

May 9, 2011

Subject: Tacoma Residential Parking Program Study

Background and Authority:

Control of access to and use of the right-of-way on city streets is a municipal responsibility. Priority of use and access is generally a function of both zoning and transportation policy. Public safety, traffic flow and transit are given the highest priorities. In commercial zones, access for deliveries and customers generally is the next highest priority. In residential areas, access for service vehicles and residential parking takes precedence over non-resident parking.

Residential parking zones (RPZs) were first created in response to the recognition that certain institutions such as hospitals, universities and large office buildings located near residential neighborhoods caused high levels of parking congestion associated with commuters or visitors to these “parking magnets”.

The legal precedent for the creation of residential parking zones was established by a 1977 U.S. Court decision which upheld the County of Arlington, Virginia’s residential parking permit law. The Virginia RPZ law was challenged under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, as discriminatory to non-residents. The ruling stated:

“To reduce air pollution and other environmental effects of automobile commuting, a community reasonably may restrict on-street parking available to commuters, thus encouraging reliance on car pools and mass transit. The same goal is served by assuring convenient parking to residents who leave their cars at home during the day. A community may also decide that restrictions on the flow of outside traffic into particular residential areas would enhance the quality of life there by reducing noise, traffic hazards, and litter. By definition, discrimination against nonresidents would inhere in such restrictions....The United States as amicus curiae notes that parking restrictions to discourage automobile commuting have been recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency to implement the Clean Air Amendments of 1970.”

In addition, the Court upheld Arlington County’s conditions for establishing RPZs:

“The average number of vehicles [operated by persons whose destination is a commercial or industrial district] is in excess of 25% of the number of parking spaces on such streets and the total number of spaces actually occupied by any vehicles exceeds 75% of the number of spaces on such streets on the weekdays of any month. . .”

Modifications of this test are now reflected in code language governing residential permit parking in many cities across the United States.

The City of Tacoma Municipal Code describes the current City authority to establish residential parking zones in Section 11.05.235 Residential parking zones-authority. Sections 11.05.236 and 11.05.237 cover “RPZ parking violation” and “abuse of privileges”, respectively.

There are a limited number of RPZs established within the City limits. Each is associated with a particular residence and identifies particular parking spaces that are reserved only for holders of RPZ permits. These zones were created due to the high number of commuters for downtown and Tacoma Ave employment locations who compete for these spaces during business hours, Monday through Friday.

Current RPZ Practices in Cities Comparable to Tacoma:

The following table summarizes RPZ survey results from twelve cities that have been used as comparisons for other Tacoma traffic and parking studies. The following key points emerge for the survey data:

1. The majority of the cities (11 of 12) have residential parking zone programs.
2. All of the cities in the survey limit the RPZ programs to residential zoned areas that are subject to on-street parking space competition from non-resident commuters or visitors to adjacent area attractions, parking generators like hospitals or universities or adjacent commercial business/retail districts.
3. Most of the zone programs have minimum size or number of block faces required for consideration. None reserve specific parking spaces for specific residences, while some require that a vehicle be parked within a specific number of blocks of the registered address.
4. The majority (7 of 11) require a resident petition process, occupancy evaluation and Council concurrence.
5. The majority (7 of 11) charge an annual fee for the permits
6. The majority (7 of 11) limit the number of permits per residence

Residential Permit Zone Survey for Tacoma Review

City	RPZ Program	Permit Fee (\$/Year)	Permits per Residence	Permit Use Restrictions	Process to Set-up/Change Zones	Zone Restricted to Residential Areas Only (2)
Albuquerque	yes	Free	2 + 1 guest	Only in specified zone	-Designated by City staff	Yes
Atlanta	yes	\$20	2 – single family 1 – multi family	Only in specified zone	-Resident request & vote -Occupancy & needs rating test by City staff	Yes
Boise	yes	Free	No current limit, but ordinance authority to limit	Within 2 blocks of address	-Petition process -Council approval	Yes

