

DATE: June 11, 2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

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VIA: Kimbra McCarthy, City Manager

TITLE: **Holistic Citywide Review of Street Parking Regulations**



STUDY SESSION MEMO

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Study Session memorandum is to provide an overview of existing City street parking regulations and obtain Council feedback on the findings and recommendations from the review.

BACKGROUND

On June 13, 2023, the City Council adopted the Fiscal Years 2023-25 Council Work Plan, which includes the following Priority A project: Conduct a holistic Citywide review of street parking regulations. Council did not provide direction on a scope of work or specific areas to study. This memorandum provides a comprehensive overview of the current street parking regulations, a discussion about upcoming challenges related to on-street parking supply, and recommendations based on the review of the parking regulations.

City Regulatory Authority for Street Parking

There are approximately 140 miles of City streets, which consist primarily of two-lane local roads. El Camino Real, Central Expressway, RT Jones Road, and private streets are operated and maintained by the state, County, federal agencies, and private entities respectively, and are not under the City's jurisdiction.

The City regulates on-street parking within the City's street right-of-way. The parking regulations are managed by the Public Works Department and enforced by the Police Department. While the City does not regulate parking on El Camino Real and Central Expressway, the Police Department does provide traffic and parking enforcement on these streets.

The primary regulatory authority for street parking is the state through the California Vehicle Code (CVC). In some cases, the CVC establishes parking regulations, which apply statewide. In other cases, the CVC provides enabling authority to local jurisdictions to establish parking regulations, sometimes limited to specific parameters. The engineering reviews for establishing certain parking restrictions are determined by engineering judgment in applying design standards and guidance, including, but not limited to, the California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD), California Highway Design Manual (HDM), the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), and other publications and tools by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). The CAMUTCD details size, color, and text of regulatory signs, curb colors, and pavement markings.

Public Right-of-Way

Public right-of-way refers to an area of real property in which the City has a dedicated or acquired right-of-way interest in the real property for public street and utility purposes. The City owns its right-of-way either in fee or in street easements over private property with the deeds or easement documents specifying for public use as a street and for sanitary sewers, water mains, storm drains, gas mains, overhead and underground electrical and telephone wire, electroliers, cable television, and other municipal uses.

As defined in the CVC:

- “Street” is a way or place of whatever nature, publicly maintained and open to the use of the public for purposes of vehicular travel (CVC Section 590);
- A person riding a bicycle has all the rights to use the street as a driver of a vehicle (CVC Section 21200); and
- “Sidewalk” is that portion of a street, other than the roadway, set apart by curbs, barriers, markings, or other delineation for pedestrian travel (CVC Section 555).

The City ensures that the street system is available for the public’s travel needs (vehicular, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian), including the necessary infrastructure for safe travel (e.g., traffic control devices, streetlights, drainage for flood control) and amenities to enhance the street (e.g., trees). In addition, the City uses the street right-of-way for its own public utilities (water, stormwater, sewer) and grants franchises and permits for other utilities (PG&E, telecommunications, etc.) to use the right-of-way.

While the City may issue special event permits for temporary private use of the right-of-way (e.g., a block party), the City does not grant ongoing exclusive use of the public right-of-way to any property owner, resident, or business. The one exception is on Castro Street, between West

Evelyn Avenue and California Street, where the City Council established a pedestrian mall as allowed in the California Streets and Highways Code Sections 11000-11806 and approved issuing outdoor patio licenses for businesses to use a portion of the Castro Street right-of-way for their exclusive use.

