

# Residential Permit Parking Review: Project Update, Summary of Residents' Perspectives and Next Steps for the Review

## Introduction

### What is Residential Permit Parking?

Arlington County's Residential Permit Parking (RPP) Program is used to manage on-street parking demand in residential neighborhoods. It does this by allowing some people to park on the street while preventing others from parking on those streets. RPP zones are demarcated with parking signs. Only residents with County-issued permits and passes, their visitors, and landlords can park in their RPP zone during RPP-restricted hours (usually Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM).



In 1972, Arlington established the RPP program to prevent commuters going to offices in Crystal City from parking on residential streets in the Aurora Highlands neighborhood. However, limiting some residents from getting RPP restrictions put on the streets where they live, and keeping them from obtaining permits to park on streets with RPP restrictions goes back at least as far as the early 1990s.

### The RPP Review

County staff is reviewing the purpose and function of Arlington's RPP program. As the first major review since the Board adopted changes to the program in 2005, the RPP Review is an opportunity to consider changes that improve the program's efficiency, user experience, and fairness. Since 2017, staff has been engaging the community in the review of the program (see Engagement Overview on page 2).

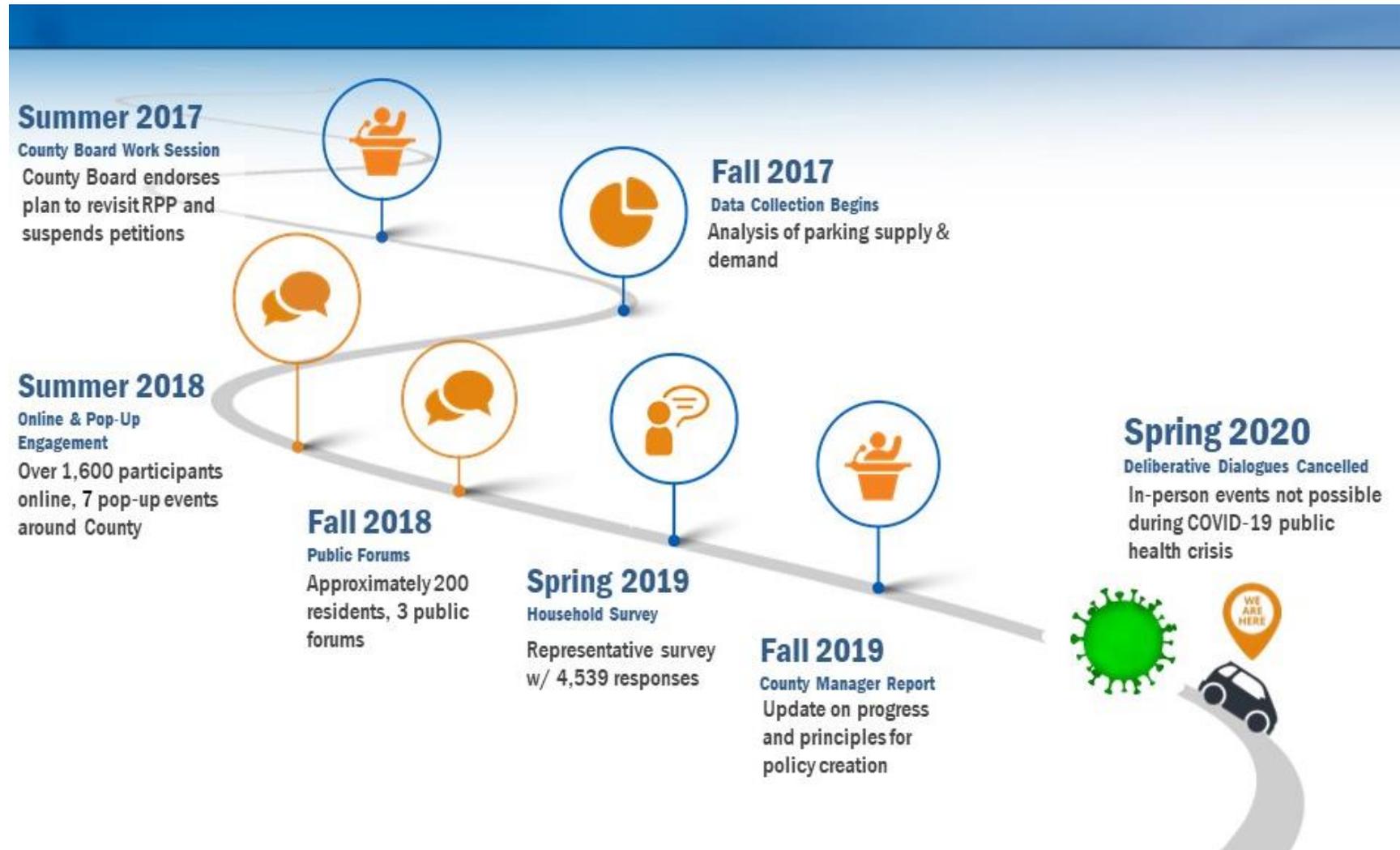


The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted plans for a set of community meetings planned for the RPP Review in the spring of 2020. Now, staff is restarting engagement with the public to bring the Review to a close.

This document offers a second look at what the community has shared with County staff over the last few years before concluding with staff's plan for the rest of the Review.

## Engagement Overview

Staff has engaged the public in a variety of ways since the project began in 2017 including: hosting 10 in-person events; recording 6,300 interactions with residents; and inviting 60,000 households to participate in a survey.



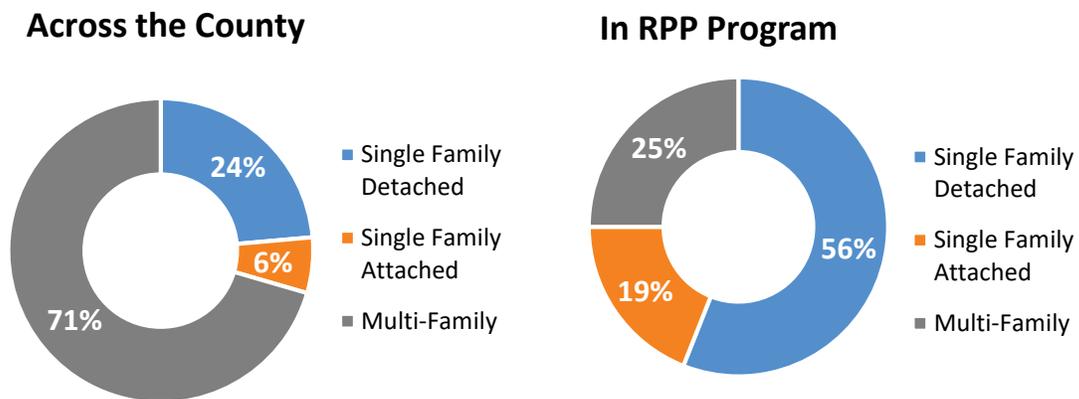
## Who Lives in RPP Zones and Who Does Not?

About 11,200 households (or about 10% of the County) live in one of the County’s 24 RPP zones. Unless noted differently, the data presented is from the [2019 Household Survey](#).

### Participants by Housing Type

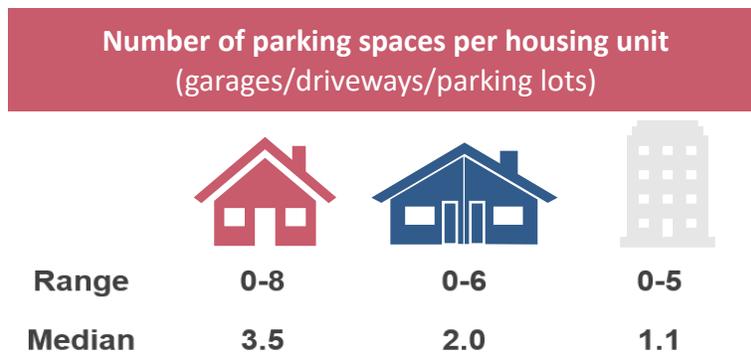
People who live in RPP zones live in a mix of housing types that differs from the County as a whole. This is expected because of the County’s rules for who can apply for restrictions. At the beginning of the program, eligibility to petition was broader than today; over the years, the program has become more restrictive.

