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Item No. 13.1.1
Transportation Standing Committee
January 23, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Standing Committee
FROM: Brad Anguish, Commissioner of Operations
DATE: November 22, 2024
SUBJECT: Proposed Residential Parking Permit Surcharge for Long Vehicles

ORIGIN

July 25, 2024 Transportation Standing Committee motion (Item 14.1):

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Mason

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a staff report that examines revisions to residential parking permits that would charge differential fees based on length of the vehicle, with higher fees for longer vehicles.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the feasibility of implementing a parking permit program based on vehicle length. While a length-based system could increase parking space availability and potentially generate more revenue, significant challenges exist.

There is no central resource to verify vehicle dimensions, leading to potential inconsistencies and disputes. Additionally, administrative burdens would increase due to the need for manual checks and enforcement.

A review of other municipalities found examples of weight-based parking fees, but none solely based on length.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council maintain the current one-size-fits-all permit pricing strategy.

BACKGROUND

The municipal parking permit program is governed by HRM By-law P-1200 Respecting On-street Parking Permits.

Current permit parking offerings are generally ambivalent toward vehicle type. All residential and carshare permits are limited to personal passenger vehicles (cars, SUV and trucks under one tonne, as well as motorcycles). Commuter and visitor permits are open to all of the above, along with commercial motor vehicles. The By-law defines a commercial vehicle as “a motor vehicle having attached thereto a truck or delivery body and includes an ambulance, hearse, casket wagon, fire apparatus, police patrol, motor bus, and other motor vehicles used for the transportation of goods;”. There is no mention of, or restrictions on, vehicle length.

DISCUSSION

A program based on vehicle size would charge parking permit fees based on length, with longer vehicles paying more due to their increased use of public parking space. This approach incentivizes smaller, space-efficient vehicles, potentially easing congestion and optimizing limited urban parking. Those driving longer vehicles would have to pay more to park, as they would be taking up more space. Fee structures could vary across different length categories or be set incrementally for more precise differentiation.

WHAT IS OVERLENGTH?

The following table¹ includes a number of the best-selling cars in Canada, Also included is the Mitsubishi Mirage, the shortest car available from a major manufacturer in Canada.

Vehicle	2023 Model Year length in meters*
Mitsubishi Mirage	3.846
Nissan Versa	4.495
Honda Civic	4.52
Toyota RAV4	4.59
Toyota Corolla	4.63
Hyundai Tucson	4.63
Nissan Rogue	4.65
Chevrolet Equinox	4.65
Hyundai Elantra	4.675
Tesla Model 3	4.69
Honda CRV	4.695
Toyota Camry	4.88
Honda Accord	4.97
Ford F-150	5.31
Chevy Silverado 1500	5.35
Toyota Tacoma	5.39
Ram 1500	5.8

A permit program imposing a surcharge to longer vehicles would likely be interested in ensuring larger SUVs and trucks paid an increased share for taking up extra space. For this reason, a surcharge for a longer vehicle should apply for vehicles 5.2 meters in length or longer.

¹ Vehicle lengths were collected from various manufacturers website for 2023 model year vehicles. In cases where multiple lengths were reported due to various vehicle configurations, the shortest length was used.

ADVANTAGES

There are multiple advantages to a program that considers the length of the vehicle being permitted

Increased street parking capacity: Considering a one (1) meter gap between vehicles for entry and exit of a parallel parking stall, a 40-meter-long section of permit parking would fit approximately nine (9) Mitsubishi Mirage-sized cars, compared to eight (8) Nissan Versas or six (6) Full Sized Dodge Rams. Given that permit parking is installed primarily in residential areas, 40 meters would be a long section of parking, due to obstructions such as driveway openings or fire hydrants. A program which discouraged longer vehicles from parking on street would therefore increase capacity by up to 5%.

Potential Revenue increase – Alternatively, assuming the vehicle mix and permit demand both stay the same, a premium on larger vehicles would create a corresponding increase in revenue.

CHALLENGES

Data availability – While the curb weight of a vehicle is collected when registered in Nova Scotia, vehicle length is not. Charging different parking permit fees based on vehicle length would be challenging to implement due to the lack of a centralized resource to accurately determine vehicle dimensions. This could lead to inconsistencies and disputes, as there would be no reliable way to verify the length of a vehicle at the time of permit issuance. Additionally, vehicle lengths for vehicles of the same model can vary depending on factors like trim level or accessories, making it difficult to establish a standardized measurement process.