City of Tacoma
 Parking Advisory Task Force
 Residential Parking Permit Study

City	RPZ Program	Permit Fee (\$/Year)	Permits per Residence	Permit Use Restrictions	Process to Set-up/Change Zones	Zone Restricted to Residential Areas Only (2)
Boulder	yes	\$17	2 per resident + 2 guest	Only in specified zone	-Petition process -Public hearing -City Manager decision	Yes
Denver	yes	Free	1 per licensed driver + 1 for household + 2 guest	Within 1 block of address	-Resident request -City staff studies & conducts resident acceptance survey	Yes
Portland	yes	\$35	No limit	Only in specified zone	-Occupancy test -Petition process -Community vote	Yes
Sacramento	yes	Free	No limit	Within 2 blocks of address	-Public hearing -Residential vote -Council concurrence	Yes
Salt Lake City	yes	\$36	No limit	Only in specified zone	-Resident petition process	Yes
San Francisco	yes	\$98	4	Only in specified zone	-Petition process -Occupancy test _Multiple agency reviews	
Seattle	yes	\$32.50	4 + 2 guest	Only in specified zone, within 2 blocks of address	-Occupancy test -Public hearing -Transportation Director decision	Yes
Vancouver BC	yes	\$32-\$63	2+ guests Majority of zones	Only in specified zone	Council approval after occupancy study	Yes
Vancouver WA (1)	no	n/a	n/a			n/a

- (1) Vancouver, WA has an on-street parking permit system that facilitates all day parking in under-utilized commercial on-street parking spaces
- (2) Parking in residential neighborhoods with Permit restrictions is time-limit controlled, either free or paid, depending on the degree of control required

Detailed Description of Community RPZ Programs:

City: Albuquerque, New Mexico

Purpose of RPZ Program: The city has established restricted parking zones in residential neighborhoods around the State Fairgrounds, the downtown commercial core and the University of New Mexico. The purpose of the zones is to limit commuter and visitor parking associated with the above parking attractors from spilling over into the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: All of the RPZ areas are zoned residential.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: It appears that the establishment of zones is the sole responsibility of the City's Parking group. There is no reference in the Code of Ordinances or on the Parking web site concerning a procedure to request or modify one of the existing RPZ areas.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: Permit eligibility is limited to residents living within a designated zone. Each resident address is allowed two permits and one visitor/guest permit. The regular permits must be registered to a specific vehicle license plate number. A government issued identification document, vehicle registration and proof of residency is required for the application process. Permit parking is limited to the zone of issue.

The visitor permit must be used within two blocks of the registered address.

Permit Cost: Free, no expiration

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City: Atlanta, Georgia

Purpose of RPZ Program: The purpose of the Atlanta RPZ program is to limit non-resident parking in residential neighborhoods adjacent to parking generators.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to areas zoned residential.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: An RPZ area is created administratively by the Office of Transportation (OOT) and is defined in the Municipal Code (150, Article IV, Division 4).

The process to establish or modify a RPZ is initiated by a public request to the Office of Transportation (OOT). The requested area must be at least two blocks in length and within 1500 ft of a defined traffic generator. The request must be followed by 70% of the impacted residents signing an OOT issued petition confirming their support of the proposed zone.

In determining eligibility for zone creation, the OOT considers the availability of off-street parking and the parking occupancy during the controlled time period. General occupancy must be greater than 75%, of which 33% are non-resident vehicles. If the OOT rating system indicates justification for a zone, the residents are notified, permit applications are accepted and signs installed.

Additions or reductions of existing zones follow the same procedure, but only require 50% of residents approving.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: Permit eligibility is limited to residents living within a designated zone. Each single family address is allowed two permits. Multi-family addresses are allowed 1 permit per unit. A permit must be registered to a specific vehicle license plate number. A driver's license in the name of the registered owner, vehicle registration and proof of residency is required for the application process. Permit parking is limited to the zone of issue.

Permit Cost: Permit cost is \$20 per vehicle and requires renewal each year.

City: Boise, Idaho

Purpose of RPZ Program: The Boise RPZ program is established as part of the City Code 10-11-11. The program is "designated for those residential areas with a high percentage of all day non-resident parkers".

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to areas zoned residential.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: Boise requires a neighborhood petition process to initiate a request to form or modify a RPZ area. Once the boundaries and parking control recommendations of the zone are established by the Public Works Department, Council approval is necessary to create the zone.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: Currently there are no established limits on the number of permits issued per residential address. The City ordinance governing RPZs reserves the authority for Council to establish limits in the future. A permitted vehicle must park within two blocks of the registered address.

Permit Cost: Permits are issued free of charge, with proof of identity, residential address and vehicle registration.

