

# Woods of Westlake Parking Pilot Summary Report



# TRANSPORTATION

Parking Enterprise Division  
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## Executive Summary

In response to a community request, Austin Transportation conducted a 90-day pilot beginning in May 2021 with the goal to manage increased parking activity near the Hill of Life trailhead in the Woods of Westlake community. The pilot employed a digital environment, using the Park ATX mobile app without physical payment infrastructure for handling both public metered parking and residential permit parking.

The pilot experienced moderate success in regulating and tracking street parking activity, and demand on the parking system remains overwhelmingly high for trailhead access. According to recorded community feedback, most residents in the neighborhood would like parking regulations to remain but with increased restrictions and enforcement in long-term implementation, whereas trail visitors are concerned that increased parking regulations will privatize access around a public amenity to only nearby residents. Any long-term parking solution must balance access for these two audiences in the area.

### *Results and Takeaways*

- Parking activity is highest on the weekends, by almost 2.5 times as much as on any weekday. By city ordinance, parking is not enforced on Sundays or public holidays, when visitor numbers to the trail increase.
- Residents and trailhead visitors initially experienced issues with the digital parking environment due to technical bugs and unclear instructions on how to use the Park ATX parking payment app. User experience gradually improved with continued use over the course of the pilot.
- Weak cellular connection limited the capabilities of the digital-only parking environment.
- Parking demand will persist with the neighborhood's proximity to the Hill of Life trailhead. Parking regulation is a tool to manage transportation demand, not eliminate it.

Woods of Westlake residents whose streets had residential permit parking during the pilot now have the option to submit applications to make those hours and permits permanent through the Residential Permit Parking application process. Austin Transportation will review incoming applications and, in the interim, implement minor modifications to parking regulations in response to feedback provided during the pilot.

## Background

The Woods of Westlake neighborhood is home to the Hill of Life trailhead. In recent years, visitor numbers to the trailhead have grown and coincided with a rise in resident concerns around parking, transportation, and other safety concerns. In 2020, the Parks and Recreation Department conducted a reservation pilot for visitors to the Barton Creek Greenbelt and reported success with addressing demand to trail, but staffing constraints limit the long-term viability of a permanent reservation system. Currently, no reservation system is in place for community members to access the Barton Creek Greenbelt.

Austin Transportation's mission is to manage and enhance mobility for its community. In the case of the Woods of Westlake parking pilot, the scope of Austin Transportation's goal was to address increased demand on the public parking supply close to a public park amenity. Previous observations in 2018 on Shannon Oaks Trail in the neighborhood showed that conditions did not meet occupancy levels to be eligible for residential permit parking. Due to increased reports of access issues, Austin Transportation offered to test a hybrid solution of paid parking and residential permit parking to address the impacts on neighborhood parking and street access. Additionally, this pilot tested the effectiveness of managing parking through a primarily digital environment, which included the administration of the residential permit parking program through the Park ATX mobile app.

