

CITY OF ISLE OF PALMS

South Carolina

Mayor:
Dick Cronin

City Council:
Barbara Bergwerf
Marty Bettelli
Ryan Buckhannon
Jimmy Carroll
Sandy Ferencz
Patrick Harrington
Michael Loftus
Jimmy Ward

November 24, 2014

Janet P. Oakley
Secretary of Transportation
South Carolina Department of Transportation
955 Park Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

RE: Managed Beach Access Parking

Dear Secretary Oakley:

I am writing to seek SCDOT's concurrence that the City of Isle of Palms may regulate the parking on the public rights-of-way on the island. I am sure you are aware that population is increasing in the East Cooper area of Mount Pleasant. As a beach adjacent to this growing area, the City of Isle of Palms is experiencing this growth in the form of peak season, daily beach visitation. While our community enjoys hosting visitors to the beautiful amenity of the beach, the traffic and parking problems have reached a crisis point requiring action. For several years, the City has been wrestling with equitable methods of controlling the volume of beach visitors during the peak season. The City commissioned traffic engineers to conduct data collection, which confirmed that which was inherently known, that too many cars are arriving for too few available parking spaces in which to park. Data collected by the Stantec, the City's Transportation Engineering firm, reflected that on a peak time and day over Memorial Day weekend, there were 8,566 vehicles on the island with only 1,044 of these vehicles occupying on street parking. Of the remainder, 1,247 vehicles, were in one of the three (3) parking lots. This leaves quite a few other vehicles either going to an alternate destination on the island or contributing to the traffic jam on streets because there is nowhere for the cars to park. The result is illegal, dangerous situations, pollution and gridlock inhibiting emergency response in all conditions. For water missions and emergency calls, ingress and egress among these congested conditions are the most critical. Currently there is no way for a motorist to know, in advance of contemplating a trip to the beach, that all of the available spaces are filled.

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The City wishes to implement a managed plan to regulate the parking on the public rights-of-way, only in effect for the peak time periods during the critical months of the year. The City has utilized the City of Charleston's model for the peninsular parking. During the time period from before Memorial Day in May through Labor Day in September, for the times of 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m., parking on the public rights-of-way in the beach parking zones would require a paid parking permit identifiable through vehicle license plate recognition and enforced by the Isle of Palms Police Department. The adjacent residential areas within approximately 1,000 feet of the beach access points would become "residential parking only," identifiable through vehicle license plate recognition and enforced by the Isle of Palms Police Department. All other areas of the island would remain unregulated, but the plan includes a provision to receive further study in the future if congestion occurs or if residents petition to become included in the regulated areas. Residents in the regulated residential area would not be required to purchase a permit for parking in the rights-of-way anywhere on the island; however, residents in the unregulated area wishing to park a vehicle, other than a golf-cart-type vehicle, in the beach regulated area during the peak season would be required to purchase a permit just as any other visitor to this area of the island.

Enclosed is a description of the concept, maps depicting the zones and associated language for a proposed ordinance which the City contemplates passing if SCDOT agrees. It is not the intent of the City to generate a financial windfall by selling permits to park at the beach, but rather to utilize the revenues to offset the cost of managing the program.

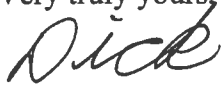
The South Carolina Department of Transportation's district has been very helpful to the City in implementing small mechanisms to improve this situation up to this point. Signs have been added to improve line of sight at the intersections. The department gave the City permission to install a white line along the right-of-way of Palm Boulevard to assist in delineating the need for beach visiting motorists to park four feet (4') off the pavement, and "no parking on pavement" regulations have been implemented on SCDOT streets where passage of two vehicles on the street is inhibited if parking when allowed on both sides.

In addition to the Managed Beach Access Parking program, the City would like to expand the regulation which requires one to park four (4') feet off the road on the ocean side of Palm Boulevard to the land side of Palm Boulevard as well. Also, the City would like to delineate some "golf cart parking only" areas in the public rights-of-way near some of the beach access points. Encouraging the use of golf carts by motorists on the island will free spaces for off-island visitors and is a more ecologically friendly mode of transportation to the beach.

