

**FINAL DRAFT**

Alaskan Way Viaduct  
**REPLACEMENT**  
PROGRAM



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

 **WSDOT**

 **King County**

 **Port of Seattle**

 **City of Seattle**

# SR 99 Tunnel Project Parking Mitigation Plan

## Monitoring Report for End of Year 2015

 **Washington State  
Department of Transportation**

 **SDOT**  
*Seattle Department of Transportation*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The report provides an update of the progress and performance for the *SR 99 Tunnel Project Parking Mitigation Plan*. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), the City of Seattle (SDOT), partners and stakeholders began implementing various strategies in July 2012 to help offset the loss of on-street parking during construction of the SR 99 tunnel. This monitoring report details the status and performance of the strategies through the end of 2015. This information has been used to assess each strategy's effectiveness, and determine whether adjustments were needed

## 1.1. Original Program Goals

The goal of the *Parking Mitigation Plan* as originally stated in July 2012 is: "To retain customers of the central waterfront and Pioneer Square businesses by making sure that short-term parking is:

- Available,
- Proximate,
- Safe, and
- Affordable.



## 1.2. Program Vision

As the program elements have been implemented, other goals have emerged to extend the benefits of the program beyond the SR 99 construction period. To ensure a legacy, it is important that changed perceptions about parking—from the customers', businesses' and parking operator's viewpoint—continue into the future. It will also require that WSDOT's and SDOT's role in managing the program transition to other entities, primarily the Downtown Seattle Associations (DSA) and Alliance for Pioneer Square. The expanded vision for the program is that it:

- Provide available, proximate, safe, and affordable parking benefiting waterfront and Pioneer Square communities.
- Change consumer behavior so that customers seek off-street parking as their first choice.
- Change garage owner/manager behaviors so that they continue to offer low-cost short-term parking because it is economically viable.
- Provide flexible program strategies that can transition over time from WSDOT to DSA leadership by the time the Viaduct structure removal is complete.

Section 2 provides a summary of 2015 activities for each of the program elements. Section 3 provides detailed analysis of the various program strategies from initial implementation through the end of 2015.

## 2. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM PROGRESS

The ten original strategies from the *Parking Mitigation Plan* are presented below along with the original statement of strategy purpose; an 11<sup>th</sup> strategy—to provide shuttle services for customers—was evaluated but not pursued. This is followed by a summary of accomplishments in 2015.

### 2.1. Build and Acquire Parking Garages

*Strategy 1: Create a “parking mitigation bank” for the purpose of helping to fund the construction of, or acquisition of, garages for short-term public parking.*

In 2015, the following progress was made on this strategy:

- Pike Place Market commenced construction on its new garage using funds provided by this program. The garage is expected to be complete in late 2016.
- Continued to work with Gonzaga University to discuss options for a long-term covenant for parking on the 1101 Western (Spring/Seneca) lot and/or the Watermark Garage.

### 2.2. Partner with Private Parking Facilities

*Strategy 2: Provide incentives for private parking facilities to offer a parking fee that is competitive with the price of on-street parking for short-term customers (four hours or less).*

Five garages continued to participate in the low-rate partnership program. All offer a rate of \$3 per hour for up to four hours. One other garage, Stadium Place, offers the same low rate through a covenant negotiated as part of Strategy 1. Participating garages include:

- Pike Place Market Garage = 540 spaces
- First and Columbia Garage = 703 spaces
- Hillclimb Court Garage = 150 spaces
- Watermark Tower Garage = 121 spaces
- Butler Garage = 421 spaces
- **Strategy 2 total spaces = 1,935 spaces**
  
- Stadium Place Garage = 75 spaces
- **Strategy 1 total spaces = 75 spaces**

**Total of spaces offered at low-rate garages for Strategies 1 and 2 = 2,010 spaces**

All six garages, plus the Bell Street Pier Garage and Waterfront Place Garage, are also part of SDOT’s e-Park program. In this program, space availability is monitored and displayed on facility signs, e-Park dynamic message signs located throughout downtown, on *DowntownSeattleParking.com* and the city’s website *www.seattle.gov/transportation/epark*. The status of partner garages at the end of 2015 is listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Partner garages

Garage name	Low-rates agreement	Long-term covenant	e-Park agreement
Pike Place Market Garage	√	√	√
First and Columbia Garage	√		√
Hillclimb Court Garage	√		√
Watermark Tower Garage	√		√
Butler Garage	√		√
Stadium Place Garage		√	√
Bell Street Pier Garage			√
Waterfront Place Garage			√

### 2.3. Marketing

*Strategy 3: Market parking availability and preferred travel routes.*

The marketing campaigns of 2015 were executed much like the campaigns of the previous year featuring a fully-integrated plan surrounding *DowntownSeattleParking.com*. The campaign involved online display, mobile, transit, radio, video pre-roll, digital radio, partnerships with television stations, search optimization and non-traditional initiatives. The efforts garnered over 50 million impressions which helped lead to record-breaking traffic on the website.

### 2.4. Improve Key Walking Routes within Public Rights of Way

*Strategy 4: Improve walking routes between partnership parking facilities and destinations along the waterfront and in Pioneer Square to enhance the customer experience.*

There were no 2015 actions for this strategy; right-of-way improvements were completed in 2013.

### 2.5. Create Temporary On-Street Parking

*Strategy 5: Increase on-street parking supply, where possible, as construction progresses.*

There were no 2015 actions for this strategy; temporary on-street parking was added in 2013 and 2014.

### 2.6. Improve Wayfinding to Destinations and Parking

*Strategy 7: Create a comprehensive wayfinding system to connect visitors with neighborhood destinations and parking.*

There were no 2015 actions for this strategy; signage upgrades were completed in 2014.

## 2.7. Expand e-Park Program (to Pioneer Square and Central Waterfront)

*Strategy 8: Help customers more quickly find available and proximate parking through the City's e-Park program.*

In November 2014, SDOT and Commute Seattle entered into an agreement for Commute Seattle to incorporate e-Park marketing into the broader *DowntownSeattleParking.com* campaign. In addition to marketing activities, the agreement includes resources to support the first steps towards aligning \$7/flat rate and e-Park garages. The purpose of these efforts is to further support *DowntownSeattleParking.com* as the single source for downtown Seattle parking location, price and availability information. The agreement extends into 2016.

## 2.8. Develop Smart Phone Application/Website (Parking App for Smart Phones)

*Strategy 9: Provide visitors with up-to-the-minute parking information by integrating off-street parking facility locations, rates and hours of operations with the real-time parking availability in the e-Park system in a smart phone application.*

In 2015, the *DowntownSeattleParking.com* website received its most significant upgrade since its launch three years ago. With approximately 70% of its traffic coming via mobile or tablet devices, the user experience was updated to feature characteristics befitting of a web application in 2015. This makeover included a simplification of design, destination-based search, and visual proximity of garages and lots to the desired destinations. The information on individual garage pages was also updated and refreshed.

## 2.9. Change On-Street Parking Policies and Practices

*Strategy 10: Increase on-street parking use through changes to policies and practices that optimize parking occupancy and turnover, and enhance customer service.*

Time-limited, but free, Sunday parking was implemented in the core area of Pioneer Square in September 2014. The effect on parking utilization was monitored in spring 2015. Results of that monitoring are presented in Section 3.1.5.

## 2.10. Implement Programs for Special Events

*Strategy 11: Use special event promotions for various neighborhoods by offering parking incentives.*

Periodically, special free parking events are provided to build awareness of the program and parking availability. In 2015, a free-parking event was held for the Western Avenue businesses, and the program continued the on-going monthly free parking promotion during the First Thursday Art Walk in Pioneer Square. Detail about these events and participation information is provided in Section 3.4.

### 3. PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The following sections present information used to evaluate the performance of various parking strategies. Data collected since various strategies were first implemented have been compiled to show the trends over time. Key data that have been tracked over time include:

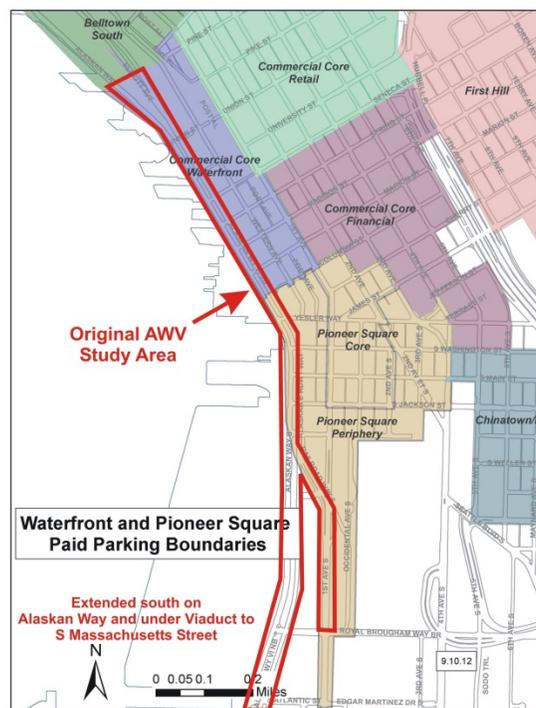
1. On-street parking supply and parking transactions
2. Parking utilization and transactions for partnership garages
3. Website metrics
4. Parking use during special events and promotions

#### 3.1. On-Street Parking Supply

##### 3.1.1. Parking Losses due to AWV and Seawall Construction

At the request of the Parking Stakeholders, the effect of AWV and Seawall construction activities to on-street parking have been compared to pre-construction conditions that existed in 2008. This analysis tracks the loss of on-street parking along Alaskan Way and under the Viaduct from S. Massachusetts Street to Virginia Street, as well as along Railroad Avenue S and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue S from Alaskan Way to S. Royal Brougham Way. This accounts for the impacts associated with the Holgate-to-King Street (H2K) project and south tunnel portal projects that removed parking near the Stadiums. The study area for this analysis is highlighted by the red boundary on Figure 1.

