

Aurora Highlands CA request for RPP community engagement session

Stephen Crim <Scrim@arlingtonva.us>

Thu, Feb 4, 2021 at 12:33 PM

To: "Scott Miles, AHCA President" <president@aurorahighlands.org>

Cc: Dennis Leach <Dleach@arlingtonva.us>, Jessica Baxter <Jebaxter@arlingtonva.us>, Erin Potter <epotter@arlingtonva.us>, Nate Graham <nsgraham@arlingtonva.us>

Dear Mr. Miles:

Happy Thursday to you.

As you'll recall, I was able to get answers to some but not all of your questions from January 13th. I am now writing with answers to the other questions that I did not get to that day. My apologies for not getting these to you as soon as I had hoped. Again, see the text of your e-mail below with replies in **orange**.

3) What is the assessment plan?

Thank you for the data. You guys are clearly the experts on understanding patterns and how they can be measured. So it's confusing that there's not a clear plan for how you expect to measure & address impacts going forward. How will the board know what to ask for or change without something from you to work off of?

We plan to report to the Board on our operations of the program two years after any changes are adopted. However, we're not proposing another round of on-street data collection at this point. The occupancy data that we were able to collect in Aurora Highlands and elsewhere for the RPP Review was funded through special budget allocations that the program does not and has not had on a normal basis.

We have not received any guidance from the Manager or Board, as part of our review, to enhance our data collection and monitoring of parking on streets with RPP restrictions. We will follow guidance from the Manager or Board, if any, to make those enhancements. You and your neighbors are welcome to share your observations or concerns with us after adoption.

What does the county view as acceptable utilization rates / problem indicators for RPP streets? Clearly 100% is unsustainable. To me, even 80% seems problematic. Can there be some commitment that if a zone hits 60% consistently, we revisit restrictions? Or if traffic rates increase more than 20%? Or if residents now have to walk more than 3 blocks? Or if 80% of a blocks residents lodge a complaint? I don't know that those numbers make sense, but we need something concrete to look towards, otherwise we're just asking residents to have faith that everything will just work out.

This is in the context of major development in this area with a huge amount of consternation on what that will inevitably mean. If you're only evaluating these changes over the next year, with COVID decimating the in-office workforce, that won't tell you anything of value 2-3 years from now when offices are hopefully back to normal capacity.

Further, we are expecting a significant amount of development here. For example, if RiverHouse becomes eligible to join zone 1, that would triple the amount of households in the zone while adding virtually no additional spaces. That in itself could significantly alter utilization rates, without even considering the addition of paid parking. That's also without considering the proposed development infill that could add orders of magnitude more households. And of course, it's also with the context that each new development is subject to significantly reduced parking ratios, so each one shifts more pressure to street parking.

The **Parking and Curb Space Management Element** of the County's Master Transportation Plan sets a minimum target of 60% for parking on residential streets. The RPP program has long allowed residents to obtain RPP restrictions if 75% of the parking spaces on a block were occupied and that 25% of the spaces are occupied by vehicles not registered to a nearby address (or are "out-of-area").

The proposed program removes the 25% "out-of-area" test because the Department of Motor Vehicles and County Commissioner of Revenue data sources used to determine that a vehicle is "out-of-area" are not completely accurate for that purpose. For example, a vehicle may belong to a resident of the street petitioning for restrictions, but the owner may not have the vehicle properly registered. Also, if someone from out of town is visiting a home on the petitioning street when the County studies the parking on that street, then the vehicle would be counted as "out of area" even though they are there to visit a resident.

Removing the out-of-area test, while keeping the overall occupancy threshold at 75%, would make RPP restrictions easier to obtain and change the balance between "maximizing on-street parking utilization with the residents' desire for convenient on-street parking" called for in the Master Transportation Plan. Increasing the occupancy threshold to 85% while removing the 25% out-of-area test would be a way to maintain that balance. The RPP program attempts to make parking easier on residential streets by limiting who can park on them during certain hours, though it has never had specific occupancy targets that, if reached, trigger changes to the program. The proposed changes do not seek to add these kinds of triggers.

4) Why change the intent of the program?

We implemented RPP in Aurora Highlands way back when because commuter parking was causing safety issues, it was transforming a residential neighborhood into a parking lot, it was literally causing fights. All of those are legitimate responsibilities of the County to address, and the RPP apparently did that extremely well. Why is RPP abdicating that in favor of a basic parking management program?