DISCUSSION

The City's street right-of-way provides a limited supply of on-street public parking. All City street parking is free of charge (i.e., no parking meters). As permitted in the CVC and specified in the Mountain View City Code (MVCC), the City restricts or regulates parking for the following purposes:

- Provide for public safety (e.g., vehicular line of sight and turning clearance, bicycle and/or pedestrian accessibility, inadequate width for parking, fire hydrant access, emergency vehicle access, eliminate traffic hazards, etc.).
- Promote parking turnover to keep the parking available for general public use (e.g., time limits for areas with high parking demand, loading zones, school zones).
- Clear the parking lane for maintenance, repairs, and construction in the right-of-way (e.g., temporary no parking for pavement, sidewalk, curb, tree, storm drain, and utility work). While advance notice of temporary "no parking" restrictions is usually provided for maintenance and construction, the City will require immediate removal of parked vehicles for urgent road or utility work.
- Meet federal and state regulatory requirements (e.g., street sweeping to help keep debris and pollutants out of the storm drain system that outfalls to the creeks and bay, parking for vehicles with disabled placards/license plates).
- Promote alternate and sustainable modes of transportation (e.g., car sharing/ride sharing, bus stops, electric vehicle charging, bicycle lanes, etc.).

The City's parking regulations are included in Chapter 19, Motor Vehicles and Traffic, of the MVCC. Attachment 1 lists the current MVCC street parking restrictions, which are numbered as R1 to R50 for ease of reference and discussion only.¹ Attachment 1 also provides the following information:

- ***MVCC citations and description of the application for each parking restriction.***

¹ The list in Attachment 1 is specific to street parking restrictions and does not include all parking regulations in Chapter 19, such as designating angle parking, parking citations, permits for downtown parking lots, and temporary "no parking" for emergencies, special events, or construction/maintenance.

- **Authority to designate specific locations subject to the parking restrictions as defined in the MVCC.** In general, the City Council designates the street segments by resolution for parking restrictions that affect an entire street or major segments. For more limited parking restrictions, the City Traffic Engineer determines the locations based on an engineering review. Examples include red zones (red curb), loading zones (yellow and white curbs), disabled parking zones (blue curb), bus zones, and any area where parking or stopping a vehicle would constitute a traffic hazard or endanger life or property. Parking restrictions that apply Citywide, for defined areas, or on certain types of streets are shown as “N/A” on the attachment.
- **Whether the parking restriction is currently in effect.** Some restrictions are not currently in effect or enforced because there are no locations identified or posted for the restriction or it has been superseded by state or federal laws. Some examples of parking restrictions where there are no locations currently in use in the City include one-hour parking from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (R25), parking meters (R29), green zones that limit parking time (R33), and “no parking” flood zones (R40). An example of a restriction not enforced is prohibiting street parking for habitation purposes (R46). In addition, prohibiting parking within 15’ of a crosswalk in a business district, if signed or marked (portion of R6), is superseded by Assembly Bill (AB) 413, which prohibits parking a vehicle within 20’ of the approach side of any unmarked or marked crosswalk or 15’ of any crosswalk where a curb extension is present.

Parking restrictions set forth by CVC are statewide regulations and, unless noted otherwise, do not require markings or signage for enforcement. Parking restrictions within the purview of local jurisdictions require signage or markings unless the regulation is applicable Citywide, with the exception that postings are required to support enforcement related to vehicles discharging sewage (R50).

While some of the Citywide parking regulations included in the MVCC were historically under City purview, they have since been incorporated into CVC as statewide regulations, and the MVCC application is now redundant. Examples include obstruction of a sidewalk (portion of R47, R48, and R49) and parking within 18” of the curb (R45), which are incorporated in CVC Sections 22500(f) and 22502, respectively.

Parking Restriction Locations

Attachments 2, 3, and 4 are preliminary maps showing the existing, posted (signed) parking restrictions that are designated for specific street segments. For the past several months, staff has been field-verifying the locations of all posted parking restrictions along City streets as time permits in preparation for this Study Session.² The draft maps included in this report are based

² There are approximately 7,500 parking regulation signs in the City’s 140-mile street system.

on approximately 70% of the posted restrictions having been field verified, and the maps are preliminary until staff completes the field-verification process.

