

# Memo

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**To:** Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation  
**From:** Paul Baldino  
**Subject:** Residential Permit Parking Policies  
**Date:** July 8, 2019

This memo responds to the 2019 CACT Action Item: “Study the permit parking policies of other jurisdictions.”

I was unable to find a guide for development of a residential parking policy or a list of best practices on the websites of the International Parking and Mobility Institute and professional planning organizations. The closest was a 2013 report by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates for the City of Newport Beach.

According to the Nelson/Nygaard report:

- A residential permit parking program (RPP) operates by exempting permitted vehicles from parking restrictions and time limits for non-metered, on-street parking spaces within a geographic area.
- A conventional RPP allows those without a permit to park for a limited period during a specified time frame (e.g., 8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday). Permit holders are exempt from these regulations and able to essentially store their vehicles on-street.
- Ownership of a parking permit does not guarantee the availability of a parking space.
- The primary goal of an RPP is to manage parking “spillover” into residential neighborhoods. By managing parking spillover, RPPs can ensure that residential neighborhoods are not overwhelmed by commuters, employees, or visitors, thereby enabling local residents to park their vehicles on-street more easily and conveniently.
- RPPs are especially important in older neighborhoods where residences were built with limited or no off-street parking.

Nelson/Nygaard recommends the following principles for a successful RPP:

- Establish guidelines on how blocks or neighborhoods can petition for an RPP and how the need for a program will be determined.
- Assure the program has community support. This is typically accomplished by requiring a minimum number of residential units to sign a petition of support.
- Prioritize public parking access during peak visiting and recreational hours.
- Prioritize parking for residents and their guests during evening hours and overnight.
- Place a cap on the number of permits per household to ensure that on-street spaces are not overwhelmed.
  - A waiting list can be used to allocate permits once the number of regulated on-street spaces has been reached.
  - The number of permits can be restricted by a tiered pricing strategy where the fee increases with each permit provided to a household.

- Be clear that the issuance of a permit does not guarantee the permit holder a space on any particular block or location.
- Incorporate clear signage and user-friendly technology, such as license plate recognition, so the program is easy to understand for motorists and simple to enforce for staff.
- Ensure adequate staffing for ongoing management and enforcement.

I surveyed the websites of the District of Columbia; the Cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax, and Leesburg; and Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun Counties. All have RPP districts (RPPDs).

Following is a *summary* of the principal features of these jurisdictions' RPPs as presented on their websites. Program regulations are complex and vary significantly between jurisdictions. Some jurisdictions provide a great deal of detail on their websites; others do not. Contact with jurisdiction staff is recommended to verify and clarify specific program elements.

#### **How do residents apply for the establishment of an RPPD?**

- Petition signed by a percentage of addresses in the proposed district:
  - 51% - DC, Leesburg
  - 66% - Fairfax City
  - 60% or request by the homeowners' association – Fairfax County
  - 75% - Falls Church, Loudoun
- Fairfax County requires a fee of \$10 per signed petition address.
- Arlington has suspended the establishment, removal, or modification of RPPDs pending a program review planned for completion by the end of 2019.

#### **How is the need for an RPPD determined?**

- A survey of the legal parking spaces in the proposed district identifying the percentage of spaces occupied and the percentage occupied by non-resident vehicles.
  - 75% / 50% – Fairfax County, Fairfax City, Loudoun
  - 75% / 25% – Leesburg
  - 65% / 25% - Vienna
  - 70% / 10% vehicles with out-of-state tags – DC
  - Fairfax County may establish an RPPD on residential public roads within 2,000 feet walking distance from a pedestrian entrance or 1,000 feet from the property boundary of a high school, college, or metro station.
  - Fairfax County may also establish a temporary RPPD to address short-term situations, such as a specific construction project which lasts at least six months and creates parking problems in adjacent residential areas.
- Other requirements:
  - Blocks in the proposed district must have at least 75% residential properties. – Fairfax City, Loudoun
  - Only single-family detached/duplex homes and attached townhomes with addresses on public streets may be included in a district. Townhomes with private off-street parking are not eligible. – Loudoun
- If the requirements for an RPPD are met, a public hearing is held, and the jurisdiction's council or board approves the new district.

