

University Impacted Area Parking Study

April 25, 2006

BACKGROUND:

Parking regulations in the University Impacted Area (UIA) and neighboring areas surrounding the ISU campus have been an ongoing concern to citizens and visitors of the City of Ames alike. As a result of continued interest by various stakeholders, staff was directed to address these concerns and develop an inclusive solution to the existing parking problem. In fall of 2005, staff assembled a Campustown Parking Team comprised of members from the Police, Planning and Public Works Departments, as well as Iowa State University staff. Over the course of several months the team met with members of multiple neighborhood associations and Greek affiliates who live in the UIA. These meetings resulted in the creation of a steering committee fashioned from the following groups; The Campustown Parking Team, South Campus Area Neighborhood association (SCAN), Greek Community Affiliates, Government of the Student Body, Apartment Owners/Managers, and various renters.

On November 16, 2006, staff and the steering committee met to develop a recommendation for UIA regulations. The recommendation included the following four basic changes to the current parking regulations:

- **Alternate side parking regulations should be made consistent throughout the University-Impacted area providing for a “change over” period from 9:00 p.m. to Midnight.**

The steering committee members believe that this change will eliminate the confusion that now exists because of the numerous variations in changeover periods throughout the area.

- **The existing prohibition on parking on either side of a street from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. should be eliminated (except in metered areas).**

The steering committee members believe that the alternate side parking regulation alone accomplishes the City objectives for street cleaning, snow removal, and the elimination of long-term storage of vehicles.

- **The existing parking limits of 4 and 6 hours should be abolished.**

The steering committee members believe that commuter drivers are not using the neighborhoods to park in as much as they did in the past since there is more use of the bus system and commuter parking lots.

- **The fines for illegal parking should be increased to \$15.**

The steering committee believes that this change is justified in order to bring the fines in line with parking penalties at ISU. In addition, it is believed that once more easily understood parking regulations are in place, harsher penalties are warranted because violations will then be intentional.

On March 21, 2006, the steering committee met with the Ames City Council in a roundtable setting to discuss the committee's findings and subsequent recommendations. At the conclusion of the roundtable, the City Council directed staff to hold a public information session to hear citizen comments regarding parking regulations in the UIA. Over 2,000 invitations were sent to persons living in the UIA notifying them of the public information session that included an outline of all Steering Committee recommendations to date.

On April 6, 2006, a public information session was held, and was attended by eight citizens. The session was recorded and shown on City Cable Channel 12. Discussion during the April 6th session covered parking concerns as well as various safety concerns regarding vehicular speeding and pedestrian safety. Staff in Police and Public Works Departments will continue to monitor enforcement and safety concerns as an ancillary effort to the focus of this study. Included in this report are several alternatives, together with an estimated cost, when applicable, to address the University Impacted Area parking concerns.

Pictures of the existing parking regulations, along with a detail of each, have been provided as attachments one through four. Attachment five is notes from the April 6th public information session.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can approve all four of the recommendations of the steering committee. These recommendations are as follows:

- Changing to a uniform alternate side parking sign
- Elimination of the 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. parking prohibition (except in metered areas)
- Abolishment of the 4 and 6 hour parking limitations
- Increasing illegal parking fines to \$15

This alternative will cost \$5,000 to change out the existing signs to reflect the new regulations.

The intent of this alternative is to eliminate the inconsistency in the current signage while concurrently eliminating confusion. This alternative also provides equitable parking regulations for all stakeholders. Finally, removal of time-limited parking may provide efficiency to the Police Department's ability to enforce parking regulations in the University Impacted Area.

A proposed alternate side parking sign is shown below. This configuration more closely follows Federal guidelines.



2. **The City Council can approve the recommendations of the steering committee that would require a change to a uniform alternate side parking sign, the abolishment of the 4 and 6 hour parking limitation, and the increase in the illegal parking fines to \$15.** Under this option, the 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. parking prohibition would be maintained. This alternative will cost \$3,500 for the change out of the existing signs to reflect the new regulations.

