



Re: Elm Street   
Kathryn E Franks to: Steven Choat, Heather M Aven  
Cc: Tara J Sundin

05/26/2010 12:51 PM

Hi Steven,

Thank you for your comment -- it will be forwarded to Planning Commissioners.

Kathryn Franks  
Development Specialist II  
(360) 778-8388  
kfranks@cob.org

City of Bellingham  
Planning and Community Development Department  
210 Lottie Street, City Hall  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
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"Steven Choat"

Katie:

05/26/2010 11:49:25 AM

From: "Steven Choat" <stevenchoat@gmail.com>  
To: <kfranks@cob.org>  
Date: 05/26/2010 11:49 AM  
Subject: Elm Street

*Katie:*

*I talked with you briefly last week about the parking issue along Elm Street and followed that up with a letter to be given to the planning commission. Thank you for taking the time to discuss this with me and for forwarding my email to the commission. I am sure you are aware that this would have a major impact on the families and businesses that reside along Elm Street. It would not only present a huge inconvenience for the owners of these homes and businesses and impact adjoining areas, but also create financial hardship via the loss of revenue for business owners and the possible negative impact on home values.*

*I did speak with several people that attended this meeting, and the impression they were left with is that this is a done deal. Can you verify this, as that was not the impression I had after you and I talked last week? If this was really coming down to a vote, of course I would have been there with a hundred other people from the area to oppose any such change, but felt at the time a letter would suffice. I'm probably reading between the lines, so correct me if I'm wrong on all of this. I guess the thing that presents some note of urgency in all of this, is the fact of how this was handled on Cornwall Avenue. Almost no one knew this was happening who lived on the street until the contractor showed up to install the bike lane. We are still feeling the impact of an underutilized bike lane and the overflow of parked cars on our street from homes that are often two blocks away. For this reason, I am painfully aware of how the city*

*often conducts business as usual so I am trying to be double diligent on this one. So please, let me know what the status of all of this is.*

*Just so you know...I did overhear several people mention that this portion of Elm Street has always been considered part of the Columbia area and those individuals often only attended the Columbia meetings. As your meetings have focused primarily on the Fountain district and been held in the Fountain district, many of them people assumed it had nothing to do with this portion of Elm Street, which I guess makes sense.*

*Thanks again Katie!*

Steven M. Choat  
Mortgage Banker

Pinnacle Capital Mortgage  
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Fw: Elm Street Revision  
Kathryn E Franks to: Heather M Aven

05/27/2010 02:42 PM

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----- Forwarded by Kathryn E Franks/ncd/cob on 05/27/2010 02:42 PM -----

From: "Steven Choat" <stevenchoat@gmail.com>  
To: <ccomeau@cob.org>  
Cc: <KFranks@cob.org>  
Date: 05/27/2010 09:27 AM  
Subject: Elm Street Revision

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*Chris:*

*Katie Franks passed your name on to me as the contact person regarding changes that are possibly being considered for the Elm Street corridor. We as a neighborhood are very opposed to any changes that would eliminate or even limit parking along Elm Street. Many home owners have no parking options behind their properties in this area and business owners rely heavily on this for their customers. Direct experience on Cornwall has shown that property owners have been inconvenienced, home values have been impacted, safety has been compromised due to higher rates of speed through these areas and property owners in adjacent areas have lost precious parking due to overflow.*

*Katie mentioned that you might be able to give me some further back ground on this issue, and how and when this will begin to filter through planning and finally to city counsel. As we are in the process of forming a sort of neighborhood coalition to oppose such a dramatic and unnecessary change, it would be helpful to understand where this started and how these things generally progress.*

*Thanks for your time and assistance.*

*Steven Choat  
2319 Elm Street*

*360.303.7445*

To City Planning : Attention Katy Frankes

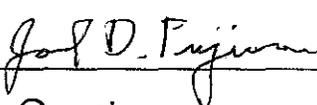
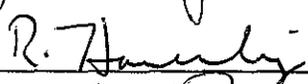
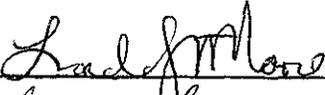
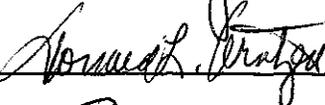
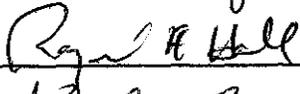
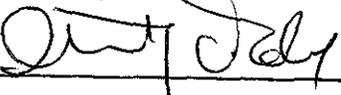
These additional signature sheets are in regards to the proposed Bike Lane and reduced parking available on Elm Street and Northwest Ave. We will no longer have parking available for customers. We will no longer have parking for my neighbor on Northwest who has to drive a van for her <sup>5</sup> five children, one of which has special needs. Her small driveway going into the lower level garage is so shallow, her van would hang over the sidewalk. We have no parking strip on Northwest Avenue on either side as the street was widened in the past & now the sidewalk borders on the curb and the street. So the city could not cut into a parking strip to provide parking as was done on parts of Cornwall. We could no longer have a yard sale or a gathering of friends & family as your proposal would make it difficult for parking -

Please consider the people and businesses who live here! We pay our taxes to support you and the city services. Most of the bike riders do not live on our street and they need to be licensed and made to obey the traffic laws. Our car was smashed into by a bike rider in daylight who has no insurance, of course, so we are vulnerable for the deductible.

