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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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To: Municipal Services Committee
From: Eric Lom, P.E., City Traffic Engineer
Date: May 25, 2022
Re: Possible 6-month trial for parking changes on Pacific St (Drew St to Lawe St)

In response to concerns raised by Alderperson Meltzer, the City’s Traffic Section recently assessed the possibility of allowing unrestricted parking on both sides of Pacific Street between Drew Street and Lawe Street (see Figure 1). Parking is currently restricted to two hours on the north side of this portion of Pacific Street (the south side is unrestricted).

According to City records, parking had been restricted to two hours on *both* sides of the blocks in question for many years prior to 1995. In 1995, the two-hour restriction was removed from the south side at the request of several residents. At that time, the restriction was retained on the north side of the street due to Pacific Street’s narrow width of 28 feet.

Based on feedback received from several constituents, Alderperson Meltzer is proposing a six-month trial to test the removal of the two-hour restriction on the north side of the street as a way of providing additional on-street parking and decreasing the speed of traffic.

As previously noted, this portion of Pacific Street is 28 feet wide. Based on the City’s *Narrow Street Parking Policy*, which generally applies to low-volume residential streets with limited on-street parking usage, 28 feet is just wide enough to allow for parking on both sides (the policy mandates removal of parking on one side at widths of 27 feet or less). On a 28-foot street with parking on both sides, what you essentially have is two 7-foot parking lanes and one 14-foot travel lane. Given that passenger vehicles have mirror-to-mirror widths of 6.5 to 8.5 feet, vehicles traveling in opposing directions will often need to “give way” (see Figure 2) when there are parked vehicles on both sides. While this results in lower overall speeds, it can be uncomfortable and feel unsafe for some drivers.

Based on the totality of the information, we are supportive of approving Alderperson Meltzer’s request for a six-month trial to eliminate the two-hour restriction on the north side of the blocks in question during the non-winter months. We recommend the restriction remain in place during the winter months (Dec 1st to Apr 1st) when the effective width of the road is typically reduced by four to five feet due to snowbank “creep.”

Letters were mailed to all affected properties advising them of Alderperson Meltzer’s request and inviting their comments and/or participation in the 6/6/22 Municipal Services Committee meeting.

Figure 1



Figure 2 (Credit: City of Portland, WA)

