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South Lake Union
Friends and Neighbors
Community Council

June 19, 2006

Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck
Seattle City Council
City Hall
600 4th Ave. 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98124-4025

RE: Neighborhood Business District Strategy
Proposed Parking Requirement Revisions

Dear Councilmember Steinbrueck:

The South Lake Union Friends and Neighbors Community Council (SLUFAN), the designated community organization representing planning and other issues in the South Lake Union (SLU) neighborhood, expressed concern in a letter to your office in May 2005 that the parking provisions of the proposed Neighborhood Business District Strategy (NBDS) were not being adequately coordinated with the SLU community planning process and the update of the SLU Neighborhood Plan. The SLUFAN planning committee was recently briefed at our May meeting by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) on the NBDS final parking recommendations. While SLUFAN supports the urban planning principles and general objectives identified in the NBDS, we continue to have concerns about the proposed recommendations and the implementation plan. Of particular concern is the proposal to totally eliminate any on-site parking requirements for new development projects in all Urban Centers, which includes our neighborhood. Our specific reasons for this concern are myriad, but essentially center on:

- Application of *these* generic recommendations without regard for the specific conditions and requirements of the SLU neighborhood;
- Immediate implementation without a transition phase;
- Implementation of policies to reduce parking before adequate transit service is established in SLU; and
- Diminishing supply and increasing cost of private parking impacting lower-wage employees and small businesses in SLU

In addition, several policies outlined in the Draft South Lake Union Neighborhood Plan, while in concept echoing NBDS objectives relative to the parking recommendations, provide further support for our concerns. These include:

Policy 16: Work with transit agencies to provide transit service to and through South Lake Union to meet growing demand and changing markets.

Policy 17: Promote a system of safe pedestrian and bicycle connections linking key activity areas and destinations, such as open spaces, schools and cultural facilities.

Policy 18: Collaborate with businesses, developers and transit providers to reduce demand for automobile trips by making transit and other alternative modes attractive choices for residents and commuters.

Policy 19: Develop flexible off-street parking requirements that provide parking adequate to a building's occupants and encourage the use of transit, walking, bicycling and other non-automotive modes.

Policy 20: Encourage the efficient use of on-street parking for neighborhood businesses, residents and attractions through innovative parking management and pricing strategies.

For Policies 19 and 20 to work, they need to be implemented in concert with Policies 16 and 17. As stated in Policy 18, attractive choices need to be in place to reduce the demand for automobile trips. SLUFAN believes that generic and wholesale implementation of the parking recommendations (including particularly the proposal to eliminate on-site parking requirements for new developments) at this time would be contrary to the SLU Neighborhood Plan and not in the best interests of the neighborhood.

As mentioned earlier, SLUFAN generally supports the principles and objectives underlying the parking recommendations. However, changes in parking strategy must evolve in concert with the development of transit options and the creation of a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, and we believe the current recommendations fail to adequately take into account those objectives. SLUFAN thus proposes to work closely with DPD, OPM, SDOT, Council staff, and transit representatives to develop SLU neighborhood-specific recommendations and an integrated implementation plan that will support the overall urban planning principles and objectives of the NBDS as well as the policies identified in the SLU Neighborhood Plan, thus providing long-term benefits for the city and the South Lake Union neighborhood.

Sincerely,

South Lake Union Friends and Neighbors Community Council
Christopher Tucker, President

cc: all Seattle City Council members
Mayor Greg Nickels
Diane Sugimura, Department of Planning and Development
Grace Crunican, Seattle Department of Transportation