



MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department

DATE: June 1, 2021

TO: Council Transportation Committee

FROM: Lorenzo Lopez, City Traffic Engineer
Edward Arango, Assistant Public Works Director

VIA: Dawn S. Cameron, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: **Residential Parking Permit Program Revisions**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Transportation Committee forward to the City Council approval of the proposed revisions to the Residential Parking Permit Program.

BACKGROUND

On October 4, 2016, the City Council adopted an ordinance amending Chapter 19 of the City Code to create the Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program. The purpose of the RPP program is to provide relief for neighborhoods that are affected by overflow parking by nonresidents from adjacent commercial, transit, school, or other uses.

In 2019, the City Council requested staff review the RPP program and propose changes that would make it easier to qualify for the program and lower the permit cost for residents. At a City Council Study Session on November 12, 2019, staff provided an overview and update on the City's RPP program to obtain City Council direction on possible changes to program criteria. A copy of the Study Session memo is included as Attachment 1 to this memorandum. Also attached is a comparison of parking permit programs in other cities prepared for the November 12, 2019 Study Session (Attachment 2 to this memorandum).

ANALYSIS

The RPP Program process consists of the following eight steps, which are described in more detail in Attachment 1:

Step 1 – Resident Petition

Step 2 – Parking Surveys

Step 3 – Establishment of RPP Zone Boundary and Restrictions or Denial of Request to Establish RPP Zone

Step 4 – Postcard Surveys

Step 5 – Council Transportation Committee (CTC) Discussion

Step 6 – City Council Action

Step 7 – Posting of RPP Zone Signs

Step 8 – Notice to Residents about RPP Zone Designation

Described below are the recommended revisions to the RPP program based on Council direction received at the November 12, 2019 Study Session, concerns raised by residents about the program, and the Council's recent discussion about residential parking permits at the May 11, 2021 Council Study Session on the Downtown Parking Strategy. Attachment 3 to this memorandum provides a red-lined version of the RPP Guidelines showing the revisions recommended below.

Petition Process

The current RPP Program Guidelines requires signatures by adult residents residing in at least 51% of the dwelling units within each block of the proposed RPP Zone. Staff suggested and Council unanimously supported applying the 51% signature requirement to the total proposed RPP Zone and not for each block. This will make it easier to qualify for Step 2, where staff will conduct the parking surveys. This modification is included in Attachment 3.

Postcard Surveys

The requirements for successful voting are 51% of surveys returned on each block and 67% support on each block. These thresholds are relatively high as the parking program imposes cost and potential inconvenience to all residents in the zone, including those who may not support it.

Similar to the petition process, it was suggested and Council unanimously concurred with applying the percentages of surveys returned and votes in support to the total proposed RPP Zone and not on a block-by-block basis. This will also make it easier for an RPP Zone to be approved.

Councilmembers also suggested options to reduce the 67% support requirement. Staff does not recommend reducing the current 67% support requirement because it could result in a much smaller number of residents approving than desired for a program that will directly affect every resident in the zone. For example, below is a comparison of the number of residents required to approve if only the minimum number of postcards are returned under the current 67% approval and under a lower 55% approval:

Residents in RPP zone (postcards sent)	100
51% of postcards returned	51
67% of returned postcards vote yes	35
55% of returned postcards vote yes	29

Under the current voting thresholds if only 51% voted, 35 residents could make the decision to establish the RPP zone for the 100 residents. If the threshold were lowered to 55%, 29 residents could be making this decision.

Staff has revised the RPP program in Attachment 3 to base the percentages of surveys returned and votes in support on the total proposed RPP Zone, rather than block-by-block. Staff has also added to the RPP Program Guidelines that staff will send out at least one additional notice by mail or email to remind residents and property owners to vote to promote the highest response rate possible. Staff recommends retaining the 67% approval rate requirement and no changes were made for this requirement in the red-lined edits in Attachment 3.

Question 1: Does the CTC support retaining the 67% approval rate requirement?