These draft maps display only the posted restrictions. The following parking restrictions are not identified on the maps:

- Existing red zones, street loading zones, and blue zones (R30-R34 in Attachment 1)—These zones are currently being surveyed as part of a Citywide effort to inventory traffic markings and traffic control devices. The completion of the inventory and mapping is anticipated to be completed in Q4 2024.
- Citywide parking restrictions that do not require signage or markings—For example, 72-hour parking limit (R7), no double-parking (R43), and no obstruction of streets/sidewalks (R49).
- Provisions set forth by the California Vehicle Code (CVC), which include, but are not limited to, no stopping, standing, or parking at the following locations:
 - Within 15' of a fire hydrant;
 - Within a crosswalk or blocking a curb ramp;
 - Within 20' of the approach to a marked or unmarked crosswalk;
 - Within 15' of the entrance to a Fire station;
 - In front of a driveway;
 - On sidewalks; and
 - Obstructing traffic.

After completing the field verifications for the postings, staff will compare the locations to the resolutions adopted by Council designating the locations. Staff has already noted some discrepancies, especially for signs posted based on resolutions adopted many years or decades ago. Some of these discrepancies are due to sign postings being moved as street improvements or frontages for new developments were constructed.

Process to Designate Parking Restriction Locations

Locations subject to specific parking restrictions have been identified by one or more of the following means:

- Public requests—Traffic Engineering receives approximately 132 requests per year for parking restrictions. The reasons for the requests include concerns about sight lines at driveways and intersections, needing a space for a vehicle with a disabled placard/license plate, and too much parking on the street/lack of availability for guests/customers to park.

- Safety issue identified by Traffic Engineering or Police.
- Street improvement projects which reduce right-of-way available for street parking, such as adding buffered bike lanes, protected bikeways, wider sidewalks, or improved roadway design.

When a concern is raised about safety, or a public request is received for a parking restriction, the first step for is Traffic Engineering to conduct an engineering review that may include site measurements, data collection, field observations, or historical research of existing conditions. If the concern is verified and can be addressed by the Traffic Engineer (e.g., add red curb), a work order is issued for Streets staff to implement the required measures. The City Traffic Engineer uses engineering judgment and engineering practices as the primary basis for determining the use of red curb and other controls.

If the concern is best addressed through a parking restriction that requires City Council action (e.g., a timed restriction), staff will recommend that the City Council adopt a resolution approving the parking restriction. Since these types of restrictions typically affect several blocks, staff conducts community and/or business outreach before bringing the item to the City Council for consideration. If the Council-approved parking regulation is limited in scope, it is also implemented by a work order issued for Streets staff to implement. Regulations implemented in larger areas may require establishing a CIP project and allocating funds for a contractor to do the work.

Residential Parking Permit Program

The City also has a Council-approved Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program (R28 on Attachment 1). 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. The permits are intended to be used in conjunction with timed-parking limits to keep street parking open to the public; the program does not reserve street parking for residents only. The program has an established process for designation of permit zones, including a resident-initiated petitioning process, qualifying criteria, and fee structure for permits. Per the guidelines, permits exempt permit holders from the posted time limits in the designated zones. Permits do not exempt permit holders from any CVC, MVCC, or other posted parking regulations and do not guarantee or assign a specific on-street parking space.

While the program was established in 2016 (and revised in 2017), to date the City has not received any qualifying petitions to request establishing an RPP zone; therefore, there are no existing RPP-posted regulations in Mountain View.

In 2019, Council directed staff to 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 Council's direction on possible changes to program criteria. Based on the input from Council, staff conducted further analysis and brought recommended revisions for the RPP Program guidelines to the Council Transportation Committee (CTC) on June 1, 2021. The CTC supported the recommended revisions, which included applying the 51% signature requirement for the petition, and 51% of postcards returned with 67% voting yes to the total proposed RPP zone and not for each block. The CTC also supported a staff recommendation for a pilot program to offer two free permits per residence that are not vehicle-specific, which would reduce the workload for administrating the program compared to a program that reduced fees to less than 20% cost-recovery and was vehicle-specific.

