

Pierce Transit

# **Permit Parking Program Guidelines**

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Pierce Transit – Transit Development Dept.

# Pierce Transit Permit Parking Program Guidelines

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# Pierce Transit Permit Parking Program Guidelines

## I. KEY FEATURES SUMMARY

- This document defines program parameters for a parking permit program, with the goals of improving parking availability, increasing transit ridership, and aligning with regional transit parking programs.
- The program offers permits for reserved parking spaces during times of peak facility demand, initially defined as the weekday morning peak commute hours of 4:00 am – 9:00 am. Use of any non-occupied reserved spots become available to all on a first-come, first-served basis after 9:00 am on weekdays and all day on weekends (except during special events).
- The program offers permits for single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) at prices adequate to cover permit program costs and consistent with local market rates for monthly parking. Reduced rates will be offered to ORCA-LIFT qualified customers and high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs with two or more transit riders per vehicle).
- Permit issuance requires that participants use regional transit service, meeting a regionally established threshold of utilization (minimum of 12 transit trips per month ). Transit trips are verified using ORCA (regional transit card) usage data or Pierce Transit agency Vanpool records.
- Permits are optional for all participating facilities. Transit customers without permits will still have access to a portion of participating lots at no charge, as non-permitted spaces will continue to be available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The permit program may be expanded to any and all facilities meeting the regionally established threshold of utilization (90% or greater) for at least three consecutive months and if the facility is eligible for fee-based parking under WSDOT funding rules.
- The Pierce Transit Board of Commissioners establishes initial permit pricing. The Board delegates authority to Pierce Transit's CEO to establish permit fees and adjust the price as well as the quantity of monthly parking permits, permit and permit space use restrictions, and/or the number of permit restricted spaces offered at each station, as necessary to achieve program performance goals.
- Performance measures for management of parking facilities have been established and will be monitored to maintain alignment with program goals.

## II. BACKGROUND

Accommodating safe and convenient customer access to the regional transit system is integral to Pierce Transit's mission to improve people's quality of life by providing safe, reliable, and useful transportation services that are locally based and regionally connected.

Many of the Pierce Transit Park and Ride facilities are currently operating near or at capacity. These facilities often reach capacity in the early morning on weekdays. Customers often arrive earlier than necessary to ensure securing a parking space

which can lead to over-crowded buses and trains.

These Pierce Transit Permit Parking Program Guidelines provide a framework for the agency's support and management of infrastructure and facilities to provide customer access to transit services, with goals to increase ridership, and to encourage convenient and safe connections to local and regional services through all access modes, including vehicles requiring parking.

To implement a permit parking program, transit agencies must have the authority to apply parking restrictions and make necessary changes to the parking facility (e.g. signage, pavement markings, and equipment installation).

By current state law, fee-based permit implementation must be excluded at state-owned facilities. However, permits may be issued free of charge at state-owned facilities.

Pierce Transit's permit parking program aligns with regional transit partner programs. The Sound Transit Board has approved the creation of a permit program for managing customer parking at Sound Transit facilities with high parking demand. Sound Transit currently operates the permit program at Link light rail stations, or agency-owned facilities with utilization at 90% or higher for the most recent three-month period. At these facilities, up to 50% of the available spaces can be reserved for permit holders only during peak morning commute hours. King County Metro Transit's permit parking programs follow the same guidelines.

### **III. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

This program and guidelines were motivated and shaped by input from transit riders, Park and Ride facility users, and regional transit partner agencies. The purpose and intent of the parking permit program is to improve parking availability and the reliability of customer access to the regional transit system, in response to comments by Pierce Transit and Sound Transit riders about the difficulty of finding parking at our Park and Ride facilities.

### **IV. PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM GOALS**

The following goals have been established to guide the Pierce Transit Board in the management of parking facilities and the parking permit program:

- Improve parking availability by providing reliable access to parking for transit riders seeking to utilize the transit system throughout the AM peak period.
- Increase transit ridership by maximizing the number of daily transit riders per parking stall across all agency operated facilities.
- Align with regional transit parking programs to offer consistency in managing customer parking at facilities with high parking demand.

Program goals are directly related to addressing common complaints received by Pierce Transit and transit agency partners about the difficulty of finding space at Park and Ride facilities. Tacoma Dome Station survey respondents' top priorities for

program design were: (1) ensure open parking space by managing demand; (2) encourage riders to bike, walk, or carpool to transit; and (3) recover the cost of managing and enforcing the program.

