



NATIONAL PLANNING EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR A PLANNING PIONEER, **DONALD SHOUP, FAICP, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA**
PLANNING.ORG/AWARDS/2015/PIONEER

FOR SOMEONE WHO, IN HIS WORDS, “came in through the back door” in planning transportation policy, professor Donald Shoup, FAICP, has greatly reshaped the way planners and the public think about the real costs of parking and its impacts on land use. ¶ His influence didn’t happen overnight. It took Shoup’s landmark book, *The High Cost of Free Parking*, published by APA Planners Press in 2005, which distills his math-driven message that parking pricing reforms can improve urban living, to reach a broader audience.

A distinguished professor of urban planning at UCLA, Shoup has steadfastly recommended for 40 years that cities should charge fair market prices for on-street parking, use the meter revenue to finance added public services in the metered neighborhoods, and remove off-street parking requirements. He contends that cities should set the lowest price for on-street parking that will leave one or two open spaces on every block, so that “everyone can have great parking karma.”

“Donald Shoup single-handedly carried interest in this topic for many decades until the world caught up with his way of understanding the role of parking in land use and transportation systems,” wrote Richard Willson, FAICP, professor and chair of urban and regional planning at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in a nomination letter. “Because he persevered, planners and policy-makers now understand parking as a policy issue rather than a regulatory detail.”

Shoup’s work has inspired cities around the country, particularly Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pasadena, and more recently Austin and Houston, among many others. The core areas of many U.S. cities have eliminated minimum parking requirements based on his

recommendations. San Francisco’s SFpark—a real-time, on-street parking pricing program—takes his ideas into practice on a large scale. Shoup’s suggestions have resulted in new zoning tools, such as overlay zones for flex parking regulation, parklets, and others.

What is the secret of persevering for so many years without a great deal of acknowledgment in planning or policy making until recently? “I thought I was right and it was important,” says Shoup. “Very few people are interested in parking itself, but when they realize that parking touches just about everything in land-use planning, they start to show interest.”

Shoup has four degrees from Yale University, including those in electrical engineering and economics. At UCLA he has served as chair of the department of urban planning and as director of the Institute of Transportation Studies. He is also the editor of UCLA’s transportation journal *ACCESS*, which won a National Planning Excellence Award for a Communications Initiative from APA in 2014.

In conversation, Shoup’s excitement about everything land use or parking related is palpable, from a recent visit to car-free Mackinac Island in Michigan to technologies being invented for parking purposes. “It has been fun to see how *The High Cost of Free Parking* has increased the demand for smart parking technology,” he says. “Then everything comes full circle when the new technology allows cities to adopt smart parking policies.” That excitement is contagious: Fans of his work call themselves “Shoupistas” and can join a group of more than 2,000 followers on Facebook.

While passionate about parking policy, he personally avoids cars all he can. Professor Shoup bikes or walks to work every day. ■

—Corry Buckwalter Berkooz