

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2019

TO: THE MEMBERS OF THE TRAFFIC AND PARKING BOARD

FROM: KATYE NORTH, DIVISION CHIEF OF MOBILITY SERVICES, T&ES
MEGAN OLEJNIK, URBAN PLANNER, T&ES

SUBJECT: RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

This memorandum is in response to questions that were provided to staff in writing by members of the Traffic and Parking Board after the September 23, 2019 Board meeting on the staff recommendations to the Residential Permit Parking (RPP) Program coming out of the RPP Refresh Project.

- 1. Is there evidence that standardization of RPP restrictions will assist in enforcement? Can the City explain the enforcement value of reducing the parking limit to 2 hours compared to the loss of flexibility? Will the City be able to enforce more with their current resources?**

In 2019, there have been more than four times as many citations given on RPP blocks with 2-hour time limits as those with 3-hour time limits, despite there being more RPP blocks with 3-hour time limits.

Parking Enforcement believes that having consistent 2-hour time restrictions would result in more efficient enforcement based on the assessment of Parking Enforcement staff who have worked and supervised the Unit for over 50 years of combined experience. The position of Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO) encompasses a myriad of duties and responsibilities in conjunction with the issuance of citations. When the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is in session, the PEO's staff five to six school crossing posts in the morning and afternoon due to the understaffing of the School Crossing Guard (SCG) position. PEO's respond to Calls For Service (CFS) and conduct follow ups on Call.Click.Connect (CCC) requests and 72-hour Rule monitoring requests. They respond when requested to conduct traffic control, transport the traffic van, and relocate and/or impound vehicles.

The timing and roles associated with each shift make enforcing the 3-hour restrictions difficult. The Parking Enforcement dayshift is from 6:00 am to 2:30 pm. Once time restrictions go into effect at 8:00 am, PEOs begin patrolling assigned areas, typically after completing ancillary duties at school crossing posts. The evening shift is from 1:30 pm to 10:00 pm. Evening shift PEOs staff school posts immediately after their roll call briefing until 3:05 pm. PEO's then proceed to their enforcement areas. One officer is

assigned to clearing and monitoring the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on Abingdon Drive and Washington Street. For officers enforcing 3-hour restrictions, depending on the number of vehicles and how many 3-hour blocks are in an enforcement area, they may or may not complete the enforcement phase of the first rotation in one shift.

Consistency in time restrictions could also benefit residents and visitors who are sometimes confused when parking in areas where 2- and 3-hour limit blocks are in proximity. Parking Enforcement has received complaints from people who have been issued citations on 2-hour blocks after previously parking on a near-by 3-hour block and assuming consistent restrictions.

The Alexandria Police Department and the Parking Enforcement Unit's mission is to provide competent, courteous, professional, and community-oriented police services. They are committed to a strong and productive partnership with the community to continue to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in all of Alexandria's neighborhoods. They are dedicated to protecting life and property while assuring fair and equal treatment. The Parking Enforcement Unit attempts to strike a balance between the needs of the community and the efficient operation of the Unit. The Traffic and Parking Board and the Parking Enforcement Unit have heard concerns from the community regarding the lack of enforcement. During a City Council FY2020 budget work session, Council expressed concern related to a decline in parking ticket revenue in FY2019. As a result, the City Manager asked the Office of Performance and Accountability (OPA) to conduct an analysis of Parking Enforcement. With the analysis report, the City Manager transmitted a memorandum to City Council that included a summary and action plan.

As a result of the analysis report, the City Manager's mandated an "accelerated PEO hiring process." This included commitment to address improve the PEO pay structure to recruit and retain PEO's. Four new PEO's have been hired since the beginning of August 2019 and interviews have been completed for several other positions since.

2. How will the City seek to measure and show that the reduction of flexibility in RPP options for residents was worth it?

Staff can report back to the Traffic and Parking Board a year after the recommended RPP changes have been implemented on the average number of citations being given on RPP blocks compared to before implementation to identify trends.

3. Is there a technological challenge to properly inputting the parking map data into a computerized system?

Currently, the Parking Enforcement Officers manually enter into their enforcement devices if they are monitoring 2- or 3-hour restrictions. Although this just involves a few programming keystrokes, it does add time to the process to transition between what restrictions they are enforcing.

