

STUDY GUIDE

THE WAR ON CARS

KEY TERMS: car culture
regulations

personal freedom
environmentalists

dictate

NOTE-TAKING COLUMN: Complete this section <u>during</u> the video. Include definitions and key terms.	CUE COLUMN: Complete this section <u>after</u> the video.
How much more expensive has President Obama's increased CAFÉ requirements made new cars?	Why is America's car culture being killed?
How much more do electric vehicles cost to operate over their lifetime than gasoline-powered cars?	
	How is America's car culture being killed?
How many miles per charge does a typical electric car get?	

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Ms. Fix shares with us that, “...there’s been a concerted push by government bureaucrats and environmentalists to transform car ownership from a source of pride to a source of guilt.” Why do you think that this is the case? Do you think that people should feel guilty for purchasing and using a car? Why or why not?
- Later in the video, Ms. Fix explains that, “The very reason people love cars – personal freedom – is also why regulators can’t stand them... And when it comes to your car, they want you off the road. So do the environmentalists with whom they have made common cause.” Why do you think that regulators are so staunchly against personal freedom? Explain. Why do you think that regulators have made ‘common cause’ with environmentalists?
- Ms. Fix then points out that, “These Obama-era standards make cars more expensive—around \$4,000 per new vehicle... This prices millions of middle-class families out of the new car market. The regulations also encourage the production of smaller, lighter cars, that are generally less safe than larger, heavier ones.” What other negative consequences can you think of that result from such heavy regulation of the auto industry? Do you think that the auto industry is going to continue to be so heavily regulated? Why or why not? Should it be? Why or why not?
- Later, Ms. Fix argues that, “...the environment loses because electric vehicles produce three times as much toxic pollution as gas powered ones when you factor in the mining of rare earth minerals that electric car batteries require. And this doesn’t include the environmental consequences involved in ultimately disposing of these batteries. Still the regulators, bureaucrats and environmentalists persist. Urban planners are adding bike lanes, reducing parking spots, and pouring billions into more public transportation— all to get people out of their cars.” Why do you think that government and environmentalists often push policy and regulation so hard based on narrow thinking, ignorance, and flat-out incorrect information and premises? Explain. What do you think could be done to counteract, or at least mitigate, the success these groups are having in terms of limiting the freedoms of Americans?
- At the end of the video, Ms. Fix concludes that, “Personal car ownership is part of America’s fabric. It brings people together, and makes this big country of ours seem a little smaller... and more free. America’s car culture isn’t dead...yet. So long as Americans still want to live in the Land of the Free, America’s car culture will never die.” What do you think that Ms. Fix means by the term ‘America’s fabric?’ Do you agree with Ms. Fix that America’s car culture will never die as long as cars are inextricably linked to freedom? Why or why not?

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: Seattle Parking

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “Parking in Seattle is tough, and it’s going to get worse,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What is the Move Seattle levy? What percentage of people who work in Seattle live somewhere else? What does the author of the article state the real answer to the parking problem is? Why doesn’t the author bike to work? Who is Scott Kubly, and what is his take on transportation in Seattle? How long did it take the author to get to work on that particular day?
- Why is parking in Seattle hard to find? What is the relationship between cars and freedom? Do you think that reducing and limiting freedom, especially when done under the guise of moral superiority is becoming more socially acceptable amongst millennials and younger generations? Why or why not?
- In what ways does this article support the points made in the video, if any? Do you support Seattle actively deterring people from driving into the city? Why or why not?



QUIZ

THE WAR ON CARS

1. Cars allow us to _____.
 - a. be spontaneous
 - b. be free
 - c. be in control
 - d. All of the above.

2. Antagonism toward America's car culture can be traced back to the _____.
 - a. 1910s
 - b. 1930s
 - c. 1970s
 - d. 2010s

3. Which of the following is a way urban planners are attempting to get people out of their cars?
 - a. Reducing parking spots.
 - b. Decreasing public transportation funding.
 - c. Incentivizing carpooling.
 - d. Eliminating bike lanes.