Staff had not brought these changes forward to the City Council for approval due to a very high workload responding to the COVID pandemic, which was exacerbated by a high level of vacancies in Public Works. Staff also determined that further analysis was needed prior to moving forward with the recommendation for free permits under a pilot program. In addition, parking demand shifted substantially during the Shelter-in-Place order for the pandemic and with remote work for certain businesses. For example, downtown residential areas impacted by overflow parking from the Caltrain park-and-ride lot before the pandemic are not experiencing these issues at this time due to the decline in transit ridership. Staff has not received any petitions for the RPP Program in the last few years, and the inquiries received relate to parking complaints that the RPP Program does not address.

Future Street Parking Capacity/Availability

In the future, it is anticipated that on-street parking capacity will be reduced while demand for street parking may increase. Specifically, competing uses for the limited street right-of-way may lead to removing parking lanes and expanding "No Parking/No Stopping" on more street segments. For example, adding buffered bike lanes or protected bikeways frequently requires using the right-of-way previously available for on-street parking. As the City continues to look at opportunities to add more green street features and potentially widen the pedestrian zones, the right-of-way may need to come from eliminating on-street parking.

At the same time, AB 2097 has prohibited minimum parking requirements for any development within one-half mile of a major transit stop, which includes the Caltrain and light rail stations in Mountain View. As specified in the Housing Element, the City will also be eliminating parking minimums for 100% affordable housing developments and residential developments in the El Camino Real, San Antonio, Downtown, East Whisman, and Moffett Boulevard Precise Plan areas. The reduction or elimination of on-site parking by these development projects can lead to a significant increase in the number of vehicles seeking on-street parking. This can be offset if the developments actively promote and incentivize walking, bicycling, taking transit, and car-share services through Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs; however, to date,

most TDM programs do not offset parking demand to the extent that may be required to avoid street parking impacts.

Preliminary Findings

Listed below are preliminary findings based on reviewing the City's current parking restrictions, the field verification of posted parking zones, and potential future impacts on street parking capacity/availability:

- The MVCC provides a wide range of tools to maintain safety and provide for management of on-street parking in addition to the parking regulations in the CVC. These include designating "no parking" through signage or by red curb where there is inadequate space for vehicles to park without creating a safety hazard and for ensuring clear sight lines. It also includes promoting parking turnover for public use through different types of timing restrictions, designating loading zones, and providing parking for vehicles with disabled placards/license plates.
- While not all parking regulations are currently in use, some of these provide flexibility for future use, if needed, such as parking meters (R29), prohibiting parking adjacent to schools (R15), or where parking may contribute to flooding adjacent property (R40).
- At the same time, some updates should be made to the MVCC to eliminate outdated codes that have been superseded by the CVC or are not enforceable. In addition, where the on-street signage locations are inconsistent with Council-adopted resolutions, the signs should be removed or the resolutions updated.
- The MVCC does not include any specific restrictions related to the use of public street parking areas for storage or business purposes (e.g., trailer storage, work/company vehicles, cars for sale). It does prohibit parking for the purpose of washing, servicing, repairing, or otherwise working on vehicles, except in emergencies (R37 in Attachment 1).
- While the RPP Program has not yet been updated, consistent with the direction provided by the City Council in 2019 and CTC in 2021, a fresh look at the program may be warranted based on upcoming reductions in street parking capacity along with potential increases in demand with the elimination of minimum parking requirements for many future developments. For example, there may be a desire to plan ahead for impacted street parking when a major new development with limited on-site parking is approved.

