

City explores selling on-street parking permits to apartment and condo residents

Monthly permits would be available for a price ranging from \$75 to \$150 per month

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The City of Calgary is looking to create a "market permit" that would allow people in large apartment buildings to purchase a residential on-street parking permit if they needed a space.

Article content

Apartment and condo dwellers in Calgary could soon have a new option for on-street parking, if they're willing to pony up the cost.

The Calgary Parking Authority is looking at introducing "market permits" to its residential parking permit program. They would be made available on a monthly basis to people who live in large residential buildings for a price ranging from \$75 to \$150 per month.

The update will require a bylaw amendment and therefore must be approved by council, which could happen as soon as next Tuesday.

Chris Blaschuk, interim general manager of the CPA, said the idea was originally planned for a small number of "pre-1945" buildings that were built before cars became prevalent, but after hearing interest from councillors and stakeholders, CPA decided to look at a citywide program.

"It's really recognizing the cost of providing parking in a high-demand area, like street parking in the Beltline," said Blaschuk. "There's a lot of different people looking to use up parking, like visitors to the area, deliveries to people who live in these buildings, as well as the residents and visitors to adjacent areas."

To qualify, a vehicle owner would have to live in a building at least four stories high or with more than 20 units. Blaschuk said the permit would be good for areas zoned for residential parking within 150 metres of the building where the owner resides.

The proposed pricing would start at \$75 per month for suburban areas, \$100 per month for medium-density inner-city areas, and \$150 for the city centre.

The city's residential parking permit program, which applies to about 80 designated zones, is due for an overhaul as council discusses its four-year budget cycle this November.

Currently, homes and duplexes in residential parking zones can get up to three parking permits for vehicles registered at the address, and in some cases can also get two visitor passes. People in smaller apartment buildings can get one permit per unit.

In January of last year, council approved a fee structure that will see residents receive only one free residential parking permit, and pay \$15 for additional permits, including visitor permits.

That fee structure was approved but also postponed until 2023 as a way of offering economic relief to Calgarians in the midst of the pandemic.

Ward 7 Coun. Terry Wong said he likes the idea, but he wants to know why the program will be limited to one permit per unit.

“How did we arbitrarily come up with the number one?” asked Wong.

He said there are many three-and four-vehicle families living in apartments downtown, where parents and their adult children all work and need vehicles.

Councillor Terry Wong speaks with the media outside Calgary Council Chamber on Monday, November 1, 2021. Azin Ghaffari/Postmedia

Blaschuk said 2023 will be a pilot year for the market permits, and CPA will monitor how much demand there is for spaces.

“The price is really the tool that helps us monitor the capacity,” he said. “So if it’s super popular and there’s not a lot of places for people to park, we will need to review whether that price is the right price. Or if there’s not a lot of interest, then there may be more flexibility to reduce the price.”

He said the CPA is hoping people will use the spaces provided with their building when possible. The market permit will be another option when nothing else is available.

According to Blaschuk, about 5,000 people who lived in larger apartment buildings have residential parking passes that they received before the rules changed, and they were allowed to renew them up to the end of 2022. Those residents will now need to purchase these market permits if they wish to continue parking on the street.

Blaschuk said permit holders affected by the change will be contacted by CPA later this month.

“Anyone who will experience a change to their parking allotment will receive communication directly from us later in September. So, if people don’t hear anything from us, they can continue to be able to apply for the permits that they’ve typically had.”

— *With files from Madeline Smith*