



# CITY OF SAN MATEO

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## Agenda Report

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**TO:** City Council  
**FROM:** Drew Corbett, City Manager  
**PREPARED BY:** Public Works  
**MEETING DATE:** September 16, 2019  
**SUBJECT:** Residential Parking Permit Program Policy and Procedures - Approval

### RECOMMENDATION:

Review the proposed revisions to the Residential Parking Permit Program and adopt a Resolution to approve the revised program policy.

### BACKGROUND:

In March 2019, City Council received an update on the Residential Parking Permit Program (RPPP) policy review and provided direction to staff on several components of the program. Staff has made minor recommended revisions to the policy document to incorporate the direction from City Council.

### Purpose and Goals

The RPPP was established to maximize availability of on-street parking for local residents in highly impacted areas. This is accomplished by preventing long-term parking (i.e., more than 2 hours) on residential streets by non-residents. The RPPP policy includes provisions that aim to accomplish the purpose and goals of the program without unnecessarily restricting residents' use.

### Policy Provisions and Recommendations

During the March Council meeting, staff requested direction from Council on several program provisions, including number of permits per household, term for permits, price for permits, parking generator determination, and application/implementation process. Based on Council direction, staff recommends the following revisions to the existing policy and procedures for the program.

- **Number of Permits.** City Council generally supported some limitation on the allowable number of permits provided to residents, with a request to 'grandfather' existing permit holders and their existing number of permits. In evaluating implementation, staff determined that allowing different permitting criteria for different program participants would be difficult to track and administer over a long period of time as home occupancy and vehicle ownership changes.

The main concern regarding the number of permits issued is related to maximizing on-street parking while balancing the needs of different residents. A static permit limit could result in disproportionate restrictions to on-street parking access for homes with a greater number of licensed drivers. Comparatively, allowing unlimited on-street parking to homes with few licensed drivers who own a large number of cars would provide on-street parking to vehicles that are used infrequently and reduce on-street parking available to all residents and their guests.

To meet City Council's objective of providing unlimited permits to those who need them, and in keeping with the

program's goal of maximizing on-street parking available to residents, staff recommends issuing one permit per licensed driver with a vehicle registered to an address within an RPPP area. This allows each licensed driver to have one permitted vehicle, with no limit to the number of licensed drivers per household, while reducing the use of on-street parking for vehicle storage. Homes that own a greater number of vehicles than licensed drivers would then use their off-street parking for extra vehicles. Under this approach, the number of permits would be issued proportionally to the actual vehicle use and potential need for on-street parking.

- **RPPP Program Application and Approval Process.** Under the existing policy, applications for new program areas are evaluated by staff and approved by the Public Works Director. Council expressed some support for ongoing approval by the Public Works Director but also expressed interest in involving the Sustainability and Infrastructure Commission (S&I Commission) during the review and approval process. Given implementation of a new program area may affect multiple neighborhoods, and that the City may receive multiple requests at a time, staff recommends that RPPP applications continue to be approved at the staff level but include a process where appeals are brought to the S&I Commission. The S&I Commission would evaluate whether staff's decision was consistent with the RPPP policy, the need of a new program, and whether the goals of the program are achieved by implementing a new program area. Further, staff will conduct parking utilization studies for all program requests and utilize the data to develop the staff recommendation for implementation.
- **RPPP Program Removal or Modification Process.** The current RPPP policy document includes a provision for removal of an RPPP zone or a portion of the zone. Staff has received inquiries regarding modification of existing program areas (e.g. time of day or days of the week). The proposed policy document recommends following the same procedure of neighborhood petition and mailed survey to gauge community interest in the proposed program modifications.
- **Parking Generators.** City Council directed staff to retain the approved list of parking generators (previously referred to as Parking Impact Generators). In the existing policy, parking generators are non-residential land uses or entities that are a cause of parking overflow onto residential streets. The current approved parking generators are schools, businesses, commercial districts, or commercial uses. Parking generators do not have access to parking permits under the RPPP, thereby reducing the demand for on-street parking. Council generally supported including multi-family housing as a parking generator for the RPPP.