The charts below are how households break down by type in RPP zones and across the County based on the County’s RPP administration database and housing data from the Department of Community Planning and Housing Development.



### Participants’ Access to Parking in Driveways, Garages, and Parking Lots

As part of the RPP Review, staff consulted data from multiple County departments to estimate the amount of parking in driveways, garages, carports, and parking lots at homes around Arlington. Staff found that multi-family development has the lowest average amount of parking available while single-family detached housing has the highest. However, the amount of parking by property varies greatly.



- About 95% of all single-family detached households in the RPP program have at least some amount of parking in a driveway, carport, or garage. That number is almost the same as for those single-family detached homes not in the RPP program.
- About 55% of all single-family detached and single-family attached homes have a garage or carport.

### Why and When Do People Park on the Street at Home?

Even when builders include off-street parking with any type of home, some people that live there or visit will still park on the street.

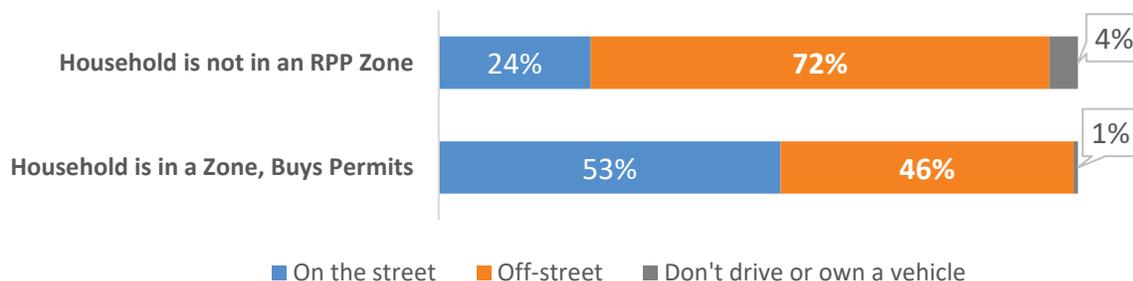
### Reasons for Parking on the Street Instead of in a Garage, Driveway, Carport or Lot



<b>It's More Convenient to Park on Street</b>	<b>Household has Many Cars</b>	<b>It's Cheaper to Park on Street</b>	<b>Garage or Carport is Used for Something Else</b>
In some instances, it is more convenient to park on-street rather than to pull into a driveway or park in a garage.	A household with more cars is more likely to park on the street at least some of the time. Especially true if a household has more cars than can park in the driveway, garage, carport, or parking lot.	If someone must pay to park in a garage or lot, he or she may decide that the time spent looking for parking and walking from the parking space is worth the money saved.	About 31% of people living in single-family-detached homes with a garage/carport and 20% living in townhomes or duplexes with a carport said that they use at least some of their parking for storage to the point where they cannot park in it.

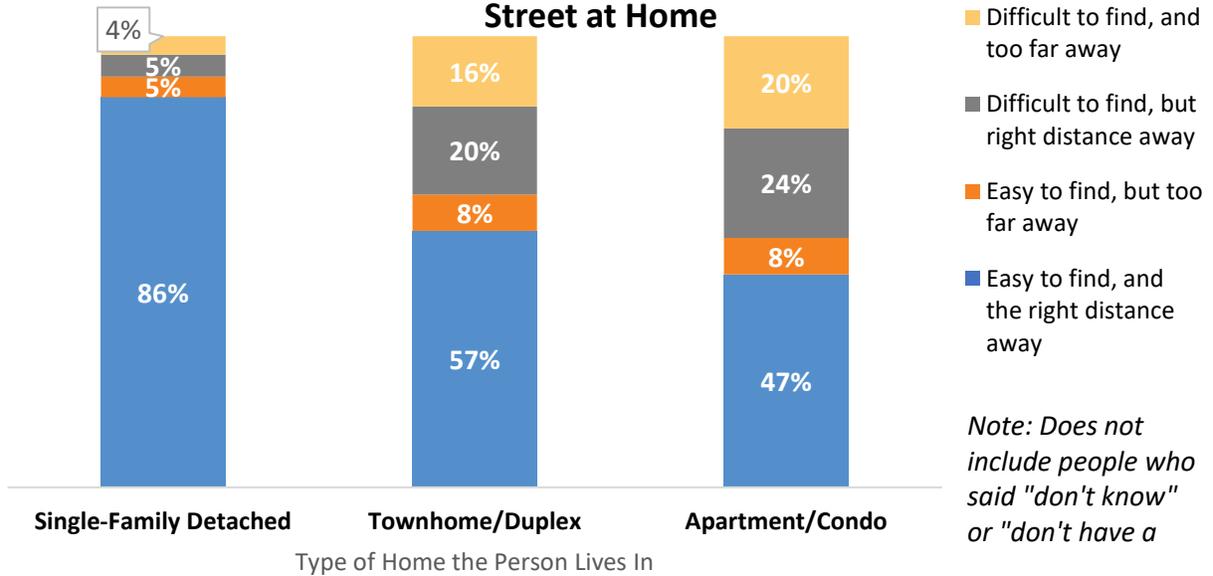
- Residents are more likely to park on street if they have RPP restrictions, regardless of the type of housing in which they live.
- Residents living in RPP zones reported that their visitors park on the street more than residents who do not live in RPP zones.