# Regarding Northwest Avenue and Elm Street

We, the undersigned residents and business owners and shoppers of these business establishments, would like to request of the city to retain our parking areas in front of our homes as well as our businesses.

We need to retain our pedestrian friendly neighborhoods where hard-working neighbors try to keep a safe and friendly place to live and shop.

Print Name	Signature	Address
1. ANNA AIELLO		2308 Elm ST.
2. RICHARD PERKINS		1208 Toledo St.
3. JOEL FUJIWARA		3018 ALVARADO DR.
4. R. Hameling		2064 Elizabeths St
5. Manio (Gagan) McPegaw		4949 Sansh way
6. Linda Moore		2315 Elm St
7. DONALD L. ARITZEN		4875 ALDRICH RD. Bham Wts
8. Raymond Hall		1477 Hillspring B'ham Wt
9. KEITH PEDERSON		3865 FORT BHAM RD.
10. Dennis Lewis		1703 Euclid Ave Bham
11. ANTHONY ZOLA		2210 ELDRIDGE AVE Bham
12. Walter Rymczyk		3109 Pinewood

Please call Sally Snow for pick up! 715-3350

# Regarding Northwest Avenue and Elm Street

We, the undersigned residents and business owners and shoppers of these business establishments, would like to request of the city to retain our parking areas in front of our homes as well as our businesses.

We need to retain our pedestrian friendly neighborhoods where hard-working neighbors try to keep a safe and friendly place to live and shop.

	Print Name	Signature	Address
1.	ROBERT J BELL JR	Robert Bell	528 W. ILLINOIS ST
2.	BRETT E. FROST	Brett Frost	2429 PARK ST.
3.	RAY MARTIN	R. Martin	2330 ELM
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			

aka: Sara L. Snow

Please call Sally Snow for pick up! 715-3340

Please consider our requests!  
By Sara L. SNOW



Re: Fountain District Comments   
Kathryn E Franks to: Dean Martin  
Cc: Heather M Aven, Tara J Sundin

06/01/2010 10:01 PM

Hi Dean,

Thank you for your comments. They will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for their review.

Best regards,

Katie

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Dean Martin

Dear Bellingham Planning Commission: I would like...

06/01/2010 20:03:34

From: Dean Martin <c.deanmartin@yahoo.com>  
To: kfranks@cob.org  
Cc: Mark Keller <mkeller@yahoo.com>, Todd Donovan <donovan66@msn.com>  
Date: 06/01/2010 20:03  
Subject: Fountain District Comments

Dear Bellingham Planning Commission:

I would like to provide a few comments regarding the Fountain District Planning for your consideration.

As a policy body you have the difficult task of looking at the big picture and making long-term decisions that are for the benefit of the entire city, and indeed, the larger community. One of the things that I think is very important is to provide sufficient housing options, so that it is not necessary to build homes on the agricultural resource lands and rural lands used for agriculture and other natural resource needs. Every possible option to reduce the pressure on natural resource lands should be given consideration. The more people that can be accommodated in Bellingham, the less need there is to convert resource lands. County Council members have used, as part of their justification for increasing Urban Growth Areas into Ag lands and other lands, that the cities, including Bellingham, are unwilling to accommodate the expected increases in population (see May 8 editorial attached).

To have the urban areas take a higher portion of the overall Whatcom County population than

they currently are, there needs to be sufficient housing in Bellingham, and it needs to be an attractive option; aesthetically, lifestyle-wise, and financially. With that in mind, I would encourage the Planning Commission to recommend a maximum of 45 feet in the commercial areas of the Fountain District, with the central core areas at Haggan's and near the fountain limited in height by the Planning Director (as is their current status). By going to 45 feet, you have the opportunity to increase the ability for attractive development that pencils out for developers and for the buyers or renters (only one foundation and one roof whether it is one story, or four stories high). Doing this also encourages the development of more exciting and interesting local businesses, more commercial activity, and a more interesting place to live, work, shop and socialize. There also should be a requirement that any new buildings be at least two stories high. There are a number of upsides to increasing how many new neighbors we can accomodate, and this positive visions of more a more attractive and vibrant community are not often discussed.

