



Agenda Item

City Council

Item #: 7.2.

8/9/2022

File #: 22-0452

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THRU: Rob Houston, City Manager

FROM: Christopher Cash, Public Works Director

1. SUBJECT

Review of City's Neighborhood Permit Parking Program policy

2. SUMMARY

The City's Neighborhood Permit Parking Program (NPPP) was first established in 1987 to provide a mechanism for combating parking intrusion on residential streets. Since then, it has been amended several times, most recently in 2015, to align with the City's evolving goals. In response to recent increases in permit parking inquiries staff was directed to review the NPPP and identify areas of potential change.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve the proposed updates to the Neighborhood Permit Parking Program policy and implementation updates, dated August 9, 2022.

4. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Goal 1. Provide for a safe community

b. Provide and maintain infrastructure necessary to ensure the safety of the public.

6. DISCUSSION AND BACKGROUND

Permit Parking Program Background

Established in 1987 and periodically amended since, the City's Neighborhood Permit Parking Program (NPPP) is designed to mitigate the intrusion of non-residential, e.g., university, commercial, and industrial, parking demands on residential streets. In doing so, the program strives to provide local residents and their guests with access to on-street parking within reasonable proximity of their homes. The NPPP currently includes 25 "lettered" permit parking areas, the first of which is designated Area "A" and comprises an area within and around Chapman University, as shown on the Attachment. The remainder of the city falls outside of Area "A". This distinction is important since permit parking requests within Area "A" are currently processed in a unique manner.

Current Permit Parking Policy

Area “A” Procedures and Implementation Criteria

Area “A” was first established in 1987, and subsequently expanded in 2001, to prevent Chapman University student parking from encroaching onto residential streets in high parking demand areas of Old Towne. Based on stakeholder input and staff observations at the time of its establishment, it was presumed that parking intrusion exists within its boundaries. But, because the intrusion potential and tolerance levels vary between the many streets within the area, the intent was that each street within the area’s boundary could request activation of permit parking on a case-by-case basis, if and when parking conditions deteriorate to unacceptable levels. Effectively, the Area “A” policy recognizes the inherent and potential need for permit parking around Chapman University, and provides for a streamlined implementation process.

Activating permit parking in Area “A”, involves the following key components:

1. No application fee
(Note: originally established without a fee, a \$400 fee was subsequently assessed and paid by Chapman University on behalf of all future applicants. When Area “A” was expanded in 2001, the City Council waived the application fee for the expanded area.)
2. No parking study (minimum occupancy or utilization)
3. Petition showing 55% support of affected street(s.)

If the above criteria are satisfied, the request is presented to City Traffic Commission (CTC) for approval and City Council for final approval.

Non-Area “A” Procedures and Implementation Criteria

Each of the other subsequently approved permit parking areas (currently Areas “B” through “Y”) are created using a different procedure. Rather than establishing predefined boundaries and allowing those within to “opt in” at their discretion, each individual request is processed and evaluated for necessity (based on a parking study) on a case-by-case basis, with residents initiating a request for their street/neighborhood, and Traffic Engineering staff establishing a study area based on engineering judgement. The limits of the study area might then be further refined based on the result of the petition process or City Traffic Commission/Council direction and, if approved, each study area becomes a stand-alone lettered Permit Parking Area.

Implementation procedures outside of Area A are delineated in the city’s NPPP implementation policy. The policy was most recently amended by City Council in 2015 and attached for reference. Key components of that policy involve the following requirements for establishing a new permit parking area:

1. Application fee be paid (\$4,900)
2. Parking Study be conducted and the affected street(s) experience at least 75% occupancy.

3. 75% petition support.

As is the case with Area “A”, all requests meeting the City’s criteria will be presented to both the CTC and City Council for approval.

Concerns Over Current Policy

Since the NPPP’s inception, the program has evolved through several policy changes, each reflective of the city’s needs and priorities at the time. With the last change occurring seven years ago, it was requested that staff review the current policy to identify potential adjustments for improving the program while addressing several key concerns.