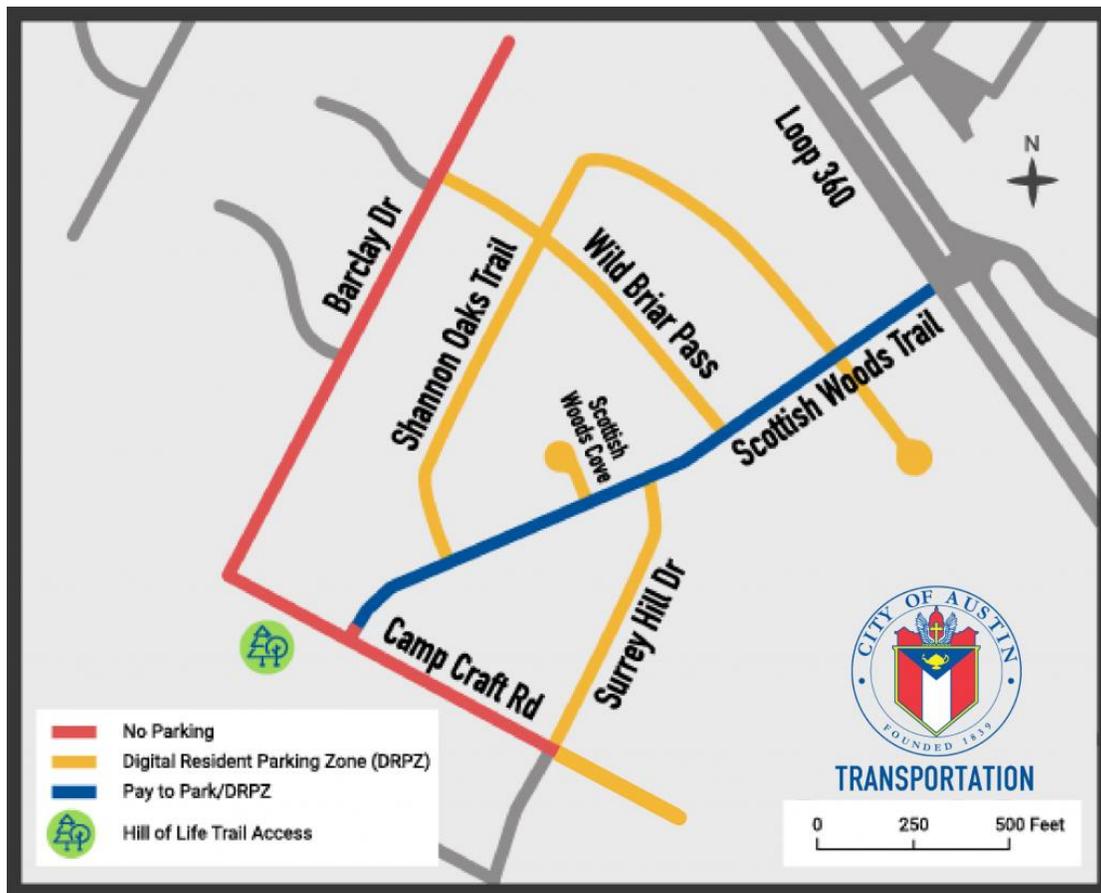


Figure 1 Map of parking pilot regulations by street in the Woods of Westlake neighborhood

## Parking Pilot Configuration and Features

Features of the pilot parking configuration included:

- Pay-to-park on-street parking Monday, at \$2/hour, through Sunday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Digital environment for parking payments using the Park ATX mobile app—there were no physical parking meters in the area
- Digital Resident Parking Zones, active Monday through Sunday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Residents and their guests on Scottish Woods Trail, Scottish Woods Cove, Shannon Oaks Trail, Wild Briar Pass, Surrey Hill Drive, and the 1700 block of Camp Craft Road could park on the street with proper permits or Park ATX validation codes. Under parking pilot conditions, each household was eligible for:

- Two physical hang tag permits for resident parking, to hang from the rearview mirror during restricted parking hours (Monday through Sunday 8 a.m.-8 p.m.)
- One Park ATX validation code for parking on the street during restricted parking hours, valid for 10 uses per day, for guests or additional household members

Parking was and continues to be prohibited:

- On Barclay Drive and Camp Craft Road<sup>1</sup>
- Near most intersections in the neighborhood for improved sight distance
- At fire hydrants

## Mobile Parking Transaction Data

Across the 90-day pilot period between May 7 to Aug. 5, the Park ATX mobile app logged 9,315 parking transactions total. On average, a paid parking session lasted 2.5 hours.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1700 block of Camp Craft Road previously had no parking regulations before the pilot. For the duration of the pilot, this block had residential permits, but due to the context of the street with the upcoming addition of a new residence, this area will become “No Parking.”