### Where did you park most recently near your home?



- People in the RPP program said it was easier to park on street than those who are not in the program.
- Regardless of whether RPP restrictions are on their street, people living in single-family detached houses report easiest time finding parking, while multi-family dwelling households report having the hardest time.

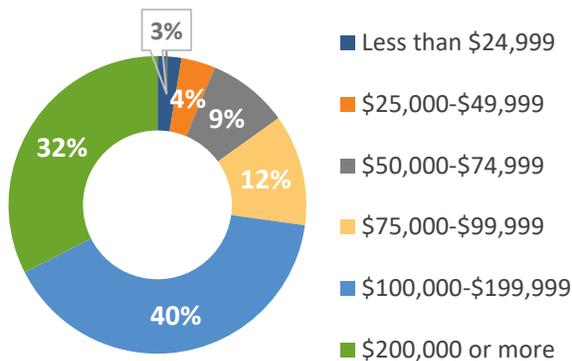
### What Residents Said about the Last Time they Parked on the Street at Home



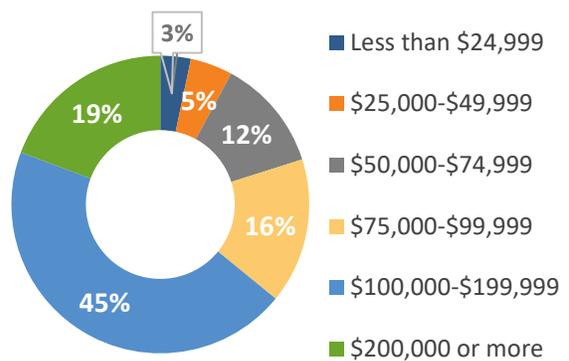
### Income and Race

In Arlington, housing type, race, and income are related; data from the Census Bureau show that people of color have lower household incomes than white residents; and people of color are more likely to live in multi-family buildings. Responses to the 2019 Household Survey show differences between those who live in RPP zones and those who don't in terms of income and racial makeup.

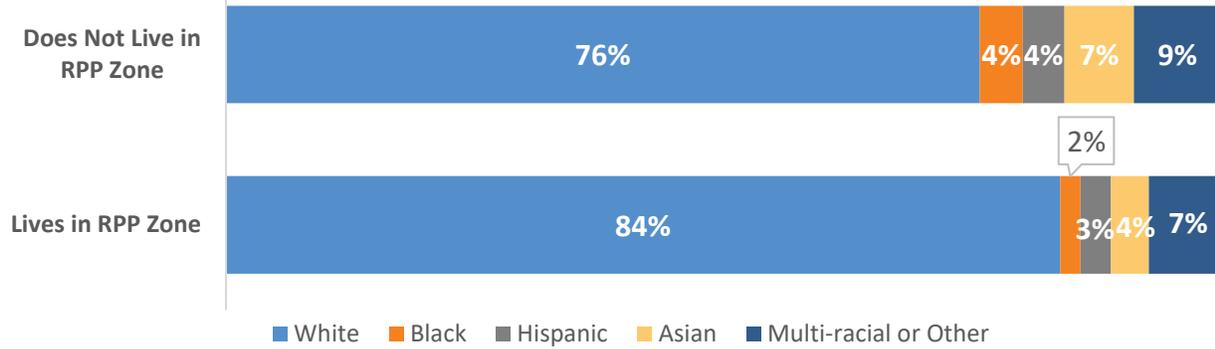
### Household Income for Residents Living in RPP Zones



