



Legislation Text

File #: 22-639, Version: 1

TITLE:

RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT/ TRANSPORTATION
SERVICES DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: RAJA SETHURAMAN, PUBLIC SERVICES DIRECTOR

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RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Approve revised Residential Permit Parking program guidelines and policies.
2. Approve an annual residential parking permit fee with an escalating rate structure and discount for qualifying low-income residents.
3. Authorize staff and the City Attorney to initiate amendments to the Costa Mesa Municipal Code (CMMC) incorporating proposed changes to the Residential Permit Parking program and return to City Council for approval through the Public Hearing process.

BACKGROUND:

The most recent guidelines for the City of Costa Mesa's Residential Permit Parking program (RPP) were adopted in January 2016 (Attachment 2). The purpose of the RPP program is to help relieve parking congestion on public streets adjacent to impacted residential areas by vehicles unrelated to the neighborhood.

Key components of the existing Residential Permit Parking program include:

- Considered only in R-1 zones on a street by street basis;
- Eligible household is defined as a single family or multi-family residence along the designated permit parking street as well as single family residence located in a mixed-use neighborhood located within 250 feet of a permit parking street;
- Parking survey that identifies neighborhood parking demand of 70 percent or more of all available parking is considered significant;
- Petition signed by a majority of households is required for installation or removal of the program;
- Up to three (3) permits per household; and

- One hundred (100) guest parking permits per household issued per year.

In recent years, the parking demands from single-family residential, multi-family residential, and commercial parking shortages have caused significant parking impacts on other adjacent residential neighborhoods where residents are unable to park on streets adjacent to their homes. The City has received significant feedback from both residents and business owners related to limited parking on public streets.

Several factors have contributed to the increase of significant parking impacts including a growing number of vehicles per household, older neighborhoods originally designed for a lower parking demand, insufficient parking within multi-family communities, and the use of garages for storage. In addition, when a single-family street becomes a newly designated residential permit parking street, vehicles utilizing this street for parking are displaced and moved to other nearby streets. Often, streets designated with residential permit parking become much less utilized since residents not living on that street are displaced and are then required to find parking elsewhere resulting in a new set of parking challenges in adjacent neighborhoods. This sequence of events creates unintended cascading impacts on surrounding streets.

A Professional Services Agreement with Dixon Resources Unlimited for the Citywide Parking Study of the Residential Permit Parking program was approved by the City Council on January 21, 2020 to identify viable solutions including both short-term and long-term solutions to parking impacted neighborhoods. The study objectives include:

- Actively engage stakeholders;
- Holistically understand parking challenges;
- Evaluate the Residential Permit Parking program; and
- Develop recommendations that will have an immediate as well as long-term impact on the City's parking operations.

The scope of work included extensive stakeholder input, a parking analysis of existing and future parking conditions, alternative parking management strategies and an implementation plan. In April 2020, the project was put on hold and defunded due to financial impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. In the City's approved Capital Improvement Project fund for fiscal year (FY) 20-21, the project funding was restored. The Citywide Parking Study project was reinitiated with Dixon Resources Unlimited in October 2020 when students returned to campus for in-person learning and traffic patterns returned to more typical levels.

ANALYSIS:

The Citywide Parking Study includes a review of existing conditions, current parking policies, extensive data collection and analysis, and community outreach. The on-street parking data collection was conducted in the residential areas of City Council Districts 4 and 5 and approximately 650 blocks were observed consisting of a total inventory of 10,531 spaces. Data collection occurred over two days in October 2020 including weekday and weekend to compare occupancy and turnover rates.

An online Citywide Residential Parking Survey was conducted from March 13, 2021 to April 18, 2021. The purpose of the survey was to gather initial feedback about residential on-street parking including

existing policies and programs. The survey was available online with English and Spanish language options. The City received 356 total responses and four percent took the survey in Spanish.

The City hosted four virtual community outreach meetings to provide information about the project and to solicit feedback from residents. The presentation slides were offered in both English and Spanish, and a Spanish translator was present during the meetings.

The community outreach meetings were held on the following dates:

- March 15, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
- March 31, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
- June 30, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
- September 28, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Over 100 residents participated in the community outreach meetings. Results from the surveys and data collection are included in Attachment 3.