This alternative would contain the same alternate side parking sign revision as shown in Alternative 1. **The retention of the overnight restriction will be supported by some of the stakeholders involved in this study who are fearful of long-term storage of vehicles in the neighborhoods should this restriction be removed.** Removal of the time-limited parking restriction during the day will provide improved efficiency to the enforceability of parking regulations.

3. **The City Council can approve the recommendation of the steering committee that would require a change to a uniform alternate side parking sign, and the increase in the illegal parking fines to \$15.** Under this option, the 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. parking prohibition and the 4 and 6 hour parking limitation would be maintained. The cost of this alternative will be \$2,500 for the change out of existing signs to reflect the new regulations.

This alternative would contain the same alternate side parking sign revision as shown in Alternative 1. **The retention of the overnight restriction and time-limited parking will be supported by most of the stakeholders who are fearful of long-term storage of vehicles in the neighborhoods should these restrictions be removed.**

4. **The City Council can approve any combination of the proposed regulatory changes, but retain the current illegal fine structure of \$10.**
5. **The City Council can direct Staff to research other alternatives to parking regulations in the University Impacted Area.**
6. **The City Council can decide to retain the current parking regulations in the University Impacted Area.**

NEXT STEPS:

This is the third time in three decades that this sensitive issue has been studied extensively and brought to the City Council for action. A significant amount of time and effort has been devoted to working with representatives of the many constituencies in developing recommendations to improve what everyone agrees is a very confusing situation. Because of their lack of clarity, the current regulations cause great confusion and frustration to many of our residents and visitors when tickets are issued. Students in particular have repeatedly made it clear that they feel singled out and made to feel unwelcome in the community because of these regulations.

Based on the input received to date, it appears that almost everyone can support change to a uniform signage with a 9 p.m. to Midnight "changeover period."

Beyond this, staff believes that, at the very least, the City must standardize alternate side parking regulations throughout the area. This change will make the alternate side parking regulations in the UIA consistent with other areas of the City (e.g., north of downtown). This UIA area standardization is appropriate for all streets *except* for Hayward Avenue, where the existing one-side parking has reportedly created no problems and continues to be appropriate.

Staff further supports elimination of the daytime parking limitations. These regulations are very difficult for the Police Department to enforce because they involve marking tires, which is a time consuming and inefficient means of enforcement.

Many of the home owners in the area are concerned that changes to the overnight restriction and time-limited parking will result in more storage of vehicles in their neighborhoods. Therefore, there is less unanimity with these recommendations.

Finally, it seems appropriate to increase the illegal parking fine to \$15 because of the greater clarity gained by the proposed revision in signage. The fine increase will also serve to standardize the City of Ames fine structure in accordance with the current structure used by Iowa State University.

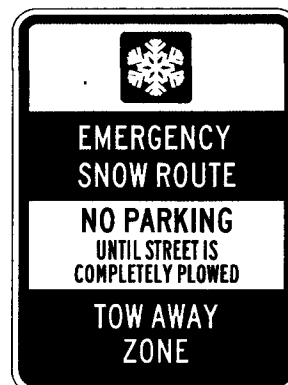
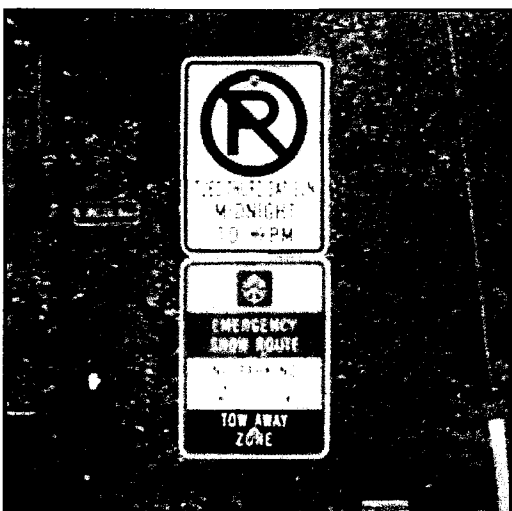
The City Council must decide which of the steering committee's recommendations you will support and then direct staff to bring back for approval the relevant Municipal Code revisions that are necessary to accomplish these changes.

