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**NO  
PARKING**

## Are parking problems in Multnomah Village real or perceived?

By Erik Vidstrand  
The Southwest Portland Post

Picture this scenario: parking meters line the main streets of Multnomah Village; parking enforcement officers walk around daily with handheld devices issuing tickets as needed; less and less parking spots are found due to infill, traffic calming, and additional bio-swales.

Business owners and visitors say the above scenario is plausible in the not-too-distant future. Of course anything is possible when it comes to involving the city, especially the issues that are deep-rooted in passion and frustration.

So is the parking problem in this 100-year-old village real or perceived?

On one hand, there are the folks who support road diets – narrowing of roads to slow traffic and reduce accidents – increased bicycling; accessible, frequent public transportation; and encouraging walking.

On the other hand, there are the folks who *need* access to parking

for accessibility, especially disabled, injured, and elderly citizens.

Many individuals have weighed in over the years on issues of the community. There have been workshops on transportation needs; forums on livability; meetings with politicians; and engaging citizens; and an abundance of media coverage.

“Here’s the thing,” declared a very long-time business owner who wanted to remain nameless. “Believe it or not, there is a problem with parking which creates a domino effect which grates the nerves of visitors, frustrates business owners, and produces a stress factor that, quite frankly, wasn’t there not that long ago.”

According to this owner, the city is partially to blame for the problem.

Tamara Marshall, co-owner of Fusion Hair Salon, reported a recent parking issue on the Multnomah Village Facebook page and it resulted in over 100 comments.

“It exasperates me,” her thread began, “that my clients are circling the block for more than 15 minutes looking for parking.”

“Once parked, they usually have to move their car before the two-hour time limit so no one stays to shop.”

She relayed that customers feel frustrated because they were told by the city that they need to move their car away from their original parking space since they may get ticketed for just moving a few feet away.

Some comments state that people are spoiled. They don’t want to walk any longer than three minutes.

“Not everyone can commute any way but by car,” Marshall responded. “What

about the elderly, the disabled, even people who may be injured? I have clients as far away as Ashland. What do you tell them?”

Joe Theissen, one of the writers on the Multnomah Village Facebook page wrote, “I’ll take more sidewalks over more parking lots any time.”

“I’m a lifelong ‘97219-er’... and I’ve had to deal with parking in the Village for years. I firmly believe that moving toward more parking is moving away from what the Village is all about.”

“But honestly, I care more about preserving the Village than the 21st century expectations of convenience.”

Cash Gordon, the manager of O’Connor’s Restaurant and Bar, claims that parking problems are hurting business.

“Our business has been down. I feel this is mainly due to the parking issues. If people can’t easily park, they say, ‘the hell with it’ and go somewhere else [to eat or drink].”

Gordon walks the village at least twice a week scoping out the parking situation. He notes that the lower lot at the Multnomah Center is usually full. According to the city, who runs the center, it’s filled with employees and students.

Nevertheless, on the Sunday before Christmas, one of the busiest shopping days of the year, this reporter counted 36 empty parking spots in the lower lot while parking and traffic chaos prevailed in the heart of the village.

Gordon remarked that 33 parking spots have disappeared on Multnomah Boulevard and Capitol Highway since



Tamara Marshall is co-owner of Fusion Hair Salon in Multnomah Village. Marshall said her customers are forced to move their cars out of the area after two hours or face parking tickets. (Post photo by Don Snedecor)

the road and sidewalk construction projects began over three years ago.

“I’ve spoken to Moses Ross (former chair of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association),” Gordon continued. “He prefers a political solution.”

There were other solutions suggested including the *Post’s* editor, Don Snedecor.

“Except for loading and unloading,” Snedecor commented, “business owners, managers, and employees should always long-term park at the Multnomah Center, lower lot, if they are able to.”

“The Multnomah Village Business Association,” he continued, “should survey surrounding properties for vacant lots, church lots, etc. that could be used for overflow parking and then  
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Temporary parking signs placed by gas company NW Natural are ignored. This photo was taken during working hours along Capitol Highway near 34th Avenue. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)



A parking enforcement officer gives a ticket to a car parked illegally along Capitol Highway next to the Multnomah Center. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

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