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Item No. 13.1.1
Transportation Steering Committee
June 12, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Transportation Steering Committee

FROM: Brad Anguish, Commissioner of Operations

DATE: April 14, 2025

SUBJECT: Proposed Residential Parking Permit Surcharge for Heavy Vehicles

ORIGIN

January 23, 2025, Transportation Standing Committee motion (Item 13.1.1):

MOVED by Councillor Cleary, seconded by Councillor Morse

THAT the Transportation Standing Committee direct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a report to investigate a different pricing model that charges more based on vehicle characteristics other than length.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the feasibility of implementing a fee structure based on vehicle weight for the parking permit program. Information is provided regarding the different types of permits offered, along with requirements, anticipated implementation timeframe, and potential revenue increases for each permit option if vehicle weight is incorporated into the pricing model.

A recommendation is provided for a pricing model based on vehicle weight for annual residential parking permits. Based on current program requirements, this option is the easiest to implement and offers a potential increase in permit revenue of approximately \$20,000 per year.

Alternative recommendations are also identified.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation Standing Committee recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to prepare amendments to implement a pricing model based on vehicle weight for annual residential parking permits, as described in the discussion section of this report, and return to Halifax Regional Council for approval.

BACKGROUND

The municipal parking permit program is governed by HRM By-law P-1200, the *On-Street Parking Permits By-law*. Current permit parking offerings are generally ambivalent toward vehicle type. All residential and car share permits are limited to personal passenger vehicles (cars, SUVs, trucks under one ton, and

motorcycles). Commuter and visitor permits are open to all 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 weight.

DISCUSSION

A program based on vehicle size would charge parking permit fees based on weight, with heavier vehicles paying more due to their increased impact on public space. This approach incentivizes smaller, more efficient vehicles, potentially easing congestion, reducing emissions, improving road safety and optimizing limited urban parking. Those driving heavier vehicles would have to pay more to park, as they would be taking up more space.

Vehicle Mix

According to Statistics Canada¹, new light-duty vehicle registrations in 2023 in Nova Scotia were distributed as follows:

- Passenger Cars: 257,267
- Multi-Purpose Vehicles (Including SUVs and Crossovers): 238,267
- Pickup Trucks: 124,530
- Van (Minivans and Cargo): 30,950

Across these vehicles, 95.5% were conventional internal combustion engines, 2.4% were diesel engines, and the remainder was a mix of hybrid-electric (1.5%), plug-in hybrid-electric (0.2%) and battery-powered electric vehicles (0.4%)

This mix was used to estimate the vehicle weights used in potential revenue calculations below. Based on these numbers, approximately 22% of light-duty vehicles weigh 2,500kg or greater, while 6% weigh less than 1,500kg.

Multi-Level Fee Structure

The Nova Scotia Registry of Motor Vehicles sets rates for vehicle permits based on vehicle weight.

Registered Weight	Fee (Two Years)
0 - 1,000 kg	\$143.30
1,001 – 1,500 kg	\$176.90
1,501 – 3,200 kg	\$221.70
3,201 – 4,100 kg	\$276.50
4,101 – 5,000 kg	\$333.90

Vehicles over 5,000 kg are considered Heavy Commercial Vehicles. Motorcycles are charged \$46.10/yr. Very few vehicles with a registered weight under 1,000 kg are available in Canada.

Further, HRM By-Law P-1200 only allows residential permits to be issued to trucks of less than one ton capacity. This would make any current vehicles with a curb weight of more than 4,000 kg ineligible for a residential parking permit. Commercial vehicles are eligible for visitor and commuter permits.

Electric Vehicles: The batteries required to store energy for an EV are heavy, so EVs tend to be heavier than an equivalent gasoline-powered vehicle. While the emissions impact of an Electric Vehicle is much less harmful than that of a similar gas-fueled vehicle, the extra weight does create a greater impact on the roadways, potentially increasing infrastructure maintenance costs. These costs would not be substantial.

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2022023-eng.htm>

There are multiple advantages to a program that considers the weight of the vehicle in determining permit charges:

Cost recovery for road maintenance: Heavier vehicles contribute more significantly to the wear and tear of road surfaces. Charging higher permit fees for these vehicles can help offset the increased maintenance costs associated with their impact. Further, a weight-based fee structure can be seen as a fairer way to allocate the costs associated with maintaining infrastructure on a usage basis.

