake & Central Lot (54 spaces), Marina Lot (1/2 of 120 spaces), and Library Garage (1/2 of 339) for downtown commercial use. Nevertheless, this leaves a current deficiency of 599 spaces.

New commercial development is unlikely to reduce this deficiency in private parking supply because certain floor area is exempt from parking requirements. Essentially, existing floor area is grandfathered from having to provide parking. Even if redeveloped, the amount of current floor area is exempt from parking requirements. Developers would have to replace current off-street parking spaces and provide parking for additional floor area, but not for the redevelopment of current space. New parking spaces that would occur in the redevelopment process will serve new floor area, not current floor area. So, it is unlikely that the current deficiency in private parking supply will be reduced by redevelopment.

If there is not much private redevelopment, the current deficiency may be manageable without the addition of public parking supply. But if there is substantial private redevelopment there will be a need for additional public parking. However, if 20,000 sf of current floor area were to be redeveloped to 60,000 sf, the developer would have to provide parking for only 40,000 sf, which does not reduce the overall deficiency and may not satisfy lender requirements for parking supply. Consequently, the City might be asked to participate in the project to provide parking for the 20,000 sf of grandfathered parking exemption. T o provide a catalyst for further downtown development, the City might want to provide more parking than this to make up for the deficiency of nearby properties.

This analysis suggests there are various ways of dealing with the deficiency of downtown parking supply:

- Manage public parking supply by means of time limits, pricing, and ParkSmart.
- Add to public parking supply by means of leasing space, e.g., Antique Mall site. (But if it is privately developed this new public supply may be lost.)
- Build a free-standing public parking garage on city owned land, or buy land.
- Partner with a developer to build more parking than would be required.

This Board favors partnering with a developer, but has not been able to prepare a readiness plan to do so. Downtown stakeholders are reluctant to develop a financial plan that involves a financial

commitment. They are still looking for someone else to pay the price. Consequently, we will not be ready to participate when a developer steps up.

The fallback plan is to recommend that remaining opportunity sites (U. S. Bank, Antique Mall, and Kirkland Square) not be redeveloped as residential over commercial, but as office over commercial, so that shared parking can be achieved.