Cars need to be addressed in a different way. Cars are just one way for transportation, and not everyone needs to have a car. By tying residential use and business uses to minimum car slots, we maintain and reinforce the ongoing auto dependency. We need to find ways to break that cycle. One way may be to separate the car from the residential use. You rent an apartment or buy a condo to live in; if you have a car, you rent or buy a space for that. This also makes housing more affordable. Having on street parking is extremely costly, and should not be done for residential and business uses in this area. People should not have an expectation of free (or even cheap parking). "The High Cost of Free Parking" is a book that has some very good ideas on how to address this issue (informative review attached).

EPA also has publications about parking in the context of smart growth

*Parking Spaces / Community Places: Finding the Balance through Smart Growth Solutions at:*

<http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/EPAParkingSpaces06.pdf>

We should be striving for complete streets that accomodate cars, delivery vehicls, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. If on-street parking interferes with any of those uses, it is not a good use of the public's right-of-way.

I understand that some of the decisions you will make regarding the Fountain District will be difficult and will make some people unhappy. Please keep in mind the long-term vision of what we want Bellingham and Whatcom County to be in the future and decide accordingly.

Thanks much and good luck.

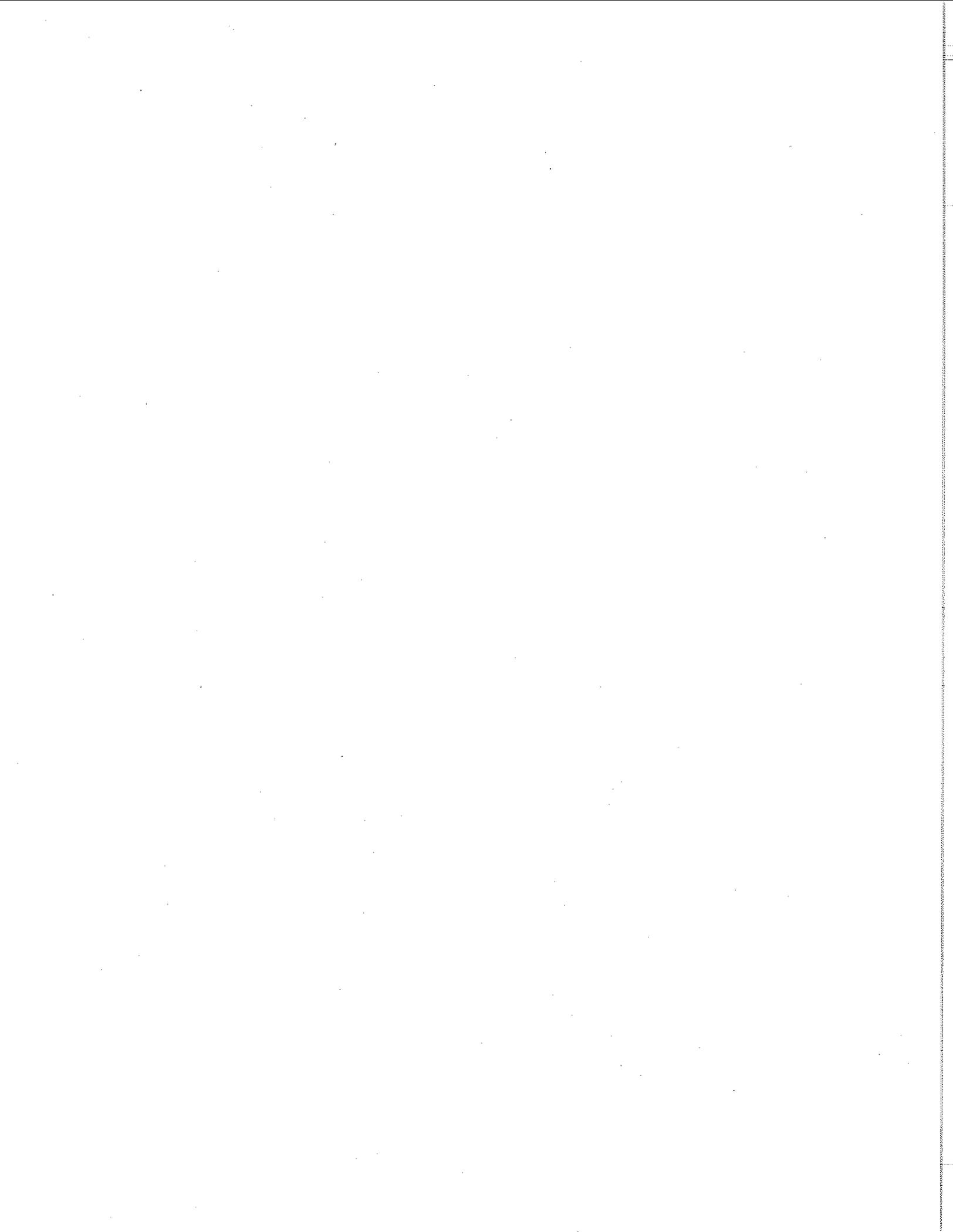
Dean Martin  
2823 Walnut St.