Administrative checks – because the system cannot determine vehicle length at the time of purchase, a system that charges extra for a longer vehicle would have to be done on an honour system, with permit purchasers choosing an “oversized permit” instead of a standard permit. Checks would have to be done before releasing each permit to ensure the correct permit was chosen, and the correct fee applied.

Enforcement Checks – In addition to a license plate scan, Parking Compliance Officers would be required to measure the length of the vehicle to ensure the proper permit had been purchased. This significantly increases the time to investigate whether a parking ticket is warranted. Further, the vehicle-mounted Automated License Plate Recognition system would be unable to perform a check for vehicle length.

CROSS JURISDICTIONAL SCAN

Staff did a scan of other municipalities to see if any jurisdictions were using a length-based pricing model. No examples of a system based solely on vehicle length were found. Several jurisdictions do have increased rates for larger vehicles, primarily based on registered weight.

Canada

Montreal: two Montreal boroughs (Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie² and Plateau-Mont-Royal³) have implemented pricing strategies to charge more for larger vehicles. Both neighbourhoods base their pricing on weight, rather than length. For example, in Plateau-Mont-Royal the smallest vehicles (less than 1,250 kg) pay \$241.45 for an annual permit, while the largest (greater than 1,800 kg) pay double that cost, at \$482.90 annually. Both boroughs had allowances for “green vehicles” such as electric or hybrid models, which tend to be heavier due to the batteries on board.

Vancouver: As part of their Climate Emergency Initiatives, staff at the City of Vancouver suggested a Residential Parking Permit Surcharge based on vehicle emissions as determined by Environment

² <https://montreal.ca/en/how-to/get-residents-only-parking-sticker?arrondissement=RPP>

³ <https://montreal.ca/en/how-to/get-residents-only-parking-sticker?arrondissement=PMR>

Canada Fuel Consumption data⁴. This initiative ended up not being approved by Vancouver City Council and was abandoned in 2021.

Outside Canada

France – Paris recently had a referendum where citizens voted to triple hourly parking fees for vehicles weighing over 1.6 metric tons.⁵ Heavier vehicles there will pay €18 (approx. \$26.25 CAD) per hour, versus €6 (\$8.75 CAD) per hour for smaller cars. Their new pricing structure, familiarly known in Paris as the “SUV Law”, took effect October 1, 2024.

The city of Lyon also has weight-based pricing for parking permits with various exemptions for vehicle type (electric, plug-in hybrid) and/or social factors (income, family size).⁶

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications related to retaining the current one-size-fits-all permit pricing strategy. Depending on the threshold for a long vehicle, and the uplift applied to oversized parking permits, there would be an uplift to revenue and the associated costs with administration of the new strategy.

As an example: Approximately 1,600 residential permits were issued between November 1, 2023, and October 31, 2024. Assuming 20% of those are over length, and a \$25 surcharge for overweight vehicles, additional revenue from permits would be approximately \$8,000. Some of this revenue gain would be offset by the additional administrative effort required to ensure vehicles are charged the right amount.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

No community engagement was required.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Larger vehicles are generally accepted to have a more harmful environmental footprint than a smaller alternative. While specific impacts would be difficult to estimate, a parking permit surcharge on larger vehicles could encourage vehicle buyers to consider a smaller option when shopping for their next vehicle, reducing the number of larger trucks/SUVs on the road.

ALTERNATIVES

That Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council:

1. direct the CAO to investigate a different pricing model that charges more based on vehicle characteristics other than length; or
2. direct the CAO to implement a permit pricing model that charges more based on vehicle length. This is not recommended as outlined in this report.

⁴ <https://www.shapeyourcity.ca/parking>

⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/paris-france-cars-environment-olympics-fdef746064711c22d22e06776b9f1397>

⁶ <https://www.lyon.fr/faq-stationnement-lyon>

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Motor Vehicle Act, RSNS 1989, c 293:

153 (1) Notwithstanding Section 152, the council of a city, town or municipality may by by-law prohibit or restrict the parking or leaving standing of vehicles except in accordance with a sign or device on a parking meter.

154 A council of a city, town or municipality 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.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, SNS 2008, c 39:

188(2) Without restricting the generality of subsection (1) but subject to Part VIII, the Council may, in any by-law...(e) provide for a system of licences, permits or approvals, including any or all of (i) establishing fees for licences, permits or approvals, including fees for licences, permits and approvals that may be in the nature of a reasonable tax for the activity authorized or for the purpose of raising revenue, which fees may be set or altered by policy...

60(1) The Council may make policies (c) setting and amending the fees to be paid for (iii) permits, applications and approvals required to be obtained from the Municipality or an employee of the Municipality pursuant to a by-law of the Municipality or an enactment...

ATTACHMENTS

None

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