## **V. PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM PARAMETERS**

The following parameters have been established to guide the Pierce Transit Board regarding administration of the parking permit program:

- a) The CEO may issue parking permits and restrict through enforcement the use of selected parking spaces to permit holders only during defined periods of time such as the AM peak period, at selected Pierce Transit parking facilities.
- b) The CEO may issue parking permits for agency-operated parking facilities where average weekday utilization is 90% or higher for at least three consecutive months,
- c) The CEO may allocate up to 50% of the total number of parking stalls provided for transit rider use at any Pierce Transit facility for exclusive use of HOV and/or SOV parking permit holders during permit enforcement hours.
- d) To increase transit ridership, Pierce Transit will prioritize the marketing and issuance of HOV parking permits over SOV permits at all participating facilities.
- e) SOV parking permits will initially be made exclusively available to residents of the Pierce Transit Benefit Area, but the program may be expanded to allow non-residents to purchase permits at a price established by the CEO should the CEO determine it is in the best interests of Pierce Transit.
- f) The number of customers on the wait list for either SOV, or HOV parking permits at each facility should not exceed 15% of the total quantity of such parking permits issued.

## **VI. ESTABLISHING PERMIT PRICES AND AVAILABILITY**

The following additional parameters have been established to guide the Pierce Transit Board in establishing initial permit prices and availability for HOV and SOV permits, including initial implementation of permit programs at future parking facilities:

- a) Permit prices are adequate to recover, at a minimum, the administrative and enforcement costs of the permit program at each permitted facility.
- b) SOV permit prices are established in consideration of market rates for monthly paid parking alternatives otherwise available to customers.
- c) SOV permit prices should remain competitive with market rates for monthly parking available to transit riders.
- d) Reduced-price SOV permits for ORCA-LIFT qualified customers will be no less than 33% and no more than 50% of the full SOV permit price for the same facility.

- e) HOV permit prices and availability will be established to incentivize use of HOV over SOV parking.

## **VII. INITIAL PERMIT PRICES**

While authorizing the CEO to make administrative decisions regarding permit pricing will allow Pierce Transit to be more efficient and responsive to local market conditions in program administration, the following factors guide the initial rate-setting process consistent with the program goals and parameters established:

- a) An analysis conducted by Pierce Transit of market rates for monthly commuter parking permits at existing public and private parking facilities in the vicinity of Tacoma Dome Station shows an average rate of \$80 per month, varying between \$60 per month to \$100 per month depending on location.
- b) The regional rate for discounted permits issued to ORCA-LIFT qualified customers has been established as \$27 per month and represents a minimum of 33% of the SOV permit price, Title VI equity analysis performed by Pierce Transit staff showed a proportionate financial burden on low-income households in the Pierce County Benefit Area, (and with no disparate impact on the minority population).
- c) Monthly HOV permits will be issued at no charge. Providing permits at no monthly charge is an incentive for use of HOV permits over SOV permits, consistent with the goal of maximizing the number of transit riders per stall. It may also enable the HOV program to be implemented in the future at WSDOT facilities where no-charge permit parking is allowed by state law.

## **VIII. TITLE VI COMPLIANCE**

Pierce Transit has performed a Title VI equity analysis of the permit parking program and determined that the program will not cause a disparate impact on the minority population nor a disproportionate burden on low-income households.

## **IX. PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND MEASUREMENT**

To evaluate the performance of the permit program in relation to system access policy goals and the goals and performance targets established in this guidelines document, and to inform the CEO's adjustment of program factors including permit quantity and price, Pierce Transit shall regularly monitor the utilization of all spaces (permit restricted and unrestricted) in all Pierce Transit owned and operated parking facilities. Pierce Transit will also conduct customer surveys of parking users and customers arriving at the facilities by other modes.

## **X. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

Pierce Transit will administer the permit-parking program at Pierce Transit-owned facilities. Pierce Transit will have the option of contracting parking administration with a vendor or utilizing the contract of a regional partner agency under that agency's contract for handling administration, including permit sales, customer service, signage management, facility monitoring and enforcement of the permit program.

## **XI. PRICING & ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES**

### **Purpose**

To define and implement provisions regarding:

- establishment of permit parking user fees for Pierce Transit Park and Ride facilities;
- establishment of wait lists,
- enforcement of permit parking restrictions on Pierce Transit property;
- a process to appeal permit parking violations

### **Applicability and Audience**

Pierce Transit staff; Park and Ride lot users; Pierce Transit parking permit holders; contracted Park and Ride lot management firms.