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## Free Parking versus Free Markets:

### A Review Essay on Donald Shoup's *The High Cost of Free Parking*

By Daniel Klein, Professor of Economics, George Mason University

Book information: *The High Cost of Free Parking*. By Donald Shoup. Chicago: Planners Press (American Planning Association), 2005. Pp. xviii, 734. \$59.95.

This essay will appear in:  
*The Independent Review: A Journal of Political Economy*  
Fall 2006

*Abstract:* Donald Shoup has written a massive tome on parking. This essay summarizes the key insights, evaluates the contribution, and interprets Shoup's work as a form of strategic writing.

**Keywords:** Parking, parking requirements, curb parking, parking benefit district, privatization, decontrol, spontaneous order, esoteric writing, strategic writing.

JEL code: R48

Donald Shoup is a professor of urban planning at the University of California, Los Angeles. He holds a doctorate in economics from Yale, and has spent several decades researching parking. He has long been known within transportation and planning fields as the authority on parking. Now he has poured his learning into a massive book.

The book persuades me that the impact of parking policies is much greater than I thought. Fundamentally, the policies in question are just two: city governments (1) mismanage curb parking and (2) require developers to provide extensive off-street parking.

Pesky policy-wonkery? Shoup shows that the magnitudes are huge. About 87 percent of all trips in the U.S. are made by personal motor vehicles, and parking is free for 99 percent of these trips (p. 590). But free parking is not a spontaneous outcome. The required parking lot at a restaurant usually occupies at least three times as much land as the restaurant itself. Shoup reckons this a subsidy to parking, and estimates the U.S. total of such subsidy between \$127 billion and \$374 billion a year. "If we also count the subsidy for free and underpriced *curb* parking, the total subsidy for parking would be far higher. . . . Do we really want to spend as much to subsidize parking as we spend for Medicare or national defense?" (591)

Like freeways and free schooling, free parking isn't free. "We don't pay for parking in our role as motorists, but in all our other roles—as consumers, investors, workers, residents, and taxpayers—we pay a high price" (2). Meanwhile, when motorists drive downtown and cannot find a parking spot, they curse and increase congestion. Exactly like on freeways.

The extent of free parking is so enormous and so normal that people just think it nature's endowment, like air. Everyone feels entitled to free air and free parking. Hence, "most people do not see it as being any subsidy at all" (591). "Because parking costs so much and motorists pay so little for it, the hidden subsidy is truly gigantic" (591).

And yet scholars hardly notice parking at all. Shoup surveys various leading textbooks and sources, and concludes: "Somehow, the urban land use with the biggest footprint and a

profound effect on the transportation system has been invisible to scholars in every discipline” (25).

Parking requirements “increase traffic congestion and air pollution, distort urban form, degrade urban design, increase housing costs, limit homeownership, damage the urban economy, harm the central business district, and penalize poor families” (592). Mandated on-site parking “skews travel choices toward cars and away from public transit, cycling, and walking” (2-3).

The book is marvelous and wonderful. It explains that parking policy is stuck in a self-feeding cycle. It brilliantly criticizes the culture of parking policymakers. It tells all facets of the history. It provides theoretical underpinnings. It displays rich empirical evidence. It makes novel connections and illuminates old issues. It bubbles with illustrations, cultural allusions, and ripe quotations. And its 734 pages are gracefully written. It is one of the best policy books I know. The book represents a life-work in understanding the problem and enlightening the public.

### **Spontaneous Order Forsaken**

The main thrust of Shoup’s analysis is that parking should be left to the invisible hand. He wants to remove zoning requirements for off-street parking. As for the street, he does not propose full-fledged privatization, but something in that direction. The government should create local districts that receive the revenue of paid street parking and use the revenue for district improvements. Thus, Shoup advocates a radically decentralized form of governmental control and residual claimancy. The virtues he describes are precisely the virtues of private ownership. Why not just privatize? More on that later.

Shoup explains that parking requirements are “a disastrous substitute for million of individual decisions—by developers, merchants, employers, and drivers—about how much a

parking space is worth” (497). In the proposed arrangement, parking will be a spontaneous order:

- “Parking will increasingly become unbundled from other transactions, and professional operators will manage more of the parking supply” (496).
- “Emancipation from parking requirements will especially encourage adaptive reuse and infill development in older areas where providing more parking is difficult and will also favor development at locations with good public transit” (498).
- “If cities charge market prices for curb parking, drivers will usually be able to find an available space near their destination” (14-15).
- “To solve the curb parking commons problems without imposing inept land-use regulations, cities can instead let the market do some work for the public good” (594).

