

GSNC PARKING POSITION

The Glenwood South Neighborhood Collaborative (GSNC) is an organization composed of residents, businesses and friends of Glenwood South. We appreciate the fact that members of the staff of The City of Raleigh have taken the time to meet with our community and discuss the proposed changes. These efforts at community outreach are to be commended. We also hope that you will give serious consideration to the comments made herein.

The City of Raleigh has proposed several changes to its on-street and off-street parking policies that will have a direct effect on residents and businesses located in Glenwood South (GS). The City has repeatedly expressed its commitment to take into account the unique characteristics of individual neighborhoods. While GS is by no means monolithic, this is an attempt to convey its varied needs and interests. The proposals have been detailed at many places, so I will not reiterate them here. Moreover, if aspects of the proposed changes are not specifically addressed, one should assume that GSNC is taking no position on that particular proposal.

Let's start by discussing the proposal with which we can agree. The City is proposing to raise the on-street metered parking rate \$.25 per hour each of the next two years. We understand that there are increased administrative costs that must be covered by parking fees. The imminent replacement of the existing parking meters is a good example of these costs. The City has repeatedly stated that the goal of the proposed parking changes is not to increase the flow of revenue to the City. We take them at their word. The City has also expressed an intent to reinvest increased revenue into public parking deck maintenance and possible streetscape amenities. As will be discussed in more detail later, GS has no public parking decks so we would strongly encourage new revenues to be invested in streetscape amenities in GS. One of the goals of GSNC is to enhance walkability in our neighborhood. Our sidewalks and streetscapes have been severely neglected by The City and we would like to see a commitment to use parking fees for this enhancement.

The biggest factor that distinguishes GS from other parts of downtown Raleigh, particularly the Fayetteville area, is the lack of city owned parking decks in this neighborhood. One of the underlying motivations for the parking proposals is to realign the relationship between on-street and off-street parking rates. There is an attempt to move on-street parkers into city-owned lots by increasing the cost of on-street rates and decreasing the cost of off-street rates. Since there are no city-owned lots in GS, this proposal merely results in a rate increase with no alternative outlet location to turn to. While there are numerous privately-owned lots available in GS, we do not expect them to lower their rates in response to this proposal.

One of the significant proposals effecting GS would be to extend the end time for metered on-street parking from 5pm to 8pm. The stated rationale for this change is the assumption that it will create greater turnover in on-street parking and thus, generate more visits to neighborhood businesses. As stated later, this assumption should be supported by gathering more reliable data before implementing the proposed changes. Even if this assumption is

considered valid, there is no significant endorsement for this proposal from local GS businesses. The vast majority of business owners do not feel that this extension of metered hours would benefit their business. A survey of neighborhood businesses led to a conclusion that most of these businesses had worked out private arrangements to offset the lack of city-owned parking facilities in GS and to deal with limited on-street parking availability. For example, businesses such as Mellow Mushroom, MoJoes, Carlton's Florist, Armadillo Grill, Havana Deluxe, Bright Smiles, C. Grace, Empress Room, Cortez, Glenwood South Pharmacy, Revolver, Raleigh Wine, Drink, 42nd Street Oyster Bar have exclusive or shared use of surface lots for their customers. This is by no means an exhaustive list of such businesses but is only illustrative. Many more businesses have arrangements whereby customers can obtain validated parking at privately owned lots. Examples include; Typhoon Bistro, New York Deli, Douglas Carroll Salon, Sushi Blues, Plates, Polished, La Santa, Anise Pho, Sushi O, DeMo's, and Tobacco Road . Other businesses such as Sullivan's and Vidrion have valet parking.