Staff reviewed potential changes to types of parking generators with legal counsel to evaluate the permissibility of differentiating between different types of residential housing (e.g., single family residential, condominiums, apartments, townhomes, etc.) in the RPPP. According to legal counsel, land uses that are similarly situated (i.e., alike in all relevant ways) are required to be evaluated and treated equally unless there is a rational basis for distinction.

In situations where off-street parking is provided as part of rental or ownership of the residence, staff does not believe a rational basis exists for distinguishing between different forms of residential housing. However, when off-street parking is not included in the cost of rent or purchase (i.e., "unbundled parking"), a financial incentive is created to park in the public right-of-way. Unbundled parking has the potential to impose a greater demand for on-street parking when compared to residential units that include parking spaces. In these situations, staff believes a rational basis exists for distinguishing between different forms of residential housing exists.

Accordingly, it would be appropriate to treat any residential housing that does not provide off-street parking differently under the RPPP program. The rational basis is to incentivize housing developers to provide bundled parking, or for programs to be offered to residents to reduce the need for vehicle parking. In order to provide this incentive and ensure adequate on-street parking for all residents, staff recommends including a policy preventing residents in new multi-family buildings with unbundled parking from obtaining RPPP permits.

- **Permit Issuance for Corner Properties.** Under the current RPPP policy, homes with street addresses located in RPPP areas are eligible for permits. Staff has historically received requests for permits from residents in homes

abutting an RPPP area, where the side of their home is in the restricted parking area but the street address (front door) is not in the program area. In some cases, the implementation of RPPP restrictions results in removal of all on-street parking available for these homes. In these circumstances, staff recommends allowing issuance of permits for the corner property as well so long as it is demonstrated the only available on-street parking is part of the new RPPP program area.

### **Additional Considerations**

In reviewing the goals of the program, staff evaluated other options to enhance the RPPP program and maximize the availability of on-street parking for all residents and their guests. One approach implemented in other cities is to incorporate policies that require the use of at least some of the available off-street parking (e.g., garage, driveway, off-site legal parking space).

As an example, if a resident has an available off-street parking space (e.g., driveway or parking in a multi-family complex), they would be eligible for one less on-street parking permit to encourage use of at least one of their existing available parking assets. In this example, the same policy would be applied to both single- and multi-family housing occupants who are eligible for RPPP permits, which would then require multi-family residents to also use their available off-street parking. By encouraging the use of free, available, off-street parking, fewer vehicles would be parked on-street, thereby increasing availability of on-street parking for all residents or their guests.

While staff does not recommend implementation of an off-street parking requirement at this time, it may be an option for future consideration or implementation if the provisions of the current policy do not result in adequate availability of on-street parking for residents and their guests.

### **RPPP Updates**

Current RPPP permits will expire at the end of December 2019. Staff has begun the process of ordering new permits and expects to begin outreach to residents in permit parking areas during October. Staff has also created an online permit application process that will be available to residents this year. The online application process was developed in response to frequent requests from residents to automate the process and make it available during non-business hours. Residents will submit the application online, and include their supporting documentation as a PDF, JPEG, or PNG formatted item. City staff will evaluate each application, confirm the supporting documentation, then mail the requested permits to the resident's home.

In support of the new online permit application, staff has worked with the City's Information Technology, and Community Development departments to ensure computers will be available at City Hall for residents who do not have access to a computer. Staff will also prepare a user guide to assist residents during the application process and will be available for assistance on-site. With the new online permitting system in place and the available on-site assistance from City staff, the City will no longer be accepting paper applications.

### **BUDGET IMPACT:**

Current program costs are estimated to be \$100,000 to \$150,000 annually and are incorporated into the Public Works operating budget. The proposed policy updates are not estimated to have an impact on program costs. The program is paid for by the General Fund.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

This program is not a project subject to CEQA, because it is an organizational or administrative activity that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5).)

### **NOTICE PROVIDED**

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Att 1 – Proposed Resolution

Att 2 - Proposed Residential Parking Permit Program Policy and Procedures  
Att 3 – Public Comment

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