

September 12, 2011

To: Northwest Portland Parking District Project
c/o Mayor Sam Adams
Northwest District Parking Plan Stakeholders Advisory Committee
c/o Bill Hoffman – Portland Bureau of Transportation
cc: Rick Williams – Rick Williams Consulting
cc: Ron Walters - Northwest District Association
cc: Tom Miller – Portland Bureau of Transportation
cc: Katja Dillman – Mayor’s Office
cc: Ramon Corona – Portland Bureau of Transportation

The Zone K Area parking committee appreciates the opportunity to respond to the Northwest District Parking Plan that is being developed. The demand for parking, especially on street parking, in Portland’s Northwest District has exceeded availability for years. The Zone K Area Parking Permit Program (APP) was created in 1999 through a citizen initiated process, with the assistance of the Portland Bureau of Transportation and consultants hired by the City to review parking conditions at that time. The Zone K APP was conceived because the eastern edge of northwest Portland was dramatically impacted by parking for employment in the Central Business District. Traffic counts at that time established that 300-400 commuter cars driven by people who worked outside the proposed zone were parked daily on weekdays in the twenty four and a half blocks of the proposed Zone K area. Neighborhood meetings were held several times during the winter and spring of 1999. Businesses, residences, and apartment buildings were canvassed door to door and by telephone to gather input and provide options and information.

Zone K was created by a special election within the proposed borders. The election procedure is established by Portland City Code.

{City of Portland Charter, Chapter 16.20.800 Area Parking Permit Program Process. Specifically:

F. A ballot will be mailed to all addresses within the proposed area within 30 days after the last public meeting. The legal occupant of an address is eligible to vote. This ballot must be received by the City Traffic Engineer on or before the date specified in the mailing. A minimum of 50 percent of the ballots must be received, of which 60 percent must be "yes" votes, to approve the program.}

Ballots were mailed to 373 addresses within the K area. As per the Code, the election results were only valid if at least 50% of the ballots were returned, a high standard to reach in any election. A lot of hard work was done by citizens in the Zone K area.

The election was also supported by the Northwest District Association which mailed a letter (May 26, 1999) to the neighborhood signed by Frank D. Bird, President, Northwest District Association, which stated:

“Studies have found that over 300 commuters daily are parking in our neighborhood but do not work, live, or do business here. *Permit parking is a way to keep parking spaces for NE neighborhood residents, businesses and employees. (*italics from original)*

This parking program is one of several parking initiatives in the Northwest District. Expressing your opinion through the ballot will be an important indicator of whether permits are a useful tool in solving our neighborhood’s parking challenges.”

Following an 87% affirming vote with more than the required 50% participation of the eligible residents, business, and property owners, the Portland City Council approved the Zone K Area

Permit Program in 1999. City Commissioner Charlie Hales called the response “a clear mandate from those affected to start the program,” noting “It’s pretty hard to get 87% on anything.”

The August 1999 issue of The Nob Hill Neighbor, a publication of the Nob Hill Business Association commented on the creation of the Zone K APP as follows:

“The permit boundary, Burnside to Northrup and 16th to 18th, is only a small portion of Northwest Portland. But it is an attractive parking area for drivers who neither live nor work in the area who then walk or take transit to work in other parts of the city.

In addition to the practical effect of increasing parking access for local businesses and residents, this approval by residents and businesses has larger significance. Other types of permit programs have been debated previously in NW Portland, and had the effect of pitting residents against businesses.

This time both residents and businesses worked together to support the program...”

The Zone K APP has now been in place for twelve years since 1999. The permit program that was set up to deter commuter parking has maintained that mission since the beginning. Parking is restricted to two hours, except where otherwise more limited by signed zones, unless a Zone K Permit is displayed. The restrictions are in place Monday through Friday from 7AM to 6 PM. The days and hours and time limits in Zone K have remained unchanged for 12 years. One of the clear and simple things about Zone K currently is that it is aimed at commuter parking and creating turnover. As Zone K is constituted, anyone in the city can park within the boundaries after 6 pm weekdays and anytime on weekends.