The proposed changes to the intent language better reflect how the program has operated in the past as well as how it would operate with the proposed changes. The current intent language mentions a variety of nuisances that it is supposed to minimize, but the program has only ever directly addressed parking. For example, the intent language mentions noise control, but the program has never granted RPP restrictions on the basis of ambient noise.

I disagree with the impression that the County is not intending to manage commuter parking in residential areas with the proposed changes. Also, keep in mind that the program has for many years not only managed commuter parking but also resident parking by excluding most households living in apartments, condos, and townhomes from applying to obtain restrictions.

If you are planning to speak at tonight's Transportation Commission meeting or Monday's Planning Commission meeting, then I will "see" you then.

Best,

Stephen Crim, AICP
Parking Manager

Arlington County Dept. of Environmental Services
Transportation Engineering & Operations
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22201

Please note, any email sent to/from Arlington County email addresses may be subject to disclosure under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

From: Scott Miles, AHCA President <president@aurorahighlands.org>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:53 AM
To: Stephen Crim <Scrim@arlingtonva.us>
Cc: Dennis Leach <Dleach@arlingtonva.us>; Jessica Baxter <Jebaxter@arlingtonva.us>; Erin Potter <epotter@arlingtonva.us>
Subject: Re: Aurora Highlands CA request for RPP community engagement session

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside Arlington County.

Stephen,

Thank you for providing these responses so quickly. We did have a discussion of this at our January AHCA meeting on Wednesday, and what started as a resident effort to oppose some changes in a spirit of compromise ended up with members approving a motion to simply reject all of the proposed changes outright.

A significant factor in that is the persistent issues of concern over potential negative impacts, not understanding why changes are needed, or how they would be managed. I have heard the thought put into the deliberative dialogs that were planned pre-covid was innovative and impressive; it is a shame that those or some degree of increased community engagement were not pursued with a stronger imperative as I believe it would have resulted in a different outcome.

Thanks,
Scott

--

Scott Miles, President
Aurora Highlands Civic Association
www.aurorahighlands.org

Stephen Crim wrote on 1/13/21 5:19 PM:

Dear Mr. Miles:

This afternoon, I've been able to write up answers to some of your questions. I will reply to your other questions, but I won't be able to get those to you before your meeting tonight. See the text of your e-mail below with replies in **orange**.

Also, I want to be clear that the advertisement for the February hearing will include two options for the Board to consider in terms of number of permits and fees: the original staff proposal, in which the maximum number of annual permits would be 2 for households with off-street parking and 3 for households without off-street parking at the fees in our presentations made so far; and another option in which the maximum number of annual permits would be 4 for all households, but with higher prices for these added permits. I bring this up because last week I sent Ms. Natasha Atkins a table that compares the proposed program with the current program. Today, colleagues pointed out to me that this document was not written clearly to indicate that we would be presenting both options. My apologies for that; we will correct that document before it goes out to the entire list of Civic Association presidents and our RPP Review listserv, but I wanted you to know ASAP.

1) **What are the rates to be charged?**

If it's significantly cheaper than nearby garage parking, there's a huge concern our streets will naturally be more desirable, and become a parking lot with less access by residents and significantly increased traffic.

A quick look at garages surrounding Aurora Highlands in PC & CC show rates of \$11-25 for 2 hours, and \$14-37 for 8-24 hours. If someone can park on street for \$1.50 an hour, that's \$3 for 2 hours, and \$12 for 8, significantly cheaper than any other available paid parking, so the County would be incentivizing parking on residential streets.

The paid-parking rate for those without passes and permits would be the same as the short-term meter rate, or \$1.75 per hour. While this is cheaper than charged at garages, keep in mind that there is metered parking closer to most garages. So if someone is looking to save money by parking on-street, they would have other, already metered spaces to consider before considering space on streets with RPP restrictions. The price to park is a factor in where someone parks, but so is the distance that they have to walk to their destination. By setting the rate at \$1.75 per hour, short-term parking in RPP zones would be no cheaper than the metered parking that is usually closer to places like community centers, restaurants, and stores.

At the same time, if passes are reduced and people need to use their flexpasses for their own vehicles, it's not very nice to expect visitors to their home to pay the same rates they would for commercial underground parking.

In addition to the FlexPass, households can give their visitors one of their short-term visitor passes. Under the proposed program, households would still be able to get up to 100 of these per year, each of which is good for three days. However, if a visitor is coming to a home and for whatever reason it's not possible to coordinate a transfer of a visitor pass or FlexPass to the visitor, that visitor could at least still park legally for two hours by paying up to \$3.50.

