



# City of Palo Alto

## City Council Staff Report

(ID # 9451)

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**Report Type: Consent Calendar**

**Meeting Date: 10/1/2018**

**Summary Title: Continue Southgate RPP Pilot Program**

**Title: Approve Extension of the Pilot Phase of the Southgate Residential Preferential Parking Program for a Period of Six Months**

**From: City Manager**

**Lead Department: Transportation**

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the City Council continue the pilot phase of the Southgate Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) Program for six months.

### **Executive Summary**

The residential preferential parking (RPP) program in the Southgate neighborhood is approaching the end of its “pilot” phase and it has largely met expectations: limiting commercial parking on residential streets by requiring permits for any person desiring to park for longer than two hours during business hours. While there have been a couple of issues, including high on-street occupancies (“bunching”) on streets with close proximity to El Camino Real, and complaints from businesses (primarily medical office uses) who have not been able to secure the number of employee parking permits they would like, the pilot has been largely successful. Staff recommends extending the Southgate RPP pilot for six months to further evaluate the program and return to Council in Spring of 2019 with any recommended modifications.

### **Background**

The City Council established the Southgate RPP Program as a one-year pilot program by adoption of Resolution No. 9688 in June 2017. Permit sales for the Southgate RPP Program pilot began in October, soft enforcement (warnings with no citations) began in November, and full enforcement rolled-out in December 2017.

With only two commercial properties within the Southgate neighborhood, only ten Six-month

Employee Parking Permits were made available. Despite there being only two commercial properties in the Southgate neighborhood, there are seven businesses registered at these two addresses and some employees and some businesses were unable to secure the number of employee parking permits desired.

Early in the program's implementation, some of these business owners requested that the City make available more Six-month Employee Parking Permits because the limited supply had quickly sold out and they were unable to secure permits for their employees. In response, Staff recommended the addition of 15 Six-month Employee Parking Permits through the remainder of the pilot phase and other actions.

On January 29, 2018, the Council considered staff's recommendation and provided alternative direction to keep the program generally as-is during the remainder of the pilot period, with very minor modifications. These modifications included:

- Petitioning Caltrans to approve the annexation of a segment of the west side El Camino Real (SR 82) between Churchill Avenue and Park Boulevard into the Southgate RPP program area;
- Adding an additional 15 Six-month Employee Parking Permits after the segment is annexed; and
- Clarifying the Resolution language regarding re-parking in the RPP program area.

Council at that time did not support the Staff recommendation to implement a cap on Daily Employee Parking Permits or install two-hour (non-RPP) parking along the east side of El Camino Real (SR 82) fronting the two commercial properties.

On March 5, 2018, the City Council adopted a Resolution implementing the prior Council direction. That Resolution was later amended and replaced by Resolution No. 9756, adopted May 14, 2018, to correct an inadvertently included cap on the number of Daily Employee Parking Permits available for purchase by employers and employees.

Staff subsequently submitted a certified copy of the Council Resolution to Caltrans with a request to include a portion of El Camino Real (SR 82) in the Southgate RPP program area. On July 26, 2018, Staff received approval from Caltrans to annex these segments of El Camino Real into the Southgate RPP Program. Staff will be installing signage and increasing the number of employee permits by 15 on November 1, 2018.

## **Discussion**

In June 2017, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 9688 establishing the Southgate RPP Program as a one-year pilot program. Permit sales for the Southgate RPP Program pilot began in October 2017, with soft enforcement (warnings only, no citations) beginning in November

and full enforcement in December of that year.

Permit sales for the Southgate RPP Program pilot began in November 2017. At that time, there was some concern that businesses that are located at the Churchill Avenue and El Camino Real intersection might have difficulty purchasing permits for themselves and staff. During the first six months of this program, staff reached out to these offices to make sure that they were able to purchase permits immediately after they went on sale. In October 2017, when these first employee permits (which are valid for six months) had to be replaced with new permits, the businesses uses were not able to purchase the permits they needed before the supply was exhausted.

Staff met with the business owners and employees to discuss this issue. Occupancy data shows that the average occupancy was 24% in the morning (9:00-11:00AM), 25% mid-day (12:00-2:00PM), and 22% afternoon (3:00-5:00PM). The City engaged a consultant to conduct a parking occupancy study in Southgate in January and May 2018 in order to measure the occupancy of on-street parking spaces and assess the impact of the RPP program at the midpoint of the one-year pilot. The results of this study found that the average daily occupancy is 24%.

On December 20, 2017, staff met with Southgate residents and stakeholders to get RPP program feedback and provide preliminary occupancy data. Meeting attendees provided favorable responses to the RPP program, citing a reduction in neighborhood traffic, improved visibility when driving, seeing a higher number of bicyclists, improved safety for bicyclists, and the availability of parking in their neighborhood. Staff also heard concern about issues of insufficient employee permits available to businesses. Staff also met with residents, businesses and stakeholders on January 10, 2018 to discuss the employee permit issues, occupancy and the potential changes in the pilot program discussed in this report.

The proposed Council action would extend the pilot phase of the Southgate RPP Program for six additional months with no change.

## **Policy Implications**

The following Comprehensive Plan programs and policies are relevant to the Southgate RPP Program:

*Policy T-5.5 Minimize the need for employees to park in and adjacent to commercial centers, employment districts and schools*

*Policy T-5.11 Work to protect residential areas from parking impacts of nearby businesses and uses, recognizing that fully addressing some existing intrusions may take time.*

*Policy B-1.2 Promote Palo Alto's image as a business-friendly community. Assume an active role in fostering businesses, including small start-ups, entrepreneurs, and innovative businesses.*

*Policy B-1.3 Engage with all stakeholders in the community, including businesses of all sizes, local retailers, the public, and City decision-makers in order to understand the challenges businesses and employers face.*

*Policy B-2.3 Recognize that employers, businesses and neighborhoods share many values and concerns, including traffic and parking issues and preserving Palo Alto's livability, and need to work together with a priority on neighborhood quality of life.*

*Policy B-3.3 Develop strategies for promoting businesses and employers that generate revenues that will support a full range of high-quality City services, including retain and attract revenue-generating businesses.*

*Policy B-4.2 Attract and support small businesses, start-ups, non-profit organizations, and professional services, which are vital to a diverse and innovative economy.*

## **Resource Impact**

As a result of Caltrans' approval of inclusion of a portion of El Camino Real into the RPP district results, 15 additional Six-month Employee Parking Permits will be available and will generate additional revenue for the City, while also creating additional expenses related to the sales and administration of these permits. Staff will continue to monitor the activity of this program and will bring forward any necessary budgetary adjustments as part of the annual budget process.

## **Timeline**

Current parking permits (resident and employee permits) expire on October 31, 2018 and new permits will go on sale at least 20 days in advance of that date.

## **Environmental Review**

This program is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations since it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the extension of this existing program may have a significant effect on the environment and Section 15301 in that this proposed resolution will have a minor impact on existing facilities.