City: Boulder, Colorado

Purpose of RPZ Program: In Boulder, an RPZ is known as a Neighborhood Permit Parking Program (NPP). A NPP is a residential area where parking is restricted. It is a tool developed to balance the needs of all who park on Boulder streets, including residents, commuters and visitors. The plan was adopted as part of the City of Boulder Transportation Master Plan.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: The process to start the establishment or modification of an RPZ area requires a neighborhood petition from at least 25 residents. Following receipt of the petition, the City conducts a parking survey, develops a draft proposal with proposed

boundries and recommended parking restrictions. These recommendations include time limit restrictions for non-permit vehicles as well as hours of permit enforcement.

A neighborhood meeting is conducted to review and modify the draft proposal. This is followed by a Public Hearing before the Boulder Transportation Advisory Board. The Board recommendations and hearing comments are forwarded to the City Manager for the final zone creation decision.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: Boulder issues up to 2 permits per residence plus two free guest passes. Businesses located in NPP Zones may purchase up to 3 employee parking passes. Only one of the zones permits purchase of a limited number of commuter parking passes. Permit parking is limited to the zone of issue.

Permit Cost: Residential passes cost \$17 per pass per year. Business employee passes cost \$75 per pass per year. Limited commuter passes cost \$78 per quarter.

City: Denver, Colorado

Purpose of RPZ Program: The Denver RPZ program was established for residential blocks that experience increased parking by non-residents.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: Residents in areas that seem to be experiencing increased parking by non-residents file a RPZ request with Public Works. The Public Work staff reviews the area and parking conditions and prepares a residential survey form if an RPZ may be appropriate. The survey form requests an indication from area residents concerning approval or dis-approve of the zone request. Basis on the nature of the survey response, Public Works makes the finl decision.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: Permit parking is required to be within 1 block of the registered address. One permit is issued to each licensed driver plus an additional permit for the residential address. Two guest permits are issued per address.

Permit Cost: Permits are issued free of charge, with proof of identity, residential address and vehicle registration.

City: Portland, Oregon

Purpose of RPZ Program: The purpose of the Portland RPZ program is to limit non-resident parking in high parking occupancy residential neighborhoods adjacent to parking generators.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: Portland has strict occupancy data-based criteria for establishing an RPZ area. To start the process, a local neighborhood group, representing a minimum area for 40 block-faces or 8,000 linear feet of curb, needs to attest that peak parking occupancy exceeds 75% for at least 4 days per week, 9 months of the year. Additionally, 25% of the parked vehicles must be from outside of the proposed zone area.

Once City staff verifies the parking conditions, and the boundaries and parking controls are identified, approval of the formal RPZ requires a resident petition process, a formal public meeting process and a resident vote with at least 60% approval. With successful neighborhood support, Council approval is needed to officially approve the zone.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: There are currently no limits on the number of permits issues to a specific residential address. Permit parking is limited to the zone of issue.

Permit Cost: The annual permit fees are set as a function of the annual City budget process, with the objective to be cost neutral. The current fee is \$35.

City: Sacramento, California

Purpose of RPZ Program: The Sacramento program was started in 1979 in areas where residents had difficulty parking near their residential address during the day because of commuter on-street parking or where off-street parking was not adequate.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: The process starts with a written request from the neighborhood. This is followed by a public hearing process and a residential property owners vote. Following a positive vote, Council concurrence is required to formally establish the zone.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: Permit parking is valid only within two blocks of the registered address. There are currently no limits on eligibility other than proof of area residency. One guest pass is issued per address.

Permit Cost: Permits are free and must be renewed every two years. All of the permits within a zone expire on the same date.

City: Salt Lake City, Nevada

Purpose of RPZ Program: Salt Lake City has established a City Parking Program (CPP) for areas with parking “generators” like hospitals, university complexes and other large buildings that attract non-resident (commuters) to seek parking in residential neighborhoods.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: Establishing or modifying a zone requires a neighborhood petition process. The petition contains a listing of all of the residential addresses within the requested zone. Signatures are required from each residential address that supports the requested zone. Completed petitions are submitted to the Department of Transportation for verification and zone implementation.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: Permits are issued only to vehicles registered to an address within the specific CPP. There is no limit to the number of permits per address.

Permit Cost: The permit cost is \$36 per year. Costs are adjusted periodically to cover the administrative costs of administering the program. Permit parking is limited to the zone of issue.

