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## Land Use, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Summary Minutes

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**Tuesday, December 04, 2012 10:30 AM City & County Building, Room 391**

**Committee Members:** Robb, Chair; Montero, Vice-Chair; Brown; Lehmann; López; Shepherd

**Committee Staff:** Gretchen Williams

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**Council Members Present:** Brown, Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd, Susman, Nevitt

**Members Absent:** None

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### Bill Requests

**BR12-0690 Amends Denver Revised Municipal Code Section 54-492 to clarify and broaden the applicability of permit parking areas.**  
*Matt Wager, Cindy Patton and Nancy Kuhn, Public Works*

Public Works Manager Jose Conejo and staffers Cindy Patton and Matt Wager presented the proposed ordinance language amendment. The proposed language, along with new Manager's Rules & Regulations, will give Public Works the tools it needs to adequately and more effectively manage parking. We need to establish new tools to address needs in our mixed-use areas.

The Strategic Parking Plan contains three goals for balancing

parking demand and supply.

1. Acknowledge a variety of land use patterns and contexts;
2. Manage parking as an asset; and
3. Encourage an integrated and collaborative approach.

The current residential parking permit program (RPP) dates from the 1950s when Denver was much smaller and less dense and when land uses were generally more separated. The language was based on a Supreme Court decision and is duplicated in many cities. It was written to protect residents from external impacts, such as from stadiums and hospitals, for example. It is not applicable to businesses or other user groups, and as the fabric of the city changes, Public Works is being asked to issue permits requiring more flexibility than the language allows.

The proposed language provides new tools to address the new realities of our mixed-use neighborhoods.

Currently, there are 24 residential permit parking areas, with over 24,000 permits, spread across the City, with a presence in every Council district. The City spends \$1 million annually to operate the program, which is subsidized by the General Fund.

No permit program can expand the parking inventory. The goal is to make the process more flexible and more transparent and usable by the Manager's adoption of rules and regulations.

The current residential parking permit program will not change. Proposed are two new types to add flexibility:

1. Manage right-of-way (ROW) permits in smaller, more localized interventions, such as around a specific school; and

2. Area Management Plan (AMP) Permits designed and issued based on a completed and approved Plan. AMP may or may not result in actual permits. The AMP will be designed based on input from stakeholders and City.

Councilwoman Montero asked how the process would be fair, especially for single family homes.

Ms. Patton replied that parking permit programs are initiated by residents and/or businesses, and everyone in an area has the ability to provide information. The AMP would be a longer process than the current RPP because there would be more groups needing to be represented. The process will be guided by the Manager's Rules and Regulation, which will be adopted following a published public hearing.

The attached presentation includes a graphic comparing the three tools.

In summary, it is important to understand that:

1. Nothing changes for existing RPP holders;

2. RPP continues to be dynamic and customized to achieve a balance of user

and area need; and

3. The RPP program will return to a 1-year renewal cycle so it matches the visitor pass program; and renewals will be available on-line.

Councilwoman Montero asked why this is good for the single family property owner when the needs of the businesses often outweigh those of residents.

Ms. Patton explained that this language gives Public Works the ability to look at each situation differently. It will clearly delineate who is eligible for what type of permit.

Councilman Nevitt saw the potential for rewarding organized areas at the expense of others.

Public Works staff responded that they are trying to identify the problem areas and move forward more comprehensively while being sensitive to any impacts on adjacent areas. Each area is studied and different circumstances are identified and evaluated.

Councilman Nevitt said Public Works needs the resources to enforce the rules and permits, so any new fees need to be in place as soon as possible. People value what they pay for. The City needs to reach cost recovery with the people benefitting paying rather than the whole City.

Councilman Lopez noted that the zoning code limits the number of cars per households to one per licensed driver plus one, which is limiting. Perhaps we should change those rules. Parking is not the problem; the problem is the number of cars.

Mr. Wager said the RPP is biased toward single-family houses, but the two new programs level the playing field between single-family and other uses. All players have to come together and work through the issues. Many of Denver's policies are looking to decrease the need for a high numbers of cars. We are trying to look at the system as a whole.

Councilman Nevitt asked that parking areas and districts become a layer in the GIS system. Mr. Wager said they are already working on that.