CTC Consideration

The City's program requires consideration by the CTC prior to review by the City Council. This was included to allow a public airing of the issue and consideration by policymakers after the residents vote but prior to final Council consideration. Staff asked Council if they wish to eliminate the requirement that the CTC consider the establishment of an RPP Zone if the support threshold is met. Council was not in favor of this change. Therefore, the RPP Program guidelines continue to include Step 5 – CTC Discussion.

Permit Fees

The current permit fees are as follows:

Permit	Month	Annual
1st Car	\$5	\$60
2nd Car	\$10	\$120
Caregiver	\$5	\$60
Guest	\$5	\$60
Visitor One Day – \$2 per day		
Replacement – \$10 each		
Contractor – \$112 for 25 one-day permits; \$54 per month per space; \$109 per quarter per space.		

When this fee schedule was established, it was estimated it would provide 50% cost recovery, including the set-up costs and permit issuance.

Staff has received feedback that the program should have no cost to residents within the permit zone. Some argue that overflow parking is not a problem created by the residents in the zone, so the residents should not bear the financial cost in addition to the inconvenience of the permit program. At the November 12, 2019 Study Session, Council unanimously supported lowering the permit fee. There were several suggestions to reduce the cost on the initial permit, and it could be tiered for additional permits. Some Councilmembers suggested the first permit could be \$25 per year, and any additional permits could be a higher cost. Other suggestions were to explore other fiscal mechanisms to help recoup the total cost of the RPP program.

As noted above, the current RPP Program fees do not provide full cost recovery for implementation of the RPP Program. Regardless of what changes are made to the fees,

there will be an ongoing impact to the City budget, which cannot be determined at this time because it is unknown how many RPP zones may eventually be created.

Reducing the permit fee to \$25 per year for the first permit and \$50 per year for the second permit would reduce cost recovery to around 20%. At this rate, it would be more efficient for staff to provide the permits at no charge to residents. To issue the permits, residents must come to the Public Works counter at City Hall to show proof of address and sign for their permits. Collecting a fee adds staff time to the process for not only Public Works, but also Finance for deposits and accounting.

There are also other cost-saving measures staff could take for the ongoing operations of the program. Namely, the current program requires permits to be issued to specific vehicles, which then generates the need to issue guest and caregiver permits and new permits whenever residents change cars or new residents move in. All of this creates extra staff time for preparing and issuing the permits.

Staff recommends a pilot program where each household in a RPP zone may receive two free residential parking permits that are not vehicle-specific. These could be hangtags that residents could use for their own vehicles, provide to guests when visiting, and/or give to caregivers or contractors working on their homes. Additional permits could be provided under special circumstances with approval of the Public Works Director. The permits provided would be two-year permits where all permits have the same start and end dates. After an RPP zone is implemented, residents would come to City Hall to pick up their permits after showing proof of address and signing for their permits. When the two-year period is nearly expired, staff would send out reminder notices of the expirations and to return to City Hall for their new two-year permits. This is modeled on the County of Santa Clara's no-fee residential parking permit program where there are several residential parking permit zones with hundreds of residents and County staff has the permit issuance process down to a routine that was easily handled at the counter.

Once the first RPP zone is established, staff would monitor the pilot program to determine the level of staff effort and costs involved. Based on the first two years of implementation, a determination could be made if permits should continue to be free or a modest fee should be charged.

Question 2: Does the CTC support the proposed pilot program to provide up to two free two-year parking permits to each household in an RPP zone?

The red-lined edits in Attachment 3 show the recommended revisions related to the permit and survey processes. Potential edits related to permit fees and number of permits will be made after receiving CTC direction.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will take the CTC-recommended RPP program revisions and a resolution to adjust the fees, if recommended by the CTC, to the City Council for approval.

PUBLIC NOTICING – Agenda posting.

LL-DSC/EP/1/PWK

904-06-1-21M

Attachments: 1. November 12, 2019 Study Session Memo
 2. Comparison of Cities
 3. RPP Program Guidelines with proposed revisions (red-lined)

cc: PWD, APWD – Arango, CTE