The Zone K Area Parking Committee has met with residents and businesses informally to resolve parking dilemmas with in the Zone K area. Portland Bureau of Transportation staff reports that there have been no complaints from within the Zone in the twelve years of operation. Members of the Zone K Parking Committee also met with the NWDA Transportation Committee in 2004 about possible adjustments to the boundaries of the Zone K APP, specifically the ‘annex’ of the west side of NW 18th Street between Couch and Everett. Through those meetings we learned that the boundaries of the Zone K APP could not be legally modified without a repeat of the voting process that originally established the Zone K area.

{City of Portland Charter, Chapter 16.20.800 Area Parking Permit Program Process. Specifically:

J. Changes to boundaries of existing permit areas desired by area residents must be made according the following procedure:

2. The changes must be approved by the City Traffic Engineer and by a majority of the Area Parking Committee.
3. The City Traffic Engineer will mail a ballot to the addresses of the area to be annexed into or deleted from the permit area. The completed ballot must be received by the City Traffic Engineer on or before the date specified in the mailing. A minimum of 50 percent of the ballots must be received, of which 60 percent must be "yes" votes, to approve the changes.

When the Zone K APP Committee recently became aware of the NW District Parking Advisory process, with the possible outcome of eliminating the Zone K APP, the Parking Committee began a process of community outreach to the permit holders, residents and businesses within Zone K. We solicited input from permit holders with handouts, emails, telephone calls, and door to door

canvassing. We held a public meeting, on Thursday August 25th, which was attended by a spectrum of residents and businesses from throughout the Zone. This meeting gave the Portland Bureau of Transportation an opportunity to present the proposed NW Parking Plan and the status of the process.

The Zone K Area Parking Committee followed that meeting with a survey sent via a secure link based on the individual's email address to as many permit holders, residents and businesses as we had on our contact list. 77 Surveys were sent. 45 responses were received. 32 did not respond (includes 1 opt-out and 4 bounces). The survey was conducted online and had a response rate over 50% with over 93% of respondents expressing the desire to continue Zone K as an independent permit program.

Q1. What kind of Zone K permit do you have?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Resident	77.8%	35
Business	11.1%	5
Employee	2.2%	1
I don't have a permit	8.9%	4
	answered question	45
Q2. Are you happy with Zone K Parking as it is?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes - leave it alone. I like it the way it is.	93.3%	42
No - dissolve Zone K and make it part of the overall NW Parking Plan.	6.7%	3
Comments		25
	answered question	45
Q3. Do you favor increased enforcement of current parking restrictions?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	73.3%	33
No	26.7%	12
Comments		17
	answered question	45

Zone K as constituted has worked very effectively as a 'barrier zone' between the metered parking of downtown and the Pearl district and unregulated parking in the Northwest District. Daytime turnover in on street parking has benefited businesses in the area. Commuter parking in the 24 blocks of Zone K by people who work outside the Northwest District has been significantly reduced. In recent years increasing commercial development has increased parking demand. Despite the addition of the Portland Street Car and generally excellent access to public transit service, on street parking in Zone K is increasingly unavailable. Zone K constituents have called for increased enforcement of the current parking restrictions.

Opinions expressed from within Zone K in all of this community outreach and our survey efforts have been almost uniformly supportive of maintaining Zone K as it is presently constituted. The feeling of local control, the cooperative attitude between businesses and residents, the growth of a sense of community in the Zone K neighborhood have been reinforced through the process of grappling with the parking issue. For these reasons, we respectfully request that any NW District Parking Plan include maintaining Zone K as a separate Area Permit Program.

At the same time, we urge the current participants in the NW Parking Plan and the Stakeholders Advisory Committee to continue working toward a broader Northwest District Parking Plan that will decrease commuter parking, encourage turnover of spaces for the advantage of residents and businesses, and support the public transportation investments and policy initiatives of the city of Portland.

Sincerely

Zone K Parking Committee

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