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TRAFFIC LAB
City’s plan to cut cost of housing: less parking

ROBERT ALTMAN
Seattle Times staff reporter

The Seattle City Council plans to reduce parking minimums in a number of ways that would allow more of the city to be built without requiring the construction of expensive parking garages.

The city will change its parking regulations to allow businesses to be permitted to offer less parking than they had previously been required to have. The City Council also plans to require that parking spaces be shared by businesses in a neighborhood.

Social-media data of visitors to U.S. would be required under new plan

ESTIMATED JAM AFFECTED
Critics call visa proposal ‘beyond ridiculous’

By ROYAL W. CHIN
The New York Times

Nearly all applicants for a visa to enter the United States — an estimated 1.7 million people a year — will be asked to submit their social-media user names for the past five years, under proposed rules that the State Department issued Friday.

In September, the Trump administration announced that it would require all visa applicants to submit user names for their social-media accounts, a proposal that would affect about 110,000 people each year. The new proposal would vastly expand that requirement to cover some 14 billion people each year who apply for nonimmigrant visas.

The proposal covers more than 20 social-media platforms. Most of them are based in the United States — including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, MySpace, Pinterest, Reddit, Twitter, Tumblr, Vine, and YouTube. But several are based overseas: the Chinese sites Douban, Qj, sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo and Youku; the Russian social network VK, which is owned in Russia, and Odnoklassniki, which is owned in Belgium; and Gab, the nation’s newest social-media platform, which is based in Canada.

The proposal has been met with mixed reactions from visa applicants, some of whom say they are anxious about answering questions that could put them in legal jeopardy. Others say the new rules will only make it more important to monitor their online activity.

The visa rules were put into place as part of an effort by the Obama administration to prevent terrorism. But many advocates of the new visa rules have been critical of them, saying they are too expansive and too broad.

Some argue that the new rules are too broad and could be used to target people who are not even applying for visas. The proposal would also require that applicants submit user names for their social-media accounts, which could be used to target people who are not even applying for visas.

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