### Household Income Residents Not Living in RPP Zones

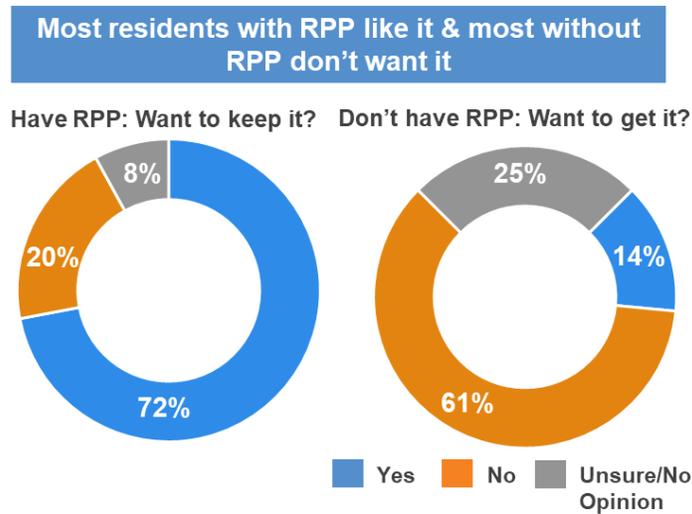


## Race of Arlington Residents Living in and Not Living in RPP Zones



*Note: Income and race data are from the residents who responded to the 2019 Household Survey, not all County residents.*

Who Wants RPP on Their Street? Who Doesn't?



Within the groups of residents who live in RPP zones and those who do not, some are more likely to want to keep or get RPP restrictions than others.

Live in a RPP Zone		Don't Live in a RPP Zone	
More Likely to Want to Keep RPP	Less Likely...	More Likely to Want to Get RPP	Less Likely...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who own their homes</li> <li>• ...living in townhomes or duplexes</li> <li>• ...live near Richmond Hwy. and areas away from the three planning corridors</li> <li>• ...who buy permits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who rent their homes</li> <li>• ...live in apartments and condos</li> <li>• ...live near Columbia Pike and along the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor</li> <li>• ...who don't buy permits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who own their homes</li> <li>• ...who live in townhomes or duplexes</li> <li>• ...who have more vehicles</li> <li>• ...living near Columbia Pike areas away from the three planning corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People who rent their homes</li> <li>• ...who live in apartments and condos</li> <li>• ...who have fewer or no vehicles</li> <li>• ...living near Richmond Hwy. and along the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor</li> </ul>

When it came to whether people wanted to keep or get restrictions, there was no difference between people:

- Who had different numbers of vehicles, if they already lived in an RPP zone
- With different incomes
- Of different races or ethnicities
- Who had a disabled placard or had someone at home with a placard and people who did not
- Of different gender identities

## How Some Residents View RPP

Residents' conflicting views about the RPP program are nuanced and sometimes connect to broader issues or feelings about where they live. By reviewing records from the program's history, staff found that residents in years past have often expressed similar sets of views, and reports from other communities show that some residents there have similar thoughts about their own RPP programs.

Here is a sample of what residents have said at in-person events, in online feedback, and in open-ended questions from the 2019 Household Survey. Note that because the 2018 Fall Forums were not recorded, the comments heard at those events are from notes taken by staff.

### ...Related to Program Purpose

Residents do not agree on whether the program should be designed to prevent commuters from parking in residential areas, or if it should be used to manage parking demand from commuters as well as other residents.



