

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Alina T. Hudak, City Manager

DATE: February 23, 2024

SUBJECT: DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL REINSTITUTION OF RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMIT DECALS IN LIEU OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM WHICH VALIDATES RESIDENTIAL PARKING ZONE PERMITS BASED SOLELY UPON LICENSE PLATE SCANS

HISTORY:

On December 13, 2023, at the request of Commissioners David Suarez and Alex Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission referred item C4 E to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee (FERC). The item requested a discussion on the potential reinstatement of residential parking permit decals to identify vehicles permitted to park within a specific residential parking zone in lieu of, or in conjunction with, the current virtual system which exclusively validates residential parking zone status based on a scan of the vehicle's license plate.

To increase transparency and accountability, and to keep pace with parking industry technology and innovations, in 2016, the City transitioned from the issuance of residential parking zone decals to a fully paperless system. The new virtual system provided for the introduction of mobile parking payments, allowing customers to pay and extend parking without having to walk to a meter. It also stopped the required "pay and display" practice when utilizing a meter, as the receipt no longer needed to be displayed. In residential zones, the virtual system allows residents to obtain and renew permits expeditiously, from the comfort of their homes or elsewhere. In addition, residents may purchase visitor parking passes in advance before the vehicle is parked.

Residential parking permits are issued by the Finance Department's Customer Service Center, on behalf of the Parking Department. Staff reports that prior to the residential virtual system, there were enforcement and accountability issues including the delay in receipt of mailed decals, reports of lost, damaged, or stolen decals, residents forgetting to affix decals, etc. Before the transition away from decals, residents had to apply for permits in person. For renewals, reminder letters were mailed out and residents could come in person to renew permits. Otherwise, residents could mail-in their residential permit application. Decals would then be mailed to the residents, but the process often resulted in delays and enforcement action. In some instances, residential parking permit decals allowed for fraudulent activity. For example, for visitor permits, residents who purchased visitor permits in advance, could resell the permits at a much higher

rate, especially during high impact periods.

ANALYSIS:

There is limited residential parking within the City primarily due to its density, heavy influx of visitors, and small geographic area. To address resident parking needs, the Mayor and City Commission created a residential parking permit zone program intended to provide public on-street parking spaces for the exclusive use of City residents living within each established residential parking zone (along with their occasional guests). These zones are typically restricted during evening hours and on weekends and holidays.

To assist residents with renewal of their permits, the virtual system generates an expiration reminder email. Additionally, as a courtesy, a week is added to the permit expiration date, allowing residents additional time for renewal prior to being cited or towed. The City's virtual system also allows for resident access to verify if a vehicle in the zone has a permit.

The virtual permit system requires that parking enforcement officers scan license plates to verify possession of a permit. Parking scan activity is monitored for purposes of measuring staff productivity and efficiency. For enforcement, a decal system relies on visual inspection without an effective mechanism for tracking staff productivity.

The fiscal impact of reverting to residential parking permit decals should also be considered. It is estimated that the City would need to purchase about 8,500 residential permits citywide at a cost of approximately \$55,000 to \$70,000 annually. Staffing costs to manage the permit issuance process would also need to be determined and budgeted.

Note that this topic was discussed by the Transportation, Parking and Bicycle-Pedestrian Facilities Committee, and did not yield support.

CONCLUSION:

Returning to a residential parking decal program is not recommended by the Administration. A decal program would decrease efficiency, limit transparency, and increase administrative costs. Furthermore, the Administration does not believe a dual virtual and paper decal program would be advantageous to the City as it could lead to fraud, reduced productivity, and a lack of accountability. The value in utilizing a virtual system is that it increases expediency, improves customer service, and helps to maintain staff productivity and the integrity of residential permitted zones.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?

Yes

Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?

No

Strategic Connection

Neighborhoods - Increase compliance with City code.