



CITY OF HOUSTON

City Council

To: Mayor Sylvester Turner

Subject: July 12, 2022 RNA Follow Up

CC: Marvalette Hunter,
William Paul Thomas

From: Sallie Alcorn, Council Member, At-Large 5
Amy Peck, Council Member, District A

Date: July 28, 2022

Dear Mayor Turner,

On July 12, 2022, the Regulatory and Neighborhood Affairs (RNA) Committee met to discuss current ordinances related to commercial and large vehicle parking on residential streets and prohibited yard parking. The agenda included presentations by Maria Irshad of ParkHouston, Sgt. Matthew Simon and Lt. Craig Kivela of Houston Police Department (HPD), Davonte Caldwell of Planning and Development (PDD), and Takasha Francis of Department of Neighborhoods (DON). Government Relations Director Bill Kelly also briefed members on efforts made during the last two legislative sessions regarding prohibited yard parking.

Several council members expressed frustration with lack of enforcement of current ordinances and provided suggestions for improvement. HPD also offered recommendations to improve ordinance language and enforcement. Members of the public described how illegal parking negatively impacts the aesthetics and quality of life in their neighborhoods.

It is important the city does what it can to improve these ordinances and strengthen enforcement. We respectfully ask to work with members of your administration and stakeholders to adopt some of the recommendations put forth at the committee meeting. These recommendations are summarized below:

General

- Allow 311 to transfer parking enforcement issues directly to HPD, if they are not routed Park Houston. Currently, calls regarding parking “die” in 311 as residents are not aware they need to call HPD’s non-emergency line.
- Shift the responsibility of enforcement of these ordinances from HPD to a civilian employee force. HPD stated that these parking violations, if not imposing an immediate danger, are not addressed quickly (or sometimes at all) due to limited available resources.
- Permit and train civilians to photograph illegally parked vehicles, issue a notice of violation, and use VIN numbers on the citation if a license plate is not available.
- Consider changing the high-capacity wrecker rotation schedule HPD uses to a quadrant or patrol district-based rotation schedule. HPD officers typically wait at least 1.5 hours for a wrecker driver because the existing rotation schedule sometimes requires wreckers to travel across the city.
- Place signs detailing the commercial/trailer/large vehicle prohibitions and make it easier for HPD to request signs at problem locations.
- Support and proactively advocate for bills at the state legislature to:
 - 1) Convert yard parking from a criminal offense to a civil offense



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- 2) Allow the county to withhold vehicle registration for repeat offenders of illegal large vehicle parking. (Bill Kelly suggests we begin with a joint approach with Harris County).
- Explore ways to increase the number of heavy-duty tow trucks to serve the city.

Prohibited yard parking ordinance (Chapter 28)

- Extend the 20-year expiration of approved prohibited yard parking applications to 40 years. Precedent for this has been set in the special minimum building line ordinance (Chapter 42-178).
- When a prohibited yard parking designation expires, if there are residents who oppose the designation, put the burden on them to gather signatures to opt out. If there is no opposition to the designation, it should remain in effect beyond the expiration date.
- If a neighborhood's deed restrictions already prohibit parking in yards, these deed restrictions should be accepted by the city in lieu of the full application process for a prohibited yard parking designation.

Commercial vehicle, trailer, and large vehicles ordinance (Chapter 26)

- Examine and revise the definition of commercial vehicle in Chapter 26-2 and remove the requirement that the logo/signage must be located on the outside of the vehicle's *front* doors to be considered commercial. **HPD recommendation**
- Change the time limit for trailers parking on public streets from two hours (Chapter 26-94) to one hour. Currently, HPD takes 4.5 hours to address a trailer violation, so decreasing the trailer parking time limit would decrease the time HPD officers spend responding to these parking-related calls. **HPD recommendation**
- Modify the large vehicle ordinance to mirror the trailer ordinance which would allow HPD to tow a large vehicle if left on a public street for over one hour. **HPD recommendation**
- Extend the large vehicle ordinance to apply to all public streets (Chapter 26-96.) Determining whether an area is a residential district increases the time HPD and ParkHouston must spend to address a potential violation. **HPD recommendation**
- Revise the "leased or borrowed" clause in ordinance language to be more specific about the types of vehicles allowed to remain in residential districts for up to 72 hours. Most large vehicles coming to the attention of HPD are leased by the operating company, so action is delayed until the 72-hour period is up.
- Increase parking citation fines. Violators would much rather pay an occasional \$60 fine over a monthly fee to a truck yard.

Please let us know your interest in moving forward with ordinance revisions. Thank you for your consideration.

Handwritten signature of Sallie Alcorn in blue ink.

Sallie Alcorn
Chair, RNA

Handwritten signature of Amy Peck in blue ink.

Amy Peck
Vice Chair, RNA