Most businesses owners thought that any increase in turnover during these extended hours would be offset by the disruption caused by the need to feed meters, and the overall increase in perception that it is expensive to park in GS. GS is already at a disadvantage with suburban dining or drinking destinations due to the limited availability of free parking. Any proposal to decrease free parking availability will inevitably have a negative impact on visits to the neighborhood. Moreover, most businesses also thought that this proposal, particularly when coupled with the proposal to expand metered parking to some of the side streets in GS, would have a detrimental effect on their employees. It would force them to venture farther off Glenwood Avenue, into adjacent neighborhoods to find parking.

This leads to the third major proposal effecting GS; to expand metered parking to some of the side streets. In general, there was no support for this proposal for the reasons previously stated; the existence of alternative parking for customers, the detrimental effect on employee parking, and the negative neighborhood perception resulting from additional parking restrictions in GS. Starting from southern proposal to add meters on Jones Street between Glenwood and West, there are no retail stores in this block. Google located on the corner of Glenwood does little, if any, retail business. The new bar Halcyon would not generally be open during the proposed hours. The two major businesses, 42nd Street and Tobacco Road have either a dedicated parking lot or validated parking. These new meters would provide little benefit. The next proposed meters would be on North Street for one block on both sides of Glenwood Avenue. There are privately-owned, public lots in both of these blocks that provide hourly parking at the rate of \$2.00 per hour. As stated earlier, the Pharmacy provides free parking for its customers. There are a few businesses such as Hibernian, Parliament, North Street Beer Station, and Heat that do not provide parking. While there is no great support for expansion of on-street metering, this may be the one street in GS where it would make sense. On Tucker Street meters are proposed in the blocks on each side of Glenwood Avenue. Toward Boylan Street we have public housing, a charitable organization and businesses that provide for customer parking. There is no justification for new meters in this block. On Tucker going

toward West the two main businesses have valet parking and/or validated parking. In addition, the biggest privately-owned parking deck in GS is on this block. Again, there is no justification to adding meters on Tucker. Finally, Johnson Street in the block between Glenwood and Boylan has no retail businesses. The adjacent businesses are public housing, condos and a small office building with dedicated parking. There is no justification for adding meters on this primarily residential street.

The last area of newly proposed meters would be on Glenwood from Johnson Street to Peace Street. While there is no significant need for metered parking in this block because of the existence of dedicated lots for the businesses of MoJoes, Mellow Mushroom, and Carlton's Florist, it would create consistency to extend the metering of Glenwood Avenue all the way to Peace Street. While not a proposal from the City, the restrictions on parking on Glenwood Avenue between Peace and Tucker during rush hour (7-9am southbound and 4-6pm northbound) needs to be addressed. The southbound restrictions create problems in the morning not due to cars parked in those lanes during the restricted hours, but due to trucks parked there making deliveries. Moreover, the prohibition on parking in the northbound lane between 4-6pm is a fiasco. The purported basis for this restriction is to free up this lane for traffic exiting GS. However, there are cars parked in this lane virtually every day during this time period. At least a dozen tickets are issued in this two-block area during this two-hour interval every day. These tickets create a significant source of revenue for the City of Raleigh from such a small period of time and location. The irony is that these lanes are virtually never clear during rush hour. Because the City does not tow these cars, they continue to block the street. Thus, the alleged benefit, the free flow of traffic in these blocks, is never achieved. The City needs to either show that it is serious by towing these illegally parked cars and trucks, or preferably abandon this ill-conceived effort at opening this lane of traffic during rush hour. It does not help that the myriad of parking signs in this location just adds to the overall confusion for parkers.

GSNC suggests that The City wait before implementing the extended hours and expansion to side streets for metered parking in GS until data can be collected to support the assumption that greater turnover is needed for on-street parking in GS. The City will be acquiring new technology this summer/fall that will allow monitoring of parked cars by scanning their license plate numbers. This new technology will allow The City to collect more accurate data to support its proposal. Since these parking proposals will be phased in over several years, there is no need to rush into a proposed action that may in fact not solve any problem in GS. GSNC appreciates the opportunity to comment on these parking proposals and hopes that The City of Raleigh will give them due consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Miller

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