

HALIFAX

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Item No. 14.1.7
Halifax Regional Council
September 19, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by 

SUBMITTED BY:

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 16, 2017

SUBJECT: Amendments to By-law P-1000 to Allow Back Window Permit Display

ORIGIN

The following motion was PUT and PASSED at the June 13, 2017 meeting of Halifax Regional Council:

That Regional Council request a staff report considering amendments to By Law P-1000 Respecting On-Street Parking Exemptions and Permits to allow residents with Residential Parking Exemption permits to display permits on the back window for better visibility for parking enforcement and reduce ticketing errors.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Motor Vehicle Act, R.S.N.S., c. 293, s.154.; Council “may make a by-law exempting persons or vehicles from parking restrictions within the city, town or municipality and providing for permits to be issued to those who are exempted”.

By-law P-1000, subsection 4(6);

An Exemption, Permit or Visitor Exemption issued pursuant to this By-law is valid only when affixed to the upper portion of the front windshield on the passenger side of the vehicle in respect of which the Exemption, Permit or Visitor Exemption was issued so as to be clearly visible from the exterior, except for motorcycles, in which case the Exemption, Permit or Visitor Exemption shall be located on the front forks or rear mud guard.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct the CAO to confirm the practice of not permitting the placement of Residential Parking Exemptions and On-Street Parking Permits in the rear window of the vehicle in amendments to By-Law P-1000.

BACKGROUND

The On-Street Residential Parking Policy was approved by Regional Council in 2002 and is supported by By-law P-1000. The By-law allows the Municipality to manage parking in high-demand residential areas by placing parking controls and selling permits to residents and a limited number of monthly permits to anyone from outside the area wishing to park. There are currently about 800 resident exemptions issued and 140 parking permits.

Subsection 4(6) of By-law P-1000 currently states that “An Exemption, Permit or Visitor Exemption issued pursuant to this By-law is valid only when affixed to the upper portion of the front windshield on the passenger side of the vehicle in respect of which the Exemption, Permit or Visitor Exemption was issued to be clearly visible from the exterior, except for motorcycles, in which case the Exemption, Permit or Visitor Exemption shall be located on the front forks or rear mud guard.”

Changes to By-law P-1000 are currently being developed by staff and a new by-law is expected to be presented for consideration of Regional Council in November, 2017.

DISCUSSION

Within the past year, over 450 reviews were requested from residents who received a parking ticket but produced a residential parking permit, accessible permit or resident exemption. In some cases, these are due to the enforcement officer not seeing a displayed permit, but in other cases this is likely attributable to the resident not having the permit displayed due to neglect or due to intentional “lending out” of the permit to another vehicle.

While placing permits in the rear window of a vehicle may be more convenient in the process of preparing a ticket for a violation (as the rear license plate will also be visible) staff believe that there is better reliability for visibility in the front window because rear windows can often be more highly tinted and are less likely to be cleared of snow and frost than front windows.

The motion of Regional Council is a request to “allow” placement of permits in the rear window, presumably as an option to front window placement. However, having uniform placement of parking permits is an important aspect of efficient enforcement. Requiring an enforcement officer to scan both front and rear windows for permits will clearly add more time to inspecting parked vehicles and create more opportunity for permits and exemptions to be missed.

Another approach would be to require permits to be placed in the rear window. While this would eventually result in the uniformity desired for efficient enforcement, there would be a significant transition period and educational effort required to ensure that current customers move their permits and exemptions from the front window to the rear window. As mentioned previously, staff do not believe this conversion will result in improved detection of permits.

While it may create a nuisance for customers who are ticketed due to an enforcement officer failing to notice a permit or exemption, such tickets are always cancelled when the customer provides proof of possessing a valid permit or exemption.

With the implementation of the Parking Roadmap, a physical permit or exemption placed in the vehicle window will be a thing of the past. The planned technology changes will create a system where those eligible for permits and exemptions will register their vehicle license plate number. Enforcement will be conducted by entering or scanning the vehicle license plate to confirm eligibility to park. These changes are expected to be implemented in early 2019.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to the staff recommendation.

Implementing Alternative #1 would result in reduced efficiency of enforcement with the consequence of higher cost to maintain existing enforcement levels or reduced levels of enforcement for the same cost. Alternative #2 would have similar inefficiencies, but over a limited transition period.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There is a risk that continuing to require permits and exemptions to be displayed in the front window of the vehicle will result in more unjustified tickets being issued resulting in dissatisfied customers. Staff do not believe this risk will be substantially reduced by relocating the permits and exemptions to the rear window.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement has been undertaken related to this issue.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental implications to the staff recommendation or the alternatives.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Regional Council may direct the CAO to provide the option of placing permits and exemptions in the rear window of the vehicle when drafting changes to By-law P-1000.
2. Regional Council may direct the CAO to require that permits and exemptions be placed in the rear window of the vehicle when drafting changes to By-law P-1000.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments.

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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