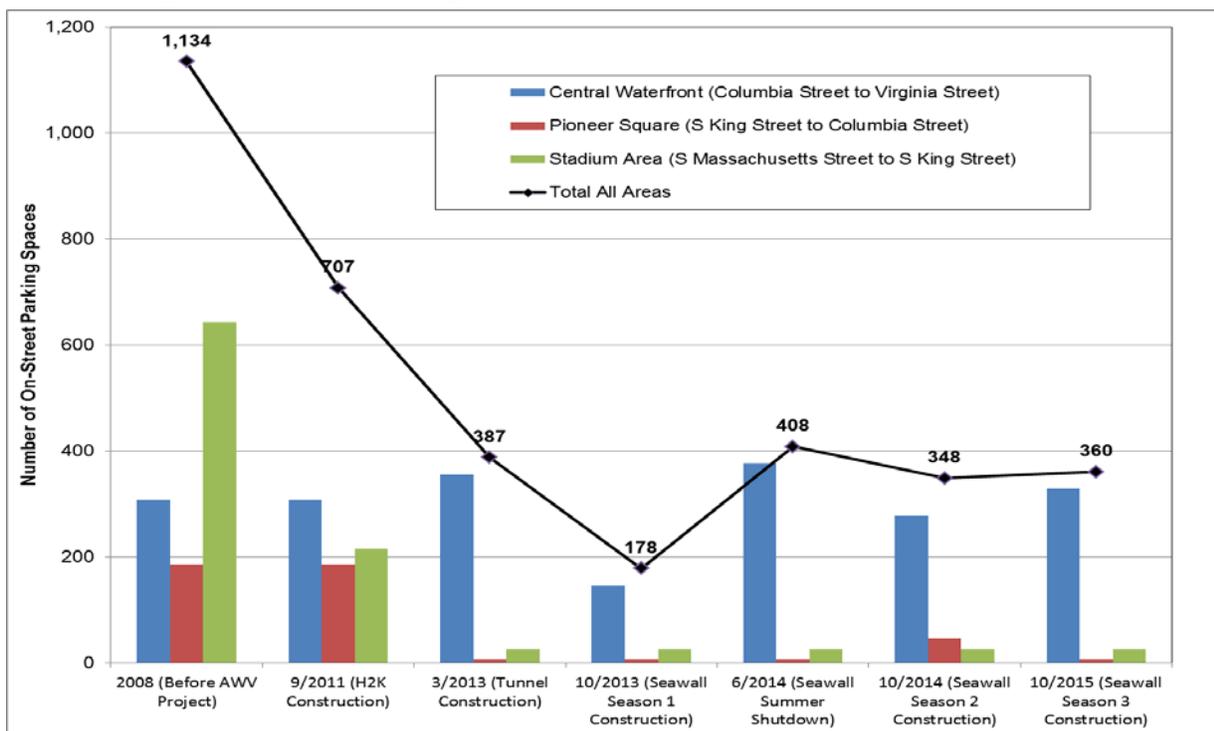
Figure 1. On-Street Parking Study Areas



*Note: Area defined by the red outline was original studied for the H2K Environmental Assessment, 2008, and Heffron Transportation field surveys performed in 2011 and 2013.*

The number of parking spaces that existed in the red-outlined study area, which extends from Virginia Street on the north to S. Massachusetts on the south, was compiled from a variety of sources. The pre-construction condition is based on information in the *H2K Environmental Assessment*<sup>1</sup> and on-street parking studies performed by Heffron Transportation and SDOT. Prior to the H2K project, there were a total of 1,134 on-street parking spaces in the affected area. Most of these spaces (642) were located south of S. King Street and were unrestricted spaces under the Viaduct. The combination of the H2K project, the tunnel launch pit, and the South Access Project eliminated all but 25 of those on-street spaces. The south end tunnel construction has also eliminated most of the spaces in the Pioneer Square segment of the study area between S. King Street and Columbia Street, reducing on-street parking from 185 spaces before construction to 7 spaces in the current configuration. Spaces in the Central Waterfront segment between Columbia Street and Virginia Street have been affected by Seawall construction, most substantially during the first season in 2013 when parking decreased from 355 to 146 on-street spaces. Many businesses along the waterfront were closed during this phase of construction. In fall 2015, there were 328 on-street spaces in the Central Waterfront segment.

Figure 2. On-Street Parking Losses Associated with AWV and Seawall Construction



Source: SDOT, March 2013.

<sup>1</sup> FHWA and WSDOT (Federal Highway Administration and Washington State Department of Transportation). 2008. SR 99: S. Holgate Street to S. King Street Viaduct Replacement Project Environmental Assessment and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. June 2008.

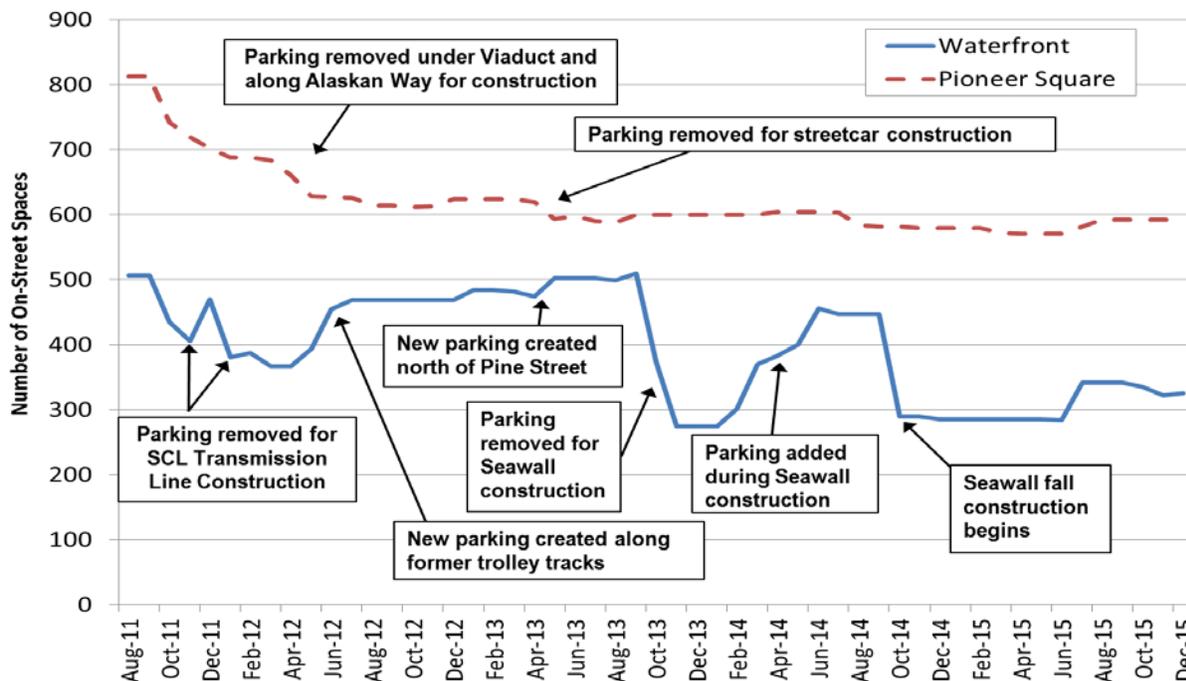
### 3.1.2. Neighborhood Area On-Street Parking

The parking supply presented above tracks only the on-street parking losses caused by the AWV and Seawall projects. It does not account for parking lost due to other construction projects such as the First Hill Streetcar construction in Pioneer Square or the utility construction along Western Avenue. It also does not account for parking removed for private development construction. In order to evaluate the full parking losses in the Pioneer Square and Central Waterfront neighborhoods, SDOT’s database of parking by neighborhood area was used. SDOT’s designated monitoring areas for the “Pioneer Square Core” and “Commercial Core – Waterfront” were used. These areas are shown on Figure 1 above. SDOT tracks both the parking supply and pay station transactions for these broader areas. These data are reported below to show changed in on-street parking supply by month since August 2011 when monitoring first began.

### 3.1.3. On-Street Parking Supply for Neighborhood Areas

Figure 3 shows how the number of on-street parking spaces in the Pioneer Square Core and the waterfront has changed over time, and notes events that changed the supply. There was a slight decrease in Pioneer Square parking supply in 2015 due to both public and private construction. The chart also shows the removal and replacement of on-street parking along the waterfront due to the various stages of Seawall construction.