4. **Can non-residential blocks within a district have RPP signage added or removed along the property? For example, the northside of the 600 block of Franklin Street only has one business and the rest is the parking lot of Suburban Dry Cleaners. Is there a mechanism to allow for the parking on this block to be added into a parking district, since there are no residents to initiate the process or survey?**

Blocks with no residential uses abutting them are not able to have RPP restrictions posted since there are no occupants of residential properties to initiate the petition process. The City Code only allows RPP parking signage to be added, modified, or removed through a resident initiated process under the existing and proposed code language. However, corner properties that abut a block are eligible to sign petitions for a block face, although they may not have an address on that block. A residential property abuts the 600 block of Franklin Street on the north corner with S. St. Asaph Street. That property would be eligible to request RPP signage through the petition process, although staff would likely recommend RPP restrictions on only part of that block closer to the residential properties on S. St. Asaph since most of that block serves commercial uses.

The proposed code language allowing the Director of T&ES to recommend removing a non-residential property from a district is intended to allow the City to remove large areas that could be redeveloped into residential properties before they redevelop, to reduce the conflict that often occurs during the Development Special Use Permit process regarding whether or not residents of a new building are eligible for RPP permits upon occupancy of the building.

5. **Are there examples of cities other than Portland, OR that have used a ballot by mail or similar process as an option for starting the process of establishing a new district?**

In research performed by the City and in our consultant study, it seemed that most cities use a petition process similar to Alexandria's to establish new Residential Permit Parking districts. Portland was the only example staff found that uses a ballot process, and staff felt that option was an appropriate way to collect resident feedback without an unmanageable burden on staff time.

6. **What are the impacts of court cases regarding chalking and LPRs for enforcement purposes on Alexandria? Do we have other enforcement mechanisms in the works?**

The majority of Parking Enforcement Officers use handheld citation devices to enter license plates to monitor vehicles, and LPRs are also in available on a couple of fleet vehicles. There was a court case in Fairfax County that deemed passive collection and storage of personal data obtained by LPRs in violation of the Virginia Data Act. The Data Act does not preclude law enforcement agencies from maintaining, using and disseminating personal information collected by an automated license plate reader (LPR), provided such data specifically pertains to investigations and intelligence gathering relating to criminal activity. The City Attorney's office has indicated that parking enforcement would fall under this exception, as the City only uses the data for a specific law enforcement purpose and do not retain the information.

- 7. Does the code distinguish different rights for residents, owner, tenant based on their ownership status?**

No, occupants of a residential property have the same right to petition for RPP restrictions whether they are an owner or tenant of the property.

- 8. What are the expected impacts of the new code on employees that work at restaurants for 8-hour shifts?**

Most restaurants and retail establishments have Special Use Permit (SUP) conditions that require that their employees park off-street and require that employers provide information about alternative transportation options like transit, carpooling, or bike routes. These conditions are standard for SUPs for any new restaurant or retail establishment. In 2018, the City created the Old Town Business Employee Discount Parking Program, which allows employees of participating businesses a \$1 rate for parking in City garages after 4pm Monday through Friday and all day on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays to help provide a less expensive off-street parking option.

- 9. How will repair/services companies manage parking their vehicles when their work goes beyond 2-hour limits.**

Under the existing Code Section 5-8-74 (a)(4) and proposed Code Section 5-8-77 (a)(4), persons doing business with residential or non-residential property owners within an RPP district are eligible for permits for the estimated time required to complete the work for which the permit was sought, up to 30 days.

- 10. What parking options are available for patrons of the Little Theater so they don't need to scramble to move their cars?**

The Little Theater could advertise nearby garages to their visitors and staff such as the Colonial Parking Garage located about a block and half away at the corner of Duke Street and Washington Street or the Courthouse Garage located about four blocks away on the corner of King Street and S. Pitt Street. The City will reach out to the Little Theater to provide information about the process to apply for valet parking for their organization. Additionally, many of the restrictions around the Little Theater are 2-hour parking restrictions currently, and many of the blocks that currently have 3-hour RPP restrictions near the Little Theater are only in effect Monday through Friday 8am to 5pm. This code update would not impact the hours and days the restrictions are in effect, so those blocks would have unrestricted parking during evening or weekend performances.

- 11. How do you define "occupants" of residential properties to be eligible to sign petitions? Does this include everyone living in the house, including minors?**

To clarify based on resident and Board concerns heard by staff, a definition for "occupant" is proposed to be added in Section 5-8-7. The proposed definition is "An adult person living in a residence or using premises, as a tenant or owner, for residential purposes."

