

Residential Parking Permit Area Extension Policy

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Summary

San Francisco's Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program governs on-street parking in certain neighborhoods of the City, extending privileges to residents and businesses in those neighborhoods. There are 31 RPP Areas; adding blocks to these RPP Areas typically is initiated by requests from residents. How RPP Areas are extended can differ based on the regulation of the street needing the extension. Generally, blocks with meters or other regulations simply apply for eligibility in the nearest area. Blocks without regulation must receive new parking regulations in addition to eligibility, a process that requires a petition from the block and an analysis of the suitability of regulations. This document specifies the policies and practices used by the SFMTA for extensions of existing RPP Areas.¹

Overview

Section 905 of the City's Transportation Code establishes the RPP program and lays out basic rules for the program. Among other things, Section 905 states that:

- annual residential permits may be issued only to “[a] legal resident of the Residential Parking Permit Area”; and,
- “the SFMTA Board of Directors may [...] designate, rescind, or modify a Residential Parking Permit Area.”

Regulation and eligibility

While Section 905 refers generally to “Residential Parking Permit Areas,” there are two distinct elements that make up an RPP Area:

- the on-street regulations that confer permit holders certain parking privileges on a given block, either the ability to legally park longer than posted permits or the ability to park without paying (hereafter “regulations”); and,
- the set of addresses that are eligible to purchase a given permit (hereafter “eligibility”).

Where extensions can happen

Individual buildings or sets of buildings can be RPP-eligible even if the curb on their block is already regulated as something other than RPP (or if there is no on-street parking on their block). Extending eligibility to blocks with existing non-RPP regulations (in appropriate circumstances):

- takes into account the mixed-use nature of most San Francisco neighborhoods: residents who live on a block with meters, or bus zones, or no parking at all, are likely to have the same transportation and parking needs as residents who live around the corner on a block with RPP regulations; and
- matches the policy used when the original RPP Areas were created: Areas were created with defined borders, with every parcel inside the border—even commercial parcels or those on blocks with non-RPP regulations like parking meters—granted eligibility.

Relatedly, extending eligibility to households on unregulated blocks without also adding regulations, if appropriate, runs counter to the policies contained in Section 905 that require consideration of available parking and appropriateness of RPP when considering modifications to Areas, and would be unfair to those nearby households who have already elected to regulate their own blocks.

¹ Areas more than ¼ of a mile from an RPP Area must form a new area. New areas are required by Section 905 to have at least one mile of street frontage, 250 signatures or signatures from 50% of the addresses in the area, and a planning study to establish the need for a new area.

In rare situations, negotiations between a property owner and a nearby neighborhood may lead to a building being deemed ineligible for RPP even though it is on a block with RPP regulations.

Two types of extension

In order to carry out the intent of Section 905, SFMTA uses the following policies when considering the sometimes-distinct questions of modifying RPP regulations or eligibility.

RPP Extensions on Unregulated Blocks

For blocks that do not have any parking regulations (aside from street cleaning), any RPP Area extension must include an extension of both RPP eligibility and a change of regulation, usually traditional time-limited RPP (i.e., timed parking limits applied to all except permit holders), but occasionally Pay or Permit parking or general metered parking.

Minimum of one block

To promote legibility and consistency, RPP regulation and eligibility extensions must include a minimum of one block, defined as both sides of the street between two cross-streets (excluding alleys). In cases where a portion of the block is already a part of an RPP Area, RPP regulation and eligibility extensions must cover the remaining unregulated portion of the block. The policies described below are phrased in terms of a “block,” but refer also to portions of blocks or sets of blocks.

Resident petition required

RPP regulation and eligibility extensions require a petition signed by 50% of the legal residential units on the block. Legal residential units are defined based on Bureau of Street-Use and Mapping data. Addresses that are eligible to sign a petition for RPP eligibility for a particular block are limited to: 1) residential addresses on that block and 2) residential addresses in buildings at the corners of the block, even if the addresses are on the cross-street.² Addresses that are already part of an RPP area are not counted as part of the total.

Parking occupancy study required

Once a petition is received, SFMTA staff will conduct an occupancy study to confirm that there is a parking problem that would be addressed by regulation. If the parking occupancy study shows that more than 80% of the available parking spaces on an applying block are occupied, SFMTA staff will initiate the process to bring the extension of RPP parking to that block to the SFMTA Board of Directors, who has final approval authority.

Determining days/times of enforcement and parking time limit

Generally, newly regulated blocks will receive the same days and times of enforcement as nearby blocks within the same RPP Area. When there are conflicting regulations on nearby blocks, SFMTA staff will work with the applicants to determine what regulations are best for that block. The standard parking time limit for non-permit holders in RPP Areas is two hours; SFMTA may lower the time limit to one hour, if warranted based on



² Because of limitations with the RPP webmap, that parcel will show as eligible even though not all addresses are eligible.

neighborhood conditions and residents' input. Difficulty of enforcement means that SFMTA will not regulate blocks with four-hour time limits for non-permitholders.

RPP Extensions on Already-Regulated Blocks, or Blocks with No Parking

If a block has general paid parking regulations or has no parking, the SFMTA, pursuant to the policies and processes below, may grant requests for RPP eligibility from that block (or parcels on that block).

Requirements for extensions of RPP eligibility

To be eligible to join an RPP Area, a parcel or block may not be (a) more than 500 feet in a straight line from the nearest RPP-regulated parking space, or (b) a building constructed with a development agreement precluding its inclusion in an RPP Area.

No changes to existing paid parking regulations or no-parking zones; general time-limits may be adjusted

SFMTA will not convert a metered block or a block without parking to RPP-regulated parking. For blocks with general time-limited parking, the SFMTA may adjust the regulations to better suit the land use. Requests for RPP extension from a building or buildings facing a metered block or a block with no parking do not require a resident petition because those requests do not modify on-street regulation.

Request Process for RPP Eligibility and Regulation Modification

Requests for modifications and petitions should be entered into the webform at [SFMTA.com/services/permits/request-new-or-expanded-permit-area](https://www.sfmta.com/services/permits/request-new-or-expanded-permit-area). Any questions about submissions should be sent to InfoRPP@SFMTA.com.

Determining which areas to extend and how to create new areas

When a parcel or block applies for an extension, it will be assigned to the area for which it has been pre-zoned by the SFMTA, usually the closest RPP Area. The pre-zoned RPP Area map is currently under development and will show the RPP Area that a given block would be added to should it apply, factoring in proximity to current zones and barriers to convenient parking such as highways, major streets, or hills. This map will supersede the aforementioned 500-foot buffer zone. This map will also guide the creation of future zones from existing zones as the program expands.

Required documentation

Eligibility-only extensions do not require any documentation above and beyond the initial request. Extensions for both eligibility and regulation require a petition signed by 50% of the households on the affected block. Once the extension is approved, documentation establishing residency is required to be able to purchase a permit.

Timeline and process for request approval

For requests for eligibility-only extensions, the process takes three months from the time the request is received until the SFMTA Board of Directors approves the extension. For extensions of both eligibility and regulations, the time window is approximately a month longer to allow for signature verification and data collection required to support the change. Proposals that modify the regulations on the street will also have to go to the Transportation Advisory Staff Committee. Prior to the final approval by the SFMTA Board, all items relating to RPP Areas are heard at an Engineering Public Hearing, where anyone can give feedback on the proposal.