Several recommendations were developed taking into consideration the data collection results, community outreach feedback, residential parking survey, industry best practices, and the 2016 California State Attorney General opinion. These recommendations are meant to address the current and long-term residential parking and mobility challenges in Costa Mesa. Initial steps recommended for the RPP program will provide immediate parking management benefits and establish the basis for future improvements. The guiding principles employed in the development of the City's RPP program include:

- **Equitable access:** Develop equitable programs that appropriately balance the parking needs of all residents, businesses, and visitors, while enabling the on-street parking supply to serve the community fairly, and enhance access for all.
- **Sustainable solutions:** Implement financially sustainable strategies that modernize and streamline parking program management.
- **Efficient program management:** Create an efficient and adaptable parking system that is optimized for the City's current needs, but can be incrementally updated and adjusted over time.

The following are goals and priorities identified for the parking program:

- Align the RPP program with the Attorney General's opinion and develop an equitable solution that serves the needs of all Costa Mesa residents. The 2016 California Attorney General's opinion (#14-304), states ***"In issuing long-term residential parking permits, local authorities may not distinguish among residents based on the type of dwelling in which they live."***
- Improve parking demand management. This includes addressing local neighborhood parking challenges and the parking demand generated by commercial areas.
- Improve mobility and promote alternative transportation options. Promoting alternatives to driving alone can lower parking demand, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and is better for the environment.
- Address spillover impacts and optimize on-street parking supply utilization. There is often an

imbalanced distribution of parking demand due to spillover parking impacts from permit parking restrictions.

- Streamline and modernize the RPP program. This includes utilizing technology to automate and enhance permit applications, approval process and enforcement of permit parking.

Several recommendation options and strategies were developed for the RPP program. These include:

- Implementation of a revised RPP program.
- Future RPP permit zones limited to external parking impacts: residents near commercial areas, OC Fair, and near City boundaries.
- Changes to permit eligibility and permit maximums.
- Annual RPP permit fee and low cost options.
- Implementation of an automated permit management system.
- Implementation of mobile license plate recognition cameras, and transition to virtually managed permits.
- Ongoing enforcement staffing adjustments based on data.
- Branding and marketing.
- Longer term shared parking agreements.
- Promote and enhance alternative transportation modes for walking and biking.

Feedback from residents regarding proposed recommendation options was obtained during the fourth community outreach meeting held on September 28, 2021. Over 40 community members attended this meeting via zoom. Several residents expressed support for implementing a residential parking permit fee and in favor of keeping a residential permit parking program. Residents on existing residential permit parking streets inquired about potential needs for re-applying and about any renewal priorities. Other topics discussed included virtual permits, parking enforcement, shared parking opportunities, utilization of off-street parking, and increasing housing density.

Based on the public input received at the fourth community outreach meeting, a proposed phased renewal process is recommended for existing residential permit parking streets and application for potential new streets into the program. The existing residential permit parking streets with and without existing external parking impacts, which include commercial businesses, entertainment and event facilities, and educational institutions are shown in Attachment 4.

Proposed recommendations for the RPP program were presented to the City Council in a study session on November 9, 2021. Based on City Council direction, staff is recommending approval of revised RPP Program Guidelines (Attachment 1) and approval of recommendations for implementing the proposed Residential Parking Action Plan. The proposed Residential Parking Action Plan is provided in Attachment 5.

The revised RPP Program Guidelines (Attachment 1) for consideration include the following key components:

- Revised permit eligibility to include Costa Mesa residents of all housing types in compliance with the 2016 California Attorney General's opinion and remove the limitation of the program to

only single family, R-1 zones.

- Establish RPP eligibility zones only in areas experiencing external parking demand, which includes impacts from commercial areas, neighboring cities, the Orange County Fairgrounds, schools, and recreational facilities.
- Establish a neighborhood permit zone system with a minimum of 2,000 feet (both sides of the street included) which is about four blocks instead of on a street-by-street basis.
- Continue to require a petition for new permit zones with support from majority of households (minimum 51 percent) to form a new zone.
- For petitions in rental complexes, the residents, property managers, and property owners will participate in the petition survey. If the units in a multi-family property are individually owned, each owner would be included in the petitioning.
- Continue 70% parking occupancy threshold of all available on-street parking and visible off-street parking for consideration of new permit zones.
- Implement an annual permit fee structure with an escalating rate structure and low cost permits for qualifying low income residents.
- Replace a maximum of three (3) permits per household limit, with one (1) permit per eligible driver.
- Develop a phased renewal process for existing residential parking permit streets.
- Continue to require a petition for removal of residential permit parking restriction with a minimum of 51 percent of more households support for such action.
- Continue to provide annual guest permits to eligible residents at a maximum of 100 guest permits per year.