### **Binding Minimums**

Perhaps the surest way to know if parking requirements are distorting the decisions of developers is to consult revealed preference: Do developers often decide to build *more* than the minimum? Studies show that they rarely do. Moreover, Shoup tells of his own experience on the Design Review Board on the Los Angeles City Planning Department: “I reviewed the plans of all development in Westwood between 1994 and 2003. I saw many projects where the parking requirements limited the floor space of a building, prevented changing its use, or disfigured its design. But I never saw a project with significantly more parking than the zoning requires” (90).

Most of the time you go to the shopping mall or supermarket, there is a superabundance of empty spaces. It may not seem this way, because you focus on the area near to the

entrance. Shoup tells of a study of suburban office developments in 10 Southern California cities, finding “that the peak parking occupancy averaged only 56 percent of capacity” (82). Investigate the top floor of office-park parking structures: Not only are there no cars, there are few oil spots.

Parking requirements do not require that parking be free. The regulatee may charge for parking. However, Shoup reports the results of Urban Land Institute’s 1999 survey of shopping centers: “Only 2 percent of the centers charged for parking, and they validated it for customers. Only 1 percent charged employees for parking.” *Free* parking is a matter of supply and demand: “if there are more than enough spaces to satisfy the peak demand at a zero price, why charge for them?” (p.87)

### **The Intervention Dynamic**

At the heart of the parking mess is an intervention dynamic. Motorists park on the street and fill the spaces. Tight parking is a great aggravation, so when people hear that a new building is planned, they fear even greater aggravation—an “externality.” But a large part of the aggravation arises from open access at the curb, as well as failure to use better technology. Parking requirements then seem like a reasonable imposition. “Planners set off-street parking requirements because the government fails to charge fair-market prices for curb parking, not because the market fails to provide enough off-street parking” (498).

Then the situation is misconstrued: “Planners have identified the source of the problem not as the city’s failure to charge market prices for curb parking, but as the market’s failure to supply enough off-street parking” (p. 8). By setting parking requirements, they save us from the vagaries of the marketplace. But less beneficent souls also find parking requirements useful. For example, the opponents of a large development usually invoke parking requirements as a reason to reject it or scale it back (495).

## Quack Professional Culture

Shoup explores how planners set requirements. Mainly, they copy each other. “[T]wo surveys suggest that planners set requirements close to the average of other cities” (31). No matter how defective, professional standards become self-validating.

The other method is to consult the manuals of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), which produces *Parking Generation* and *Trip Generation*. These authorities estimate “demand” as peak utilization. Price is not a variable. “The maximum observed demand thus becomes the minimum required supply” (24). Shoup explores the ITE in depth and makes clear its quackish nature, and yet their numbers constitute the professional convention. “As a result, *Parking Generation* directly governs many of the cities’ parking requirements” (53).

The presupposition of free parking becomes self-fulfilling: “[U]rban planners who use these parking generation rates to set minimum parking requirements are shaping a city where almost everyone will drive wherever they go and park free when they get there” (32).

The amount of parking generated by a site depends on many variables (including price of parking), so it is hard to predict or control. Moreover, if the planners tried to fine tune the requirement, the developer will simply provide misleading information and projections. “To avoid these problems cities usually require parking in proportion to something known when a building permit is granted, is difficult to change without another permit, and can be measured easily to verify compliance. For this reason, cities usually require parking in proportion to the built floor space at a site, even if this is a poor prediction of parking demand” (78).

The foolish practices are cemented in by legal considerations. “Admitting the flimsy basis of the parking and trip generation rates would expose land-use decisions to countless lawsuits from developers, neighborhood groups, and property-rights advocates, all of whom

could rightly question the legitimacy of the ‘science’ used to establish parking requirements and could argue for either more or less parking” (53).

Shoup’s analysis of the professional culture is powerful, though always rounded at the tip. Consider this bit of language analysis:

Even the phrase ‘set a parking requirement’ is humbug. The word ‘set’ suggests the possession of special expertise or technical ability to calibrate a finely tuned instrument. But urban planners have no special expertise or technical ability to predict parking demand, and parking requirements are not finely tuned instruments. Planning for parking is a skill learned on the job, and it is more a political than a professional activity. Perhaps planners merely ‘impose’ parking requirements. (88)

Shoup is on the edge of saying that parking requirements are vanity plus coercive power. He notes that “parking requirements result from democratic decision making” (22), and that “[u]rban planners who establish off-street parking requirements . . . have no financial incentive to get things right” (497).

