

hour rule”, applies to everyone, even residents parking in front of their homes or residents with parking permit stickers.

In 2017, the City undertook a comprehensive review of the 72-hour rule to determine if it should be eliminated or modified. In May of 2017, City Council approved keeping the 72-hour rule, but creating a pilot program to allow exemptions. Through this pilot, residents who need to park on-street for longer than 72-hours may apply for an exemption through the City using an online application form. If approved, residents may park their vehicles on-street for up to 14 days. Vehicles must be parked within 1/8 of a mile of one's place of residence (for reference, this is between 1.5 and 2 blocks in Old Town) and up to four exemptions are allowed per calendar year.

City Council approved the pilot program until November 1, 2019. As discussed below, staff evaluated community feedback, exemption usage data, and feedback from Parking Enforcement to develop recommendations on the program.

DISCUSSION: The continuation and modification of the 72-hour rule exemption will require an amendment to the City Code, as it was initially approved as a pilot program through November 1, 2019. Below is a summary of the pilot program evaluation and the proposed recommendations for continuation and modifications to the program. Attachment 2 provides the proposed amendment to the City Code to make the exemption program permanent.

Program Evaluation

Staff issued a questionnaire on the 72-hour rule exemption from May 3 to May 19, 2019 and received 800 responses. A summary of the questionnaire is provided in Attachment 3. Most respondents (89%) indicated that they supported allowing exemptions to the 72-hour rule. When asked for how many exemptions per year a vehicle should be eligible, the average answer was eight, and when asked for how many days a vehicle should be eligible to be exempt, the average answer was 22 days. Only 16% of questionnaire respondents indicated they had applied for a 72-hour exemption.

In addition to the online questionnaire, staff received feedback from residents via phone calls and emails. Several residents who contacted staff did not support the 72-hour rule policy and would like staff and City Council to reconsider the rule. Feedback from residents on the 72-hour rule included that residents who pay City taxes should not be penalized for parking on City streets, that the rule spurred disagreements between neighbors, and that the policy promotes otherwise unnecessary vehicle usage by requiring residents to drive their vehicles periodically. Staff informed the residents that continuing or eliminating the 72-hour rule was evaluated in 2017 and the result of that review was to maintain the rule with an option for an exemption. The purpose of this most recent review was solely to evaluate the exemption process.

Staff reviewed the exemption usage and found that on average, about 22 residents apply for 72-hour exemptions per month. Staff found that only 6 of the 393 vehicles that registered for exemptions reached the maximum number of exemptions (four) per year allowed by Code.

Finally, Parking Enforcement provided feedback that they were generally supportive of the 72-hour rule exemption, but they would like the exemption information to be more directly integrated with their handheld enforcement devices. The Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES) and the Alexandria Police Department (APD) staff will work with the enforcement technology vendor and Information Technology Services to determine options to address this. Regarding the specific exemption options, Parking Enforcement Officers felt that expanding the duration of exemptions beyond the existing 14 days would make monitoring the vehicles more difficult and recommended not extending this duration. However, they did not

have any concerns with increasing the number of annual exemptions a vehicle could obtain.

Recommendations

Based on this evaluation, staff recommends removing the November 1, 2019 expiration from the 72-hour rule exemption code in order to make it a permanent program. Staff also recommends increasing the number of allowed exemptions per vehicle per year from four to five based on feedback from the community. However, because very few vehicles reach the current four exemption maximum, staff does not recommend increasing it beyond five exemptions per year. Staff does not recommend any changes to the length of the exemption and the City Code amendment reflects keeping this limit to 14 days.

Outreach

Staff notified all users who had previously applied for a 72-hour rule exemption of the online questionnaire. Staff also published an eNews regarding the questionnaire in advance of the Traffic and Parking Board public hearing on the proposed program recommendation and code amendment. The Traffic and Parking Board considered this Code amendment at a public hearing on July 22, 2019. No one from the community spoke on the item. The Board voted unanimously to recommend approval of the proposed code changes.

FISCAL IMPACT: Staff does not anticipate any impact to City costs or revenues based on these changes. The application system for the 72-hour rule exemption is automated and there is no cost to the resident to receive the exemption. APD and T&ES staff monitor the automated system as needed to verify exemption requests and respond to complaints.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Ordinance Cover

Attachment 2: Ordinance for Modifying Section 10-4-8

Attachment 3: 72-hour Rule Exemption Evaluation Questionnaire Results

Attachment 4: Presentation

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