

Review of the Residential Parking Program

ISSUE

The Residential Parking Program (RPP) has remained largely unchanged since its creation in 1999 and has not kept pace with changing demands and the rapid growth of the city. Concerns with the RPP designations, effectiveness and processes were raised after RPP zone expansions were implemented in 2018. It was determined a comprehensive review of the RPP was required to identify program modifications which will better address current needs and future pressures.

Objectives of the review of the RPP were to:

- 1) Modernize the program and address issues raised, while accommodating the original intent;
- 2) Identify necessary amendments to Bylaw No.7862, Residential Parking Program, 1999;
- 3) Confirm appropriate permit types, fees and eligibility criteria;
- 4) Establish efficient and effective processes for RPP zone creation and expansion; and
- 5) Identify opportunities to improve and/or automate administrative and operational processes.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation recommend to City Council:

1. That the recommended program modifications respecting the Residential Parking Program, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report, be adopted;
2. That the City Solicitor be requested to prepare the appropriate amendments to Bylaw No. 7862, The Residential Parking Program Bylaw, 1999; and
3. That the City Clerk be requested to repeal Policy C07-014, Residential Parking Permit Program.

BACKGROUND

History

In 1999, City Council approved Bylaw No. 7862, The Residential Parking Program Bylaw, 1999 (the "Bylaw"). Administrative Policy A07-014, Administration of Residential Parking Permits, was established in 1998 with updates to May 2012, while the Council Policy C07-014 Residential Parking Permit Program was established in 2003 and updated in November 2013.

The RPP was created in response to residents in some neighbourhoods experiencing significant on-street parking congestion, usually generated by a nearby hospital, educational institution or business district. While there have been numerous expansions to the RPP zones to include additional blocks, there have not been significant changes to the RPP program or policies.

Funding for the review of the RPP was approved by City Council as a Capital Project for 2019.

Current Status

Upon submission of resident petitions requesting the establishment of an RPP, the City of Saskatoon (City) reviews and designates certain streets to become part of a RPP zone. These petitions identify support from residents to become part of the program, on a block by block basis. With the designation of a block as part of an RPP zone, non-resident parking is restricted to a short period of time (generally one to three hours) during the day, Monday to Friday. Residents living on the block may purchase parking permits from the City allowing them to park for longer than the posted time limit.

Limited Residential Parking Permit (LRPP) zones are established in areas where there is parking pressure but in a more localized smaller area. Typically, these may be established in a neighbourhood located adjacent to a moderate parking generator such as a high school.

While the RPP is under review, the existing operation of the program has continued. However, during this time, expansions or changes to the zones are not being considered, until completion of the review and implementation of updated policies and bylaw amendments.

Additional information on the current program approach is included within each section of the proposed modifications in Appendix 1.

Public Engagement

Substantial public engagement was conducted to gather input and comments from the public and stakeholders on RPP improvements. The first round of public engagement was carried out in June 2019 to seek input on the current concerns, learn perspectives from people residing within and near existing RPP zones and seek potential solutions to the challenges identified. The second round of public engagement occurred in November and December 2019, with feedback sought on 14 recommended changes to enhance the RPP and address concerns and challenges identified. Generally, citizens were supportive of the RPP, however many felt that improvements could be made to better address concerns.

Engagement initiatives undertaken in conjunction with the RPP review included:

- 1) Development of an RPP Engage Page on the City's website, with updated information and background materials published to this page throughout the process;

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- 2) Distribution of two online surveys;
- 3) Opportunity for residents and stakeholders to attend nine open houses hosted in locations in and adjacent to RPP zones; and
- 4) Targeted communications and meetings with representatives of large institutional and commercial uses that generate high demand for parking in adjacent residential neighbourhoods

Approximately 650 people participated in the engagement process. A summary of the feedback received through the public engagement process is provided in Appendix 2.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

The RPP review identified a number of ways in which the current RPP may be enhanced to better address various aspects of the program. These include the designation and permit issuance process, program administration and enforcement considerations. The proposed changes are based upon input received during the engagement process, the review of best practices in other municipalities (summarized in Appendix 3) and an administrative review of the current program.

Changes proposed to the RPP are summarized in Table 1 below and described in detail in Appendix 1. Upon approval of this proposed approach, an amending bylaw and accompanying report from the City Solicitor will be presented to City Council as part of the bylaw amendment process.

Table 1 – Summary of Proposed Updates to Residential Parking Program

Item	Item for Consideration	Proposed Program Modification
1	Maintain use of Petitions to Initiate the Zone Designation Process, after which the City will Assist in Boundary Identification	Add a step to the petition process to include City involvement in identifying appropriate boundaries for new zones or zone expansion.
2	Consider all Streets during the Zone Designation Process	Consider whether non-residential areas (e.g. streets adjacent to schools or parks) should be included as part of new or expanded zones, or other appropriate parking restrictions put in place for non-residential blocks.
3	Set Permit Limits for Residential Dwellings	Limit the number of residential permits issued per dwelling unit address to a maximum of three.
4	Mitigate Impacts on Adjacent Non-RPP blocks by Allowing Those Residents to Purchase Permits	Allow residential properties that are located on a block directly adjacent to an RPP zone to be eligible for permits.
5	Retain Current Permit Fees at this Time	Retain current permits fees (RPP \$25, LRPP \$15 plus tax) until further review of technological enhancements.

