

Informational report on
Visitor parking permits in Residential Permit Parking Areas

Review of

April 2, 2014

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Review the history of the Residential Permit Parking Program and its goals.
2. Provide examples of visitor parking permits in other communities.
3. Review common complaints or concerns received by City staff regarding the program.
4. Discuss potential advantages and drawbacks to a visitor permit program.

History of the Residential Permit Parking Program

The Residential Permit Parking Program was approved by ordinance in 1977. One of the main purposes of the program was "... to establish a mechanism whereby area residents will be afforded an opportunity for the limited storing of vehicles on public streets to the partial exclusion of commuter vehicles. It is intended that this Residential Parking Ordinance will reduce automobile commuting and its accompanying energy waste and air pollution, reduce the total vehicle miles of travel in the affected area, and alleviate traffic congestion, illegal parking, and related health and safety hazards." In the ensuing years there were various changes made to the program, including changing the program from being block specific to area specific (due to two court cases in Dane Circuit Court), changing the number of permits allowed per dwelling unit, and adding the Residential Parking Only Program.

Neighborhoods that are near high schools and large employers such as the UW-Madison and hospitals often have a substantial amount of students and employees who desire to park on the neighborhood streets near the school they attend or place of employment. In addition, neighborhood streets that are near bus routes or bike paths may have a substantial number of commuter vehicles parked by people who choose to drive a car part way to their destination and then ride the bus or a bicycle to their destination.

Historically, the Residential Permit Parking Program has been intended to provide on-street parking opportunities residents where commuter traffic impacts the area they live in. It is resident-driven and resident-focused. When the Resident Permit Only program was added in 2000, the discussion noted that there was no provision for visitor permits,

and staff recommended that the program be tried without them, but they could be added at a later date.

Visitor parking permits in other communities

The Village of Shorewood, WI, allows guests of a resident to park for one day in residential permit parking districts if permission is granted by the Shorewood Police Department.

Boulder, Colorado has a neighborhood permit program that offers up to two residential permits, which includes two visitor permits, business permits, and nonresident commuter permits. The nonresident commuter permits are available on a limited basis.

Tucson, Arizona has a residential permit parking program that allows a limited number of permits for residents who live in 4-unit or smaller dwellings. Parking is only allowed on the block face of the address the permit is issued to. Residents can also obtain up to two visitor permits. They also have a non-resident parking permit program for commuters. Commuter permit cost varies from \$100/year to \$450/year depending on location.

Chicago has a residential zone parking permit, which allows residents and their guests to park in areas limited to residents and guests only, either at all times or for certain days/hours. Residents can purchase either daily permits or annual permits. (Annual permits are divided up into May through November, December through March, and April through May).

Common complaints or concerns received by City staff

Residents who live at an address that is not eligible for the RP3 program may complain that this is not fair to them, especially when a neighboring address is eligible. Often these are in newer buildings that have much higher density than the prior use, and this condition is placed on the new development in order to reduce the impact of the more intense use on neighbors who already have limited parking options. Prior to signing a lease, residents are required to be informed about this restriction.

Residents who live at an address that has a limited number of permits available may complain that other people in their building received permits, while they did not.

There are few on-street spaces available near their residence, and they have to park several blocks from where they live.

Long term visitors would like a permit to park at their friend or relative's house on a regular basis, when they stay over several days per week.

Residents are not eligible for a permit, but their landlord sells the off-street parking in the building to commuters during the day.

Permits are not available for their address and off-street options are prohibitively expensive.

Permits only allow them to park in the area they live, while there is more parking available in the adjacent permit parking area.

Permits don't work at meters or override any other parking restrictions.

No visitor permit is available.

Resident wants a permit for the area where they work, not where they live.

People who work as caregivers do not fulfill residency requirements and are unable to obtain a permit, and hence they have to move their vehicle several times a day or park in garages that are not conveniently located.

Advantages and drawbacks related to a visitor permit program

Visitor permits can provide the guests of a resident with all day or longer parking in areas that would otherwise be restricted to the posted time limit. In some areas of the city, residents have little off-street parking available on their property and little on-street unrestricted parking available nearby.

Adding visitor permits to the existing residential permit parking system would increase the number of vehicles that could park in excess of posted time limits, posing a greater challenge for residents who are searching for parking. Residential Permit Parking areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 currently have more permits sold than on-street parking spaces available. The Parking Utility encourages residents in these areas to seek alternatives to on-street parking for their vehicles in these areas due to the limited on-street parking available.

One option that the Parking Utility has been asked to consider is providing visitor permits to areas that are not currently oversold, and not providing visitor permits for areas that are oversold. This would create a situation where some residents have privileges that other residents do not have. This could result in confusion and complaints from residents, since the areas where a resident would most likely desire a visitor permit due to limited parking availability would be the areas that are oversold and would not be eligible for a visitor permit.

Depending on how a visitor permit program would be structured, it is possible that people living in a residential permit parking area may give or sell their visitor permits to friends who wish to park in the area. This could be particularly problematic for areas around high schools.

A visitor permit program could require substantial staff time and the need to hire additional staff.