Attachment 1: Existing Signage

Sunset Drive:

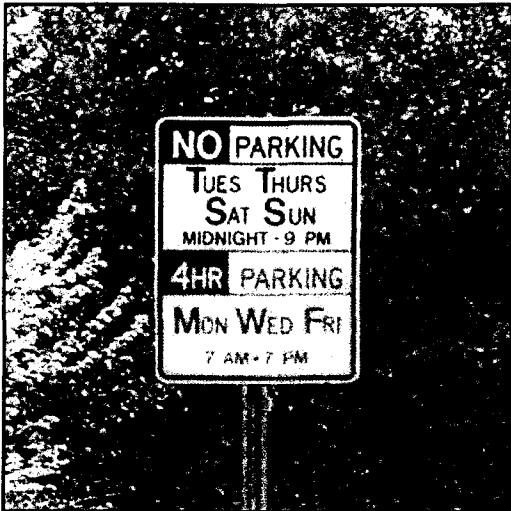


Ash Avenue:



Attachment 2: Existing Signage (continued)

Country Club Boulevard:



Greeley Street:

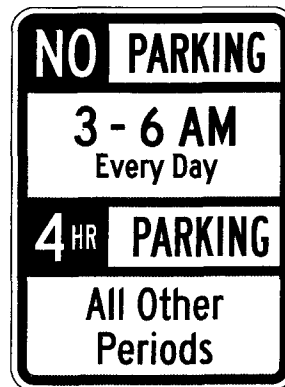


Attachment 3: Existing Signage (continued)

Agg Street:

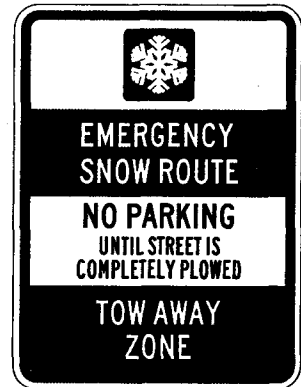
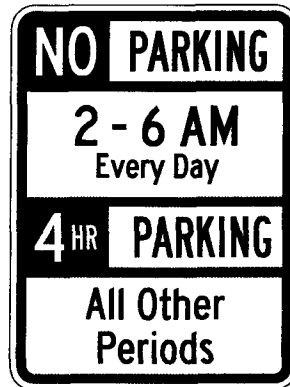


Hayward Avenue (North):



Attachment 4: Existing Signage (continued)

Hayward Avenue (South):



**Public Parking Meeting Comments
April 6, 2006**

Martha Atkins, 419 Pearson

- Should treat high density and low density differently (if not, isn't equitable and fair to all residents)
- Three new apartment buildings coming in and will affect area, expect storage issues.
- Low density areas do not want storage of vehicles.
- Look at goals – consistency and ease of enforcement can be accomplished by looking at the different needs of the two zones.
- Recommends no overnight parking in low density zone for quality of life in that area.

Jim Hoekstra, corner of Welch and Little Street

- Encourages the City to not have storage parking, keep No Parking 2 to 6 a.m. on Welch, south of Knapp.
- Keep 4 hour parking limit so visitors have a chance to use.
- Doesn't mind Alternate Parking.

Stephen Proulx, 2037 Country Club

- Asked for clarification on recommendation to abolish 4 and 6 hour parking.
- Pointed out need for open space to see around cars that are parked, esp. children – safety concern.
- Feels less commuter traffic right now due to 4 and 6 hour parking.
- Feels increase in parking with new apartment complexes coming in.
- Asked for clarification on warnings given. More concern about local traffic vs. out of towners.

Joe Rippetoe, 419 Pearson

- Access, congestion, or improving safety issues are reasons why parking changes are made; the recommendations proposed do not address these issues so there is no reason for change. No case for changes – impedes safety.
- Serious danger if remove regulations that have been there for over 20 years (there for a reason).
- Greek and neighbors currently getting along fine. Seems to be compliancy and understanding.
- Only sees consistency in signage the only reason for changes.
- Why No Parking on Lynn – will that change for consistency?
- Pearson is just as narrow as Lynn and also has a hill and curve. No one on Pearson is supporting or pushing for these changes.