Figure 3. Number of On-Street Pay Station Parking Spaces



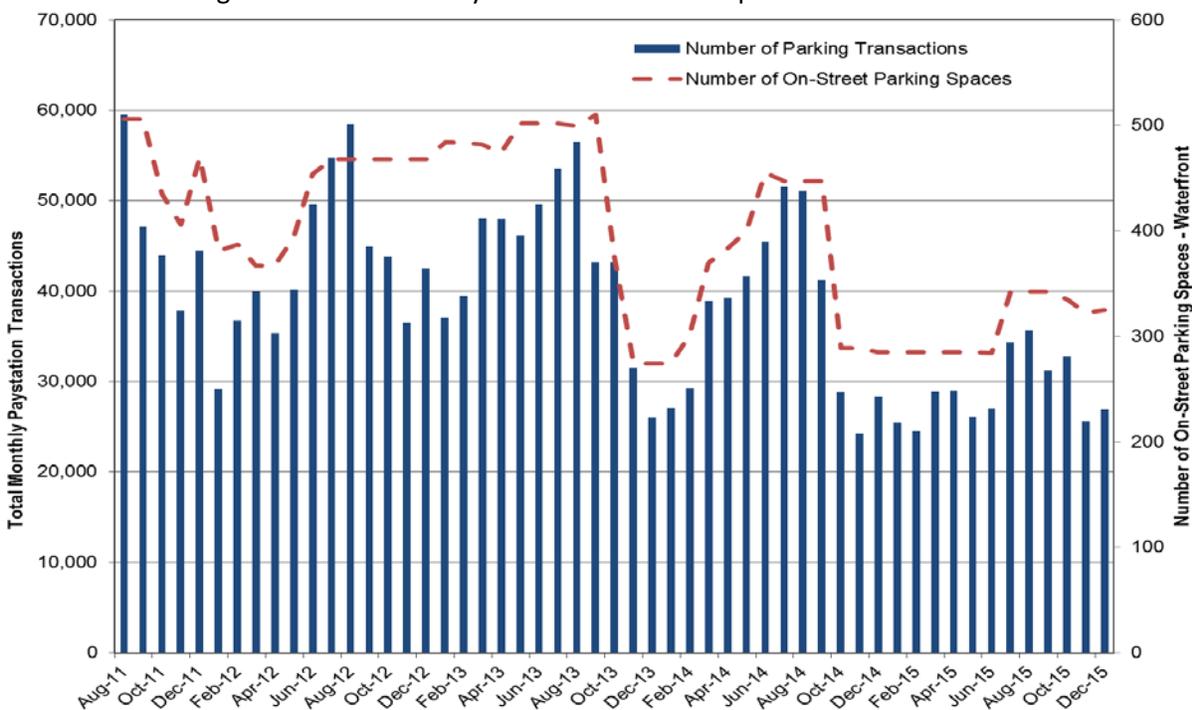
Source: SDOT, March 2016.

### 3.1.4. Pay Station Transactions

The number of transactions per month represents each time a customer purchases parking at a pay station. The parking space transaction data were compiled to show the trend over time. These are shown in Figure 4 for the waterfront and Figure 5 for Pioneer Square.

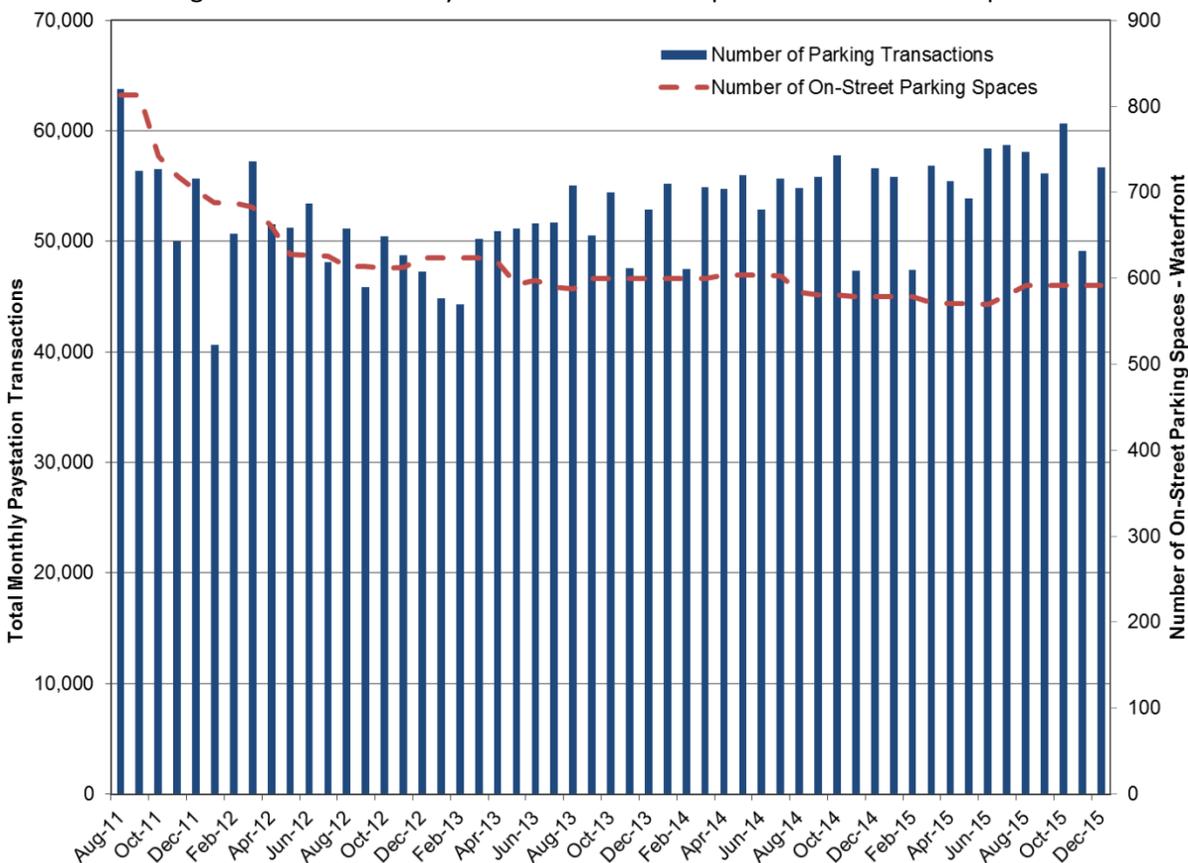
As shown, the number of transactions along the waterfront has fluctuated with the loss of on-street parking. There is also substantial seasonal fluctuation in parking use, exhibited by the change in the number of transactions in 2012 when on-street parking supply was relatively stable. The number of transactions per month in Pioneer Square was highest in August 2011 before on-street parking under the Viaduct was removed. Since then, the number of transactions per month has remained relatively stable and even increased in the past year, when there was little fluctuation in on-street parking supply.

Figure 4. Number of Pay Station Transactions per Month - Waterfront



Source: SDOT, March 2016.

Figure 5. Number of Pay Station Transactions per Month – Pioneer Square



Source: SDOT, March 2016.

### 3.1.5. Sunday Time Limits in Pioneer Square

In September 2014, SDOT implemented Sunday time limits on 27 block faces in the core area of Pioneer Square. While parking is still free on Sundays, it is now limited to a 2-hour duration. The change was intended to increase parking turnover in the neighborhood, which would benefit businesses that rely on short-term parking for customers.

In May 2015, a parking study was performed to determine the effect of the new time limits. It surveyed parking occupancy and duration in Pioneer Square on block faces with and without the Sunday time limits. The study also addressed if parking conditions change with or without a Mariners game.

The findings showed that the parking spaces with Sunday time limits encourage parking turnover and allow more vehicles to park each day. The results show that each time-limited parking space was used by 0.7 to 1.2 more vehicles per day. The 176 time-limited spaces in the Pioneer Square neighborhood accommodated 122 more vehicles on a day without a stadium event than an equivalent number of unrestricted spaces (22% increase). Those same spaces accommodated 218 more vehicles on a Mariner game day than the unrestricted spaces (45% increase). In addition, the parking spaces with Sunday time limits operate within the 85% occupancy target desired by the City, which represents one to two open parking spaces per block; unrestricted spaces have occupancies that exceed the desired occupancy target.

Detailed analysis and results were presented in a separate Technical Memorandum: *Pioneer Square Sunday Time Limits, Post-Implementation Study* (Heffron Transportation, Inc., August 17, 2015).