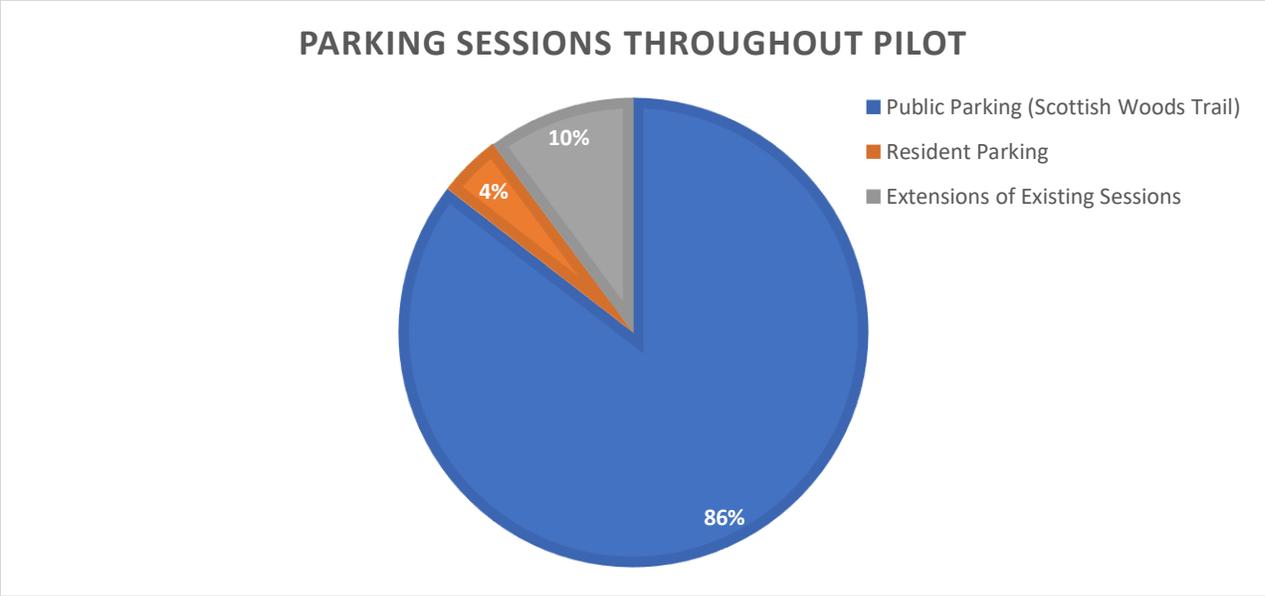


Figure 2 Representation of how many parking sessions were in the public or resident zones, as well as extensions.

- 8,858 transactions were public parking sessions on Scottish Woods Trail
- 447 transactions were resident parking sessions across the neighborhood
- 1,058 transactions were extensions of existing sessions—all but 1 being public parking sessions

**Community Feedback Process**

Austin Transportation gathered community feedback about the pilot through a public survey, three virtual meetings with residents, and a post-pilot resident survey.

**Public Survey**

Throughout the pilot, Austin Transportation made available an online survey for visitors and residents to provide comments about their experience with the pilot parking.

**Virtual Resident Engagement Meetings**

Throughout the pilot, Austin Transportation engaged residents in virtual meeting updates over Microsoft Teams and WebEx to report results and listened to feedback for adjustments to the pilot as needed.

- May 12 – Preliminary update over Microsoft Teams
- June 15 – 30-day update over WebEx
- Aug. 20 – 90-day update over WebEx

*Visitor Feedback Summary*

- Park ATX app does not function as expected due to technical bugs and poor signal connection.

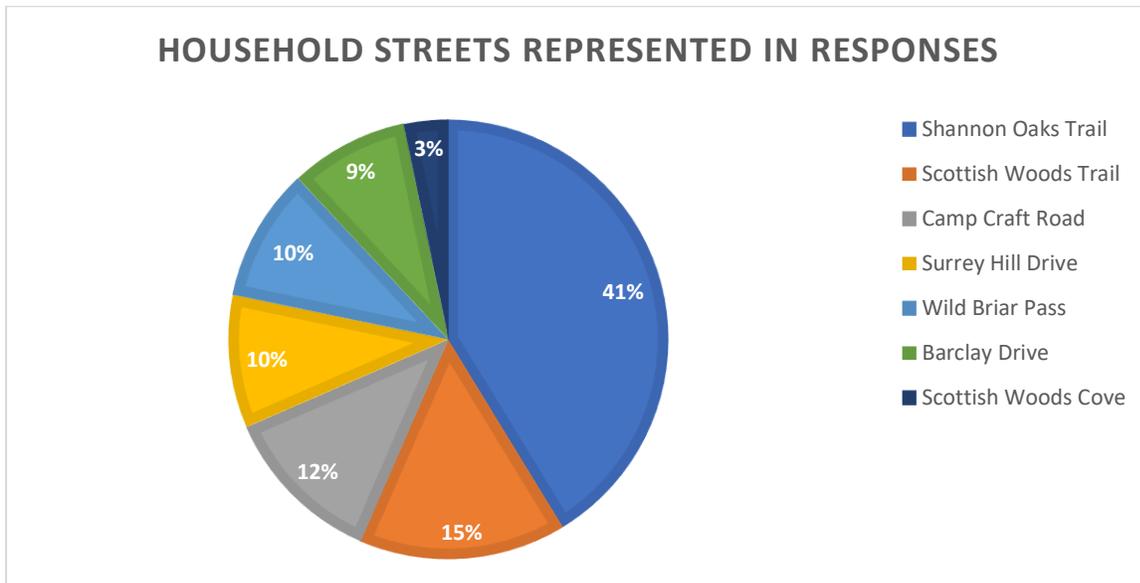
- Adding paid parking near a public amenity imposes a cost that limits access to community members who do not have the privilege of living near parks and trailheads.
- Mobile pay-only environment limits trail access to only people who have smartphones.