*Country club program; original purpose was to protect commuter neighborhoods, not for other purposes. (2018 Fall Forums)*

*Problem is that people are registered in Arlington and parking there and that is not a good criteria to use. It was originally trying to combat commuters. And now, it should be to make parking more available for residents, not just from people outside of Arlington (2018 Public Forum)*



### ...Related to Who Can Petition for Restrictions

The type of home that Arlingtonians live in dictates whether they can get RPP restrictions or not. Some residents perceive RPP as part of a division between residents based on the type of housing they live in.

*It doesn't seem fair to me who is eligible now. Higher density homes with less curb space should be eligible as single family homes. (Winter 2018 Public Forum)*



*Too many permit-only streets where residents also have driveways. Too many households with multiple cars despite public transportation nearby. (Summer 2018 Feedback Form)*



*The County should NOT make apartment, condo, and townhouse residents eligible for parking permits because it will encourage more cars and further overcrowd parking resources. (2019 Household Survey)*



### ...Related to Building New Homes

On-street parking has an influence on residents' attitudes about new townhomes, apartments, and condos in their neighborhood. About half of the residents surveyed would support new housing in their neighborhoods, but only about one quarter of residents would support that new housing if some residents in those buildings would park on the street.

- Residents who rent support new housing construction more than residents who own their homes and were more likely to approve of new housing even if it meant some of the residents in the new housing parked on street.
- Residents living in apartments, condominiums, and townhomes/duplexes were more likely to support new housing construction than residents of single-family detached homes. Multi-family residents were most likely to support new housing construction even if some new residents parked on street, while residents of single-family detached homes were least likely.
- Acceptance of new housing did not change significantly between different racial/ethnic or income groups.

Residents often talk about newer housing construction when they talk about RPP.

*It doesn't make sense that people who have driveways and space in yard to build driveways, old longer standing houses/people in them, get benefit of the program but new people do not get the benefit of the program. Not right. (2018 Fall Forum)*



*Developers aren't allotting enough parking and relying on neighborhoods to absorb the parking needs or forcing nearby residents to apply and rely on zoned parking to manage problem... (2018 Fall Forum)*



*Developers now get a pass on high rise residence parking BUT you're thinking of opening up quiet residential streets to increase parking because the county needs more parking? Apartment dwellers whose parking was inadequate thronged here to park from as much as a mile away. Our quality of life was negatively affected... (2018 Comment Form)*



### ...Related to Income

Some residents perceive RPP as dividing residents of different incomes. Residents also sometimes link issues of income and home ownership status to RPP.

*Residential zone parking is a subsidy for those that are well off and should be eliminated or those that have it should pay significant fees. (2018 Online Feedback Form)*



*Arlington strives to attract residents from all income levels -- please stop privatizing streets for residents that in the top income brackets that can afford SFHs. (2019 Household Survey)*



*It is important that the county not start to see one group of residents as the enemy (or the wealthy, or exclusive, or privileged). We are all tax paying citizens who have purchased property with certain expectations. If you start removing rights or imposing costs to these citizens, you simply break down the social contract. (2019 Household Survey)*



### ...Related to Race

Some residents bring up race and ethnicity when they talk to staff about RPP.

*Please assess the racial disparity aligned with parking restricted areas. My teen Black sons are constantly accused of "not being from Arlington" when they visit their classmates and park on the street. Thank you for doing this survey. (2019 Household Survey)*



*I am sick and tired of everyone being reduced to their race or ethnic identity. This needs to stop. (2019 Household Survey)*



*Due to Hispanic multi-family homes, parking for tax paying residents is a joke. I'm responsible for mowing grass and shoveling snow on county property in front of my dwelling. Those who park don't. Enforced permit parking is an alternative. (2018 Online Feedback Form)*



...Related to Access to Public Space

Some residents perceive RPP as unfair because it excludes people from public resources, while others believe that it is a fair benefit to residents.