4. The Obama administration's dramatic increase of CAFE requirements makes cars how much more expensive today?
 - a. \$700
 - b. \$1,200
 - c. \$4,000
 - d. \$4,700

5. Electric vehicles produce three times as much toxic pollution as gas powered ones when you factor in the mining of rare earth minerals that electric car batteries require.
 - a. True
 - b. False



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<http://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/bumper-to-bumper-frustration-seattles-lack-of-parking-forces-drivers-to-make-tough-choices/>

Parking in Seattle is tough, and it's going to get worse

Originally published September 17, 2015 at 7:00 am Updated November 30, 2016 at 5:48 pm



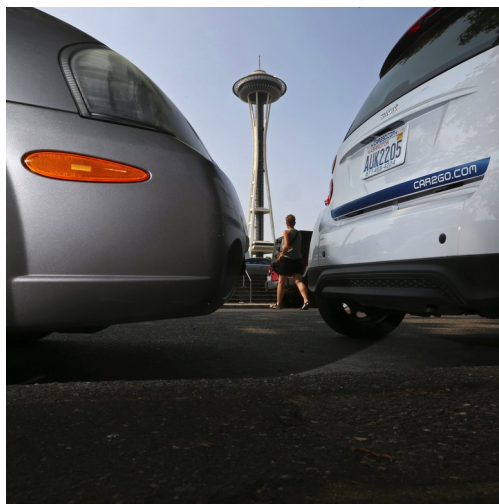
Cyclists traveling in the right lane veer to the left as a car attempts to park in front of Nordstrom. (Ken Lambert/The Seattle Times)

The city certainly doesn't want us to drive solo to work. From its website: "In general, the city's priorities . . . do not support the use of on-street parking for long-term commuter parking."

By
Bill Reader
Pacific NW Editor

MY NAME IS BILL, and I have a parking problem. More to the point, Seattle does.

All right, settle down. I'm sure you almost drove your car2go off the road reading that on your phone. But I ride the bus to work every day. See? I'm part of the solution.



The Space Needle sandwiched between bumpers seems a fitting metaphor for Seattle's current parking situation. (Ken Lambert/The Seattle Times)

Here's the deal, though: Sometimes, it's just not convenient to walk, bike, bus, carpool or Uber. Sometimes, you want to drive, which means you'll want to park. But parking spaces are hard to find in our fast-growing city, especially for commuters. If you find a spot — likely off-street in a lot or garage — it's going to be expensive. Now the bad news: It's going to get worse.

Parking in Seattle stinks. So what are we going to do about it? Don't hold your breath waiting for the city to fix this. Our political leaders are focused on the bigger transportation picture, specifically the passage of their \$930 million Move Seattle levy this fall. No, this is on us, to find alternatives to our parking strategies and our commuting and driving habits. Luckily, you have plenty of ideas.

Earlier this summer we asked readers to tell us about their parking problems and solutions, and in less than two days, 426 of you answered our online survey, sharing your horror stories and offering to fix the problem. If, in fact, it even *is* a problem.

“Who drives? I walk, bike and take transit. Parking is not a problem AT ALL. Please join the 21st century, Seattle Times.”

— *Chris Burke*

Thanks for the suggestion, Chris, I'll make a note on my PalmPilot. But many of our readers *do* consider parking a major headache, especially those who say they need to drive to work. And 61.5 percent of people who work in Seattle live somewhere else. According to the U.S. census, in 2012 more than 280,000 people (including me) had a primary job in Seattle but lived outside the city limits.

The city certainly doesn't want us to drive solo to work. From its website: “In general, the city's priorities . . . do not support the use of on-street parking for long-term commuter parking.” That's pretty clear.

Readers who answered our survey have their reasons for driving. Some need to shuttle kids around or get home in time to pick them up from school or day care, and they say our bus system isn't nimble enough. Others say they're too old or physically unable to use the usual alternatives (not everyone, it turns out, is a childless, 27-year-old triathlete with a high-paying tech job and an aPodment on First Hill).

Some people, dammit, just want to drive. A 2014 survey conducted by the Puget Sound Regional Council asked what might convince people to use transit just one extra day a week. In King County, 40.5 percent said “Nothing.” If their parking costs went up by 50 percent, only 9.2 percent of county residents said they'd give up their car one day a week.

“Personally, I think free parking and plenty of it is every American's God-given right. I refuse to shop in Seattle for that reason.”

— *Mary Webster*

Put that in your vaporizer and smoke it.



The dearth of on-street parking spots has led drivers to find creative solutions. The driver of this car managed to back into a narrow opening between storage drums. (Ken Lambert/The Seattle Times)

ACTUALLY, MOST OF US GET IT: There are more people here and fewer on-street parking spaces. We can't just keep driving our cars into downtown, hoping to find free and easy parking. Creating more parking would only create more congestion. The real answer, it seems to me, is better transit alternatives, particularly expanded bus service. Still, it would be nice to drive once in a while without dreading the prospect of searching for a parking spot. Let me tell you about the last time I gave that a try. (The same day I decided I would never, ever again drive and park in South Lake Union.)

“Only suckers drive downtown to get to work . . . Live too far away? Why did you apply for a job downtown? . . . Get over yourself and the outdated, failed suburban development strategy already.”