A motion offered by Councilmember Lehmann, duly seconded by Councilmember Montero, to file the bill carried by the following vote:

AYES: Susman, Brown, Lehmann, Lopez, Montero, Robb, Shepherd(7)  
NAYS: (None)  
ABSENT: (None)  
ABSTAIN: (None)

**BR12-0905 Approves a cooperative agreement with The Children's Museum of Denver concerning lease of a portion of non-designated Gates Crescent Park and sale of another portion for appropriate use by the museum.**

*Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation; Michael Yankovich, The Children's Museum of Denver*

Gordon Robertson, Parks & Recreation, said Parks and the Museum have been working in partnership on this plan for over five years, and we have had great public outreach. He believes the plan has great sensitivity to Gates-Crescent Park. The proposal is for a compatible and enhanced park use.

Michael Yankovich, President and CEO of The Children's Museum of Denver, said the Museum has been in existence since 1973. It moved to Gates-Crescent Park in 1984 as part of the park's development.

He explained the Museum's mission, how children learn through play, and how the Museum strives to prepare kids for school. Denver's is now the most crowded Children's Museum in the country, with growing attendance over the past six years and with 314,000 guests last year. There are days we have to turn people away. The Museum has run out of options except for expanding the museum physically.

Working with Oz Architecture and Parks, the design includes a new entrance

and addition of wings to each side of the existing building to handle enhanced arts and other programs. The Museum also wants to address the growing issue of childhood "nature deficit disorder", so part of the plan is to create an outdoor area for climbing (on a 3-story structure), running and appreciating nature and the outdoors. These kids are the future stewards of our parks and the outdoors.

Mr. Robertson said the area of the park was purchased by the City in the 1940 and was used for Public Works operations. As the Platte River Greenway took shape, the Parks Dept. took it over and improved and maintained it as a park, although it is not designated parkland. The park is 11 acres.

The agreement approves the sale of 0.6 acres in two parcels (where the two new building wings will be constructed) and enter a long-term (20-year, renewable) lease of .94 acres. The Manager of Parks & Recreation will have final approval of what happens in that area, but there will be a perimeter fence.

The proposed cooperative agreement includes a requirement for lots of collaborative programming between the Museum and Parks, including at least five free days monthly through the summer. Programming might include movie nights or other events. The uses will be a collaboration between the Museum and Parks as well as other cultural organizations.

Mr. Yankovich said the Museum involved the community in the plans for the expansion, culminating in a large public meeting on July 31. The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) discussed the issue in September and gave its unanimous support.

Councilwoman Robb noted that PRAB also requested that more public outreach be made. Mr. Yankovich replied that following the PRAB meeting, additional outreach and meetings were done in the neighborhoods of Jefferson Park, La Alma/Lincoln Park and Sun Valley.

Councilwoman Lehmann suggested providing free memberships for the families in those three neighborhoods, and Mr. Yankovich said the Museum is working with Denver Public Schools on that program. Last year, the Museum served over 17,000 DPS students and their families free of charge.

Councilwoman Robb noted this is not designated parkland, but it is hard for the public to see a difference between protected, designated parkland and undesignated land acting like a park. She said it is important to protect the open space, especially along the river. Would Parks consider officially designating the balance of Gates-Crescent Park prior to asking Council to vote on this?

Mr. Robertson said Parks is looking at that, along with a number of other parks. There needs to be a process, and that action will need to go through PRAB and will take some time.

He added that the vision for transition of this area from a Public Works operation

site to parkland included development of a museum. The proposed enhancement of the Museum is in line with the original intent.

Councilwoman Lehmann said the plans and programs the Museum and Parks have will teach children why our parks are important and how to become good stewards.

Councilwoman Shepherd, in whose district this park lies, said there are physical limitations on the Museum. This expansion is an excellent way to utilize parkland and tie in with the Museum. This part of the park is under-utilized now. Due to the hill, this area cannot be used very effectively. She supports the proposal.

A motion offered by Councilmember Shepherd, duly seconded by Councilmember Lehmann, to file the bill carried by the following vote:

AYES:	Lehmann, Robb, Shepherd(3)
NAYS:	(None)
ABSENT:	(None)
ABSTAIN:	(None)