### **Definitions**

"High Occupancy Vehicle," "HOV" or "carpool" means a vehicle containing two or more individuals arriving together and parking at a Park & Ride where the individuals continue their journey on public transportation (bus transit, rail transit, or vanpool).

"Park & Ride" means locations at which persons park their individual vehicles and transfer to a transit vehicle or carpool /vanpool vehicles.

"Parking Enforcement Staff" means the individuals authorized to enforce Pierce Transit parking rules including but not limited to Pierce Transit employees, employees of contracted parking management companies, or employees of such other firm as Pierce Transit may contract with from time to time to manage certain aspects of its parking facilities and permit parking program.

"Permit group" means all people associated with a HOV permit.

"Permit holder" or "Permittee" means a person holding a physical permit or virtual permit associated with a vehicle license plate number to park in Park & Ride facility stalls reserved for SOVs or HOVs.

"Single Occupancy Vehicle" or "SOV" means a vehicle with a single occupant (the driver) arriving alone and parking at a Park & Ride where the individual continues their journey on public transportation (bus transit, rail transit, or vanpool).

"Vanpool" means a prearranged group of at least five individuals who share their commute in a public agency-sponsored van.

### **1. Setting and Adjusting Permit Fees**

- a) SOV permit fees will be established on a per lot basis depending on factors including local market prices for paid parking, parking

utilization, location along transit corridor, availability of frequent transit service, and coordination with other public transit service providers that own and operate Park and Rides. Pierce Transit will sell parking permits to ORCA LIFT eligible customers at a reduced rate. HOV parking permits will be provided free of charge

**Pierce Transit SOV Parking Permit Fees (by Park and Ride Facility):**

<u>Park and Ride Facility</u>	<u>SOV Monthly Permit Fee</u>	<u>ORCA LIFT Monthly Permit Fee</u>
Tacoma Dome Station	\$80	\$27

(future locations to be determined)

**2. Waiting Lists**

- a) Permits will be sold on a first come first serve basis. Where demand is higher than the number of permits available, the vendor tasked with administering the program will maintain a waiting list of customers seeking permits at each lot. Waiting lists will be kept with applicant names listed in chronological order based on when they submitted their permit application. If a permit becomes available, applicants will be notified of the opportunity to purchase a permit in the order in which they are on the waitlist.
  
- b) During the first thirty days of permit sales 10% of permits at each lot will be reserved for customers who meet the eligibility requirements for ORCA LIFT, to provide adequate time for those customers to verify their eligibility for ORCA LIFT. After the first month, and in the case of a waiting list at a lot, priority will be given to verified ORCA LIFT eligible customers for any permits that become available until the 10% ORCA LIFT target has been met. If there are no ORCA LIFT eligible customers on the waiting list, then the permits will be sold to customers on the waiting list who do not qualify for ORCA LIFT.

**3. Enforcement of Permit Parking Restrictions**

The following rules will guide enforcement of posted permit-parking restrictions at Pierce Transit Park & Ride facilities.

- a) If a vehicle is parked in a designated permit-area during the restricted time period (1) without a valid physical permit or virtual permit associated with the vehicle's license plate, or (2) with an improperly displayed physical permit, or (3) with an invalid physical permit displayed, or (4) not properly parked within the marked parking stall, Parking Enforcement staff will record the license plate number of the vehicle and will cite the vehicle as being in non-compliance of permit parking rules.
  
- b) For vehicles registered with a SOV or HOV permit, any violation of rules listed in Section XI.3.a. will first result in a written warning to the permit holder. After 2 warning citations for any type of violation have occurred, a third occurrence of unauthorized parking in a

permit parking area will result in notification to Pierce Transit for action, with possible towing and impound of the vehicle under Pierce Transit Park and Ride Lots Rules and Regulations Resolution No. 90-152.