*Resident Feedback Summary*

- Park ATX payment app is confusing for many residents and their guests to use.
- Digital validation codes for resident parking are inconvenient and cumbersome for daily resident parking use.
- Residents request the ability to purchase more physical hang tags beyond the pilot limit of two.
- Enforcement is insufficiently frequent for regulations to influence changes in long-term parking behavior.

**Post-Pilot Resident Survey**

Austin Transportation conducted a survey in August that closed early September following the conclusion of the pilot to understand the impacts of the pilot on Woods of Westlake residents. The survey received 118 responses from 92 unique IP addresses. Overall, 70% of responses indicated support for keeping parking regulations in place.



*Figure 3 Visual representation of household representation, by street, of responses submitted in the post-pilot survey*

**Household streets represented in responses**

- Shannon Oaks Trail – 41.30%
- Scottish Woods Trail – 15.22%
- Camp Craft Road – 11.96%
- Surrey Hill Drive – 9.78%
- Wild Briar Pass – 9.78%
- Barclay Drive – 8.70%
- Scottish Woods Cove – 3.26%

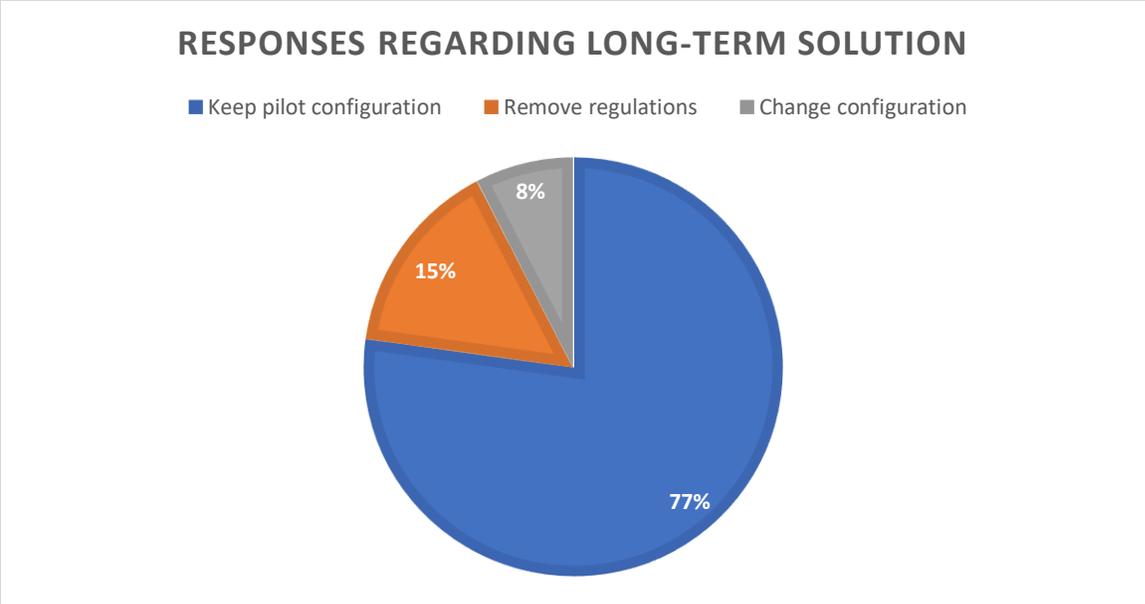


Figure 4 Breakdown of resident opinions for the long-term future of parking in the Woods of Westlake neighborhood

**Responses regarding long-term parking regulations in the neighborhood**

- Keep pilot configurations with minor adjustments – 77.17%
- Remove paid parking regulations and return to pre-pilot conditions – 15.22%
- Change current configuration to balance paid parking and residential permit parking – 7.61%