City: San Francisco, California

Purpose of RPZ Program: The San Francisco Residential Parking Permit (RPP) is designed to preserve neighborhood living within a major urban center. The program's main goal is to provide more parking spaces for residents by discouraging long-term parking by people who do not live in an area.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: For an area to be considered as a new RPP, it must contain contiguous block faces totaling a minimum of one mile of frontage. The process starts with a petition from at least 250 households within the proposed zone. The Transportation Engineering Department applies an occupancy test, requiring at least an 80% peak occupancy with 50% of the vehicles being non-resident, before studying the control requirements of the zone. The proposed plan then requires review by the Interdepartmental Staff Committee on Traffic and Transportation. This is followed by a departmental public hearing and finally a review by the SFMT Board of Directors.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: There is a limit of 4 permits per single address. Permit parking is limited to the zone of issue.

Permit Cost: Permits cost \$98 per year.

City: Seattle, Washington

Purpose of RPZ Program: Seattle's RPZs were created to protect residential neighborhoods from the parking and traffic impacts of major generators located in their midst, and in so doing to protect the neighborhoods as a whole from potential changes in land use and loss of property values.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: After receipt of a community request, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will conduct an initial assessment to determine whether an RPZ is appropriate for the area. This will include surveying the street to determine if the parked occupancy on the street approaches 75 percent across a ten block area.

Once the determination has been made that an RPZ may be appropriate, SDOT will conduct a formal parking study. This study will investigate parking occupancy and type of vehicles (residential or business-related) parked over the course of the day/evening or weekend. Parking studies typically include hourly counts of vehicles on the street, as well as license plate tracking to determine turnover on the street. License plate tracking also helps determine which vehicles on the street belong to residents and which vehicles belong to businesses or commuters.

The Director may establish a new or expand an existing RPZ when 75 percent of the curb space parking on 10 contiguous blocks (20 block faces) is generally occupied, and when over 35 percent of those vehicles are used by non-residents. If these conditions are not met, SDOT will formally notify the person(s) requesting the RPZ that it did not qualify. Even if these criteria are not met, the Director has authority to establish an RPZ when the parking problem would be ameliorated and the public interest would be served by creation of an RPZ.

If the RPZ study determines that creation of an RPZ may be warranted due to parking impacts from non-residents, SDOT will engage affected and interested community stakeholders to review the results of the parking study and assist in developing a potential RPZ proposal. Based on the parking data and information provided by residents related to the RPZ request, SDOT staff will develop a draft RPZ design

SDOT will then conduct a broad public outreach program to gather input on the RPZ draft design.

Prior to any decision to establish an RPZ, SDOT will hold an administrative public hearing to provide interested persons an opportunity to submit written and spoken comment into the public record, pursuant to SMC 11.16.317(C)(2). SDOT will mail a copy of the hearing notice at least 20 days prior to the public hearing, stating the hearing time and location. This notice will be sent to all owners, commercial lessees and residents of property within 300 feet of the affected RPZ. SDOT will publish the notice of hearing in a local newspaper at least 20 days prior to the hearing, stating the hearing time and location.

The SDOT Traffic Management Division Director will make a final decision whether or not to establish an RPZ based on parking data and public input.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: There is a limit of 4 permits per household unit for residential addresses within a zone. The permit is valid only within six contiguous blocks of the registered address. Two guest passes are available for each household unit address. Daily passes are also available for larger groups.

Permit Cost: RPZ permits cost \$32.50 per year and are issued for a two year period.

City: Vancouver, British Columbia

Purpose of RPZ Program: Vancouver uses a progressive series of residential parking restrictions in impacted neighborhoods. All non-resident parking is limited to 3 hours in residential neighborhoods. Higher parking occupancy neighborhoods can be posted for residential parking only. Both of these restrictions are self-policing with enforcement only on a complaint basis.

When a Vancouver neighborhood is affected by severe parking pressures from outside sources (e.g. schools, hospitals, SkyTrain stations and local businesses) a Resident Permit Parking (RPP) system is considered.

Zoning Limitations Associated with RPZ Zone Areas: Limited to residential areas.

Process to Establish or Modify an RPZ Permit Area: Residents work with the Engineering Department – Neighborhood Parking and Transportation Branch through a petition process to establish new or modify existing zones.

Eligibility and Limitations associated with RPZ Areas: There does not seem to be a limit on the number of permits per residential address. Parking is limited to the zone of issue.

Permit Cost: Depending on the zone, annual permits cost \$32 - \$63.

City: Vancouver, Washington

Purpose of RPZ Program: Vancouver, WA has an all day parking permit system for under-utilized on-street commercial parking spaces. The system is in the process of being phased out.