

**CITY OF ALBANY
TRAFFIC AND SAFETY COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: March 22, 2012
Prepared by: JB

ITEM/ 6-2

SUBJECT: Request to Implement a Residential Permit Parking Program on the 1000 block of Washington Avenue

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Provide direction to staff and the applicant on whether the application should be processed as presented or whether modifications to the application should be considered, such as:

- a) expansion of the permit zone;
- b) expansion of zone of households eligible for a permit;
- c) modifications to day and times a permit is required; or
- d) modifications to time limits for vehicles without permits, etc.

BACKGROUND/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

On February 8, 2012, the City received correspondence from a resident on Madison Street requesting a residential permit parking zone be created on the 1000 block of Washington Avenue from Adams west to Madison. The application specifically requests the following features:

- residential permits would be required for anyone parking for more than 30 minutes during the hours of 6 pm to 2 am – seven days a week; and
- The request is based on an understanding that the annual fee for a permit will be approximately \$23.

In response to a question from staff, the applicant indicated that the zone of residences eligible for a permit would be the following residence on the proposed street in the proposed zone:

- 1000 Washington (six units)
- 1011 Washington (two units)
- 749 Madison (one unit)
- 801 Madison (one unit)

DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES

Preliminary Analysis of Application

The proposed permit area is 200 feet in length and accommodates approximately 14 vehicles. Currently the block has a 90 minute parking limit from 8 am to 6 pm, six days a week. There are ten residential units immediately adjacent to the zone that would be eligible for the proposed permits: two single-family homes; one duplex; and one six-unit apartment complex. All properties have off street garages.

Policy Analysis

As expressed in the application, the goal of the proposal is to improve quality of life for the residents by eliminating evening and early morning bar patron parking in this block. The quality of life issues raised in this application are experienced in other areas of the City as well. The underlying issue is the historic layout of the City, with narrow but intensively used commercial districts immediately abutting residential neighborhoods with single family homes.

The implementation of the application is not expected to directly reduce bar patron parking in residential neighborhoods. It would, however, disperse the parking over a larger area, and thus reducing the probability of individual households experiences a late night disturbance. Compared to parking programs in other communities, the proposed parking zone is quite small. There is no guidance in the Municipal Code, however, regarding the size of the zone.

Because all of the residences in the eligible zone have off street parking, it is not clear whether the number parking permits that can be expected to be issued will be greater of less than the number of street parking spaces. If more permits are issued than parking spaces, then the permit is in effect a "hunting license" that allows but does not guarantee a parking space. If the number of permits is less than the number of spaces, then the permit is in effect an assurance of a street parking space near their residence. On a larger scale, limiting street parking to a small number of residences is not feasible.

A full analysis of the application will require a parking survey, car registration surveys, and public hearings where resident and business comments can be considered. This will require a significant amount of staff time and/or expenditures for consultant services.

Analysis of Municipal Code Requirements

The California Vehicle Code allows cities to establish residential parking programs. For Albany Municipal Code Section 9-12, adopted in 1958, details the permit parking procedures, including application requirements, evaluation criteria, and findings required for approval.

The following are the application requirements established in the Municipal Code.

1. A letter describing the parking problem, its cause and worst time periods.
2. A map describing the proposed zone boundaries.

3. A petition signed by at least 50% percent of the residents in the proposed zone. The petition shall be on a form supplied by the City Engineer that discloses to residents the nature of a permit parking zone and the cost of permits.

Upon receipt of the application, the Municipal Code requires staff to evaluate the application against a series of evaluation criteria (see below for details). Among the evaluation criteria is a recommendation from the Traffic and Safety Commission. Once the staff and Commission evaluation process is completed, the City Council will schedule a public hearing on the proposed application. Public notice of the City Council hearing is required.

The Municipal Code provides specific direction on the evaluation criteria to be used in determining the need for the residential parking permit:

1. Occupancy rate of on-street parking at a "peak parking period" mutually agreed upon by staff and the applicant must exceed 75% percent for the zone for the application to be further considered.
2. Evaluation as to whether a substantial number of vehicles parked in the zone belong to nonresidents.
3. Evaluation of appropriate zone boundaries, based on parking study findings and addresses on signed petitions.
4. Evaluation of the cause of the parking problem and alternative solutions.
5. Referral of the application and staff evaluation to the Traffic and Safety Commission for discussion and recommendation to the City Council.
6. Adverse impacts on other parking needs.

In order to approve the application, the City Council must make "findings" specified in the Municipal Code and summarized as follows:

1. the zone is required to enhance or protect the quality of life in the area of the proposed zone threatened by noise, traffic hazards, environmental pollution, or devaluation of real property resulting from the vehicles of commuters or those whose final destination is not within the zone;
2. the zone is necessary to provide reasonable, available and convenient parking for the benefit of the residents within the zone;
3. the zone proposed zone is desirable to encourage the use of car pooling and mass transit;
4. other alternatives do not exist or are not feasible;
5. the zone creates no significant adverse effects on other parking needs.

Fiscal Impact

One of the major issues with this application is that Police Department parking enforcement staff are not on duty during the 56 hours a week that the proposed residential parking permit would be required. During the proposed hours, this would be the only area of the City that would be subject to any parking enforcement, and thus citation revenue would not cover costs of a parking enforcement staff. Except in cases of immediate public safety, such as blocked fire hydrants or parking in a red zone, sworn police officers focus on patrol and calls for service, and generally do not enforce parking violations of this nature.

Next Steps

As stated in the recommendation, staff believes that the appropriate next step is the more fully evaluate the range of options, based on information derived from a full-scale parking survey. Range of options include

- a) expansion of the permit zone;
- b) expansion of zone of households eligible for a permit;
- c) modifications to day and times a permit is required; or
- d) modifications to time limits for vehicles without permits, etc.

and consider time limits that balance needs of visitors to commercial businesses as well as residents that do not have parking permits. Fiscal impacts of expanded parking enforcement program also should be evaluated.

Another alternative would be to review and update City-wide parking policies including feasibility of adding parking enforcement. One possible outcome of the consideration of this application is that the City's Municipal Code needs to be amended to modernize our ordinance. As a starting point for Commission consideration, attached is a memorandum on the topic prepared by Nelson/Nygaard Consulting Associates for the City of Glendale.

Attachments:

1. Analysis of Zoning Requirements
2. Project Application & Plans