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. A favorable response from the Department will enable the City to move forward with filing encroachment permits for signage, purchasing license recognition software and hardware, embarking on a public information campaign, the hiring and equipping of enforcement personnel and implementation. Accomplishing these tasks during the remaining winter and early spring months will be challenging. Your facilitation to assist the City in meeting this challenge will contribute to a safer beach season for the Isle of Palms and all of its visitors.

Very truly yours,



Dick Cronin
Mayor

Copy: Isle of Palms City Council
Robert Clark, District 6 Engineering Administrator

Residential Parking District Concept B

Concept B would include a beach visitor parking designation similar to Concept A with a smaller Residential Parking designation applicable only to residences in close proximity to the beach. Residential neighborhoods not in close proximity to the beach would not be regulated unless the residents in the area apply to be part of a residential parking only district. There are pros and cons to being inside a resident only parking district. Pros include no beach visitor parking on rights-of-way, and cons include increased logistics and planning regarding car registration and guest passes. The primary difference between Concept A and Concept B is that Concept A includes all residents in resident only districts and Concept B allows residential neighborhoods to apply to be in districts if the pros and cons are acceptable. A program would be developed to allow residents trips to the beach visitor areas and parking for their guests. The City of Charleston sells owners up to 60 guest permits annually for \$.50 each for the residential district, but has no mechanism to allow residents to park in paid spaces.

The beach visitor parking areas in Concept B would be the same as Concept A and parking would be allowed in these areas by permit only. The spaces available would be limited to those areas specifically identified by the Beach Management Plan (see attached maps). This permit program could be developed in the manner suggested by Stantec with the use of online payments, daily, weekly or seasonally tiered permits, license plate numbers being registered and a limit on the number of permits issued.

Special districts could include the marina, the Recreation Center and the Breach Inlet area. To minimize the inconvenience to residents and beach visitors, this program would only be in effect in during the peak beach season, Memorial Day through August, and only during the busy times of day, 9am to 6pm.

The attached pages include a draft ordinance, which closely resembles the City of Charleston code, and maps of the visitor beach parking areas, which reflect the areas identified in the Beach Management Plan.



CONCEPT B



ISLE OF PALMS
EXISTING CONDITIONS

SHT. NO.



UNREGULATED PARKING

REGULATED RESIDENT ONLY PARKING

CONCEPT B

ISLE OF PALMS
EXISTING CONDITIONS



SHT. NO.

08/30/25 08:00:00 AM 11/10/2025 08:00:00 AM

RESIDENTIAL PARKING DISTRICT- CONCEPT B

Definitions.

The following words and terms are defined for the purpose of this section only:

Beach visitor parking area shall mean an area in which parking is limited to vehicles that have acquired the appropriate permit as provided in this section.

Beach visitor parking permit shall mean a permit issued by the Police Department indicating the owned vehicle has acquired a permit to park in areas specifically designated as beach visitor parking areas.

Resident parking area shall mean a residential district in which certain parking is limited to vehicles displaying a resident parking registered license plate as provided in this section.

Resident parking registration shall mean every owner or resident will register their vehicle with the Police Department and have the license plate of each vehicle on display.

Owned vehicles shall mean automobiles registered to or operated on a regular basis by owners or tenants of residential units within a resident parking area.

Resident Visitors shall include only social guests and shall not include persons who are guests of short term rental properties, hotels, motels, guest homes, or who otherwise pay for accommodations.

Purpose.

The purpose of this section is to reduce hazardous traffic conditions resulting from the use of streets within areas zoned for residential uses for the parking of vehicles by persons visiting the adjacent beach or commercial uses; to protect such areas from polluted air, excessive noise, litter and refuse caused by the entry of such vehicles; to protect the residents of such areas from unreasonable burdens in gaining access to their residences; to preserve the character of such areas as residential districts; to promote efficiency in the maintenance of residential streets in a clean and safe condition; to preserve the value of the property in such areas; and to preserve the safety of children, other pedestrians and traffic, as well as the peace, good order, comfort, convenience and welfare of the inhabitants of the City.

Times and dates of enforcement.

The provisions in this section will be in effect from Memorial Day until August 31st from 9am to 6pm.

Registering of vehicles for resident parking areas.

