



# **CITYWIDE PERMIT PARKING PROGRAMS**

## **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

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The need to manage neighborhood parking has grown along with changes in vehicle use and residential density. The transportation trend has been one of increased vehicle ownership per household, and increased number of trips per vehicle. Increasing car-ownership and usage is adversely affecting accessibility and mobility in the City of Santa Cruz. The provision of additional road capacity cannot keep up with current travel demand. Parking policy is recognized as an important tool in restricting demand for more roads, and enhancing the urban quality of the city. It also plays an important role in the success of inter-modal passenger transportation systems. Local authorities must implement these parking policies.

The growth in vehicle ownership, and vehicle miles driven, has brought with it a host of problems associated with parking behavior in residential neighborhoods. When the on-street parking in a residential neighborhood is impacted by out of area parkers, residents who live there may contend with some or all of the following problems: 1) lack of guest parking, 2) late night noise, 3) difficulty accessing driveways, 4) intersection safety, 5) additional auto theft, 6) interference with weekly refuse collection, 7) difficulty with curbside mail delivery, 8) additional trash and deterioration of landscaping, and 9) a perceived loss in personal safety and privacy. Residents have found it more difficult to monitor neighborhood watch programs when unidentified non-residents are parking in the neighborhood. All of these issues cause residents to pursue neighborhood parking management through the city's established permit parking program areas, and to lobby for new program areas.

Compounding this transportation trend is an increase in residential density. The high cost of housing in Santa Cruz has resulted in more secondary units, garage conversions, subleasing of spare rooms, and communal households. These housing configurations result in greater on-street parking demand, intensifying the need to manage the on-street parking as a resource for residents. While residents or employees may point to addressing the housing demand side of this equation, that is not the purview of the Public Works Department. Land use issues, zoning density, and zoning enforcement are implemented by the Planning Department and the City Council. It is not the goal of the neighborhood parking program to function as a control on the number of residents living in a dwelling unit. However, recent policy decisions point in a direction that indicate more importance is being placed on using valuable land to house people rather than vehicles. A recent housing development on the Westside of Santa Cruz has allowed the use of on-street parking to help meet the parking demand generated by the residential complex.

The reduction in single occupant vehicle trips has been identified as a key goal of the City's Master Transportation Study (MTS) in an effort to manage congestion within the City of Santa Cruz by the year 2020. The neighborhood parking management strategy is intended to support the congestion management goals of the MTS. To avoid gridlock in the year 2020, the City will need to move more people to alternative modes of transportation for a greater number of trips. The ability to generate ongoing funding to promote alternative transportation programs and goals through parking management has the possibility of creating a system that frees up parking for those who need it while funding alternatives necessary to create a change in commute behavior. This funding will be difficult to find on an ongoing basis absent the introduction of pay parking. This approach has the ability to provide both a financial disincentive to driving alone along with incentives to move drivers to commute alternatives.

This policy is being developed at a critical time when City resources are scarce. Staff time is being directed toward maintaining revenue generating programs, and expanding those programs in a way that may allow the City to provide residents with additional service while meeting long-term transportation goals. Implementation of permit parking programs, when requested by residents, provides revenue to support the Parking Services Program. These programs may also provide funds that could return a benefit to residents for sharing their street frontage with non-resident parkers.

## PROPOSED PERMIT PARKING POLICY

The new permit parking policy proposes that on-street parking in the City of Santa Cruz is a resource to be managed for the benefit of residents, residents's guests, commute parkers, employees, and businesses. This policy forms the basis for a revised ordinance. Residential permit parking controls intended to respond to non-resident parking demand adjacent to large parking generators. The policy has the following goals: 1) to charge for parking where it is currently free, 2) to manage the on-street parking supply as a dual resource for residents and visitors, 3) promote and fund alternatives to driving alone, 4) promote and fund the connection between alternative commute options and better health, and 5) promote and fund Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs and parking programs from parking permit revenue.

On-street parking is a resource that should reflect part of the true cost of driving. By charging parkers to park on-street, the city can help manage the parking impacts while generating revenue to support parking management programs, neighborhood transportation plans, TDM programs, and other sustainable transportation incentives. New parking programs will require additional administrative and field staff. Residential permit parking programs will use funds collected from residents to pay for administrative costs. Funds generated from parking citations may be used to support the parking enforcement operation and General Fund. Commuter permit revenue may be used to fund Neighborhood Traffic Plans (NTP), and alternative commute programs. In this manner, the administration and operation of these parking programs become self-supporting and also provides funds for sustainable transportation programs. Supporting NTP programs

with permit parking revenue can help improve bicycling and walking trips through the development of bicycle boulevards, sidewalks and other livable streets designs.

Implementation of new permit parking programs would encompass all streets in the proposed zone at the start of the program. This removes the administrative burden of implementing controls on a block-by-block basis and addresses the spill-over parking issue at the start of the program. Residents would have an opportunity to opt out of the permit program on a block-by-block basis. Blocks that opt out of the program should remain out of the program for a period of two years. Each household would receive one vote whether owner or renter occupied. The petition criteria would be set at 67% of households on a block. A two-year delay to re-join the program is intended to reduce costs to the city for signage and administration.

The permit parking program would have two elements: one for residents, and a second for commuters. The proposed parking restrictions would generally have the following controls: 2-hour time-limited parking, with the days and months to be determined by the program's needs and the available resources to service the program. The 2-hour time limits are intended to provide more flexibility for resident's guests. Overnight parking controls may be implemented as a tool to assist in the enforcement of vehicle storage issues.

The existing number of resident parking permits per household is carried forward from the current programs: 3 Annual Resident, and 2 Annual Guest Permits per household. A household is considered a valid address. Current annual permit rates for residents are \$15-20 per year depending upon the program area. Daily Permits will be available in a quantity of 30 per household per year at a cost of \$1/each, and may be used by residents or their guests.

On-street parking along non-residential frontage would be reserved for parking generators. The monthly commuter permit would be targeted to non-residents. Those blocks that have a day-time peak parking occupancy of 75% or less per block face would be able to accommodate 2-4 daily commuters per block face. It is not the intension of the city to oversell Commuter Permits even when capacity may allow for more parkers than 2-4 per block face. The Commuter Permit parkers would be assigned a particular block face location, and not be allowed to park overnight. Rates for the Commute Permits would begin at \$20/month. This rate is similar current monthly pay parking rates at downtown public parking facilities (\$16 - \$31/month).

No overnight vehicle storage would be allowed. The City would continue its practice of enforcing the 72-hour abandoned vehicle law upon complaint. The overnight parking restrictions would be enforced by the Police Department upon complaint.