2) How will limits realistically be enforced?

The ability to re-activate after 30 minutes essentially means there is no limit. That is, unless there is some reasonable likelihood violators will be caught and charged enough to make it more expensive than not paying. Which means that the County has to commit to regular patrols, preferably daily, and ideally every 2 hours in "problem" zones. **Given that, will the County commit to that level of enforcement?**
I cannot commit to that level of enforcement.

Legitimate needs to leave/return could be avoided if the parkmobile zones are small enough, like one zone per street for 4-5 blocks. Those drivers could now just return and park one street over if they're within the no-reactivation period.

If limits cannot be applied to EasyPark, why not just not allow them for RPP? We are proposing the EasyPark option so that people who do not have or use credit/debit cards/mobile payments (necessary to use ParkMobile) could still park in these areas. Customers can reload EasyPark with cash at the County Treasurer's Office. Some residents oppose eliminating cash payment for government fees on the grounds that it is unfair to those who don't have access to banking systems.

Further, with no way for residents to identify illegally parked cars other than sitting there for two hours to see if someone returns, that actually removes an existing enforcement mechanism of residents reporting issues. ParkMobile clearly provides the ability to check a license plate/zone for valid payment - **can the county stipulate in their contract that ParkMobile provide some way for residents to check as well? And that the County commits to responding promptly to ticket those violators?**

At this point, I do not know if ParkMobile offers that service or if our agreement with them could be modified to include it, so I won't commit to doing that, but we will look into it. I cannot make commitments that Police would respond to reports of short-term parking violations in RPP zones any faster than Police responds to other non-emergency calls.

Best,

Stephen Crim, AICP
Parking Manager

Arlington County Dept. of Environmental Services
Transportation Engineering & Operations

2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22201

phone: 703-228-7494
e-mail: scrim@arlingtonva.us

Please note, any email sent to/from Arlington County email addresses may be subject to disclosure under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

From: Stephen Crim
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 12:54 PM
To: Scott Miles, Aurora Highlands Civic Association <president@aurorahighlands.org>
Cc: Dennis Leach <Dleach@arlingtonva.us>; Jessica Baxter <Jebaxter@arlingtonva.us>; Erin Potter<epotter@arlingtonva.us>
Subject: RE: Aurora Highlands CA request for RPP community engagement session

Dear Mr. Miles:

I just want to let you know that I have received your follow-up questions, and I will do my best to answer what I can this afternoon in between meetings. Unfortunately, I probably won't be able to answer everything today, but I'll reply to you with what I can no later than 5 PM.

Best,

Stephen Crim, AICP
Parking Manager

Arlington County Dept. of Environmental Services
Transportation Engineering & Operations
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22201

phone: 703-228-7494
e-mail: scrim@arlingtonva.us

Please note, any email sent to/from Arlington County email addresses may be subject to disclosure under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

From: Scott Miles, Aurora Highlands Civic Association <president@aurorahighlands.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 13, 2021 12:47 PM
To: Stephen Crim <Scrim@arlingtonva.us>
Cc: Dennis Leach <Dleach@arlingtonva.us>; Jessica Baxter <Jebaxter@arlingtonva.us>; Erin Potter <epotter@arlingtonva.us>
Subject: Re: Aurora Highlands CA request for RPP community engagement session

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside Arlington County.

Hi Stephen, Thank you. This is very helpful, though it still leaves questions I hope you can clarify.

As you're aware, a major concern is with the 2 hour paid parking and assessing impacts.

1) **What are the rates to be charged?**

If it's significantly cheaper than nearby garage parking, there's a huge concern our streets will naturally be more desirable, and become a parking lot with less access by residents and significantly increased traffic.

A quick look at garages surrounding Aurora Highlands in PC & CC show rates of \$11-25 for 2 hours, and \$14-37 for 8-24 hours. If someone can park on street for \$1.50 an hour, that's \$3 for 2 hours, and \$12 for 8, significantly cheaper than any other available paid parking, so the County would be incentivizing parking on residential streets.

At the same time, if passes are reduced and people need to use their flaxpasses for their own vehicles, it's not very nice to expect visitors to their home to pay the same rates they would for commercial underground parking.

2) How will limits realistically be enforced?