Recommendations for Next Steps

Based on the review and assessment of the Citywide street parking regulations, staff recommends the following actions:

- **Complete the field verification of all parking restriction signage locations and update Council-adopted resolutions to be consistent.** Staff will conduct outreach should any signs located in areas not included in a Council resolution be recommended for removal. Staff will return to Council to recommend approval of updated resolutions where needed. Based on staff workloads and the need to prioritize requests from the public for Traffic Engineering review of red/blue curbs, clear sight lines, and new stop signs as well as conduct speed surveys to lower speed limits as allowed under a new state law, staff recommends this task be a lower priority and completed as time permits. The goal would be to return to Council with updated resolutions by Q4 2025.
- **Update the MVCC to eliminate outdated codes that have been superseded by the CVC, are not in use and may not be necessary, and/or are not enforceable.** This work could also include reviewing the regulatory authority and enforcement relating to the use of public street parking areas for storage or business purposes for potential addition to the MVCC. Staff recommends that this also be a lower-priority task completed as time permits with a goal to return to Council to approve updated parking regulations by Q2 2026.

Question No. 1: Does Council have any feedback on the recommended approach for updating the Council resolutions designating street segments with parking restrictions and/or for updating the Mountain View City Code?

- **Conduct a comprehensive review of the RPP Program for potential revisions or a new approach based on the future of street parking supply and demand.** Revisions to consider include a City-initiated process and/or requiring new development with little to no parking to help cover the costs of parking permits and establishing permit zones. Staff recommends that a consultant be retained to support this effort so that it can be completed by Q1 2026. The consultant scope of work would include:
 - Identify City street segments likely to experience increased on-street parking issues by analyzing current on-street parking capacity and use in the areas where new development will be allowed to build with no on-site parking minimums, reviewing transportation plans to identify where on-street parking may be removed in the future, and evaluating the potential for a development’s TDM measures to reduce parking demand in these areas.
 - Research residential parking permit programs in other cities and counties to help identify best practices and options, including which have proven to be most effective

at parking management, processes to approve RPP zones, administrative work effort and costs to implement permit system, and the permit fees.

- Conduct community outreach, especially in neighborhoods already experiencing impacted street parking or expected to experience it in the future. The outreach will seek feedback on whether there should be a City-initiated permit process, how petitions and surveys should be handled to gauge support, and program implementation, including fees.
- Bring options forward for Council consideration and assist with drafting revisions to the RPP Program guidelines based on Council direction.

Question No. 2: Does Council support a comprehensive review and potential new approaches to the Residential Parking Permit Program and, if so, does Council have any feedback on the scope of work?

Question No. 3: Does Council wish staff to conduct any further review of the on-street parking regulations and, if so, what does Council want staff to study?

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL

As listed above, the questions for Council are:

1. Does Council have any feedback on the recommended approach for updating the Council resolutions designating street segments with parking restrictions and/or for updating the Mountain View City Code?
2. Does Council support a comprehensive review and potential new approaches to the Residential Parking Permit Program and, if so, does Council have any feedback on the scope of work?
3. Does Council wish staff to conduct any further review of the on-street parking regulations and, if so, what does Council want staff to study?

NEXT STEPS

Staff will proceed with updating the Council resolutions designating street segments with parking restrictions and/or updating the Mountain View City Code as outlined in the recommendations or as otherwise directed by Council. In addition, staff will return to Council in Q4 2024 for approval of a budget allocation and of the scope of work for a comprehensive review and potential new approaches to the Residential Parking Permit Program if supported by Council.

Should Council identify additional areas for review and study of street parking regulations, staff will develop a scope of work, assess staffing availability, and return to Council for a budget allocation for consultant services if needed in Q4 2024.

PUBLIC NOTICING

The City Council agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this Study Session memorandum appear on the City's website.

CO-LL-EA-DSC/LL/1/CAM

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- Attachments:
1. Table—Street Parking Regulations
 2. Map—Posted No-Parking Regulations
 3. Map—Posted Time-Limited Regulations
 4. Map—Bike Lane Parking Regulations