

Residents honked off at Cal Poly Pomona students parking in their neighborhood

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TRIBUNE



Pomona City Council member John Nolte (left) listens to Cal Poly Pomona police Chief Dario Robinson as he speaks to residents at Kellogg Elementary near Cal Poly Thursday evening. Residents are trying to keep Cal Poly students from parking in their neighborhood. WILL LESTER — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

By Beau Yarbrough

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POMONA >> Stopping Cal Poly Pomona students from parking in local neighborhoods, instead of paying high quarterly fees for on-campus spaces, will likely require hitting them in the wallet.

“Permit parking, from the point of view of the city, seems like the only proposed solution that will work,” Pomona councilman John Nolte told a group of more than three dozen residents gathered at Kellogg Elementary Thursday night.

The neighborhood of single family homes borders South Campus Drive to the northwest, putting it across from some of the outlying buildings at Cal Poly Pomona. That's still close enough for at least some students, who park their cars on the streets surrounding Kellogg to avoid the [\\$134 per-quarter fee for an on-campus parking permit](#). Communities facing similar problems — including those near San Bernardino Valley College — have opted for permit-only parking restrictions.

Totally free parking on campus isn't an option: Under state law, parking services at state schools must be self-funded, according to university spokeswoman Esther Chou Tanaka.

The “parking permit fee is determined by a number of factors” and aims to repay loans used to build garages and cover ongoing operating expenses, Tanaka said.

That fee is the heart of the problem, according to [Cal Poly Pomona police Chief Dario Robinson](#), who also attended Thursday's event.

“The reason that they're parking there is because it's free,” Robinson said. “That's exactly why.”

His proof: [Cal Pol Pomona had nearly 24,000 students enrolled last year](#), most of whom commute to campus each day. But during the summer, enrollment drops, with only a few thousand students on campus most days. And yet, the streets around Kellogg are still filled with student vehicles during the school day.

“They've got enough parking,” Nolte said. “That makes this a behavioral issue.”

Although residents can call the police to report student vehicles, at the moment, their drivers are not breaking any laws.

That will change if the Pomona City Council approves — with community support — requiring city-issued parking permits to park in that neighborhood during the day. Then, students or others doing so without a permit, may be ticketed.

Suddenly that “free” parking won't be.

“We need to make the parking not free. That's all,” Robinson said.

Nolte told residents Thursday that the city will work with neighborhood representatives to work out a plan for how the permit program would work.

Robinson conceded that issuing permits for the neighborhood won't solve the problem entirely. It likely will push the students to another area surrounding campus.

“Wherever we push them, they're going to go the next place that's cheaper,” he said.