
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: August 20, 2004
TO: City Council Members
FROM: Russell Weeks
RE: Petition No. 400-04-06: Proposed Ordinance to Create Standardized Public Parking Lot Entrance Signs for the Downtown Area
CC: Cindy Gust-Jenson, Rocky Fluhart, Lee Martinez, Louis Zunguze, Tim Harpst, David Oka, Gary Mumford, Wayne Mills, Dan Bergenthal, Janice Jardine

This memorandum is intended to address issues relating to Petition No. 400-04-06, a proposed ordinance to create standardized public parking lot entrance signs in the downtown area. On July 13 the City Council set an August 24 date for a public hearing on the petition and proposed ordinance. The Administration briefed the City Council on the petition at the City Council's meeting August 10.

OPTIONS

- After the public hearing, adopt the proposed ordinance.
- After the public hearing, do not adopt the proposed ordinance.
- After the public hearing, adopt the proposed ordinance with amendments. (Amendments might include changing boundaries in the proposed ordinance.)
- After the public hearing, delay action on the proposed ordinance until the City Council, as the Redevelopment Agency Board of Directors, makes a final decision on funding matters involving the signs.

POTENTIAL MOTIONS

- I move that the City Council approve Petition No. 400-04-06 and adopt the ordinance creating standardized public parking lot identification entrance signs in the downtown area.
- I move that the City Council deny Petition No. 400-04-06.
- I move that the City Council approve Petition No. 400-04-06 and adopt the ordinance creating standardized public parking lot identification entrance signs for the downtown area with the following amendments: That the boundaries of the proposed area be South Temple, 200 East, 600 South, and 400 West streets (or any amendment proposed by City Council Members).
- I move that the City Council delay final action on Petition No. 400-04-06 until a date after the September meeting of the Redevelopment Agency Board of Directors.

KEY POINTS

- The proposed ordinance appears intended to make a Transportation Division program to help install neon signs to identify available public parking lots conform to the *Salt Lake City Zoning Ordinance*.
- The proposed ordinance would make neon signs available to help identify public parking lots that are permitted or conditional uses in non-residential zoning districts in an expanded downtown area. The signs would be installed under terms of a contract with the City's Transportation Division.
- The City Council, as the Redevelopment Agency Board of Directors delayed action on funding considerations involving the program until the Board's meeting in September.
- Under the proposed ordinance, two areas in which the neon signs would be allowed are bordered by: A.) 200 North Street, 300 East Street, 900 South Street, and Interstate 15 and B.) 600 North Street, 200 West Street, 200 North Street, and Interstate 15.
- The Salt Lake City Planning Commission at its April 14 meeting adopted a motion to forward a positive recommendation to the City Council. The Commission adopted the motion after a public hearing at which no-one spoke. The Planning Division also held an open house regarding the proposed ordinance on March 25. However, no-one from the public attended the open house, according to the Planning Division.

ISSUES/QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- How many public parking lots exist in the area bordered by 600 North Street, 200 West Street, 200 North Street, and Interstate 15?
- How many public parking lots exist along 300 East Street or between 200 East and 300 East streets?
- How many public parking lots exist between 900 South Street and 600 South Street?
- Has there been an increase of interest recently among parking lot owners to participate in the Transportation Division's sign program?

DISCUSSION/BACKGROUND

The Administration appears to have proposed the amendment to the *Zoning Ordinance* because of an issue that arose after the Administration announced a Transportation Division program to increase awareness of the availability of public parking downtown in June 2003.