#### **How are parking permits allocated?**

- All jurisdictions require permit applicants to present a current driver's license and vehicle registration with an address in the RPPD.

- Falls Church specifies that the resident must have no outstanding balances, e.g., property taxes and parking tickets.
- Vehicle-specific permits are window or bumper stickers. Guest/visitor and temporary permits are placards or hangers.
- Some jurisdictions require that the resident write the license plate number on the guest/visitor permit.
- New residents or residents with new vehicles may be issued temporary permits. – Alexandria, Fairfax County, Herndon, Loudoun
- Students and other temporary residents may obtain reciprocity vehicle registrations. – DC
- Each residence may have up to three vehicle-specific permits. More or fewer may be permitted if 60% of households sign a petition. – Arlington
- Some jurisdictions specify that there is no limit on the number of permits per residence. - Fairfax County, Fairfax City, Herndon
- Falls Church has certain areas designated “City Decal Exempt.” In these areas, the city tax decal serves as the permit.
- Motorcycles are required to have permits. – Loudoun

**What are the rules for guest/visitor vehicle permits?**

- Free guest permits are issued by the police district headquarters. – DC
- Thirty short-term (up to three days) visitor passes are free. Books of 30 additional passes cost \$5. Free FlexPasses (up to 60 days) that can be used by residents or visitors are also available. – Arlington, Falls Church
- Free guest (less than 24 hours) and visitor (seven days or less) permits. Long-term (up to 30 days) visitor permits cost \$5. No more than two visitor permits will be issued to the same residence at the same time. – Alexandria
- One free visitor permit per residence. Multifamily and townhouse addresses are not issued visitor passes. – Fairfax County
- One free guest permit (up to two weeks) per residence. Up to five permits (not to exceed 12 hours in a 24-hour period) for guests or persons conducting business at a residence. Upon written request, one long-term visitor permit may be issued for up to three months. - Vienna
- Two free visitor permits per residence. Additional short-term permits may be issued with approval of the city manager. – Fairfax City
- Up to two visitor permits per residence at \$5 each. – Herndon, Leesburg
- Non-transferable visitor permits for up to 30 days cost \$10. Transferable long-term visitor permits cost \$50. Residents of multifamily or townhome addresses which have a parking lot are not issued visitor permits. - Loudoun

**What are the rules for non-resident business vehicles?**

- Contractors doing work in an RPPD can obtain temporary permits. – DC, Alexandria
- No more than three business permits will be issued to the same residence at the same time. - Alexandria
- Marked service or delivery vehicles do not require permits. – Fairfax County, Vienna, Loudoun
- Service and delivery vehicles may park in an RPPD for up to eight hours in a 24-hour period without permit. – Falls Church
- Non-resident landlords may obtain a landlord permit for the purpose of conducting business at their properties. – Arlington
- Non-resident owners may obtain a permit for up to two weeks for the purpose of repairing or remodeling their properties. – Fairfax County

- Up to six home-based business permits and one temporary (up to 30 days) permit per contractor/service provider. - Herndon
- Taxis and company cars registered to an RPPD address are eligible for permits. – Arlington
- Some vehicles are *not* eligible for permits:
  - Commercial vehicles, buses, vehicles longer than 22 feet, and sightseeing vehicles. Any vehicle that displays un-removable commercial advertising or insignia is considered a commercial vehicle. - DC
  - Employees and owners of businesses in an RPPD. – Alexandria

**Are non-permitted vehicles allowed to park in RPPDs?**

- Up to two consecutive hours from 7:00am to 8:30pm weekdays, except holidays. – DC
- Two to three hours depending on the district. – Alexandria
- Motorcycles and scooters are *not* required to have permits. - Arlington

**How much does a permit cost?**

- Free – Fairfax County, Falls Church, Fairfax City
- \$5 per resident permit and \$10 per visitor permit. Permits transferrable between vehicles are \$50. An additional \$5 per permit district maintenance fee is applied annually. - Loudoun
- \$5 per resident, guest and business vehicle permit. – Herndon
- \$5 per resident and guest pass. – Leesburg
- \$20 for the first and second vehicles, and \$50 for the third. – Arlington
- \$35 per vehicle. – DC
- \$40 for the first vehicle, \$50 for the second, and \$150 for each additional vehicle. – Alexandria