


CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: December 20, 2007

TO: The Honorable City Council
c/o City Clerk, Room 395, City Hall
Attention: Honorable Wendy Greuel, Chair, Transportation Committee

FROM: *F.R.* Rita L. Robinson, General Manager
Department of Transportation 

**SUBJECT: PARKING STUDY STATUS REPORT – PREFERENTIAL PARKING
C.F. 07-0046**

RECOMMENDATIONS for Council action:

1. DIRECT the Department of Transportation to reconvene the Preferential Parking Task Force (consisting of representatives of DOT, Council Districts 4, 5, 11 and 13, the Chief Legislative Analyst, the City Administrative Officer, the Mayor's Office and the City Attorney) and meet with representatives of the Department of City Planning to discuss the Preferential Parking Program and the issues raised in this report and develop recommendations for the future of the Program.
2. DIRECT the Department of Transportation to report back to the Transportation Committee with the Preferential Parking Task Force's recommended future direction for the Preferential Parking Program within 60-90 days.

DISCUSSION:

This report on residential parking issues is presented as a follow-up to the discussion at the September 12, 2007, Transportation Committee meeting on "Improvements to How the City Manages Preferential Parking Districts". The City's Preferential Parking Program was one of the recommended improvement areas discussed in the December 30, 2006, "LADOT Parking Report" prepared by the Department's parking consultant, Ms. Andrea d'Amato.

Parking Consultant's Findings

The key finding of the parking consultant was that the "Preferential Parking Program (PPP) is too accommodating, diminishing its effectiveness to manage demand". The consultant also made the following related findings:

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- Parking supply is decreasing.
- A coordinated approach to parking policy is essential to address the conflicting priorities of: land use and transportation planning, citywide versus district needs, and the promotion of alternative transportation options.
- DOT will need to balance the competing demands for parking against the decreasing supply of parking resources. The management of parking needs to be comprehensive, flexible, simple, and accountable to the public, as it involves the use of the “public” right-of-way and facilities. It needs to be adaptable to change in order to address the growing needs of the City while also managing District-specific needs in a complementary manner. DOT will need to review the intent and strategies for critical parking programs, operations, and tools in order to simplify the purpose, better deliver the service, more efficiently manage parking operations, and insure compliance with broader land use and transportation objectives.
- The re-organization of DOT for a coordinated, more focused approach to parking will have consequences on current staffing and create the need for additional resources to be considered during this year’s budget process.

History of the Preferential Parking Program

Ordinance No. 152,722, effective September 2, 1979, created the City’s Preferential Parking Program to help provide relief to residentially developed areas that were adversely impacted by non-resident (primarily commuter) on-street parking demand. Preferential parking permits were originally issued by the City Clerk’s office, and this function was transferred to DOT in 1986. The April 25, 1986, revision of the “Rules and Procedures for Preferential Parking Districts” contained the following statement:

“The purpose of a preferential parking district shall be to limit intrusion of non-residential and commuter parking into residential neighborhoods, where such parking practices have negatively impacted the residential area; to encourage carpooling and use of transit; and to enhance the quality of life in residential neighborhoods by reducing noise, traffic hazards and litter. Every effort shall be made to achieve this purpose with a minimum impact on adjacent commercial establishments, residences and institutions.”

During the 28 years that Los Angeles’ Preferential Parking Program has been in existence, parking demand and traffic congestion in the City have changed tremendously. The Department believes it is now time to examine the performance of the Preferential Parking Program to determine if it is continuing to achieve its stated purpose and if that purpose is still relevant to current conditions in Los Angeles.

Current State of the Preferential Parking Program

Over the past five years, DOT has had all four engineering positions assigned to the Preferential Parking Program eliminated through the budget process while experiencing

a more than 30 percent increase in the number of permit parking districts and expansion of the City's permit parking programs to include the Overnight Parking District (OPD) and Oversize Vehicle Parking Programs. With only one full-time and one part-time engineer borrowed from other divisions available to process all of the extra work, the backlog has grown to approximately 30 pending PPD requests and 15 OPD requests with most processing times well over a year. DOT will be requesting additional staffing through the budgetary process to address these significant customer service issues.

Parking Issues

Over time, implementation of the Preferential Parking Program has also resulted in the following problems or policy issues:

1. Preferential parking restrictions favor the residents at the expense of the adjacent commercial establishments.
 - Although some short-term parking (e.g., one-hour or two-hour time limit) for people without a permit may be provided in preferential parking districts (PPDs), no provisions are made for the employees of the commercial establishments who must park for longer periods of time.
 - In some of the older PPDs and newer Temporary PPDs, residents of blocks immediately adjacent to commercial development have been allowed to petition to have "No Parking Anytime Except by Permit" restrictions installed barring both employees and customers from parking on their blocks.
2. PPDs are inflexible.
 - Preferential parking restrictions are not required to change to accommodate changes in adjacent land uses.
3. PPDs do not encourage the appropriate use of a scarce resource.
 - As long as enough residents buy parking permits, non-residents may be prohibited from parking in the PPD even if the residents have more on-street parking than they need.
4. Preferential parking restrictions are not standardized and are confusing.
 - Parking restrictions vary from block to block and even on different sides of the same block.

Alternative Approaches for Possible Discussion

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning (DCP) and agencies in other cities are concerned about the impact that poor management of on-street parking resources has on land use planning and traffic congestion and have started to examine different ways to achieve a better balance between competing users of residential curb space. DOT has been discussing the concept of Community Parking Overlays with DCP staff as a way of allowing the general public to park in PPDs provided they pay an hourly parking rate set at a high enough level to ensure some vacant curb spaces will still be available

for residents with PPD permits. The City of Pasadena, California, is considering creating Residential Parking Benefit Districts where a limited number of commuters would be allowed to pay to use surplus on-street parking spaces in the residential areas with the resultant revenues returned to the neighborhood to fund public improvements. Where parking occupancy is less than 75 percent, the City of Boulder, Colorado, sells a maximum of four on-street parking permits per block face to commuters for \$60.00 per quarter with the revenue used to subsidize the cost of resident parking permits and keep them at only \$12.00 per year.

CONCLUSION:

Whether by accident or by design, preferential parking restrictions are turning neighborhoods with public streets into what are essentially gated communities accessible only to the residents and their guests. The resultant inefficient use of a scarce resource – on-street parking – is stifling and even killing the growth of local restaurants and retail shops that create jobs, enhance the vitality of the area, and make Los Angeles an attractive place to live. Clearly, a better balance must be achieved between the needs of the residents and the needs of the adjacent commercial establishments. More efficient use of scarce curb parking space could be achieved if it were treated as a shared parking resource and not simply an area reserved almost exclusively for the residents.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Reconvene the Preferential Parking Task Force (consisting of representatives of DOT, Council Districts 4, 5, 11 and 13, the Chief Legislative Analyst, the City Administrative Officer, the Mayor's Office and the City Attorney) and meet with representatives of the Department of City Planning to discuss the Preferential Parking Program within the next 30 days.
2. Report back to the Transportation Committee with the Preferential Parking Task Force's recommended future direction for the Program within 60-90 days.