### **Technology Neglected**

Technology is an important part of the story. Before the days of electronic technologies, paying for curb parking involved unsightly parking metering and the handling of coins. But with new devices the motorist need not have coins, need not pay for unused minutes, and need not confront the spectacle of metering posts. One type is the multispace pay-and-display meter—you display the printed permit after paying for a selected number of minutes. Another is the multispace “pay-by-space” meter, which eliminates “meter anxiety” (that is, worrying

about not getting back before your paid time is up). But the most significant development is the in-vehicle parking meter. The meter ticks away visibly inside the vehicle as the vehicle sits in the rented parking space. It is like paying for long-distance telephone calls with a prepaid calling card. These developments are not pie-in-the-sky, but rather tangible off-the-shelf technologies. The in-vehicle system is successfully used in Aspen, Colorado and other U.S. cities. Shoup tells of coming developments using satellite technology, Global Positioning, and payment by mobile phone. Just as electronic toll technology eradicates any argument for freeways, electronic metering technologies undermine arguments for free curb parking. The government's mismanagement of curb parking, then, amounts not merely to not charging for it, but to a more general failure to keep current with technology.

Awareness of the new technologies helps one to envision how parking will work in Shoup's proposed arrangement.

### **The Parking Benefit District**

Again, the core of Shoup's reform package is (1) the removal of parking requirements and (2) the semi-propertization of curbside parking capacity as a resource of the newly created "parking benefit district" (PBD). Shoup's arguments for propertization are superb. He writes that the rents "need the right recipients who will demand price reforms, and these right recipients are those for whom the benefits of efficient management are concentrated rather than dispersed" (528). Parking benefit districts, he says, "provide an excellent example of how a neighborhood can capture the economic and social benefits from cooperative use of a scarce urban resource" (598). Shoup envisions the PBD not only being the residual claimant, but also the authority over parking decisions: "Shifting the decisions about parking to the neighborhood level will thus create the great advantage of a superior interest in the

results. In each neighborhood, the residents, businesses, and property owners will see the results every day” (598-99).

Shoup makes a strong case that PBD propertization will improve resource management. But the reform strategy has a second important advantage, and that is as a political strategy: “Unless the revenue benefits a group who can insist drivers should pay market prices for curb parking, the politics of parking will not change . . . [R]eturning revenue to the metered neighborhoods will create a countervailing interest and incite a passion to charge for parking” (522). “Parking benefit districts create place-based voting blocs of residents who want revenue to improve their neighborhoods” (525).

### **“Not Privatization”**

The issue, says Shoup, is not government property versus private property. Rather, the issue is open access versus enclosure. “With curb parking, public property is not the problem, and private ownership is not the solution” (596). “[T]he enclosure of curb parking does not imply private ownership of the curb space. Rather, I am using the term ‘enclosure’ to mean charging market prices for curb parking and then spending the resulting revenue for local public improvements” (595).

He insists that “[c]ity life requires common ownership of much land (such as streets, sidewalks, and parks)” (7), but all of his reasoning and argumentation would seem to favor more thoroughgoing privatization. Why not fuse residual claimancy with decisive authority more completely? Why not allow divestiture and recombination in ways more flexible than in the PBD plan? For example, suppose reforms held that along designated government streets the property owners obtained transferable prescriptive rights to the curb parking capacity along the abutting curb. Property owners could then combine to set up associations to manage the resources, or, even better, sell the rights to entrepreneurs who would own the

prescriptive rights and professionally manage the resources. There would be freedom of exit, better fusion of residual claimancy and authority, better utilization of local knowledge, and ongoing marketization of the resources. This system, if we could get there, would be less politicized than the PBD plan, which might create the sort of perpetual democratic fecklessness typical of homeowners' associations. Shoup never makes arguments against more radical privatization of prescriptive rights, nor against the outright privatization of the street. He references Fred Foldvary's classic work on private community (*Public Goods and Private Communities: The Market Provision of Social Services*, Aldershot, UK: Edward Elgar, 1994) and surely is aware of such theories.

Also, it seems to me that technological developments might recommend a different reform strategy. It seems like in-vehicle meters could be easily adapted such that the driver punches in a parking-merchant code, which is then displayed by the meter. This system could operate nationwide among anyone who wanted to participate. Call it the Acme system. For example, if you wanted to rent out space in your own personal driveway as parking space, you simply put up a sign announcing the rates and saying that the customer must have an Acme-system meter and punch in the merchant code (provide by the sign). You then monitor parked vehicles for compliance. A car without an in-vehicle meter, or with the wrong merchant code, or perhaps with the wrong rate code displayed would be a trespasser, and could be booted or otherwise held to account. You then collect your payments from the Acme system, who, like American Express, takes a cut. With such an Acme system, we will easily be able to imagine a reform movement in favor of capturing the potential revenues of parking supply.

