



College Terrace Parking Issues and Solutions: Frequently Asked Questions

November 2006

What's the problem that the College Terrace Residents' Association (CTRA) Parking Issues Task Force would like the City to solve?

Certain College Terrace streets are now chronically congested with parked cars belonging to non-residents. Residents on affected blocks often have difficulty finding parking near their homes, and so do their visitors. Since 2003, this problem has been spreading to previously unaffected blocks. Existing city parking regulations make it difficult for the PAPD to do effective enforcement, and staff cutbacks make it challenging to get any enforcement at all.

At a CTRA-sponsored public meeting in the fall of 2005, ten residents and an apartment owner whose renters are impacted by lack of parking volunteered to meet monthly and work with the CTRA Board toward solving this problem.

What are the results of the task force's work?

First, the task force members found that different types of non-resident parking affected different parts of our neighborhood. The three main problems that seem to be spreading into previously unaffected blocks are:

- Weekday university commuters who use the Marguerite shuttle or bicycle into campus
- Students living in Escondido Village seeking to avoid parking permit fees (a 24/7 problem)
- Employees or clients avoiding parking limitations in the surrounding commercial area

Second, the group did extensive research on problems experienced by other residential neighborhoods near major universities in Northern California, as well as the solutions considered. They also studied the process used by cities to determine the specifics of a workable solution in those neighborhoods.

Third, task force members conducted an informal survey to determine residents' opinions about parking problems on different blocks. Residents were asked to indicate their preferences for times and days that enforceable parking restrictions would be in effect. This survey was conducted door to door in the most affected parts of College Terrace in March and April 2006. The survey clearly indicated that there is interest and support for a residential parking permit program on the blocks that have experienced this problem the longest.

Why is there a focus on residential parking permit programs instead of other options?

The task force reviewed different solutions to the parking "intrusion" problems in neighborhoods adjacent to Northern California universities (Santa Clara University, UC Santa Cruz, UC Davis, Cal State campuses and other public and private universities). While specifics varied, there was overwhelming consensus that the only effective solutions involved both parking restrictions for non-residents and a permit system for residents needing street parking. Other options turned out to be legally infeasible or cost-prohibitive.

Another incentive for this approach derives from the conditions of approval for Stanford University's General Use Permit (Dec. 2000): "Stanford shall allocate funding to the city of Palo Alto . . . for a residential parking permit program in the College Terrace neighborhood." Up to \$100,000 is available for implementing this program.

Where do we go from here?

The task force is currently preparing to request that the City of Palo Alto initiate a formal public process to develop neighborhood permit parking options that would effectively use the \$100,000 allocated for this purpose. There will be multiple opportunities for resident input as this process moves forward. Both the task force members and the CTRA Board of Directors are also committed to a common requirement of the successful residential permit parking programs that we studied: formal surveys that allow residents to opt in or opt out on a block-by-block basis, with strong majority approval needed before any parking permit program is implemented on that block.

Additional information and updates will be posted on the CTRA website (www.ctra.org) and shared via the biweekly neighborhood e-news list. We also welcome your comments, questions and especially your volunteer energy. Contact us via email at parking@ctra.org or by phone at 269-2128.

Members of the CTRA Parking Issues Task Force now include: Alexandra McFarland, Pria Graves, Dennis Facchino, Bruce and Sharon Andrews, Mary Fitzgerald, Sandy Forrest, Karie Epstein, Kathy Durham, Diane Finkelstein, John Frankfurt and Steve Woodward.