Increased street parking capacity: While not always true, heavier vehicles tend also to be longer than their lighter counterparts. A program which requires an increased fee for heavier vehicles parking on the street may have the impact of increasing capacity.

Reducing environmental impact: Higher fees for larger, heavier gas-powered vehicles may encourage drivers to opt for smaller, lighter, and potentially more fuel-efficient or electric vehicles. This aligns with the broader goals of reducing vehicle emissions.

Potential Revenue increase: Assuming the vehicle mix and permit demand stay the same, higher fees for heavier vehicles may increase revenue correspondingly.

Along with the above advantages, challenges can also be associated with a weight-based pricing model, primarily around enforcement. In addition to a license plate scan, Parking Compliance Officers would be required to verify the weight of the vehicle to ensure the proper permit has been purchased. This significantly increases the time to investigate whether a parking ticket is warranted. Further, the vehicle-mounted Automated License Plate Recognition system cannot identify a vehicle make/model and therefore would be unable to perform a check for vehicle weight.

CROSS JURISDICTIONAL SCAN

Staff completed a scan of other municipalities to see if any jurisdictions were charging increased permit rates for heavier vehicles.

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. 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, the City of Vancouver's staff suggested a Residential Parking Permit Surcharge based on vehicle emissions as determined by Environment Canada's Fuel Consumption data. The Vancouver City Council did not approve this initiative and abandoned it in 2021.

Canadian Parking Association: Staff attended a conference of Parking Professionals in October 2024. A survey of municipalities in attendance revealed that no other municipalities were actively considering a weight-based pricing structure for permits at that time.

Outside Canada

France—Paris recently held a referendum in which citizens voted to triple hourly parking fees for vehicles weighing over 1.6 metric tons.⁴ Heavier vehicles there will pay €18 (approx. \$26.25 CAD) per hour, versus

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>

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/paris-france-cars-environment-olympics-fdef746064711c22d22e06776b9f1397>

€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).⁵

ON-STREET PAID PARKING (Pay Station / Hotspot)

Current on-street paid parking sessions use license plate information to initiate a parking session. In order to establish a pricing model based on vehicle weight, significant changes would be required to enable specific vehicle information to either be input by the user at the pay station or through the app when paying for parking, or to create / provide connection to a database that would link license plates to the vehicle weight.

Given the cumbersome nature of requiring users to provide vehicle specific weight information when initiating parking sessions and difficulties establishing a system to automatically connect a license plate with specific vehicle characteristics, investigation of a vehicle weight-based pricing model was not considered feasible at this time and was not investigated. A weight-based pricing model was investigated for the permit parking program.

EVALUATION OF PERMIT TYPES

Presently the municipality sells four standard permit types:

- Annual Resident Parking Permit
- Visitor Parking Permit (available in 1, 2, and 7-day durations)
- Monthly Commuter Parking Permit
- Carshare Parking Permits (available only to registered car share organizations)

Each permit category has different requirements for documentation to be submitted on application. Due to these differences, the complexity on implementing a surcharge for heavier vehicles varies based on the permit type.

Annual Resident Parking Permit

Current price: \$75 for first permit, \$175 for second permit

Potential Tiered Pricing Based on Weight

Registered Weight	First Permit	Second Permit
0 – 1,500 kg	\$75.00 *	\$175.00 *
1,501 – 2,500 kg	\$93.75	\$218.75
2,501 – 3,200 kg	\$112.50	\$262.50
3,201 – 4,000 kg	\$131.25	\$306.25
4,001 kg +	Ineligible per P-1200	Ineligible per P-1200
Motorcycle	\$40.00	\$40.00

*Current Annual Residential Permit Pricing

Vehicle Permit Collected on Application: Yes.

Complexity of changing process to allow for weight-based pricing: Low

Approximate time to implement change: 1-3 months

Potential Revenue increase: \$20,000/year (approximately 15% uplift)

⁵ <https://www.lyon.fr/faq-stationnement-lyon>

Notes: Weight information is already collected via the vehicle permit at the application. Implementation would require changes to the by-law and administrative order.

This pricing method ignores the vehicle's fuel source; a gas-powered vehicle and an electric vehicle of the same weight would pay the same amount. Given the currently limited penetration of electric vehicles on our roads, providing an exemption for EVs from the weight premium would have a negligible impact on revenue.

Visitor Parking Permit

Current price: \$15 for a one-day permit,
\$25 for a two-day permit,
\$35 for a seven-day permit.