The ability to re-activate after 30 minutes essentially means there is no limit. That is, unless there is some reasonable likelihood violators will be caught and charged enough to make it more expensive than not paying. Which means that the County has to commit to regular patrols, preferably daily, and ideally every 2 hours in "problem" zones. **Given that, will the County commit to that level of enforcement?**

Legitimate needs to leave/return could be avoided if the parkmobile zones are small enough, like one zone per street for 4-5 blocks. Those drivers could now just return and park one street over if they're within the no-reactivation period.

If limits cannot be applied to EasyPark, why not just not allow them for RPP?

Further, with no way for residents to identify illegally parked cars other than sitting there for two hours to see if someone returns, that actually removes an existing enforcement mechanism of residents reporting issues. ParkMobile clearly provides the ability to check a license plate/zone for valid payment - **can the county stipulate in their contract that ParkMobile provide some way for residents to check as well? And that the County commits to responding promptly to ticket those violators?**

3) What is the assessment plan?

Thank you for the data. You guys are clearly the experts on understanding patterns and how they can be measured. So it's confusing that there's not a clear plan for how you expect to measure & address impacts going forward. How will the board know what to ask for or change without something from you to work off of?

What does the county view as acceptable utilization rates / problem indicators for RPP streets?

Clearly 100% is unsustainable. To me, even 80% seems problematic. Can there be some commitment that if a zone hits 60% consistently, we revisit restrictions? Or if traffic rates increase more than 20%? Or if residents now have to walk more than 3 blocks? Or if 80% of a blocks residents lodge a complaint? I don't know that those numbers make sense, but we need something concrete to look towards, otherwise we're just asking residents to have faith that everything will just work out.

This is in the context of major development in this area with a huge amount of consternation on what that will inevitably mean. If you're only evaluating these changes over the next year, with COVID decimating the in-office workforce, that won't tell you anything of value 2-3 years from now when offices are hopefully back to normal capacity.

Further, we are expecting a significant amount of development here. For example, if RiverHouse becomes eligible to join zone 1, that would triple the amount of households in the zone while adding virtually no additional spaces. That in itself could significantly alter utilization rates, without even considering the addition of paid parking. That's also without considering the proposed development infill that could add orders of magnitude more households. And of course, it's also with the context that each new development is subject to significantly reduced parking ratios, so each one shifts more pressure to street parking.

4) Why change the intent of the program?

We implemented RPP in Aurora Highlands way back when because commuter parking was causing safety issues, it was transforming a residential neighborhood into a parking lot, it was literally causing fights. All of those are legitimate responsibilities of the County to address, and the RPP apparently did that extremely well. Why is RPP abdicating that in favor of a basic parking management program?

Any feedback you can provide today would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
Scott

--

Scott Miles, President
Aurora Highlands Civic Association
www.aurorahighlands.org

On Wed, Jan 13, 2021 at 7:08 AM Stephen Crim <Scrim@arlingtonva.us> wrote:

Dear Mr. Miles:

I have compiled answers to your questions and I hope that they will help you as you go in to your Civic Association meeting, though I am going to decline your invitation to join. I've copied your questions and put my answers next to them in orange.

1. Is it correct that ParkMobile users can't re-activate their parking after 2 hours has expired for some amount of time? *That is correct.*
 - a. What is that time period? *30 minutes.*
 - b. Is there a way to prevent or detect multiple re-activations per day? *I do not know at this point if it's possible to prevent multiple sessions in one day. Bear in mind, though, that preventing multiple sessions in one day would block anyone who parks on the street for less than two hours, leaves, and then comes back to park later in the day, which would be legal.*
2. Is it correct that the Arlington pass does allow reactivating indefinitely? *I believe you are referring to EasyPark, the device distributed by the County Treasurer's Office. Yes, it is possible to reset the device.*
 - a. Are there plans to change that? Are there plans to detect if that is happening? *We are looking into this, but at this point, I do not know if it is possible to make this change.*
3. What mechanism will residents have to determine if a vehicle is parked legally using parkmobile?
 - a. *Any vehicle that is parked longer than two hours would be parked illegally. If someone notices a vehicle parked for longer than two hours, then she could then notify police. There will not be a way for a resident to know whether someone has paid through ParkMobile.*
4. What are the on-street utilization rates in Aurora Highlands? *Please see our report at https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2020/01/rpp_review_onstreetdatacollection_data_release_20190711.pdf. Page 17 has a summary of the data that we collected in and around Aurora Highlands. Page 52 through 62 of this document have maps of the occupancy data that we collected in those neighborhoods.*
5. What is the median number of off-street spaces in Aurora Highlands? *We estimate that the median number of spaces for single-family detached homes is 3.80. For townhomes and duplexes, the median is 2.00.*
6. For new apt/condo buildings that become eligible, how does the process work?