## 3.2. Partner Garage Utilization

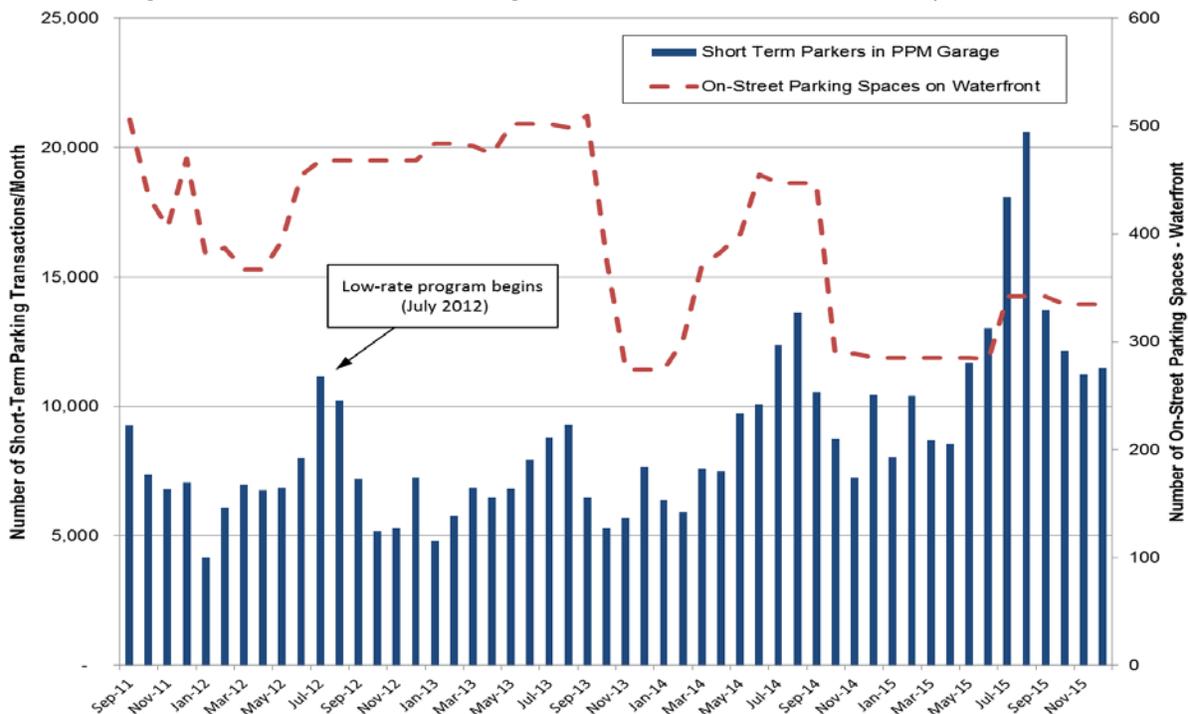
Five garages currently participate in the low-rate partnership program, all offering a rate of \$3 per hour to park up to four hours. One other garage, Stadium Place, offers the same low rate through a covenant negotiated as part of Strategy 1. The following sections show the change in the number of transactions per month for short-term parking in each garage, which includes customers who parked for four hours or less. The garage transactions are compared to the number of on-street parking spaces that were available in each garage's subarea (e.g., on-street parking on the waterfront, Pioneer Square, or both). This was done to show whether or not there is a relationship between on-street parking supply and off-street demand.

### 3.2.1. Pike Place Market Garage

The low-rate parking program in the Pike Place Market garage started in July 2012. Since then, the number of short-term parking transactions in this garage has substantially increased. Figure 6 shows the short-term parking transactions for each month since program implementation. The chart also shows the number of on-street parking spaces that were available along the Waterfront, which roughly covers the streets from Alaskan Way to 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and from Columbia Street to Pine Street. Figure 7 shows the total number of short-term transactions by year. The data show:

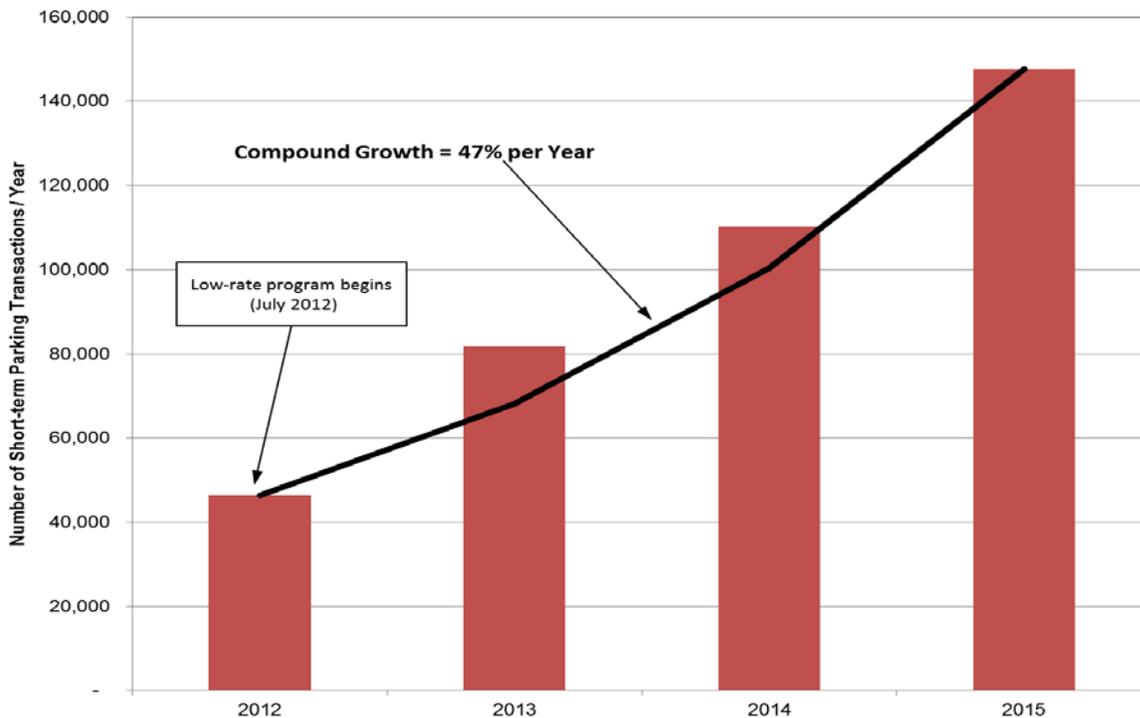
- Parking demand in the Pike Place Market Garage fluctuates substantially by season, with peak demand in the summer months.
- There were about 148,000 short-term parking transactions in 2015, up from about 46,000 in 2012 the year the low-rate program started.
- Short-term parking has increased steadily over time. Since 2012, the number of short-term transactions has grown by 47% per year (compound growth), and 100% since the program's inception during the peak visitor period.
- The Pike Place Market Garage has the most short-term transactions of any of the program's garages.

Figure 6. Pike Place Market Garage – Number of Short-term Parkers per Month



Source: Data provided by Pike Place Market, and compiled by WSDOT.  
Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

Figure 7. Pike Place Market Garage – Number of Short-term Parkers per Year



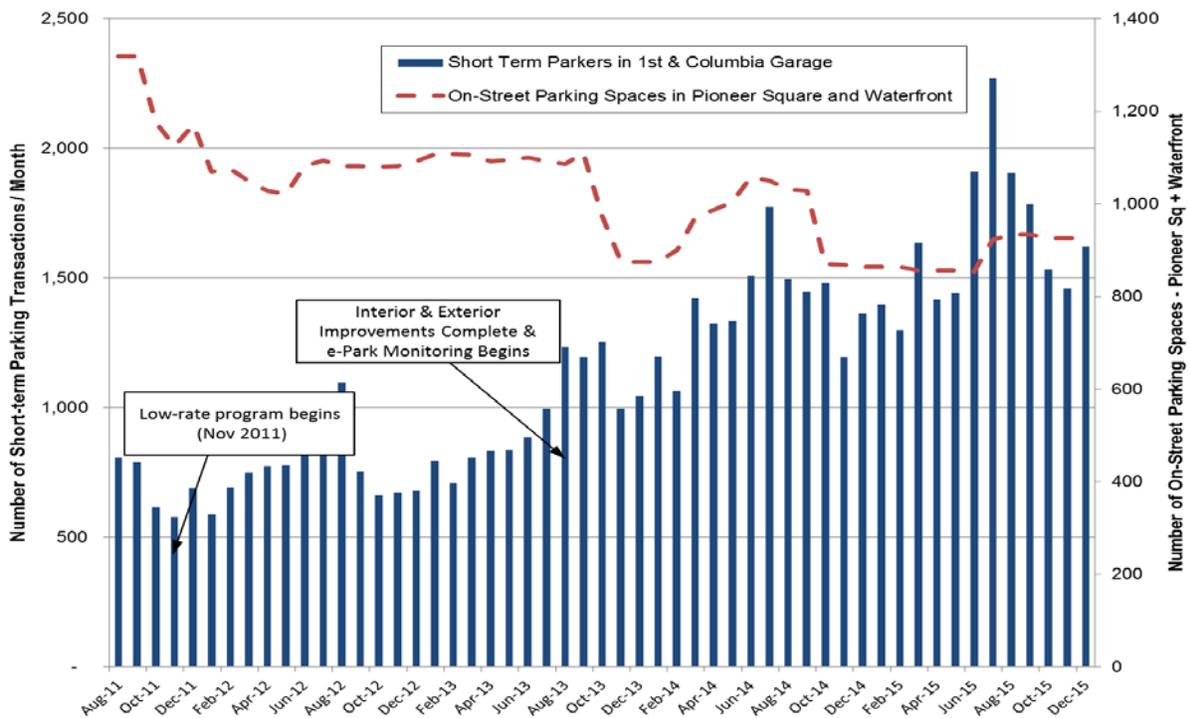
Source: Data provided by Pike Place Market, and compiled by WSDOT.  
Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

### 3.2.2. 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia Garage

The 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia Garage was the first partner to enter the low rate program in November 2011. Additional investments were made in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2013 when interior and exterior aesthetic improvements were made (painting, lighting, and signage) and e-Park equipment was installed to show the number of spaces available on both an electronic sign at the entrance, dynamic message signs on roadways into the neighborhood, and on the program’s website. Figure 8 presents the number of short-term weekday parkers by month (those who parked for four hours or less), as well as the total number of on-street parking spaces that existed in both the Pioneer Square and waterfront neighborhoods, since this garage serves both neighborhoods. Figure 9 shows the annual short-term parkers (for just weekdays). The data show:

- Parking demand in the 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia Garage fluctuates substantially by season, with peak demand in the summer months.
- There were about 28,600 short-term parking transactions in 2015, up from about 9,400 in 2012, which was the first full year of the program.
- Short-term parking has increased steadily over time. Since 2012, the number of short-term transactions has grown by 45% per year (compound growth), or upwards of 280% since project inception during the summer period.