Martha Atkins

- Yellow zones on Pearson may be an avenue to pursue, however, it will not help children being able to see.
- Everyone is getting along well right now. No changes in regulations needed.
- Two zones have different parking needs.
- Pearson is not a safe street (children, incline, snow, accidents)

Beth Chamberlin, 2125 Greeley-Sorority

- Need these changes. Sorority is a small house and more cars than lot can handle. Some do use the stadium lot; however, many have jobs off campus and need to have their vehicles to get to their jobs.
- No Parking 2 to 6 a.m. is a huge hassle and isn't followed.
- Alternate is good. Somewhat of storage, but does provide vehicle turnover.
- Realizes residential needs are different, but Greek Community needs changes and is not happy with current situation.
- Understands safety concerns.

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E-mail Comments:

Barry Larkin, NE corner of Lincoln Way and Campus Ave

- Inconsistency of yellow zone length.
- Enforcement of yellow zone violations.

Martha Atkins, 419 Pearson Ave

- See above, public meeting comments.
- Pearson Avenue should have No Parking 3 to 6 a.m. due to safety issues.

Amy Andreotti, 321 Pearson Ave

- Allowing Alternate Parking on Pearson will result in storage of vehicles.
- Storage will be exacerbated by the new apartment buildings going up.
- Eliminate street parking altogether (both sides) at the dangerous curves on Pearson.
- Increase illegal parking fines.
- Look at engineering solutions to speeding problems.

Grant Thomas, Iowa State – No address listed (Hyland??)

- Need to include some parking areas where cars can be left overnight.
- Eliminate No Parking 3 a.m. to 6 a.m. at metered locations. Ticket after 6 a.m. if still parked there.

Blake Faris, Iowa State, no address given

- He and 2 roommates agree with the proposed alternate signage.
- Don't like fine increase from \$10 to \$15, but also understands probably needed to cover cost of new signs and a compromise point.

Kay Craig and Irene Swanson, 2601 Hunt

- Alternate side parking is essential for most streets in their area.
- Appreciate parking on east side in first residential block of Hayward. Makes backing out of drive safer. Would hate to see any change on Hayward.
- More easily understood signage is a must.
- No opinion on eliminating 2-6 a.m. or traffic fines.
- 4 and 6 hour parking means occasionally a space will be available, otherwise spaces will fill up and vehicles not moved until the end of the day.
- Most important to us – keeping east side parking on Hayward each day.

Richard Horton, 2119 Country Club Blvd.

- Likes the proposed new wording on Alternate Parking signs.
- Old Alternate signage is so confusing!
- "I do have heartburn every time we have a large event (typically FB) and claim to welcome visitors to Ames - and then ticket them when there are no good alternatives left to park within a mile of the stadium. I know we have a few residents who hate athletics and hate anyone who parks in front of their home when they shouldn't, but you or the city council could waive the ordinance, officially, on these very limited occasions and show visitors that Ames is a welcoming community, for the most part."
- No opinion on the other recommendations.

Jeffrey Beetham, 3213 Oakland Street (comments from minutes from Steering Committee Minutes 11-16-05)

- Eliminate the requirement for alternate side parking. This requirement seems to have the greatest negative impact on those street-parkers who do not use their vehicles daily. If we want to encourage people to "leave their car at home" and use alternative transportation means (bike, feet, bus, carpool, and etc) we should consider parking-regulation alternatives that do not have this negative.
- The minutes indicate consensus that the alternative parking provision "keeps the city streets from becoming a storage area for vehicles, it allows for snow removal, and it provides parking for residents on one side of the street each day". The city already has a 48hr-limit for on street parking which should serve to prevent the streets becoming an auto storage area (although I would suggest this limit should be increased in order to encourage letting one's vehicle sit). We could explore alternatives that address the snow removal issue (e.g. perhaps by having signage indicating that when snow is present, alternative parking is in effect).
- The minutes do not indicate what purpose is served by 2-6 AM restrictions on parking. If someone needs to park during that time, why not let them?

- The minutes include the **"Suggestion to put Ames parking fines in line with ISU, \$15.00 for illegal parking."** Why? I would suggest putting the ISU fines in line with Ames (which for fines other than parking meter violations or violations of the handicap zone is \$10/\$15 depending on whether payment is received within 30 days).