



Footprint Investments of Seattle is erecting a 50-unit, micro apartment building with no off-street parking at 2250 NW Thurman St. on a lot smaller than the standard size for single-family homes. Photo by Vadim Makoyed

A Walking Tour of Historic Stately Homes on May 4

Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center and Northwest Children's Theater present third annual tour of historic homes.

DAN VOLKMER

As you wander through our beautiful neighborhood and into these historic homes, meet your neighbors and friends, learn about the grit and glory of our city's founders, marvel at the artistic craftsmanship and know your \$25 ticket fee goes to preserve our neighborhood icon and benefits Northwest Children's Theater and School.

The Stately Home Tour, to be held Sunday, May 4, features the work of some of Portland's most



The Dr. Andrew Jackson Giesy Home will be on the history tour.

prominent early architects. Open for viewing to ticket holders will be homes designed by the early "rock star" architects who gave Portland its Beaux Arts turn-of-the-century style when Seattle and San Francisco were still backwater villages. The Portland Hotel, the ▶

Continued on page 6

Apartment buildings flood Slabtown area (parking not included)

Increasingly, major apartment buildings coming to Northwest Portland provide little or no parking for tenants. It's a new wrinkle in a district already notorious for parking shortages.

ALLAN CLASSEN

The "other" parking issue has come to roost in Northwest Portland. After City Council ended two decades of quarrels over on-street parking by adopting the Northwest Parking Plan in 2012, neighborhood players sat out last year's citywide debate about off-street parking. It didn't pertain to them.

Minimum off-street parking requirements for new apartment buildings adopted by the city a year ago don't affect the Northwest District, which is governed by a local policy plan. While no one had this in mind when the plan was adopted in 2003, the "loophole" was discovered after residential buildings without parking began popping up in the past two or three years.

The problem was driven home last year by a Seattle developer who got approval for a 50-unit micro apartment building at 2250 NW Thurman St. It has no off-street parking. The project stands out for several reasons—including its tiny 125-square-foot units—but it now seems like less of an aberration. Backers of a handful of more recent projects also believe they can cut costs by letting tenants with cars fend for themselves.

The just completed Addy, a 104-unit building at Northwest 19th and Northrup, has only 24 parking stalls, available to the first tenants willing to pay an

extra \$165 a month.

The Hoyt, going up at Northwest 17th and Hoyt, will have 39 units without any off-street parking.

Developers of the DeTemple Plumbing property at 1951 NW Overton St. plan to build 126 300-square-foot units without providing for vehicle storage.

Ron Walters, president of the Northwest District Association from 2010-13, has compiled a list of every residential building in the neighborhood built since 2005 or currently in the pipeline. He's counted about 1,900 new units in that time ▶

Continued on page 18



Dog park a community generator

Pearlandia
BY KATE WASHINGTON

Page 11

Rally to free Packy

Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants and In Defense of Animals are sponsoring a rally Saturday, April 12, to gain freedom for Packy, the zoo's famous elephant who turns 52 on that day.

"He will have spent 52 years behind bars and is suffering from many conditions and illnesses directly related to his captivity, including a life-threatening form of tubercu-

losis," stated a Free the Oregon Zoo Elephants press release. "We urge the Oregon Zoo officials to release him to sanctuary now."

Participants are asked to meet at the zoo entrance, 4001 SW Canyon Rd., by noon. The rally will continue until 3 p.m. For information, visit freeoregonzooelephants.org/packys-birthday. ■

See stories on Page 25.



The Oregon Zoo has no plans to release its most famous elephant to a sanctuary, though Packy suffers from tuberculosis, chronic foot problems and frequent head bobbing considered by some to be a sign of boredom and stress. Photo by Vadim Makoyed

Apartment buildings flood Slabtown area

Continued from page 1

and 939 associated parking stalls, about one stall per two housing units.

More disturbingly, the ratio is going downward.

"We were getting a 60-65 percent parking ratio," said NWDA's longtime Planning Committee Chair John Bradley. "Recently, that's down to zero."