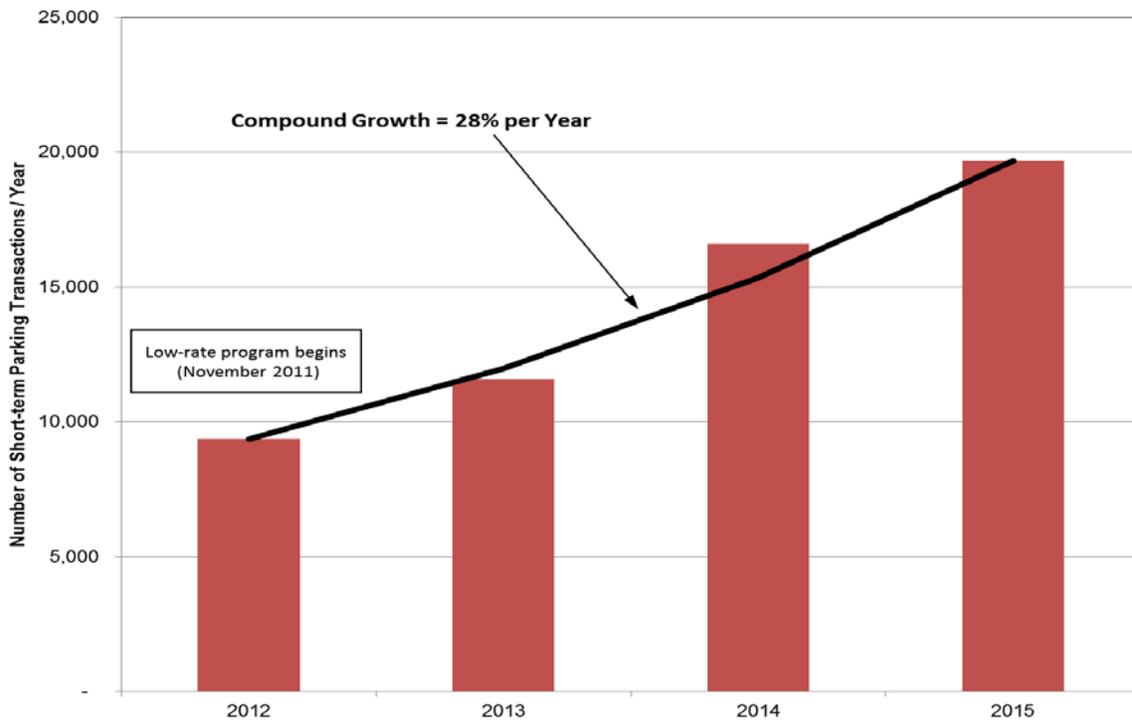
Figure 8. 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia Garage – Number of Short-term Parkers per Month



Source: Data provided by SPPlus, Inc. and compiled by WSDOT.

Notes: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

Figure 9. 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia Garage – Number of Short-term Parkers per Year



Source: Data provided by CPS, Inc. and compiled by WSDOT.

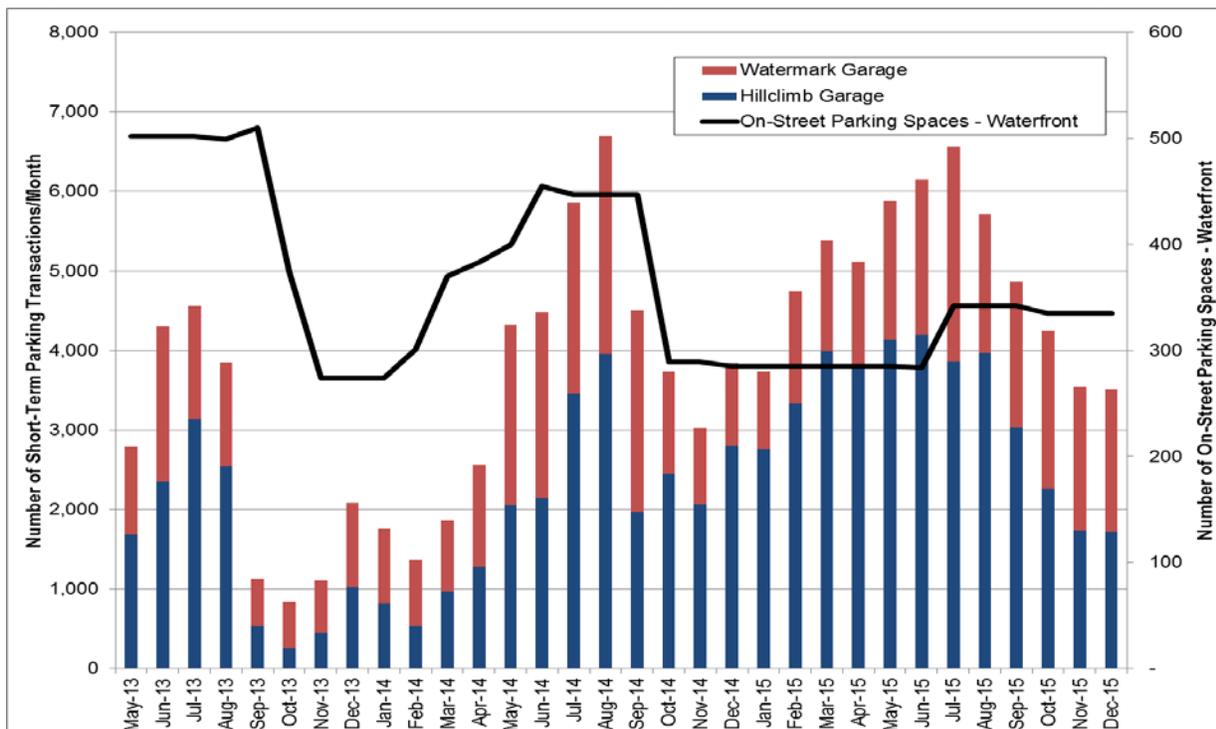
Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

### 3.2.3. Hillclimb Court Garage and Watermark Tower Garage

The Watermark Tower Garage and Hillclimb Court Garage entered the low-rate program in May 2013. These garages are proximate to the central waterfront: the Watermark Tower Garage is accessed from Western Avenue north of Spring Street, and the Hillclimb Court Garage is accessed from Alaskan Way north of Union Street. Figure 10 shows the number of short-term transactions per month in the combined garages; the chart also shows the number of on-street parking spaces along the waterfront. Figure 11 shows the number of short-term transactions per year for each garage. The data show:

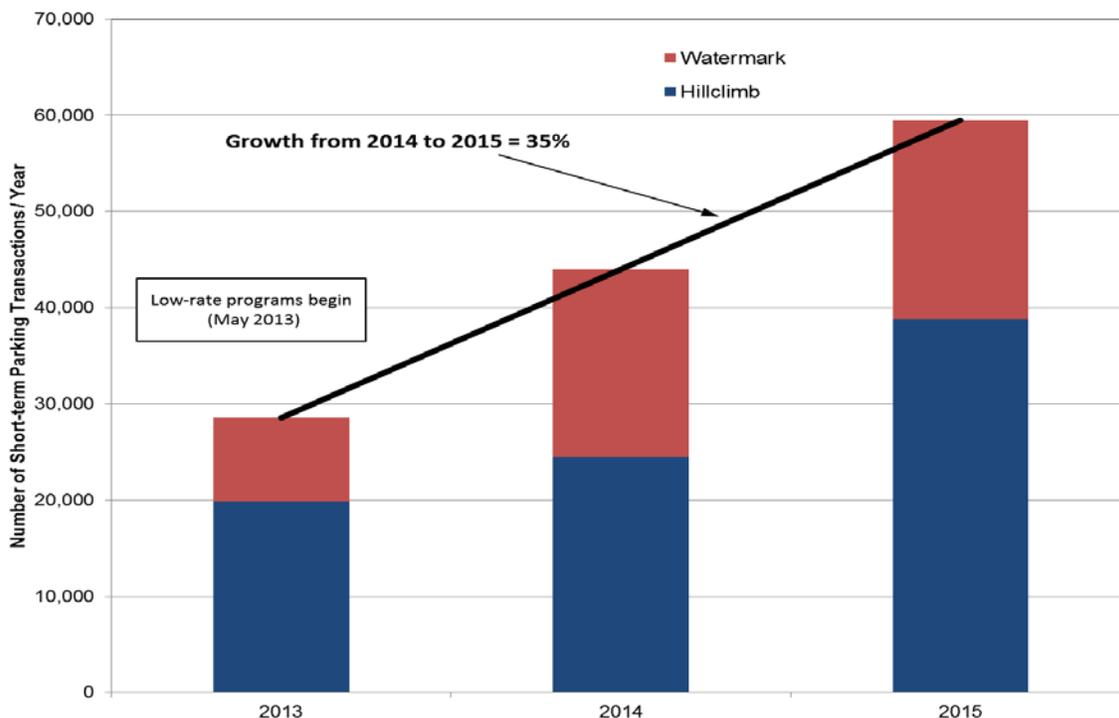
- Combined short-term parking demand in the garages was very low from September 2013 through April 2014 when many waterfront businesses were closed due to Seawall construction.
- In 2015, the Hillclimb Court Garage had about 38,300 short-term transactions and the Watermark Tower Garage had about 20,700 short-term transactions.
- There is little history to compare annual trends at these two garages, as they joined the program in May 2013 and much of 2013 was affected by construction. The annual transactions have increased by about 35% since the program began. However, if only the peak seasons from May through September are compared, the short term transactions increased by 13% between 2014 and 2015.

Figure 10. Hillclimb Court and Watermark Tower Garages – Number of Short-term Parkers per Month



Source: Data provided by Republic Parking, and compiled by WSDOT. Garages entered the program in May 2013.  
Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

Figure 11. Hillclimb Court and Watermark Tower Garages – Number of Short-term Parkers per Year



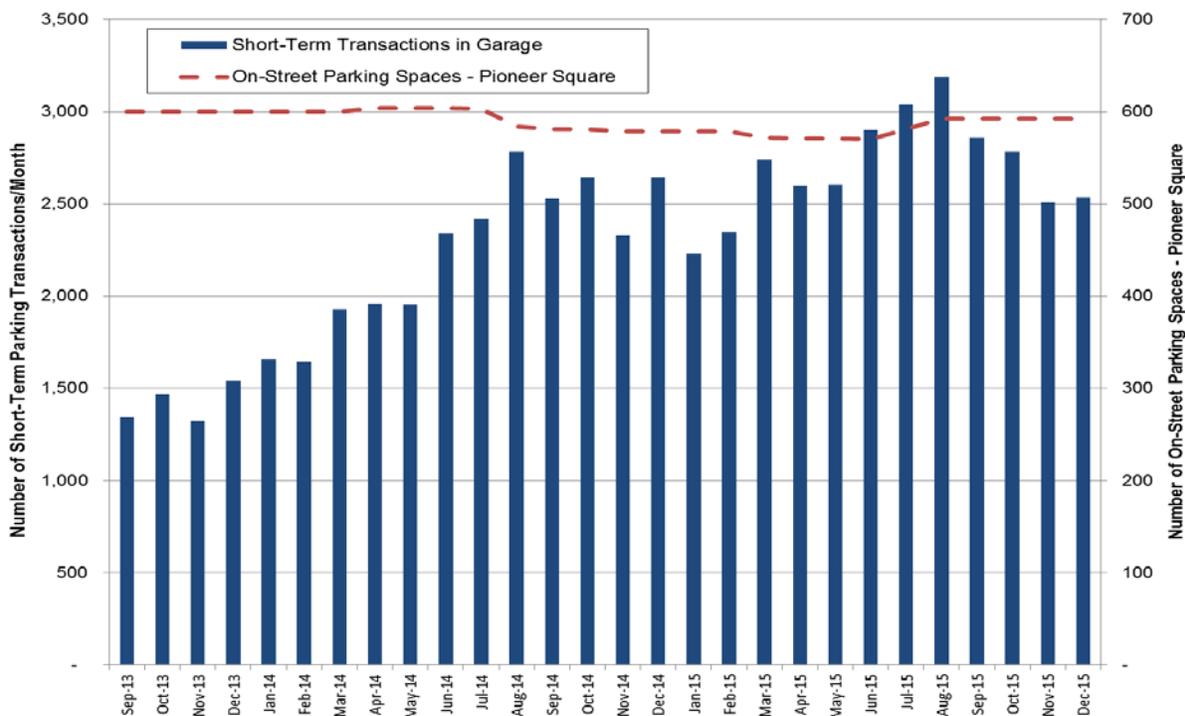
Source: Data provided by Republic Parking NW, and compiled by WSDOT.  
Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

### 3.2.4. Butler Garage

The Butler Garage joined the low-rate program in September 2013. Figure 12 shows the number of short-term parking transactions per month, along with the on-street parking supply in Pioneer Square. Annual transaction data are shown later on Figure 14. The data show:

- In 2014, the garage had about 7,200 short term transactions, which increased to about 32,300 in 2015. This represents a 350% increase.
- There was little change in Pioneer Square’s on-street parking supply during the period when this garage participated in the low-rate program. However, there has been a reduction of off-street parking supply in the neighborhood, such as the North Lot and 202 Occidental Avenue S.

Figure 12. Butler Garage – Number of Short-term Parkers per Month



Source: Data provided by LAZ Parking, and compiled by WSDOT. Garage entered the program in September 2013.

Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

### 3.2.5. Stadium Place Garage

Stadium Place garage entered the low-rate program in October 2013 through a long-term covenant with WSDOT. Figure 13 shows the number of short-term parking transactions per month, along with the on-street parking supply in Pioneer Square. Annual transaction data are shown later on Figure 14. It is noted that game days are excluded from the covenant. The data show:

- In 2014, the Stadium Place garage had about 8,830 short term transactions, which nearly doubled to about 17,160 in 2015.
- There was little change in Pioneer Square’s on-street parking supply during the time period when this program was in effect. However, there have been losses of other off-street lots in the neighborhood, such as the North Lot and 202 Occidental Avenue S.

Figure 13. Stadium Place Garage – Number of Short-term Parkers per Month



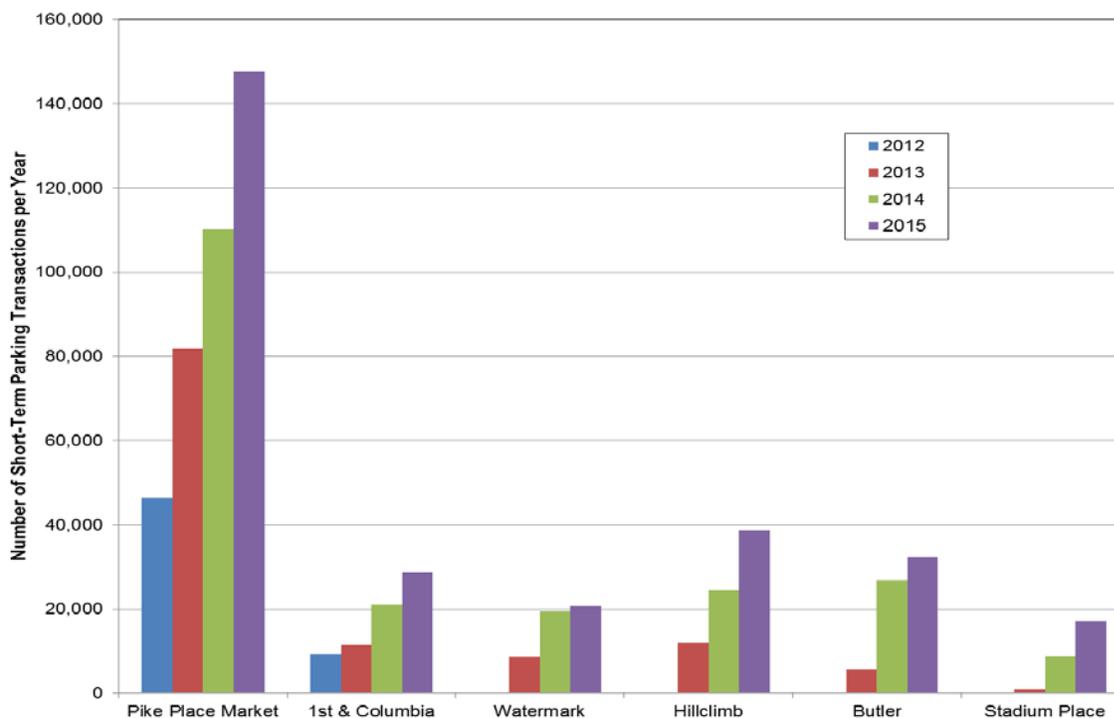
Source: Data provided by Stadium Place Investors, and compiled by WSDOT. Garage entered the program in October 2013.

Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

### 3.2.6. Summary of All Garages

The annual short-term transactions for each of the program garages are compared in Figure 14 below. As shown, the Pike Place Market Garage has the highest number of short-term transactions. In 2015, it had more short-term parking transactions than the other five garages combined. The Hillclimb Court Garage has the next highest number of short-term transactions.

Figure 14. All Low-Rate Program Garages– Number of Short-term Parkers per Year



Source: Data provided by garage operators and compiled by WSDOT.

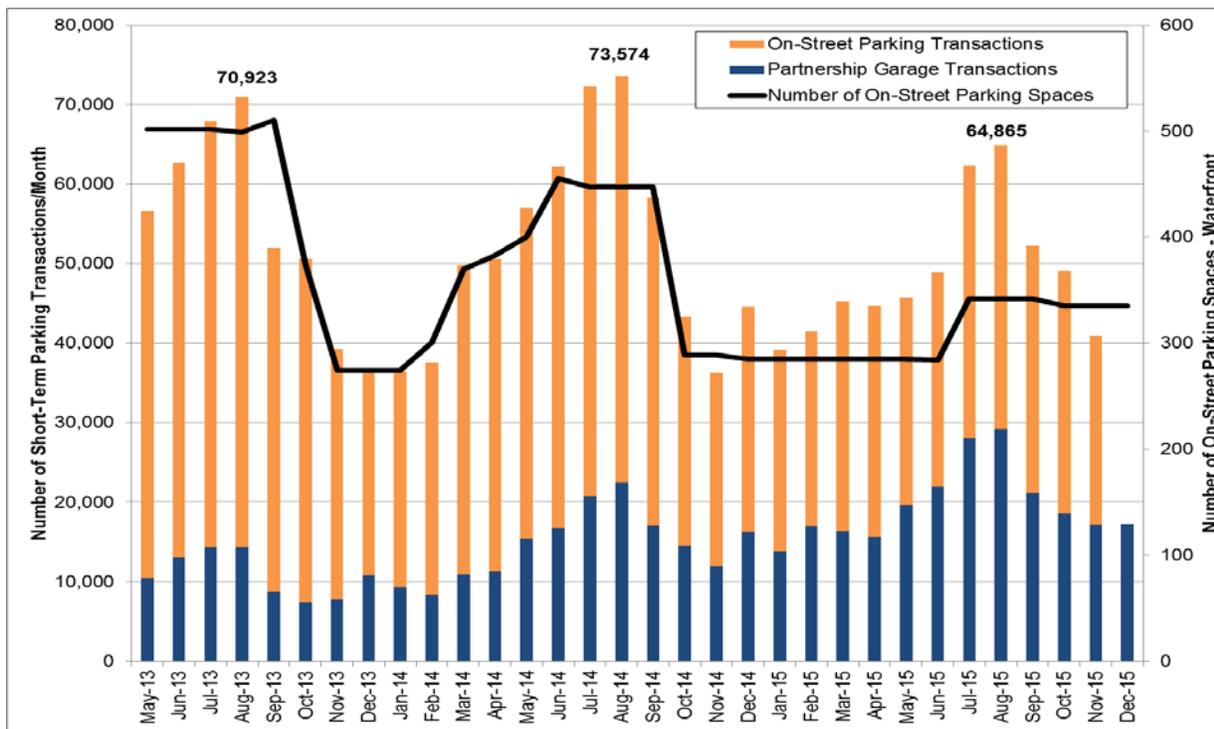
Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

### 3.2.7. Total Transactions for On-Street plus Waterfront Partner Garages

The four garages that serve waterfront customers—Pike Place Market, 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia, Hillclimb, and Watermark—have participated in the low-rate program long enough to explore if the supply of short-term parking at low rates that they provide have helped to off-set the loss in on-street parking along the waterfront. To understand this relationship, the transactions in the four waterfront garages were combined with the on-street parking transactions to show how the total number of transactions has changed over time. This is shown on Figure 15, and is compared to the number of on-street spaces available in that area.

This analysis shows that with a decrease in on-street parking there is also a decrease in total parking transactions, which declined by about 9% from the peak month in 2013 to the peak month in 2015. However, as on-street transactions have declined, the number of transactions in the four off-street garages has increased.

Figure 15. All Short-Term Parking Transactions in Waterfront Area



Source: Garage data for Pike Place Market, 1st and Columbia, Hillclimb, and Watermark garages compiled by WSDOT. On-street parking data provided by SDOT.

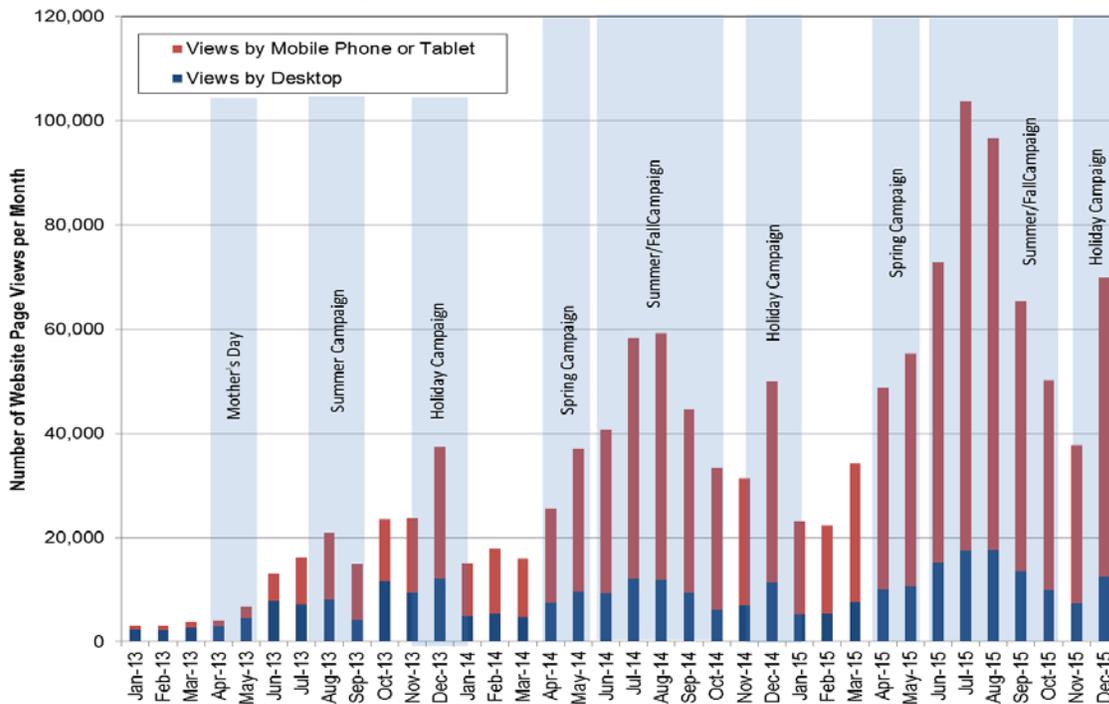
Note: Short-term parking transactions are for periods of four hours or less.

### 3.3. Marketing Program

#### 3.3.1. Website Analytics

The parking program established a website—*DowntownSeattleParking.com*—that went live in January 2013. Since that time, the website’s traffic has steadily increased. Figure 16 shows website page views for the past three years, along with the time periods for the program’s various marketing campaigns. As seen in Figure 14, website page views increase during marketing campaigns. As of late 2015, about 80% of all website page views occurred on a mobile device. This could be due to customers checking parking options while in the vicinity from a mobile device.

Figure 16. Website Page Views per Month



Source: Downtown Seattle Association, compiled by WSDOT, January 2016.

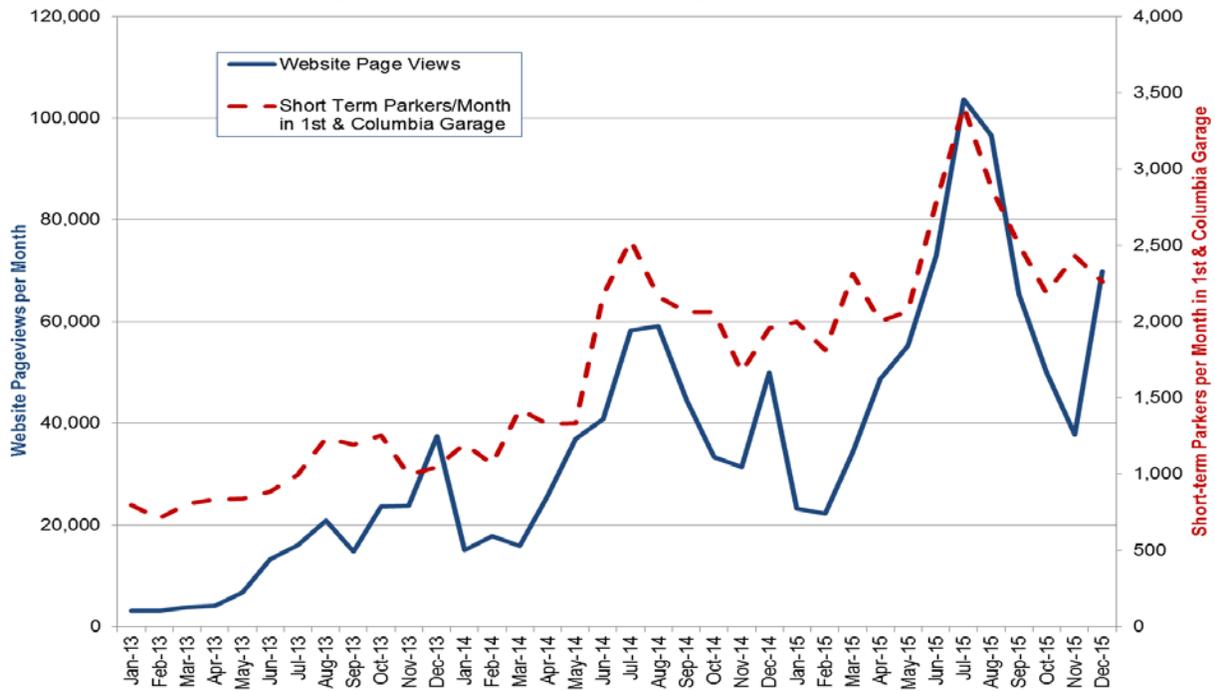
Successes of the marketing program can be inferred from key industry metrics:

- In 2015, Click through rates (CTR) for *DowntownSeattleParking.com*'s digital advertising came in at four to five times the US benchmarks.
- Cost per click (CPC) was below \$2.00 which is 79% better than US benchmark levels.
- The mobile campaign was a highlight at 0.73% CTR and \$0.52 CPC, helping *DowntownSeattleParking.com* achieve a 70-80% mobile share.
- Search performance continued to be outstanding with a very high CTR of 5.12% and low CPC at \$1.42, as did the pre-roll spots.
- Transit advertising proved to be a good value proposition, with the addition of bonuses worked into the buys.

The ultimate proof of performance can be found in the correlating data of short-term, low cost parking utilization in program garages and lots.

The relationship between website traffic and potential garage use was evaluated using parking transactions for the 1<sup>st</sup> and Columbia garage. This relationship is shown on Figure 17. This garage's data were used (instead of the Pike Place Market) since it is less influenced by seasonal fluctuations in demand or separate marketing conducted by the Pike Place Market and the Seattle Aquarium. The chart shows that peak website traffic coincides with peak transactions.

Figure 17. Website Page Views vs. Short-term Parking Transactions in 1<sup>st</sup> & Columbia Garage



Source: Downtown Seattle Association, compiled by WSDOT, January 2016.

### 3.4. Special Promotions

A main goal of the SR 99 Parking Mitigation program is to provide close, affordable parking to Pioneer Square and waterfront neighborhoods, helping to maintain vitality during construction. Periodically, special free parking events are provided to build awareness of the program and parking availability.

In years past (2012-2014), a Mother’s Day Free Parking event was executed on the waterfront. With some of the businesses closed because of the City of Seattle’s Seawall construction, the program’s marketing subcommittee decided to forgo the tradition of holding a free parking event on Mother’s Day in 2015. However, the team did want to provide a free parking event to support businesses that remained open during Seawall construction. In addition, business outreach conducted on behalf of the program identified several furniture stores along Western Avenue interested in participating in a free parking event, the results of which are presented below. In 2015, the program continued the free parking for First Thursday Art Walks in Pioneer Square.

#### 3.4.1. Free Parking Event for Western Avenue

Program staff carried out streamlined free parking promotions over two weekends in April 2015. The weekend of April 18-19 involved central waterfront businesses and the weekend of April 25-26 supported Western Avenue businesses with goals to:

- Build awareness of the parking mitigation program and *DowntownSeattleParking.com*
- Increase visitor attendance by offering free parking
- Provide on-street assistance to drivers to create an enjoyable experience people would remember and want to repeat

- Provide an incentive that businesses could promote to customers to come to the waterfront during construction

Instead of the usual approach from previous years of paid media buys, the campaign leveraged partners' and businesses' communications channels to spread the word for April's events. Communication tactics included: the use of email, information included in electronic reservation confirmations and social media. Businesses were provided with handouts, digital assets and FAQ documents for staff. Promotional copy and digital ads were created for the Seattle Aquarium and Argosy who including the free parking promotion in their own radio advertising.

Four garages participated in the Waterfront-focused promotion (April 18-19):

- Western and Seneca lot
- Hillclimb Court Garage
- Watermark Garage
- Pike Place Market

Three Republic-managed garages participated in the Western Avenue-focused promotion (April 25-26):

- Western and Seneca lot
- Hillclimb Court Garage
- Watermark Garage

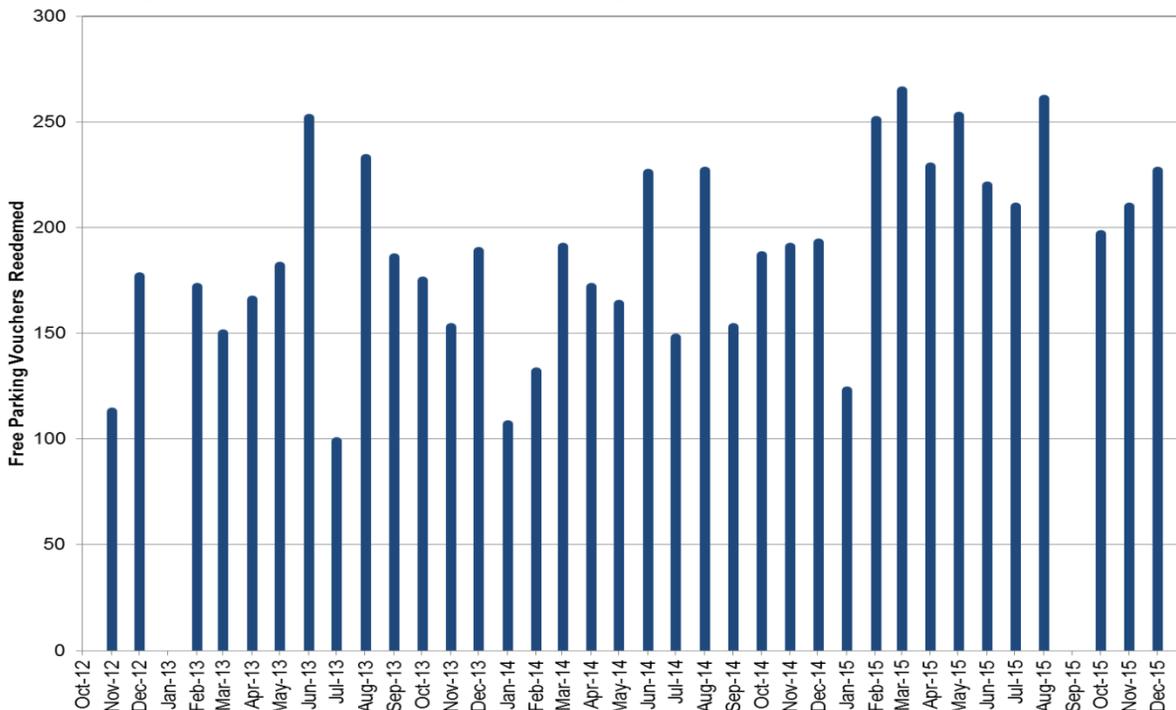
During the events, participating garages collected vouchers and provided information to customers. Garages reported a positive experience, with adequate preparation in advance of the event. Many of the attendants had worked the free parking events during previous events and knew the procedures. All three Republic-managed parking facilities, as well as the Pike Place Market, put additional staff in place for the event and reported that having this staff was critical to the event's success. Republic facilities staff requested additional flyers to hand out to parkers and waterfront visitors explaining the program and identifying participating businesses. Overall, 720 vouchers were redeemed during the two weekend event. Many visitors reported hearing of the events ahead of time via social media and from the businesses.

### **3.4.2. Free Parking During Pioneer Square's First Thursday Art Walk**

Free parking vouchers are offered to patrons of Pioneer Square's monthly First Thursday Art Walk. Over 100 Pioneer Square art galleries and businesses distribute vouchers during the event. Vouchers provide free parking between the hours of 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. at four neighborhood garages. Figure 18 shows the First Thursday program use since inception. It is noted that there was no First Thursday in September 2015 due to a corresponding Seahawks game and First Thursday was cancelled in January 2013 due to the conflict of New Year's Day.

The Alliance for Pioneer Square manages the free parking promotion and voucher tracking. Each month Alliance staff delivers free parking vouchers to participating venues. After the event, staff pick up vouchers from participating garages and enter data into a spreadsheet. Staff prepare, post and boost monthly paid Facebook advertisements. Galleries and venues in turn use Alliance Facebook events and advertisements to augment their own marketing. Additionally, posters are delivered throughout the month to participating venues. Additionally DSA promotes the free parking event by posting and boosting Facebook advertisements.

Figure 18. First Thursday Free Parking Program – Vouchers Redeemed per Month



Source: Alliance for Pioneer Square, January 2016.

As shown in Figure 19, the Frye Garage is the most used by First Thursday program patrons followed by the .Butler Garage.

Figure 19. First Thursday Free Parking Program  
Vouchers Redeemed by Garage