### **Esoteric Writing and Bargaining**

Leo Strauss famously developed theories of esoteric writing, whereby authors put much of what they have to say between the lines, or in various beards and disguises. They write this

way for strategic reasons specific to the discourse situation, such as placating censors or gatekeepers. It is tempting to read parts of Shoup's book that way. Shoup's book is admirable not merely in its wisdom and learning, but in its success in discourse where such wisdom and learning is most crucial. The book is published by the American Planning Association. Imagine if Ludwig von Mises's 1922 work *Socialism* (trans. J. Kahane, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981) had been published by the Soviet Politburo. That would have made the book and the author even greater. But what if such achievement requires some fudging? Surely favor some fudging to advance enlightenment where it is of great consequence.

Shoup says time and again that his proposal preserves public property, but all of his argumentation makes a case for private property. He often quotes others who point to private property, and remains silent about why not to privatize (594-600). Likewise, some stinging criticisms of government come by way of quotation (e.g., 483).

Shoup is bargaining with planners, and must be careful not to insult them or impugn their motives. "[M]ost planners who implement off-street parking requirements are public-minded people trying to do what is best for their communities" (596). Although he points out the greed of construction companies and others in rigging forecasts (61), he absolves planners: "does the systematic upward bias in the estimated parking and trip generation rates stem from any economic interest in the results? I think the answer is definitely *no*. . . . Mistakes are not being made to advance anyone's private interest" (62). For planners, it is a case of honest error.

One must read Shoup's book through strategic lenses. Strategic considerations may help us understand the sheer size of work. The comprehensive nature of the work makes it impossible to ignore or overlook. Anyone who pretends to be a scholar or professional working on parking policy will simply have to contend with Shoup's book. Shoup packs it

with powerful criticism, but with caresses and assurances. For example, he assures planners that reform can be introduced gradually (495), and that cities and planners should regulate parking *quality* but without really making a case for doing so (101ff, 602).

### **Other Strategic Sacrifices**

Shoup's strategic writing involves sacrifice. Where Shoup uses spontaneous-order insights—that is, the importance of particularism, local knowledge, ownership, freedom, entrepreneurship, incentives, and market forces—he writes only of how these principles narrowly relate to parking. He eschews the connection to the broader body of spontaneous-order learning. This strategy might be to the good. Had he developed his book in the more scientific way—Here are principles and now I will apply them to parking—the planners would have been embarrassed and unfriendly. Still, one might regret the failure to connect directly and openly to the great train of liberal social theory.

Second, Shoup's parking analysis eschews not only invisible-hand theory, but also the application of the insights that illuminate parking to issues directly related to parking. Shoup does apply the insights to one related issue, highway congestion, and makes the case for tolling highway usage and remitting the revenue to local highway benefit districts. However, Shoup completely neglects the application of spontaneous-order principles to the issue of transit, including buses, shuttle vans, jitneys, taxis, and on-the-spot carpools. This omission is significant for two reasons. First, because the same set of principles apply so straightforwardly. Shoup explains that “[e]very transport system has three elements: vehicles, rights-of-way, and terminal capacity” (9). For the personal motor vehicle system, he analyzes the breakdown in terminal capacity—parking. Likewise, urban route-based transit (buses, jitneys, vans) fails miserably because of the same breakdown in the terminal capacity of that system, namely the bus stops, bus stations, and pick-up areas, which are generally

governmentally owned (this insight is the gist of the book by Daniel B. Klein, Adrian T. Moore and Binyam Reja, *Curb Rights: A Foundation for Free Enterprise in Urban Transit*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1997). Moreover, in transit, restrictions on private freedom play a big role (just as parking requirements do in Shoup's story), namely the governmental barriers to entry and restrictions on operation in the would-be private bus, van, jitney, taxi, and carpool markets. These transit policy issues are not just theoretical parallels to Shoup's parking analysis, but are important to Shoup's vision. Shoup's reforms will lead to more paid parking. Treating parking space as a scarce resource will mean an outward shift in the demand for transportation modes that do not necessitate that you park at your destination, notably buses, vans, taxis, etc. But this new demand cannot be well serviced if those services are tightly bound—as they are now—by government restrictions. Although Shoup notes repeatedly that better parking policy would increase transit usage, he never address the inadequacy of transit services and the need for parallel reforms there. Besides the transit application, one might argue that there are other parallel applications important to Shoup's vision, such as the property-rights approach to automobile emissions made possible by remote sensing. These omissions, again, are due not to a lack of insight, but to strategic considerations. Shoup is picking his battles. If the book called for decontrol and property rights, not just in parking, but across the range of transportation policy, then it clearly would be a libertarian book and hence less effective with the planners, engineers, academics, bureaucrats, politicians, and environmentalists.