- c) Vehicles registered with a HOV permit that are observed parking in a permit area with only one person arriving and or exiting the vehicle will initially receive a warning citation that will be placed on the vehicle windshield. Carpool permit holders may receive up to two warning notices for violations of the 2+ person permit parking vehicle rule. A third violation will result in the carpool permit holder's account being suspended.
- d) A current, valid physical permit should be displayed either (1) by hanging it from the rear-view mirror and clearly visible from outside of the vehicle, or (2) by laying the permit face up on the driver's side dashboard with the bottom edge of the permit angled towards the driver's side front wheel. For vehicles permitted through a virtual permit, the vehicle license plate associated with the permit must be visible and legible from the outside of the vehicle.
- e) Examples of improperly-displayed physical permits include but are not limited to: leaving it on a dashboard face down; hanging it from the mirror but covering it with something else; leaving it on a seat; or displaying it in such a way that Parking Enforcement Staff cannot verify its validity from outside of the car.
- f) Examples of displaying an invalid permit include but are not limited to: Displaying an expired permit; or displaying a permit that is valid for parking at a facility other than the one in which the vehicle is located.
- g) Parking Enforcement Staff will photograph, document and specify the nature of any infraction that leads to a warning, citation, issuance of a monetary fine, issuance of any applicable late fees, and will include information about the process to appeal the citation, including contact information. A photo of the vehicle's license plate will be documented. The equipment utilized may change over time as technology advances and enforcement needs evolve.

#### **4. Appealing a Citation**

- a) If a vehicle owner wishes to contest a citation, the owner may appeal the citation directly to the Parking Management company that issued the citation.

## **XII. REQUIREMENTS FOR RENEWAL OF PARKING PERMITS**

### **1. Permit Renewal Requirements**

- a) **Transit Use Requirement:** Permits are renewed by Parking Enforcement Staff on a monthly basis. A permit will be renewed if

the SOV permit holder or if every member of the permit group is documented to have used the form of public transportation (bus transit, rail transit, or vanpool) associated with the permit at least 12 times per month in a 31 day consecutive period prior to the date of permit renewal, on a transit trip to or from the facility that the permit is issued for, and maintains a registered and paid vanpool account, if applicable. If a SOV permit holder or permit group fails to meet these requirements, then Parking Enforcement Staff will notify the permit holder or permit group via email that their monthly permit will be terminated. If a permit holder or member(s) of a permit group wishes to challenge this decision, he or she may do so in writing via email or mail. The permit will not be renewed, and parking privileges will not be available to permit holder or permit group unless and until the challenge is granted. A permit holder or permit group whose permit has been terminated and not renewed may always submit a request for a new permit. This rule does not address the initial issuance of new permits.

- b) **Payment:** SOV permits will be issued on a monthly basis to customers after payment is received by the vendor administering the program on behalf of Pierce Transit. All active accounts must be paid by the deadline set by the vendor. The vendor will provide one reminder by email if payment is not received by the established deadline. If payment is not received by the final deadline the vendor may close the account. Closed accounts may reapply for the permit program to be considered for reinstatement. For lots where there is a waiting list, permit holders will be provided with one instance where their permit will be held for up to four weeks during which time the permit holder can pay for their permit plus a late fee and reactivate their account. Parking privileges will not be available to permit holders until the permit and late fee has been paid. Deadline for payment will be established by the vendor as needed to allow a reasonable amount of time for processing, permit issuance, and related administrative tasks. The vendor shall communicate the fees and deadlines on their webpage and notify permit holders in writing by mail or email at least one month in advance of any changes.

### **XIII. PARKING PERMIT TERMINATION REVIEW PROCESS**

#### **1. Review of Permit Termination**

This section outlines the reasons and procedures to renew a terminated permit. A terminated permit will not be renewed for any reason other than those set forth in this section. A permit holder or permit group whose permit has been terminated and cannot be renewed may always apply for a new permit.

- a) **Absence:** Permittees are allowed two months each calendar year in which one or more ORCA cards or vanpool logs may fall below the required transit ridership threshold. If a permittee is challenging termination on the grounds that a SOV permit holder or one or more members of the permit group was absent due to vacation or medical reasons during the noncompliance period for which the permit was terminated, then the following process will apply:
  - i) The permittee(s) must email or mail the Parking Enforcement

