



## CITY OF KIRKLAND

Department of Public Works

123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800

[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us)

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**To:** Kirkland City Council

**From:** Parking Advisory Board, Ken Dueker Chair

**Date:** November 30, 2007

**Subject:** Recommendations for Consideration at December 11, 2007 Study Session

### *Background*

At the last study session between the PAB and the City Council, the PAB proposed to make free stalls at Lake and Central pay as a first small step to expanding pay parking. This recommendation followed a public process consisting of an open house and individual discussions with merchants. There was some support for the idea but much opposition. The PAB discussed idea with Council and discovered a lack of consensus on extending pay parking to all of Lake and Central. The Council directed PAB to explore two areas

- Gather more information about what parkers, property owners and downtown business owners think of pay parking
- Explore parking technology in an attempt to make pay parking, if implemented, easier and friendly for users.

Two surveys were conducted, one of downtown merchants/property owners, and the other of downtown parkers. We engaged a Consultant to help with survey construction and methodology. Attachment A contains a description of the Merchant/owner parking survey preliminary interpretations and the Merchant/owner survey instrument. Attachment B is a description of the Parker survey preliminary interpretations; the Parker survey instrument is in Attachment C. Attachment D contains the report of the PAB technology committee, which finds we ought to continue to rely on pay and display. Attachment E contains parking occupancy data, which indicates the parking problem is greatest in the evening and noontime periods.

As expected, the key finding of the parking surveys indicate a desire for more convenient and readily available parking, but there is an unwillingness to pay for parking. They also want the City to provide more, free close-in parking. There is less difficulty in finding available parking and the parking system is less unfriendly than we expected to find. However, those who park downtown are less unhappy with the parking situation than are merchants and property owners. Those who park downtown appear to be more inclined to walk or wait for free spaces rather than pay (See questions 8 and 9 of the Parker Study results).

### *The Parking Problem*

For years, parking in Downtown Kirkland has been perceived as being difficult, crowded, user unfriendly and too strictly enforced. Although this is confirmed somewhat by our parking surveys, the system is not in crisis. This leads the PAB to suggest improvements in managing parking by allocating scarce parking

supply by pricing rather than regulation, which will lessen the perception of heavy handed enforcement. Although some merchants have been vocal in their opposition to pay parking, the parking problem, if left unchanged, will worsen due to more development and more employees in the downtown. The lack of parking revenue to finance new parking supply exacerbates the situation.

### *The Parking Program*

The PAB has progressed in developing a comprehensive parking program and recommendations for implementation. We urge the City Council to endorse the program and act on the first two implementation recommendations in time to institute the changes by April 2008.

The PAB has conducted research in studying the parking problem, and consulted with parking management experts. The results indicate we should manage parking by a market-based approach. People are willing to pay a premium for a close, easily accessible parking place as long as the process is easy and well managed. This means the parking rules must be understandable, users must have an easy way to pay using a range of options, and trust that the enforcement system is firm but fair.

The PAB as a whole and through various committees has studied these issues closely and evaluated the many options available and based on the results of this extensive research has determined that the best way to manage parking overall in Downtown Kirkland is to adopt the following program and to implement it in stages:

- Charge for parking in public off- street parking locations in Downtown (Lake & Central, and Lakeshore Plaza lots) using Pay and Display kiosks
- Charge for parking in the Library garage, including employees enrolled in ParkSmart.
- Charge for on-street parking in the Downtown core.
- Parking charges apply from 11 am – 9 pm, Monday – Saturday.
- During times when parking charges apply, there is no time limit.
- In locations where there are no parking charges, time limits will be used to manage parking.
- Provide employers with incentives to encourage employees to use alternative modes of travel.
- Use a common pay-and-display technology in all locations to make the system understandable.
- Work with merchants to develop effective validation scheme for future visits.
- Build a public parking garage in the downtown core, or partner with a developer, financed using a mix of parking revenue bonds, local improvement district bonds, and general revenue bonds.

To avoid spillover of parking from pay to free locations, it would be best to implement the program in its entirety. However, The PAB recognizes it may be preferable to adopt the program in principle and implement it in stages. The PAB recommends taking implementing steps in the following order:

- Charge for public off- street parking in Downtown (Lake & Central, and Lakeshore Plaza lots)
  - \$1 per hour
  - From 11 – 9 pm.
  - Implement April, 2008
- Charge for parking in Library parking garage.
  - All public spaces priced from 11 am - 5 pm with 3- hour time limit.

- Price is \$1 per hour for all spaces except lower level of Library Garage which would be \$0.25 from 11 am - 5 pm for employees.
- Parking pass or tokens included with registration for swim lessons.
- Free parking at library level.
- Implement April 2008 or April 2009
- Charge for on-street parking
  - 5 pm - 9pm with no time limit after 5 PM.
  - Free with 2-hour time limit from 9 am – 5 pm.
  - Implement April 2009
- Charge for parking on-street and off-street lots, day and evening.
  - All on-street spaces and off-street lots priced at \$1 per hour from 11 am - 9 pm with no time limit.
  - Time period for parking charges in Library parking garage remains to at 11 am - 5 pm.
  - Implement April 2010