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Item	Item for Consideration	Proposed Program Modification
6	Establish Provisions for Three Additional Permit Eligibilities	Establish provision for three additional permits eligibilities for Non-Profits/Institutions, Businesses and Contractors to provide limited permits as described in Appendix 1.
7	Clarify Eligibility of Multi-Unit Dwellings	Retain similar restrictions for multi units, and clarify provisions relating to eligibility (non-conforming structures qualify and conforming structures would not qualify).
8	Establish Provisions for RPP Sub-zones	Establish provisions for issuance of permits valid only in a specific sub-zone of an RPP. Establish provisions to allow time restriction variations to be implemented within sub-zones to limit the variation of time restrictions.
9	Retain Current Schedule of Time and Days when Parking Restrictions are in Effect	Continue the use of the existing time and day restrictions.
10	Enhanced Enforcement	Enhance enforcement close to parking generators, clarify that restrictions are not in force on statutory holidays and establish provisions to cancel permits, or limit purchases, for individuals abusing their privileges.
11	Communications with Parking Generator representatives	Meet with representatives of the parking generators on an ongoing basis.
12	Pursue Technological Solutions	Pursue technological opportunities relating to online permit sales and use of digital license plate recognition systems for permitting and enforcement purposes.
13	Provide Enhanced Communications	Review communication tools to ensure information for the public is readily available and understandable and highlight that people can park in the area up to the time limit allowed without a permit.
14	Accommodate Exemptions in Unique Circumstances	Add a provision to the Bylaw to empower the General Manager responsible for the RPP to approve an exemption clause for specific situations.

Currently the provision for the establishment, administration and enforcement of the RPP are contained in three separate documents: the Residential Parking Permit Bylaw, Policy C07-14 and portions of Administrative Policy A07-014. For ease of use and clarity, all provisions will be consolidated within the RPP Bylaw. An Administrative Procedures document, setting out internal administrative processes for the RPP, will be developed if required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Currently the RPP program is budgeted to generate \$56,600 in revenue from permit sales. Cost of the RPP program is estimated at \$400,000 annually. There are no immediate changes proposed to the budget or the fee structure at this time for a number of reasons:

- At present, the City uses significant staff resources after an RPP petition is submitted to verify the petitions and parking issue. Proposed modifications would see the City assign these resources earlier in the process.
- The review indicated that current rates are similar to rates charged in other municipalities and there was no indication that any of the municipalities reviewed were seeking cost recovery from their RPP programs. Additionally, the proposed program updates may facilitate delivery of the program in a more cost effective manner. For example, program clarifications may reduce the amount of time required of the Administration to resolve any issues, or concerns and to provide administrative support.
- At this time, no change in service level is expected. It is anticipated that expansion requests will continue to take several months to review and implement. Other zone improvements (such as the establishment of sub zones) will be implemented as needed and funding requirements to address implementation will be considered further at that time.

An additional enforcement officer, equipment and car were added in 2019 at a cost of \$90,000 per year, from the existing budget allocation. This addition addresses the need for enhanced enforcement in areas closest to parking generators. As expansions or zone changes are brought forward for City Council approval, the financial implications (for signs, communication, enforcement, technology or staffing) will be detailed at that time.

Capital Project P1671, established to resource the internal RPP review, has a remaining balance of approximately \$20,000; this will support the cost of continued engagement and enhanced communications in implementing the outcomes and program updates arising through the RPP review.

An existing capital project for automation of the RPP permits has a total of \$100,000 in reserve to assist in undertaking this work. Identification of an appropriate system, as well as acquisition and implementation of enhanced technology is being considered as part of a larger parking technology review currently underway. Additional details and implications will be provided through specific reports on this initiative. Implementation of technology may reduce the cost of administering this program. Further review of fees will be undertaken once RPP enhancements, including implementation of technological solutions, are fully in place and operational for a period of one to two years. This will allow the updated information to be utilized in the assessment of program operation costs.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

As the designation process has been on hold during this review period, a backlog of interest in expansions and zone changes is expected once amendments to the Bylaw are approved. A high volume of submissions may increase the amount of time required to conduct the review and to implement the changes, based on available staffing capacity.

It should also be noted full implementation of some of the recommendations may require additional assessment and review. For example, establishing subzones within a larger RPP area, to restrict the areas where permit holders may park and to minimize in-zone commuting, will require consultation processes, analysis, funding and new sign installation. Changes to zone designations or expansions of existing zones require City Council approval.

Also, during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, RPP zones have been suspended and the closure of universities, schools and businesses has minimized the parking pressures on nearby residential areas.

NEXT STEPS

Upon City Council approval, Administration will work with the City Solicitor to prepare a revised Residential Parking Permit Bylaw and supporting documents.

APPENDICES

1. Appendix 1 – Proposed Program Modifications to the Residential Parking Program
2. Appendix 2 – Summary of Engagement
3. Appendix 3 – Municipal Scan

REPORT APPROVAL

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