*The County needs to lower the # of parking permits allowed per home and restrict street parking to those who live on that street at all hours. Otherwise, the residents who pay top dollar to live here are not afforded the opportunity benefit of parking on their own block. (Summer 2018 Online Feedback Form)*



*All Arlington residents should be able to park in any legal parking area in the County, as Arlington roads are paid for with County tax dollars. Neighborhood zone restrictions inappropriately give a public benefit to very few people. (2018 Online Feedback Form)*



*We pay a lot of money to live in Arlington, and it's not fair that anyone can park right in front of our home after 5pm or all weekend long, interfering with our ability to use the services that we pay for in our taxes. We really, really need to make the neighborhoods near the businesses zoned all the time, possibly with restrictions requiring you to park on your own street... (Summer 2018 Online Feedback Form)*



...Related to the Program's Continuation.

Some respondents want the program to go away entirely, while some want the program kept.

*I think we should abolish the residential parking permit program altogether. Taxes pay for roads and they are public and common areas of the county... (2019 Household Survey)*



*Plas[e] keep the RPP. I live near Crystal City and am concerned about traffic and commuter parking for the new Amazon HQ in my quiet neighborhood. (2019 Household Survey)*



*Please do not change this program. My family has lived in this house since 1932. Parking was terrible until one good neighbor had enough and applied for zone 6 permits on our street and it has been wonderful parking ever since. (2019 Household Survey)*



## Next Steps for the RPP Review

### Modifications to Engagement Plan Due to COVID-19

In March 2020, Arlington County staff were preparing to complete public engagement of the RPP Program Review with a series of three deliberative dialogues. These dialogues were intended to be facilitated conversations designed to bring together a diverse group of County residents to explore potential program changes and their trade-offs. Residents would have been able to talk out concerns and priorities with each other.

As seen throughout the Review, residents strongly disagree about the program. The purpose of the deliberative dialogues was not meant to generate consensus on a new RPP policy. Instead, they were meant to educate participants on RPP policy options and provide insight for decision-makers into how attitudes about this topic would and would not change after learning more about the program and hearing the perspectives of others.

Staff looked into holding the dialogues online but decided that holding online dialogues would not be an adequate replacement. There are tools for holding the dialogues online, but there are challenges to bringing together a diverse group of Arlingtonians for a meeting of three hours or more online. An inclusive group of participants at the dialogues would be especially necessary because residents are divided on the RPP program. The challenges to creating inclusive events are that:

- Not all members of the community have equal access to the internet.
- The pandemic and related loss of jobs have hit low-income, Latino, and Black residents particularly hard, and it is not appropriate to expect these residents to participate in a discussion about parking now.
- The County would not be able to offer food or childcare to help residents participate.

The County could have waited until in-person public meetings resume but continuing to delay the RPP Review increases the chance that decision-makers will see the feedback currently captured as out-of-date. Delaying the review also continues the moratorium on petitions for new or modified restrictions.

Instead of hosting the dialogues with these challenges, the County will move to conclude the Review and introduce a new policy by the end of 2020. Staff will publish a draft policy based on the last three years of community engagement and study, and then conduct additional public engagement to gather community feedback on these changes.

## Upcoming Public Engagement Opportunities

- **Comment.** When the draft policy posts, staff will open an online comment form for two weeks. To help residents understand that draft policy, staff will hold an online question-and-answer session in the middle of the two-week period when the comment form is available. Residents will be able to ask questions and get answers live.
- **Testify before Advisory Commissions.** All are invited to participate in the **November 2020** meetings of the Tenant-Landlord Commission, Transportation Commission, and Planning Commission, where staff will present the draft policy before going to the Board to Request Authorization to Advertise a Public Hearing on changes to the County Code and supporting policy.
- **Testify before the Board.** All are invited to watch and comment on changes to the RPP program at the **December 2020** Board Meeting.
- **Testify before Advisory Commissions...Again.** The **January 2021** Transportation and Planning Commission meetings will be an opportunity to comment on proposed changes.
- **Testify before the Board...Again.** The **January 2021** Board Meeting will be the place to share any other support or concerns about changes to the RPP Program before the Board makes its decisions about what changes to adopt.



*Note: Dates are subject to change.*

For more information on the project, visit the project web site at:

<https://projects.arlingtonva.us/rppreview/>. The project page hosts summaries of the [2019 Household Survey](#), the [2018 Online Feedback Form](#), the [2018 Fall Forums](#), and other publications from the Review process. Sign up for our e-mail listserv to receive study updates and the latest information about the project.