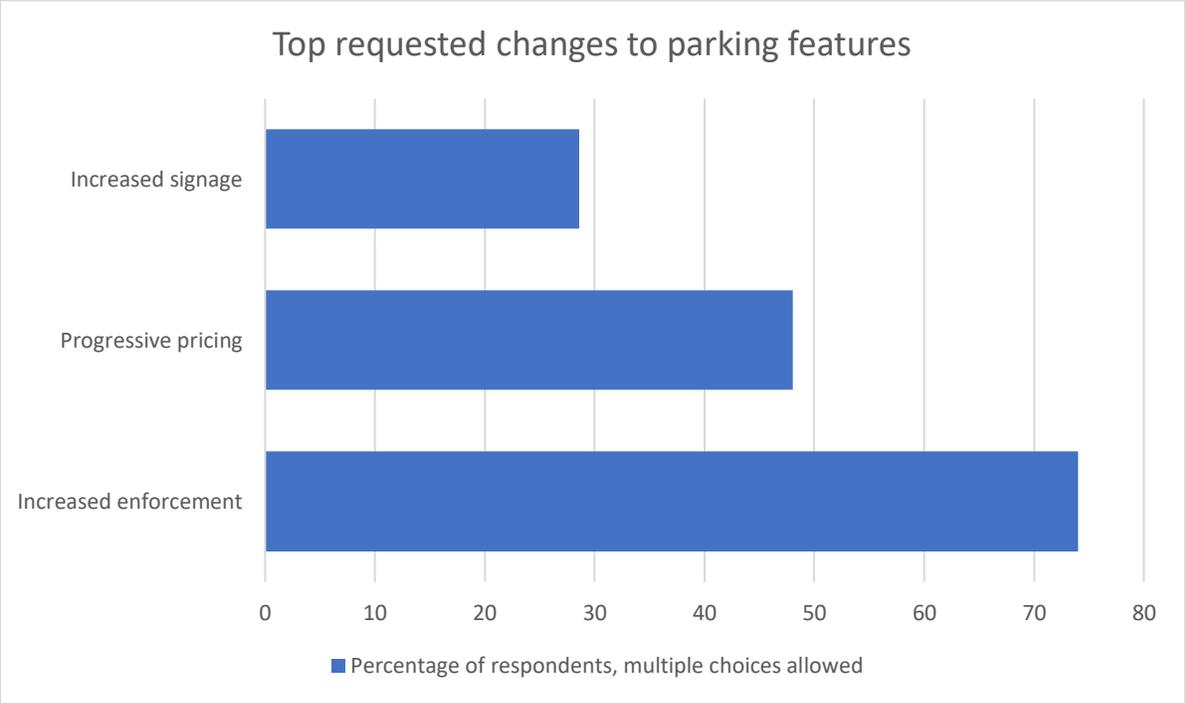


Figure 5 Top requested changes, according to resident respondents, to the parking configuration

### Top requested changes to parking features

- Increased enforcement – 74.03% marked very important
- Progressive pricing (rates increase with longer parking sessions) – 48.05% marked very important
- Increased signage – 28.57% marked very important

### Next Steps and Open Application Period for Residential Permit Parking

As survey responses indicate for broader support to keep parking regulations in place, Austin Transportation is opening the opportunity for the Woods of Westlake neighborhood to submit formal applications together to make permanent the parking pilot regulations. This opportunity is limited to only the participating RPP streets in the original pilot: Shannon Oaks Trail, Wild Briar Pass, Surrey Hill Drive, and Scottish Woods Cove. Due to the length of Shannon Oaks Trail, City staff recommend three distinct applications for the street as households may be grouped for three sections by the relevant intersections (between Scottish Woods Trail to the south, Wild Briar Pass, and the cul-de-sac past Scottish Woods Trail to the north).