A final aspect that might be read as a strategic sacrifice is the appeals to the ideological sensibilities of the planners et al. Characterizing the current parking policies as subsidies to the private automobile, he often appeals to the anti-automobile frame of mind. He writes how parking subsidies degrade the environment, increase global warming, increase energy consumption, create suburban sprawl, reduce the usage of public transit, reduce walking and

cycling, and so on. He is probably mostly right in all this, but the flavor of it sometimes comes across as too tender toward those hostile to the dominance of automobility and dispersed development. Shoup never lets on that automobile dominance is quite ineluctable and for good reasons, and that in many respects his policies would actually make driving more attractive relative to other travel modes.

I tend to see the various shortcomings as strategic sacrifices, and hence not as flaws. They are necessary to the book's great achievements, and hence are redeemed.

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# County Council members trying to find a more balanced solution

**SAM CRAWFORD / THE BELLINGHAM HERALD**

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Whatcom County officials are required to plan for future growth by state law, with a designated land supply for 20 years of growth. Our cities and the areas around them that are zoned for substantial growth are referred to as "urban growth areas." Neighborhoods for families, workers, seniors, students and everyone else must be considered, as well as places for employment, natural resources, parks, schools, streets and a host of other "infrastructure."

Whatcom County adopted urban growth areas in the 1990s and until recently these have changed little on the planning maps. Prior to this past November, the total area of urban growth areas outside of cities throughout Whatcom County was 26,922 acres. A state board ordered Whatcom County to take another look at its urban growth areas several years ago. This was in response to legal action by private landowners against the county.

At the county's request, mayors, planners and landowners provided thoughtful analyses of how our county should plan for growth. But when a final urban growth area-reduction designation was made by a majority of the County Council last November, most of the cities' modest requests - with accompanying analyses - were not heeded. The council decided to reduce previously agreed-upon urban growth areas by a substantial 6,154 acres to 20,768 acres.

The reaction to this was immediate with over a dozen petitioners initiating a legal action against the county. These included some of the small cities and a fire district, as well as private landowners. As new council members joined the County Council this year, there has been an effort to avoid litigation and reinstate a portion of the urban growth areas that were just reduced. The "new" County Council proposed changing the November decision to a total area of 22,638 acres - still a significant reduction of 4,284 acres from the previous total of 26,922 acres.

In proposing that change, some council members agreed there should be a "shift" of past urban growth area designations, away from the more rural areas west of Ferndale and south of Blaine, to the more urbanized area north of Costco and Cordata known as the "Caitac" parcel. This is currently rural-zoned land - not farmland, as some assert - that is already partially developed with a golf course, and is served by major transportation corridors.

The mayor of Bellingham has been adamant that the inclusion of "Caitac" is inappropriate at this time. He feels all decisions about Bellingham's urban growth areas should be postponed until the city can do further analysis - and yet again update its comprehensive plan. This has been an ongoing process for many years, taking shape as "The Growth Forum" and other venues for citizen

input. The last time the analysis was done, the city's projections indicated a need for larger urban growth areas.

The final designation of any urban growth area is a county decision. If the "Caitac" parcel is designated as an urban growth area, some characterize it as Bellingham having an urban growth area "forced upon them." The reality is the adjacent city - in this case Bellingham - holds all the cards when it comes to utilities and other services that enable urban levels of growth. If included as urban growth area, the "Caitac" owners would still be wholly dependent on city decisions when any specific substantial development is proposed. An interlocal agreement between Bellingham and Whatcom County would be negotiated to clarify that authority. Bellingham would not be forced to do anything.

The county executive recently made it clear that unless there were five council members who supported inclusion of the "Caitac" area as urban growth area, he would veto the ordinance. Since only four council members supported the "Caitac" urban growth area designation, that portion of the proposed revision was dropped by the council, along with several other areas.

The County Council is now proposing a change from the 6,154-acre urban growth area reduction to a 5,470-acre net reduction, reinstating 684 acres. No change is proposed to any of the Nov. 24 urban growth area designations around the city of Bellingham.

The infill issue for Bellingham requires more direct discussion by community leaders if there's any progress to be made in accommodating the many new residents anticipated over a 20-year period. Most residents like the idea of "building up, not out," but also say they don't want increased housing density in their own neighborhoods. This is far from being resolved. The residents of existing neighborhoods rightfully expect some certainty regarding their quality of life and how that might be affected by future infill growth.

*Sam Crawford is currently chairman of the Whatcom County Council. He has served on the council since 2000.*