Putting Parking on a Diet
Low-Carb Codes in Seattle for Parking Porkers
We all assume TODs require less parking:

**BUT...not all TODs are created equal**

Transitional TODs, like Northgate, force us to be specific about how much parking is the right amount.
Northgate Neighborhood

TOD in Transition

- Bisected by a 10-lane freeway
- Centered around a shopping mall
- Ringed by single family neighborhoods and strip commercial zoning
Key Components for TOD Success

• First, the second busiest transit center outside of downtown – with headways similar to light rail

• Second, a shared political will to grow the transit center area into a TOD
Parking Obstacles to TOD Success

- Out-of-date parking codes ("one size fits all")
- Community perceptions (too little parking and parking will spill over into single-family neighborhoods)
- Developer perceptions (too little parking won’t serve customer/resident needs; too much parking is a budget-breaker)
Overcoming Obstacles

Methodology

1. The Seattle TOD methodology parking CAN:
   - increase the success of TOD projects
   - address neighborhood concerns
   - minimize developer’s project risk -- and
   - inform model TOD standards

2. City Comp Plan Goals support appropriate TOD parking requirements, based on methodology
Determine Real Parking Demand

Methodology - Step 1

- 2000 Census provides a rough indication of real demand based on vehicle availability per household

Average Vehicle Availability Per Household Per Sector

- Northgate Area = 0.87 vehicles per household
- SE Seattle = 0.76
- SW Seattle = 0.91
- Downtown = 0.69
- NW Seattle = 0.97
Does transit adjacency further reduce demand?

Methodology - Step 2

Nearness to frequent transit service validates reduced demand, reduced need for vehicle ownership – and reduced parking requirements!

- **Seattle’s existing parking code** allows commercial uses a 20% reduction in parking based on frequency of adjacent transit service.

- **Portland, OR.** No minimum parking requirements for sites well served by transit.

- **Oakland, CA.** Parking requirements reduced to 0.5 parking spaces per HH unit within a TOD zone.
Developer’s Voluntary Reductions

Methodology - Step 3

• The methodology also accommodates a developer’s voluntary actions:

Examples of developer incentives to reduce vehicle ownership and manage parking supply more efficiently:

• car-sharing programs
• transit passes
• bike facilities
• TMA/PMA participation
Northgate Commons

Applying the Methodology

On-site Parking
Located Below-Grade – reduced by methodology

Transit Center
Park-and-Ride – parking shared between two sites
Watch it work!

The Methodology in Practice

• Methodology is already being used. The Northgate Commons project applied census data and a transit reduction to identify the appropriate amount of parking.

• In 2005, City of Seattle adjusted parking requirements for highest density n’hoods based in part on census data, with similar changes considered for other “urban centers” (targeted growth areas)
The Bigger Planning Picture

Northgate - Next Steps

- **CTIP**: Coordinated Transportation Improvement Project: Executive was directed to facilitate investment, coordinate capital planning, and achieve long-term planning goals for area.

- In 2006, CTIP’s parking component may recommend voluntary cooperative arrangements such as a Parking Management Association (PMA) to efficiently use parking supply and support lower parking requirements for TOD projects.
Northgate Commons: Before
Northgate Commons: After
Thanks!
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Northgate Webpage:  http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/nctip.htm