- Staff a letter including names and ORCA card numbers, Vanpool Commuter ID, or account names associated with the permit, and the dates of absence that resulted in insufficient ridership. The letter should be sent to the address identified in the letter or email by which the Parking Enforcement Staff initially notified the permit holder or permit group that their permit was terminated.
- ii) The Parking Enforcement Staff will create a record associated with the permit holder or permit group indicating that it has used one of the two allowable months in the calendar year when ridership can dip below required levels as a result of absence (each, an "Absence Exception").
  - iii) The Parking Enforcement Staff will renew the permit up to two times per calendar year following an Absence Exception. If the permit holder or permit group has used both Absence Exceptions for a given calendar year, then the permit will not be renewed.
- b) **New ORCA Card Numbers**. Permittees are allowed two instances per calendar year in which they dip below the required ridership threshold as a result of not updating the ORCA numbers associated with their permit to reflect newly-issued ORCA numbers. A permit group is entitled to two instances per year per group. If a permittee is challenging termination on the grounds that a SOV permit holder or one or more members of the permit group received a new ORCA number during the noncompliance period for which the permit was terminated, then the following process will apply:
- i) The permittee(s) must email or mail the Parking Enforcement Staff a letter including names, the old ORCA numbers and any updated ORCA numbers associated with the permit. The letter should be sent to the address identified in the letter or email by which the Parking Enforcement Staff initially notified the permit holder or permit group that their permit was terminated.
  - ii) The Parking Enforcement Staff will create a record associated with this permit holder or permit group indicating that it has used a month in the calendar year when ridership can dip below required levels as a result of failure to update ORCA information (the "ORCA Update Exception").
  - iii) The Parking Enforcement Staff will renew the permit up to two times per calendar year following an ORCA Update Exception. If the permit holder or permit group has used its two ORCA Update Exceptions for a given calendar year, then the permit will not be renewed.
- c) **ORCA Equipment Failure or Data Error**. Pierce Transit recognizes that a broken ORCA reader or other ORCA equipment failure could lead to under-reporting of ridership, or that an ORCA record might not properly reflect actual ridership or instances in which the ORCA card was used (each, an "ORCA System Failure"). Using the process outlined below, permittees may renew a terminated permit due to an ORCA System Failure. If a permittee is challenging termination on the grounds that there was an ORCA System Failure during the period when the permit was terminated, then the following process will apply:

- i) The permittee(s) must email or mail the Parking Enforcement Staff a letter including name(s) and ORCA number(s) associated with the permit and asserting that the SOV permit holder or all members of permit group did meet the ridership threshold. The letter should be sent to the address identified in the letter or email by which the Parking Enforcement Staff initially notified the permit holder or permit group that their permit was terminated.
  - ii) If the Parking Enforcement Staff confirms the ORCA System Failure or failures, then the Parking Enforcement Staff will create a record associated with this permit and the Parking Enforcement Staff will renew the permit. If the Parking Enforcement Staff do not confirm the ORCA System Failure, then the Parking Enforcement Staff will not renew the permit.
  - iii) If a permit holder or permit group experiences repeated problems with an ORCA card, the permit holder or a member of the permit group should contact Pierce Transit Customer Service by calling (253) 581-8000 (option 1) or 1-800-562-8109, or in person at the Pierce Transit Customer Information Office located at 505 E. 25<sup>th</sup> St, Tacoma WA., referencing the ORCA card number to staff for manual verification.
- d) **Failure to Properly Maintain Vanpool Account.** Permittees are allowed one instance per calendar year in which they may renew a permit that was terminated for lack of a registered and paid vanpool account with a transit agency (each, a “Vanpool Account Maintenance Failure”). A permit group is entitled to one instance per year per group. If a HOV permit holder or permit group is challenging termination on the grounds that an otherwise-valid permit was terminated due to a Vanpool Account Maintenance Failure, and that they are currently a registered and paid member in a vanpool, then the following process will apply:
- i) Permittee(s) must email or mail Parking Enforcement Staff a letter including name, vanpool account name or van number, and vanpool Commuter ID number associated with the permit, and asserting that the permit holder or member of a permit group is in good standing with a registered and paid vanpool account with the relevant transit agency. The letter should be sent to the address identified in the letter or email by which the Parking Enforcement Staff initially notified the permit holder or permit group that their permit was terminated.
  - ii) If the Parking Enforcement Staff verifies that there is a valid, registered and paid vanpool account with the relevant transit agency, then the Parking Enforcement staff will create a record associated with the permit holder or permit group indicating that it has used its Vanpool Account Maintenance Failure exception for the calendar year and renew the permit. If the Parking Enforcement Staff cannot verify that there is valid, registered and paid vanpool account with the relevant transit agency, or if the permit holder or permit group has used its Vanpool Account Maintenance Failure exception for the calendar year, then the Parking Enforcement Staff will not renew the permit.
  - iii) If a permit holder or permit group experiences repeated difficulties with its vanpool account registration or payment

status, then the permit holder or a member of the permit group should contact the relevant transit agency that sponsors the vanpool group.

#### **XIV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

This program becomes effective upon ratification by the Pierce Transit Board of Commissioners. Pierce Transit is responsible for the implementation of this program.