According to the Administration transmittal letter, parking lot owners whose lots offer on-demand public parking can contract with the Transportation Division to install a standardized neon public parking identification sign at the entrance to their parking lots. As part of the contract the City would share the cost of installing the sign. The Transportation Division has developed a prototype of the sign. Parking lot owners would be responsible for the maintaining the signs after they are installed. The Redevelopment Agency set aside \$45,000 this year in its Program Income

fund to pay half the cost of installing the neon signs. The parking lot owners would pay the other half. According to the Transportation Division, the total cost of purchasing and installing the sign is \$2,500. The shared cost, then, is \$1,250 each from the RDA and a parking lot owner. After the program was announced the Administration contacted parking lot owners to inform them about the sign program. Between June and December 2003 parking lot owners indicated some interest in participating in the program but indicated they were reluctant to pay the 50 percent match the RDA required. At the Redevelopment Agency Board of Directors' August meeting, the Administration proposed that the RDA pay the entire cost of purchasing and installing the signs. The Administration estimated that the \$45,000 would pay for 18 signs if the RDA bore the entire cost of purchase and installation. The RDA Board delayed action on that proposal until the Board's meeting in September.

Meantime, the Planning Division noted in 2003 that the *Zoning Ordinance* did not appear to allow the neon signs because the designs and prototype were "three-sided." Besides advertising parking on the front and back of the signs, the signs also advertise parking on the sign edge facing the street. Because of the Planning Division's concerns, the Transportation Division lowered its efforts to promote the sign program.

The Administration then developed the proposed ordinance under petition No. 400-04-06. The proposed ordinance would amend the City's sign ordinance to allow the installation of neon public parking signs on or near parking facilities allowed as permitted or conditional uses in areas zoned for non-residential use in two areas bordered by: A.) 200 North Street, 300 East Street, 900 South Street, and Interstate 15 and B.) 600 North Street, 200 West Street, 200 North Street, and Interstate 15.

It should be noted that the Administration proposed the boundaries listed in Item A above. However, in making its recommendation to the City Council, the Planning Commission's motion included the area listed above as Item B. According to the Planning Commission's April 14 meeting minutes attached to the Administration's transmittal, one of the Commissioners said the Administration's original proposal "should be expanded north two or three blocks due to the large amount of parking associated with the Delta Center."

At the August 10 briefing, the Administration noted that the boundaries of its original proposal sought to include the D-2 (Downtown Support District), one reason why the expanded downtown area is so large.

It should be noted that if one looks at the map attached to the Administration transmittal, the area listed in Item B appears to include a mix of uses that includes residential housing. The Council may wish to consider whether public parking lots or parking garages are integral parts of development goals in that area. It also may wish to consider the same question regarding 300 East Street as a proposed border of the area where the signs would be permitted. According to Planning Commission minutes, the Commission Chair Prescott Muir suggested that the eastern boundary should be changed to avoid encroachment into areas zoned for residential use.

In addition, according to Planning Commission minutes, Planning Division representatives said the intent of the proposed ordinance was to have public parking signs that would be recognized by people who frequent Salt Lake City but may not live in the City. The signs generally would be placed in areas where there is a parking structure that may appear as a building which may be accessed from a main street. According to the Transportation Division, the Downtown Alliance estimates that there are about 45 parking lots or garages in the Central Business District. There apparently are no firm figures for the number of parking lots or garages

in the proposed expanded downtown area. Given that, the City Council may wish to consider how effective the proposed expanded downtown area would be in guiding auto traffic to parking garages within walking distance of the Central Business and Gateway Mixed-Use districts or their proximity to bus or light-rail stops.

The City Council may wish to consider limiting the boundaries of the proposed area to the Central Business District – roughly South Temple, 200 East, 600 South and 400 West streets – and expanding the program’s boundaries as conditions warrant. It should be noted that much of the discussion about public parking in Salt Lake City has centered on the availability of public parking downtown. Given that, the Central Business District might be the most appropriate place to focus the sign program. In addition, if public funding for the signs would allow the installation of 18 signs, the Central Business District might be the most appropriate place to locate the first 18 signs.

The proposed ordinance also notes that “neon public parking signs encroaching on or over the public right of way shall obtain permission from the City pursuant to the City’s rights of way encroachment policy.” According to the Administration, the City’s right-of-way encroachment policy, as it pertains to signs, is that a lease agreement must be obtained from the Property Management Office. A lease agreement is granted if the requested sign poses no traffic or pedestrian safety concerns and meets all City development requirements.