"This is alarming," said Bradley.

Tavo Cruz, the association's main spokesperson in getting the Northwest Parking Plan passed, said current parking conditions for residents are "intolerable" now and will only

get worse.

While the no-parking trend began on the Eastside, Northwest activists suspect that developers pursuing this strategy turned to the Northwest District after the city began requiring buildings with more than 30 apartments to provide at least a 20-percent parking ratio.

"There's a feeding frenzy out there," said Steve Pinger, an NWDA board member, architect and small-scale developer.

Pinger believes land values are spiraling in the northern end of the district because so many developers realize this is

their only opportunity to erect large apartment buildings in Portland without providing space for parking.

For example, Pinger said he doubled his offer on a property at Northwest 20th and Pettygrove from the price he offered just one year earlier. It was still not enough. Another investor scooped up the 100x100-foot corner lot for \$1.9 million, \$300,000 more than his upgraded bid.

"The forces coming down on this neighborhood concern me," he said.

Those forces also include unleashing pent-up demand for the 17-acre Con-way property at the heart of the Slabtown area in 2012 with completion of a city-sanctioned master plan.

The master plan entails parking accommodation within its boundaries, but no such expectations apply to the circle of underdeveloped lots surrounding the plan area. Suddenly, developers are forming a line for these prime parcels.

"I think we need to hit the pause button," said Pinger.

Walters uses a stronger metaphor: "Right now, we need a tourniquet."

Any day, we may see another application for a micro apartment building near someone's house, he said. He fears a flood of cheaply-built, parking-less structures that could diminish the district for years.

"I think this is urgent," said Walters. "We can't wait until summer."

As an interim measure, the neighborhood association passed a resolution in January asking the city to apply citywide parking minimum standards in Northwest. It's not a comprehensive solution, he said, but it would be "better than nothing."

On that point, the organization is united.

"If we wait," said another NWDA board member and small-scale developer, Karen Karlsson, "we'll see larger no-parking buildings. ... This to me is an important issue that we really should be pushing on."

The thought that Northwest Portland has to plead for parking protections already in place across the city seems backwards to Jeanne Harrison, a former Portland Bureau of Transportation planner who chairs the NWDA Transportation Committee.

The district has denser construction and greater parking pressures than do the Eastside neighborhoods that successfully rebelled against new residential development without parking, she said.

Bradley, Harrison and Cruz of NWDA met with Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Chief Planner Joe Zehnder in February to explain the neighborhood's predicament. They came away feeling that Zehnder understood the problem but could offer little staff support or hope of prompt action. He promised to get back to them in early March but so far has not done so.

If an off-street parking requirement is not put in place soon, many fear that the coming on-street program will be too little too late. The Northwest Parking Plan will involve metering in commercial areas and permits for residents and workers throughout the district east of Northwest 25th Avenue. So far, the permit system is

enforced only south of Irving Street and full implementation of the program isn't expected until early next year.

But by then, the demand for parking may have spiked so high that having a permit may be only a license to hunt for a parking space. There could be far more cars than available parking places.

Karlsson thinks waiting even until the fall to install meters may be too late.

"The more buildings like this we get," said Cruz, "the more futile our parking plan becomes."

The topic of social justice comes up with most major policy matters in Portland these days. Predictably with complex issues, there is more than one social justice perspective on apartments without parking.

Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability officials reason that residents without vehicles shouldn't have to subsidize those who do and that buildings without parking are less costly to build, resulting in a lower-cost housing option.

But Northwest neighborhood representatives see it differently. They don't buy claims that most tenants of no-parking buildings will not own vehicles. They believe developers are externalizing the cost of their tenants' parking by shifting the burden onto the public streets.

"We're socializing the costs of development," said Pinger. "That's wrong."

Developers of no-parking buildings "are making an obscene amount of money, and we are paying the difference," said Walters.

Harrison said she used to recommend letting the on-street parking program play out before deciding if additional measures were needed. The pace and type of development afoot has changed her mind.

"Patience hasn't helped," she said. ■



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