- (a) In areas designated for resident parking, only those vehicles that have been registered with Police Department will be allowed to park.
- (b) Each residential unit may register all vehicles that are owned or leased on a long term and registered to a resident or owner. It shall be unlawful for any person to:
- (1) Provide false information on an application for a resident parking registration;
 - (2) Transfer a register vehicle's license plate to any vehicle other than the one(s) designated on the original application unless a new application has been submitted to the Police Department containing the amended information.
 - (3) Display an unauthorized resident parking registration.

Special permits.

(a) *Health care permits.* On application accompanied by a doctor's statement, the Police Department is authorized to issue permits for health care to individuals where no off-street parking is available, and when constant health care at the individual's residence is required by a licensed physician. Only one (1) such permit shall be issued for any residence at any one (1) time. Such permits shall be without cost.

(b) *One day resident visitor parking permit.* Each homeowner or resident may, upon application and approval by the Police Department, be entitled to purchase up to two (2) books of thirty (30) permits per calendar year for fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per book. Said permits may be used at any time additional resident parking is required by the resident or homeowner.

(c) Special permits will only be valid if the vehicle is parked within the appropriate resident parking area, all information is correctly provided on the permit in ink, the permit is displayed on the right side of the front dashboard free from alteration and it is clearly visible in its entirety through the vehicle windshield.

Issuance of permits for the beach visitor parking areas.

(a) In areas designated for beach visitor parking, only those vehicles that have been issued a beach visitor parking permit will be allowed to park.

DETAILS OF BEACH PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM STILL TO BE DETERMINED

Fees.

Fees to defray the costs of the operation and enforcement of this program shall be established by City Council and amended from time to time as the Council may deem fit.

When resident only parking district may be established.

Whenever the City Council shall determine, after a traffic survey of a particular residential area of the city and after a public hearing, that such an area is severely impacted by nonresident on-street parking by reason of beach visitors, adjacent commercial, industrial, or institutional uses, it may designate such residential area as a resident only parking district.

Procedure for designation.

(a) Petition; survey. Upon receipt of a petition signed by more than fifty (50) per cent of the residents fronting on the same street block, the Police Department shall conduct an engineering survey to determine whether such area should be designated as a resident only parking district.

(b) Adjustment of proposed area. The Chief of Police may recommend an adjustment to the boundaries of the proposed area if in his opinion the purposes of this division will be best served by such adjustment.

(c) Conduct of survey; designation when no petition is filed. The Police Department will conduct a block-by-block survey of the proposed area. If fifty (50) per cent of which are not owned or regularly operated by persons who reside in the area, then the Chief of Police shall recommend the district as a proposed resident only parking district and report his findings and recommendations to City Council. However, if the area fails to qualify, the Chief may order additional surveys, if in his opinion the area is sufficiently impacted by nonresident uses and further counts may be reasonably warranted. However, should the Chief determine that an area in the City is sufficiently impacted by nonresident, on-street parking, and should no petition be submitted by the residents of such area under the provisions of this section, then the Chief may recommend that such areas as a proposed resident only parking district for consideration by City Council.

(d) Hearing. Upon receipt of the findings and recommendations of the Police Chief, City Council shall set a public hearing and may by ordinance designate such area as a permit parking district.

Permits property of City.

All permits shall remain the property of the City.

Denial or cancellation of registration or permit.

The Chief of Police shall have the power to deny the issuance of a registration or permit or cancel an existing registration or permit if in his judgment the vehicle is not an owned vehicle, if the applicant for a visitor permit is not a bona fide visitor, or if in his judgment the vehicle does not meet the criteria of this section. Upon cancellation of a or permit, the holder shall surrender the permit to the Police Department.

Appeal from a denial or cancellation of registration or permit.

Any person aggrieved by the denial or cancellation of a registration or permit shall have the right to appeal such denial or cancellation to the Public Safety Committee upon written notice to the Clerk of Council with ten (10) days of such denial or cancellation.

Resident only parking area; boundary descriptions.

The area shall include all public right-of-ways within residentially zoned districts within 1,000 feet of a beach path, with the exception of the following areas:

Any area specifically designated as beach visitor parking;

The parking lot at Breach Inlet;

Within 500 feet of the beach access paths at the end of the following avenues:
3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 21st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd
and 53rd Avenues,

Palm Boulevard between 21st and 41st Avenues and between 54th and 57th
Avenues;

41st Avenue.