- a. Is it 80% of households on a block, which since apts will be much larger, that essentially means homeowners have no say? Yes, 80% of households on a block would need to support the petition, regardless of whether residents own or rent their homes.
- b. Is it the street address of the building? The "block" would be all of the homes on both sides of a street between the intersection of the two cross streets or between the cross street and the end of the street in the case of a dead end or cul-de-sac.
- c. What zone would they go in if there's no existing zone? The zone would be determined at the time that restrictions are approved. As in the past, we would not pre-determine the zone.
- d. Maybe provide some actual examples with Aurora Hills Apartments (2701 S Fern St, built 1954, 41 units) and Parc View (815 18th St S, built 1962, 82 units). At this point, I am not sure which zone these buildings would be part of if these buildings were to petition and restrictions were to be approved.

7. Is it correct that Southampton condos, River House, Crystal House, Crystal Towers, Claridge House, Pentagon Row, 1401 Joyce, Instrata, and Park at Pentagon Row are part of site plans and would still not be eligible under the new rules? River House was not built by site plan and would be eligible to petition for restrictions and join the program under the proposed rules. All of the other properties that you mentioned would not be eligible to petition for restrictions and join the program since they were either approved through the Site Plan process or are now part of a Site Plan. I will note that some of the households in the Southampton condos are part of the RPP program, but we do not have documentation of the year in which they were allowed to join the program or why. As part of the grandfathering that we've proposed for all zones, we would not remove these households from the program, but we would not expand the program to include other households in that development either.

8. How will changes to parking patterns be monitored? We study parking on residential streets on an ad hoc basis as part of our factfinding when residents or other County departments request field investigations.

9. What is the plan for reviewing & potentially reversing changes if they lead to issues in some areas? We will ask the Board for guidance on how and when they would like us to review any changes that they adopt.

Have a good day and a good meeting!

Best,

Stephen Crim, AICP
Parking Manager

Arlington County Dept. of Environmental Services
Transportation Engineering & Operations
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22201

phone: 703-228-7494
e-mail: scrim@arlingtonva.us

Please note, any email sent to/from Arlington County email addresses may be subject to disclosure under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

From: Scott Miles, AHCA President <president@aurorahighlands.org>
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 4:59 PM
To: Stephen Crim <Scrim@arlingtonva.us>

Cc: Dennis Leach <Dleach@arlingtonva.us>

Subject: Re: Aurora Highlands CA request for RPP community engagement session

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from outside Arlington County.

Hi Stephen,

We still have a residents with a lot of questions and have a civic association meeting Wednesday evening where residents will be bringing up the RPP again. I'm hoping you can help me understand the changes so I can try to adequately answer them. I can be available for a phone call tonight or tomorrow as well, which would probably be quicker and more efficient.

I think I have a fair grasp of the proposed changes from the material online, but these are a few of the things I'm still working to understand:

1. Is it correct that ParkMobile users can't re-activate their parking after 2 hours has expired for some amount of time? What is that time period? Is there a way to prevent or detect multiple re-activations per day?
2. Is it correct that the Arlington pass does allow reactivating indefinitely? Are there plans to change that? Are there plans to detect if that is happening?
3. What mechanism will residents have to determine if a vehicle is parked legally using parkmobile?
4. What are the on-street utilization rates in Aurora Highlands?
5. What is the median number of off-street spaces in Aurora Highlands?
6. For new apt/condo buildings that become eligible, how does the process work? Is it 80% of households on a block, which since apts will be much larger, that essentially means homeowners have no say? Is it the street address of the building? What zone would they go in if there's no existing zone? Maybe provide some actual examples with Aurora Hills Apartments ([2701 S Fern St](#), built 1954, 41 units) and Parc View ([815 18th St S](#), built 1962, 82 units).
7. Is it correct that Southampton condos, River House, Crystal House, Crystal Towers, Claridge House, Pentagon Row, 1401 Joyce, Instrata, and Park at Pentagon Row are part of site plans and would still not be eligible under the new rules?
8. How will changes to parking patterns be monitored?
9. What is the plan for reviewing & potentially reversing changes if they lead to issues in some areas?

The invitation to come to a civic association meeting and answer questions directly still stands as well.

Thanks,
Scott Miles
202-246-9181