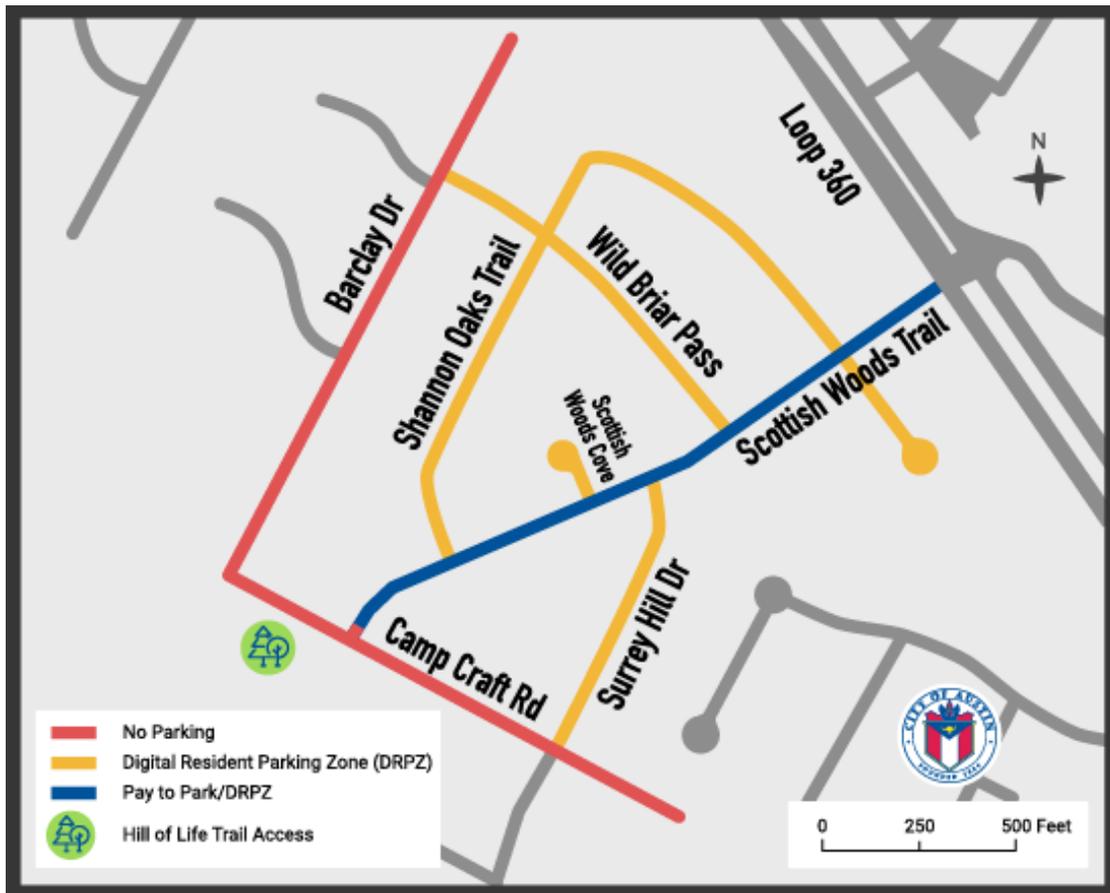


Figure 6 Map of potential final configuration, contingent on applications from the neighborhood

Regarding the paid parking on Scottish Woods Trail, Austin Transportation will take the immediate steps:

- Install a physical kiosk at the trailhead to offer a non-smartphone option for trail visitors to pay for their parking session
- Change the parking rate to a progressive pricing structure to encourage parking turnover on Scottish Woods Trail; this progressive pricing structure would mimic the structure of downtown on-street parking rates as a baseline but can be modified to best meet demand

**Austin's Citywide Progressive Parking Price Structure**

| Parking Session | Hourly Rate |
|-----------------|-------------|
| 1st hour        | \$2.00      |
| 2nd hour        | \$2.00      |
| 3rd hour        | \$3.00      |
| 4th hour        | \$3.50      |
| 5th hour        | \$4.00      |
| 6th hour        | \$4.50      |
| 7th hour        | \$5.00      |
| 8th hour        | \$5.00      |
| 9th hour        | \$5.00      |
| 10th hour       | \$5.00      |

**Key Dates for Woods of Westlake Residential Permit Parking Application Process**

- Feb. 22 (Tuesday) - Deadline for fee payment and application for each street
- Mar. 11 (Friday) – Deadline for petition signatures from all residents
- Early April – Department drafts final regulation for residential permit parking
- Mid-April – If finalized, residents may begin purchasing new residential parking permits
- Late April – Department updates parking zones and signage in the neighborhood

Each street in the neighborhood must submit an individual application for residential permit parking, and all streets must apply for regulations to stay in place. Thus, there would be six applications for the neighborhood— three for Shannon Oaks Trail and one each for Wild Briar Pass, Surrey Hill Drive, Scottish Woods Cove.

This next step for permanent regulations requires majority approval (at least 60%) from all participating streets in the neighborhood. If completed and approved, the neighborhood’s applications would align with the Residential Permit Parking Program’s Jan. 1 active permit cycle.

Applications must come from the streets that participated in the pilot to ensure a complete environment for managed parking. If applications for residential permit parking are incomplete for any streets by the deadline, or if any petition results indicate majority disapproval, then Austin Transportation will remove the signage related to parking regulations from the pilot on those respective streets.