



City of Palo Alto

City Council Staff Report

(ID # 8721)

Report Type: Action Items

Meeting Date: 2/26/2018

Summary Title: Downtown RPP Status Update

Title: Downtown Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) Program Status Update

From: City Manager

Lead Department: Planning and Community Environment

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council receive an update on the Downtown Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) Program and continue the current program without modification.

Executive Summary

Over the last several years, the City Council has directed Staff to approach parking and traffic congestion in Palo Alto from three different directions: 1) by implementing programs to reduce reliance on the private automobile (i.e. transportation demand reduction), 2) by adding supplemental parking supply where appropriate, and 3) by better managing existing parking resources.

To better manage existing parking resources and reduce impacts of spillover parking in residential neighborhoods, the City Council approved a pilot residential preferential parking (RPP) program in neighborhoods encircling Downtown in 2016 and made it ongoing in April 2017. The current program has been successful at reducing and better distributing employee parking in the neighborhoods, although there are still some street segments that are impacted by spill-over parking (in many cases, from two-hour parkers).

Overall, staff believes the Downtown RPP program has been generally successful and recommends that the City Council wait before making further adjustments until decisions can be made about management actions proposed for the commercial core, such as possible implementation of a reduced price garage permit for low income workers (similar to the reduced price permit offered in the RPP program). If Council accepts this recommendation, staff will immediately proceed with sale of the new Downtown RPP permits that are required to

NO!

be sold before April 1, 2018.

Background

For many years, the City has sought to effectively manage parking in the City's Downtown commercial core and address impacts from spill-over parking into adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The Citywide Residential Preferential Parking Ordinance, originally adopted in December 2014 (Ordinance #5294) and amended in February 2016 (Ordinance #5380), sets parameters for residential preferential parking programs citywide, and was enacted to enable the first such district in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown.

In accordance with this ordinance, the Downtown RPP program was established by separate resolution and has been adjusted several times. Resolution #9671 adopted March 6, 2017 describes its current parameters and is included as Attachment B. The current RPP Administrative Guidelines outlining the administrative rules and guidelines for the program are included as Attachment C.

The City Council last considered the Downtown RPP program on March 6, 2017 and adopted a motion <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/56728> that among other things, requested that staff return to the Council in one year to:

- Reassess the employee parking permit reduction rate based on the results of the Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (TMA) programs and other parking management programs; and
- In addition to low income employees, consider ways to prioritize or better serve neighborhood businesses such as medical, dental, and senior care.

See the Discussion section below for the current status of the Downtown RPP program (number of employee permits and on-street parking occupancies).

Discussion

The Downtown RPP program has shown continual improvement, and, with programs such as the Palo Alto Transportation Management Association (TMA), a natural decrease in both parking occupancy and employee permits sold has occurred. For the September 2016 sales period, the Downtown RPP program had issued 1,335 employee parking permits. Six months later, for the April 1, 2017 sales period, the city issued 1,155 total employee parking permits. In the most recent sales period, beginning on September 1, 2017, the City issued 1,090 employee parking permits. As employee permits are sold every six months, the one-year change from 1,335 to 1,090 represents a 22% decrease in permits sold since the same period last year. On

July 1, 2017, the fee for a full-price six-month Downtown RPP Employee Parking Permit increased from \$233 to \$365. Of the 1,090 permits sold, 38% were reduced-price (low-income) permits.

Given the reduced number of employees purchasing permits, the City could potentially reduce the number of employee parking permits available in the program at this time and/or establish an annual rate of reduction without adversely affecting employee permit holders in the near term. However, the declining number of permits sold every six months suggests that a forced reduction in the number of employee permits is not necessary to see continued progress.

YES!

Parking occupancy studies taken in November 2017 support a conclusion that the Downtown RPP program is working, with average occupancies ranging from 21% to 60%. On average, the occupancy study found that approximately 271 employees are parking with permits in the Downtown RPP program area. Occupancy maps are included in Attachment A and Table 1 below summarizes the results of the occupancy study.

Most relevant pages
in 35-page staff report.

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