Potential Tiered Pricing Based on Weight

Registered Weight	One Day	Two Day	Seven Day
0 – 1,500 kg	\$15.00 *	\$25.00 *	\$35.00 *
1,501 – 2,500 kg	\$18.75	\$31.25	\$43.75
2,501 – 3,200 kg	\$22.50	\$37.50	\$52.50
3,201 – 4,000 kg	\$26.25	\$43.75	\$61.25
4,001 kg +	\$30.00	\$50.00	\$70.00

*Current Visitor Permit Pricing

Vehicle Permit Collected on Application: No.

Complexity of changing process to allow for weight-based pricing: Medium

Approximate time to implement change: 3-6 months

Potential Revenue increase: \$20,000/year (approximately 30% uplift versus current pricing)

Notes: Currently no vehicle information, other than the license plate, is collected at time of application, to make the experience easier for visitors to the area, and to expedite processing time. Implementing a weight-based pricing structure would require by-law and administrative order changes, as well as technical changes to require a file upload for applicants to verify vehicle weight. Verification would have to happen for each permit (approximately 2,500 are sold each year), increasing administrative effort. Alternatively, applicants could be directed at time of application to self-select the appropriate permit level, creating a potential for applicant to choose the wrong permit level.

This pricing method ignores the fuel source of the vehicle; a gas-powered vehicle and an electric vehicle of the same weight would pay the same amount.

Commuter Parking Permit

Current price: \$35 to \$70 per month, depending on zone.

Potential Tiered Pricing Based on Weight

Registered Weight	Price Level 1	Price Level 2	Price Level 3	Price Level 4
0 – 1,500 kg	\$35.00 *	\$50.00 *	\$55.00 *	\$70.00 *
1,501 – 2,500 kg	\$43.75	\$62.50	\$68.75	\$87.50
2,501 – 3,200 kg	\$52.50	\$75.00	\$82.50	\$105.00
3,201 – 4,000 kg	\$61.25	\$87.50	\$96.25	\$122.50
4,001 kg +	\$70.00	\$100.00	\$110.00	\$140.00

*Current Monthly Commuter Permit Pricing

Vehicle Permit Collected on Application: No.

Complexity of changing process to allow for weight-based pricing: Medium

Approximate time to implement change: 6-9 months

Potential Revenue increase: \$150,000/year (approximately 30% uplift versus current pricing)

Notes: Currently, no vehicle information, other than the license plate, is collected at the time of application to make the experience easier for applicants and to expedite processing time. Implementing a weight-based pricing structure would require by-law and administrative order changes and technical changes requiring a file upload for applicants to verify vehicle weight. Verification would have to happen for each permit (approximately 10,000 are sold yearly), significantly increasing administrative effort. Alternatively, applicants could be directed at the time of application to self-select the appropriate permit level, creating a potential for applicants to choose the wrong permit level.

This pricing method ignores the vehicle's fuel source; a gas-powered vehicle and an electric vehicle of the same weight would pay the same amount.

Carshare Parking Permits

As carshare fleets tend to use smaller vehicles and considering that a successful carshare program is helpful in achieving municipal transportation goals as described in the IMP, staff do not recommend implementing a weight-based surcharge for carshare vehicles at this time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Pricing based on vehicle weight would increase the amount of parking permit fees collected. While the exact amount of the increase would depend on the mix of vehicles participating in the program, and the permit types a weight-based pricing model was applied to, staff estimate that applying the weight-based factors to annual residential parking permits, as recommended, has the potential to generate additional permit revenue of approximately \$20,000 annually (15% increase). If the Transportation Standing Committee were to choose alternative recommendation 1, and recommend to apply a weight-based pricing model to all permit types, there would be the potential to generate an increase in permit revenue of approximately \$190,000 annually (20-30% increase). These estimates are based on sales in 2024-25.

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 quantify, a parking permit surcharge on larger vehicles may 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:

1. recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to prepare amendments to initiate a weight-based permit pricing model for any combination of, or all other permit types, as described in this report and return to Council for approval.
2. recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to direct staff to prepare amendments to initiate a weight-based pricing model for paid parking (pay station HotSpot) and return to Council for approval. This is not recommended due to inherent challenges in implementing and enforcing such a model.
3. recommend that Halifax Regional Council direct the Chief Administrative Officer to maintain the current permit pricing structure.

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:

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...

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...

ATTACHMENTS

None