— *Chris Langston*

Yeah, that was my first mistake, buying a house in the suburbs when I could have rented a 471-square-foot studio close to work for the same monthly payment. Anyway, I had a dentist appointment in Wedgwood in the middle of the day, so having my car at work seemed like a good idea. I drove from Lake Forest Park, experienced the thrill ride that is the Mercer Street exit, crawled up Fairview and began to search for parking, willing to pay whatever it cost. Really. I wasn't looking for free parking, that's long gone. I was looking for *any* parking. There were no 10-hour spots, of course, many of those claimed early by construction workers. But I couldn't even find a two-hour spot.



The good news is that the historic Union Stables building is being renovated. The bad news is that almost all the parking in front was wiped out by construction equipment. (Ken Lambert/The Seattle Times)

I circled, from Mercer to Denny Way, Eastlake to Westlake and every block in-between. And circled. And circled. I passed one guy so many times we invited each other to our daughters' next birthday parties.

After half an hour, I found myself on Mercer, headed east, and panicked. I couldn't think of anything better to do than get the hell out of there, so I pointed the trusty Pathfinder north. My plan — if you could call it that — was to go home and take my regular bus, having wasted about an hour and confirmed my wife's long-held suspicion that I'm an idiot.

Even there I had to park about a half-mile from my Bothell Way bus stop. I could have gotten a little closer, but I don't like to park on the street in front of someone's house — legal, sure, but it doesn't seem like a very neighborly (or Seattle) kind of thing to do. As I walked toward my bus, I saw that one homeowner must feel the same way, because he'd cut large branches from one of his trees and laid them on the street in front of his house to discourage commuter parking.

A few bicyclists whizzed past me, and I remembered the good old days when I would occasionally bike to work. The 10 miles or so on the Burke-Gilman Trail were wonderful. But the white-knuckle trek the final two or three miles, on loud, busy city streets getting more crowded by the day doesn't feel safe anymore.

For some, biking is a healthy, carbon-free solution to driving and parking issues, and cyclists are pushing for more bike lanes and racks. Pronto Cycle Share offers 500 bikes and 50 stations in downtown, Capitol Hill and South Lake Union neighborhoods, with plans to expand to 2,200 bikes and 220 stations around King County.



With on-street parking spots difficult to find, many drivers turn to off-street lots. Tim Sloat, visiting from Moscow, Idaho, parks outside EMP Museum, paying \$12 for a two-hour spot. (Ken Lambert/The Seattle Times)

BUT BACK TO ME. I arrived at my bus stop just in time to see the 522 Sound Transit bus pull away, which meant I'd have to wait another half-hour. The good news, when I did get on the next late-morning bus, was that I was able to sit for a change.

(You didn't ask, but here's a free bus-etiquette tip: Don't sit in the aisle seat when the window seat is open. And if you're in the window seat, don't throw your crap in the seat next to you, pretend to be asleep and hope no one will sit next to you. Because I will.)

Scott Kubly, Seattle's transportation director, views full buses as a sign of progress.

"You see it working when you see how crowded the buses are," he tells me.

When I see how crowded the buses are I see some sweaty guy with bad breath standing 3 inches from me for the next 25 minutes. (To be fair, that's precisely what the guy standing next to me is thinking).

Readers called our bus system "a joke" — and worse — and complained that service doesn't fulfill their needs.

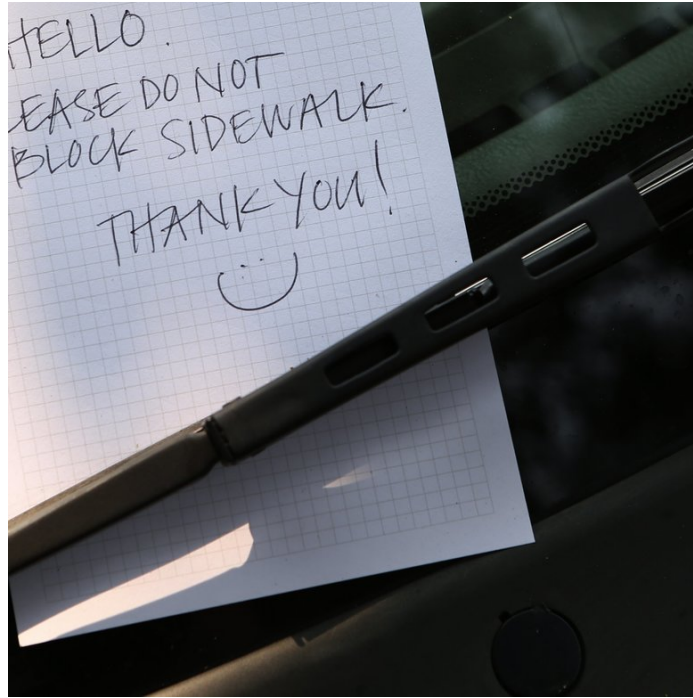
"(We need) less bus stops, more frequent bus trips. Often buses stop every other block. Waiting more than 15 minutes for a bus is unacceptable. My point is many people wouldn't need parking if mass transit worked better."