- 12. How many RPP blocks have 2-hour vs. 3-hour restrictions? Would it make sense to have zones of 2-hour restrictions and then zones of 3-hour restrictions farther out from the King Street corridor? How would that impact the enforcement?**

There are 210 blocks with 2-hour RPP restrictions and 327 blocks with 3-hour RPP restrictions in Alexandria. Code language could be written to allow zones with 2- or 3-hour restrictions based on what district the block is in or how far the block is from a particular area or land use. Requiring consistent restrictions by area may make it somewhat easier for Parking Enforcement to enforce. However, it would not be expected to lead to the same increases in efficiency as having only 2-hour restrictions, as the other concerns from Parking Enforcement about 3-hour time limits being difficult to enforce would still apply and there would still be transitions and inconsistencies.

13. How were the latest OTAPS parking recommendations incorporated into the RPP Refresh? If not, were they specifically left out?

The following table provides a summary of the OTAPS recommendations related to residential parking and their status.

OTAPS Recommendation	Status
Pay by Phone Payment in Residential Areas	Pilot program approved in November 2017 and program was made permanent in March 2019
Resident Only Parking	The Work Group discussed this parking restriction option but ultimately recommended it not be implemented.
Restrictions on New Development	A policy to address this issue was approved by the City Council in June 2017
Limit Residential Parking Permits	This was reviewed during RPP Refresh, but not recommended given the lower percentage of households with more than 3 vehicles and the limited impact this would have on parking.
Residential Parking Permit Fees	This was reviewed during RPP Refresh, but not recommended given that the current fees are fairly consistent with other cities. Additionally, in order to have an impact on parking a significant increase would be needed to incentivize other parking options, which was not something that was supported.
Time limits for residential permit parking districts	Staff considered time restrictions during RPP Refresh. While the idea of creating a 1 hour zone was not discussed in great detail, the concept of eliminating the 3 hour option was discussed as a way to simplifying the number of restrictions which had been raised as a concern from City Council and the Commission on Aging during the residential pay by phone program evaluation as well as Parking Enforcement. Since adding a 1-hour restriction would increase the variety of restrictions, it was not pursued as a recommendation with RPP Refresh.
Adjust district boundaries	This was included in the initial list of topics to consider as part of RPP Refresh (December questionnaire) but was not identified by the

	community as one of the top three issues to study further. However, it has been identified as a topic to review in a later phase.
Staff initiated process for amending/changing residential permit parking districts	This has been proposed through RPP Refresh.

14. What would be the result of a sustained enforcement "blitz" to enforce the current restrictions?

Alexandria Police Department believes it is the responsibility of the Parking Enforcement Unit to fairly and equitably enforce the City ordinances, as a result of citizen complaints or by personal observation during our patrol in the assigned areas. With the current understaffing, Parking Enforcement is dedicating all the resources they can to enforcing residential permit parking restrictions without causing negative impacts to other important aspects of their duties. For example, if all Parking Enforcement Officers were directed to focus on residential permit parking blocks, there wouldn't be enough personnel to perform crossing guard duty or to enforce other important parking regulations like vehicles parking in emergency access lanes, HOV lanes, or bike lanes. A concentrated enforcement of RPP blocks would interfere with the existing Parking Enforcement resources and duties and may be adverse to the goal of the Alexandria Police Department to provide fair and equitable treatment to all residents, employees, and visitors.

15. Can the City's staff explain that the community process remains core to the overall process when changes are proposed, but that the changes are intended to enable the ability to move forward and receive the residents' views are enhanced?

The processes for creating a new district and adding, removing, or modifying RPP restrictions via resident petition would not be removed with the proposed code amendments. There are also still options for each block to decide what restriction times and days are most appropriate for their location. Staff are recommending a new option for initiating the process of creating new RPP districts because it has been difficult for residents to garner the needed support and signatures required by existing code to successfully petition for a district. This proposed ballot-initiated process would still include public hearings at the Traffic and Parking Board and City Council, so there would be continued opportunity for resident input in the process.

16. The City outlined some costs for the transition to the new system, but could the City also outline the longer-term benefits, including cost savings, that will accrue to the City through this simplification and standardization?

Although the cost savings are difficult to quantify, there are expected cost savings and returns from Parking Enforcement being more efficient and effective. Increased enforcement and more consistent, clear restrictions would be expected to lead to more compliance with restrictions overall, resulting in fewer complaints from residents regarding non-compliant vehicles and from parkers who receive tickets for staff to

address. Consistent 2-hour RPP time limits in conjunction with increased enforcement could encourage longer term parkers to use garages or surface lots instead of on-street parking. This would encourage higher turnover of on-street parking, opening up more spaces for residents to park near their homes and increasing access to retail businesses or quick dining and food pick up for visitors.