Currently, the City of Costa Mesa does not recover any of the costs associated with parking permits. In order for the program to become financially sustainable, and for the City to make investments in modernizing the program, an annual fee for residential parking permits is recommended. An escalating permit rate structure is recommended starting at \$25 annually for the first permit. For households with multiple drivers, additional permits are recommended at a higher premium rate. The rate structure is similar to the rates in neighboring Southern California cities.



A discounted rate option is recommended to qualifying low-income residents.

Staff recommends that residential parking permit fees be reviewed annually to determine whether the City's costs are being recovered and whether the cost structure is effective at discouraging excessive permits. In addition, the cost of providing ongoing enforcement to provide enough consistency and coverage to encourage compliance is recommended to be reviewed annually. These permit fees are aimed to make the RPP program cost-neutral, covering only the administrative costs necessary for the City to efficiently manage and enforce the program.

In order to implement many of the near term recommendations of the proposed Residential Parking Action Plan, new technology investments are recommended to efficiently manage the new RPP program, which includes an automated Permit Management System (PMS) and License Plate Recognition (LPR) cameras. These systems will streamline the management and enforcement of the RPP program.

The following are near-term recommendations to implement the proposed Residential Parking Action Plan:

- Approve the proposed RPP program guidelines and policies.
- Approve an annual residential permit fee with escalating rate structure and discount for qualifying low-income residents.
- Approve a Citywide Residential Parking Permit Program Implementation Project for inclusion in the City's Fiscal Year (FY) 22-23 Capital Improvement Project budget in the amount of \$220,000 which includes:
 - Consulting services of Dixon Resources Unlimited to assist with the program implementation.
 - Purchase and development of an automated permit management system for the RPP program.
 - Purchase of License Plate Recognition (LPR) cameras for installation on two vehicles.
 - Public outreach and education.
 - Program branding and marketing materials.
 - Signage.

The time frame estimated to complete the implementation steps outlined in the near-term recommendations is six to nine (6-9) months from approval and funding.

After the implementation of the near-term recommendations for the RPP program, a phased renewal process is recommended for existing residential permit parking streets and application for potential new streets into the program.

Renewal Phase 1 (Estimated time frame of one to three (1-3) months after near-term implementation): Existing RPP zones with external parking impacts and commercial parking impacts. These include:

- Impacts from neighboring cities (Newport Beach, Santa Ana, and Huntington Beach).
- Orange County Fairgrounds.
- Commercial parking demand.

- Schools and recreation facilities

Renewal Phase 2 (Estimated time frame of 6-12 months after near-term implementation): Existing RPP zones with only residential parking demand (without external impacts) will be evaluated for renewal based on the following criteria:

- Zones must confirm their interest in participating in the RPP program by providing a petition signed by 51% of residents.
- Existing zones will be required to re-apply for the RPP zone, and will be re-evaluated under the new permit zone guidelines. The City will contact and notify these zones of the required action.
- Existing zones that are required to re-apply, and do so within 6 months will be given re-evaluation priority. If a zone has not re-applied after 6 months of notification, the zone will be removed.

Existing RPP zones will not be enforced until 1) the zone is renewed, 2) residents have been notified of the renewal, and 3) at least 50% of eligible households receive a permit under the new permit guidelines. Regardless of the phase in which a zone is renewed, all RPP zone residents will be required to meet the new eligible driver criteria and permits will be subject to the permit fee rate structure.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could consider other alternatives such as retaining the current program with modifications to address the 2016 Attorney General opinion, elimination of residential permit parking program, any other changes to proposed recommendations, or deferring funding for the implementation project to a future fiscal year. Staff does not recommend retaining the current program as it will continue to exacerbate the issues by pushing parking impacts to other neighborhoods. Elimination of RPP program is not supported by several members of the community.

FISCAL REVIEW:

If funding is approved, the initial implementation cost for new Citywide Residential Permit Parking program estimated at \$220,000, will be included in the FY2022-23 Capital Improvement Program Budget. Future operating costs of the program will be funded by fees collected through the new RPP program.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report and approves it as to form. Modifications to the Costa Mesa Municipal Code will be presented for City Council approval in the future.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

This item supports the following City Council Goals:

- Achieve long-term fiscal sustainability.
- Strengthen the public's safety and improve the quality of life.

- Advance environmental sustainability and climate resiliency.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Approve revised Residential Permit Parking program guidelines and policies.
2. Approve an annual residential parking permit fee with an escalating rate structure and discount for qualifying low-income residents.
3. Authorize staff and the City Attorney to initiate amendments to the Costa Mesa Municipal Code (CMMC) incorporating proposed changes to the Residential Permit Parking program and return to City Council for approval through Public Hearing.