

POLICY BRIEFING: Regulation of Permitted Street Parking

Current Status of Critical Parking Areas in Minneapolis

Critical Parking Areas (CPAs) are currently the only parking permit program for Minneapolis residents. There are 32 designated CPAs in Minneapolis and an [interactive map](#) of those areas is available online. As of December 2023, there are 1443 active resident permits, 121 business permits, and 547 visitor permits for CPAs within the city.

CPAs are an infrequent request, with the most recent one being approved by City Council in 2013. According to Public Works Traffic and Parking Services Division, there are general inquiries about CPAs every couple of weeks, but they rarely advance beyond that. Every year, about one group gets serious about submitting a petition, but even those rarely get to the point of submission. In the past five years the city has received two petitions that were forwarded onto the Office of City Clerk for verification of signatures, and both failed to meet the required number of signatures to advance further in the process.

If an application is submitted and has enough verified signatures to move forward, Traffic and Parking Services Division staff evaluates the proposed CPA. Since that is a rare occurrence, there is not a standardized process for the required traffic and parking survey. Generally, the staff looks at which groups other than residents are parking in the area, compare how the proposed restricted times fit with the non-resident parking demand, and evaluate street occupancies. Many of the proposals the Division receives are intended to curb nuisance behaviors of visitors of the area rather than to ensure parking availability for residents.

CPAs are enforced through frequent patrolling of the areas, as well as responding to parking complaints. Regulatory Services Traffic Control explained that staff patrol critical zones on a daily basis, while Public Works Traffic and Parking Services also noted that patrols can be dispatched based on complaints received.

Complete details on the procedure of a CPA request and resulting permit requirements, can be found in the [Minneapolis City Ordinance Article V subsection 478.710 - Critical traffic and parking areas](#). Some particularly relevant sections are included below.

As stated in the ordinance to start a CPA request, “An official written application shall be made to the director of public works. Such application shall be signed by one (1) resident in each of at least seventy-five (75) percent of the dwelling units located within the proposed critical traffic and parking area before the city council may consider the designation of a specified critical traffic and parking area.”

Additionally, there are criteria which must be met in order for a CPA to be approved. “No critical traffic and parking area may be established unless the city council shall have made the following findings:

- 1) The area is detrimentally impacted by parking of commuter, student, customer, or visitor/guest vehicles generated by area businesses, institutions or recreational/entertainment facilities during the proposed hours of restriction;
- 2) The area does not have sufficient off-street vehicular parking for the use and convenience of the residents thereof in the vicinity of their homes;
- 3) Vehicle noise, pollution or congestion will work unacceptable hardships on the residents of the area if present parking is allowed to continue unregulated; and
- 4) The health, safety and welfare of residents of the area and the city as a whole and the attractiveness and livability of specific neighborhoods will be promoted by a system of preferential parking enacted under this section.”

Critical Parking Area Permit Details¹

- 1) Residents can apply for a critical parking permit if they live or have a business in a critical parking area.
- 2) The vehicle license plate number is the permit (must be a motor vehicle or motorcycle; it is illegal to use a permit for commercial vehicles, trailers, taxis, busses, or recreational vehicles).
- 3) Permits can be temporarily transferred if a resident is using a different vehicle.
- 4) Permits are necessary during the times listed on the sign in the CPA.
- 5) A permit doesn't guarantee or reserve a parking space.
- 6) Permit costs:
 - a) New or renewal: \$25 for calendar year
 - b) Visitor: \$10 for calendar year
 - c) Temporary (2-30 days): \$5
 - d) Temporary (1 day): \$2
- 7) Annual limits:
 - a) Critical parking: 2 per licensed resident
 - b) Visitor: 2 per resident
 - c) Temporary: 50 per licensed resident
 - d) Businesses are limited to 2 critical parking permits, per unique address. They cannot use visitor permits.

Minneapolis Home-based businesses

Home-based businesses could potentially impact parking on residential streets, so it is important to understand some of the restrictions for home-based businesses. To start, the City does not allow unlicensed businesses in residential homes.² Many business types are allowed; however, Minneapolis City Code regulates and prohibits some home occupations. For example, “The home occupation shall not generate excessive customer or client traffic that is detrimental to the residential character of surrounding properties or the neighborhood. For purposes of this provision, more than five (5) customers or clients per day may be determined to be an excessive and detrimental level of traffic.”³ Complete regulations can be found in [Minneapolis City Code of Ordinances Article VII, subsection 535.450 Home occupation standards](#).

¹ City of Minneapolis. [Critical parking permits details](#).

² However, City of Minneapolis. [Unlicensed businesses](#).

³ [Minneapolis City Code of Ordinances Article VII, subsection 535.450 Home occupation standards](#).

Prohibited home occupations include:

- 1) Motor vehicle repair, service or painting, or any repair or servicing of vehicles or equipment with internal combustion engines.
- 2) A barber shop or beauty salon that is designed to serve more than one (1) client at a time.
- 3) The sale, lease, trade or other transfer of firearms or ammunition by a firearms dealer.
- 4) Sexually oriented uses, as defined in Chapter 549, Downtown Districts.
- 5) Headquarters or dispatch centers where persons come to the site and are dispatched to other locations.
- 6) Uses first allowed in the C4 General Commercial District or any industrial district.⁴

Saint Paul Residential Permit Parking Areas

Saint Paul has similar permit-restricted parking called Residential Permit Parking Areas. There are 30 areas throughout the city, and permits are available to residents and homeowners within the permit area.⁵ Saint Paul's permits have some slight variations from Minneapolis' Critical Parking Area, including:

- 1) Resident permits are physical stickers (instead of registered license plates) and are set at 3 per household (instead of 2 per licensed resident)
- 2) Visitor permits are placards and \$25 each (instead of \$10)
- 3) There is a special permit for non-resident owners
- 4) 1 day hangtags are available for residents for \$3 and there is a monthly maximum of 20 hang tags per household
- 5) Contractor and commercial vehicles do not require a permit to park, if the vehicle has permanent company markings and is currently performing a service⁶

More information on Saint Paul's Residential Permit Parking Areas can be found on the [Parking Permits website](#).

Rochester Residential Permit Parking Zones

Rochester also has 14 similar-permit restricted parking called [Residential Permit Parking Zones](#). Like Minneapolis, registered license plates are used as the parking permit. One unique feature in Rochester, is that automatic license plate readers are used to enforce the parking restrictions. Complete policy details can be found in the [Rochester Code of Ordinances Chapter 11-10](#).

⁴ [Minneapolis City Code of Ordinances Article VII, subsection 535.460 Prohibited home occupations](#).

⁵ Saint Paul, MN. [Residential Permit Parking Area Maps](#).

⁶ Saint Paul. [2023/2024 Residential Permit Parking Information](#).