1. Program accessibility and appropriateness of the existing application fee. The existing fee level, while based on previous direction to achieve cost recovery, is among the highest of area cities and appears to be an obstacle for some neighborhoods.
2. Reducing impacts of permit parking upon adjacent areas. Permit parking inherently redistributes parking demand, but the magnitude and direction of potential parking displacement can be difficult to anticipate. While staff always considers the possibility of such impacts in establishing a study area, it is difficult to capture all streets/blocks that might be affected without significantly expanding it. However, doing so would increase the likelihood that the parking occupancy in the study area falls below the necessary threshold. Conversely, if the study area were too small, it increases the chance that any parking problem would shift.

Presented below are recommended NPPP policy changes that are intended to address concerns. When considering them individually or in combination, it is important to recognize that the NPPP’s character can be quite sensitive to adjusting the values described below. Moreover, it is also critical to recognize the limitations of permit parking as a mechanism for parking mediation, and that the NPPP cannot address every individual scenario (should be designed for the “rule” and not the “exception”).

Proposed Policy Changes

1. Application Fee

The fee achieves several objectives, including cost recovery of staff time; reducing frequency of frivolous requests; and serving as a tool for applicants to build local consensus by soliciting contributions. Lowering the fee can increase access to the program but adopting one too low can increase the volume of requests, which may or may not have merit, and staff time needed to administer the program, which the city has experienced in the past.

The existing fee is set at \$4,900, which may be paid in 2 installments (\$1,500 to initiate the parking study + \$3,400 to continue with the process, assuming parking study requirements are satisfied.) As mentioned above, our fee is considerably higher than that of nearby cities, many of which charge between \$0 and \$500. To increase accessibility but avoid frivolous requests, a

\$1,000 application fee is proposed. The applicant would have the option of paying half of the fee up front, with the balance being provided at the conclusion of the parking study.

2. Parking Study:

The intent of the parking study is to determine whether, and to what degree, a definable and correctable parking problem exists. It also helps to assess whether benefits to one area outweigh potential impacts to another. Currently, 75% occupancy (utilization) is required to implement permit parking. Adjusting this percentage could impact the number of qualifying streets. Also, to make a determination, staff conducts a number of observations, often visiting the study area six to eight times with the goal of collecting reliable data that can benefit the applicant.

Staff recommends maintaining the 75% occupancy threshold but explicitly limiting the number of observations to three. Maintaining the 75% occupancy would ensure that permit parking continue to be considered only on streets on which a significant parking problem exists. However, limiting the number of observations would reduce the staff time needed to process requests, offsetting the fee reduction and decreasing the time needed to process the request.

3. Petition

Staff believes the current petition requirements are appropriate and recommends no change.

4. Establishment of Areas

Outside of Area "A", the city currently considers requests on a street-by-street basis, with a minimum of one "block". To address the potential concern with spillover and streamline the process for responding to such concerns, staff recommends two changes to how permit areas are established:

- i. Create a number of city-defined permit parking zones in areas with high parking demand potential that residents can opt into, similar to Area "A". These zones would be along commercial corridors or other areas with a documented history/clear source of parking intrusion. Staff recommends that all city-defined zones have the same implementation criteria as Area "A": there would be no application fee, no parking study, and a 55% petition support rate. If this change is approved, staff would present a subsequent report to the City Council, recommending parking zones for adoption.
- ii. Outside of any city-defined permit parking area, if within one year of implementing a new permit parking area there is spillover onto adjacent and abutting streets, allow requests to expand that area to the affected streets. Such requests would be exempt from the application fee but would need to meet the parking study and petition requirements.

Summary

Staff believes the above NPPP modifications would achieve the goal of improving program accessibility while giving residents streamlined permit parking options in impacted areas.

7. ATTACHMENTS

- NPPP Policy Update 2022