— *Ryan Weber*

Kubly agrees. He says parking is just a piece of our larger transportation issue and will be solved with more, and better, transit options. A good start would be passage this fall of the \$930 million Seattle levy, he says.

"We have to take a totally holistic view of how our transit system works," Kubly says. "The number one thing the city and region can do is invest in transit."

Kubly, who walks or takes the bus to work from his home in the Central District, makes no apologies for the city's stance on parking. "Nationally, we're known as a leader . . . as far as how we manage parking outlets."



Someone left a note asking this driver not to park in an improvised construction walkway. (Ken Lambert/The Seattle Times)

MY EXCELLENT transportation adventure rumbled into downtown, arriving at my stop at Sixth Avenue and Union Street, where I still had a 15-minute walk. (There's a different bus route I could take that would drop me closer to work. But I can't take that one because I can never find parking after 9 in the morning at the ironically named park and ride off Interstate 5 at Mountlake Terrace.)

As I walked to work, zigzagging from one side of the street to the other to avoid construction projects and closed sidewalks, I was struck by the amount of development downtown and in South Lake Union. (Not literally struck, although that could certainly happen any morning). Many readers complained about out-of-control growth, about developers who were not required to provide adequate parking for their new buildings. Some readers say they just don't go into the city anymore. I hear this a lot, anecdotal evidence that people go to Seattle only when they absolutely have to, that they do their shopping and dining where they can park easily, that Seattle should be avoided at all costs. This is at odds with the scene I see every day as I dodge doofuses on our jam-packed sidewalks.

"Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded."

Baseball Hall of Famer Yogi Berra (OK, he didn't participate in our survey, but he did say this about a popular St. Louis restaurant.)

Another thing I see a lot on my way to work? Parking garages. The city says there are more than 85,000 off-street paid parking spaces in Seattle at more than 600 public lots and garages. Kubly says about 40 percent of those spots are vacant at any given time. They can be costly, as much as \$25 to \$30 per day, but cheaper parking isn't the answer, according to Kubly.

"Lowering the price of parking isn't going to make parking easier to find," he says. "Look off-street. There are a finite number of downtown, on-street parking spaces . . . there's parking in garages — off-street — that people aren't thinking about. You need to plan ahead. Planning ahead helps everyone."

He adds that on-street parking availability "will decline rather than increase."

Kubly laughs when I ask him about the "war on cars" in Seattle.

"Putting the rhetoric aside and just looking at the facts — transportation planning in urban areas has been built around cars for 50, 60 years, and it doesn't work for anyone," he says. "That kind of transportation plan and engineering does not work."

Apparently, not everyone agrees.

“Replace the entire city administration (mayor, council, that stupid SDOT director, et. al) who continue to make the problem worse with stupid ideas to ‘solve’ the problem by eliminating more parking.”

— *Bill Stannard*



The only car allowed to park in this section of a parking garage transformed into a P-Patch is one with stuff growing out of it. (Ken Lambert/The Seattle Times)

BUT YOU WERE probably wondering about my trip to work. Well, I finally arrived at the office (total one-way commute time: 2 hours, 25 minutes) and made a decision. On-street parking? You're dead to me. It's gone, it doesn't exist, forget it. I fought the man, and I lost. Seattle 1, Bill 0.

So it comes down to choices. I can drive, which would be a 20- to 30-minute commute each way, and pay more than I want for an off-street garage (No thanks. I just can't afford to pay for the extra time I'd get back. I would if I could, some days, at least). So I ride the bus, which takes about an hour each way, including time for waiting, walking and politely declining offers of Real Change newspapers and self-produced rap CDs.

I know change is hard. (I still think the designated hitter is a terrible idea.) But the math is irrefutable. More people. Fewer on-street parking spots. We have to do something. We have to change our personal habits and, in a perfect world, a better overall transportation plan will materialize (and be paid for), providing more buses and bike lanes, and walkable neighborhoods for everyone . . .

I snapped out of my daydream and remembered I needed to give my dentist's office a call and let them know I wouldn't be able to make it.

“Thanks, Bill. We'll have to charge you a \$75 cancellation fee.”

I should have just paid to park in a garage.

Bill Reader: 206-464-2416 or breader@seattletimes.com. Ken Lambert is a Seattle Times staff photographer.