

# CACPWD Market Research

## Report of Findings and Recommendations

March 13, 2015

### I. Introduction

Market research was conducted in early 2015 on behalf of The Colorado Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities (“the Council”) to inform campaign development surrounding parking for persons with a disability. Focus groups and an online survey were conducted to capture the target audience’s beliefs and perceptions, providing a fact-based starting point for the campaign as well as a baseline for communication efforts. Desktop research was also conducted in addition to reviewing existing data provided by the Council on the subjects of disabled parking abuse, enforcement and laws.

The online survey respondents were sourced through a recruiting tool as well as through sources provided by the client. A link to the 21-question survey was then deployed through an email request. There were a total of 725 completes over the course of 10 days. The research objectives that guided the development of the online survey as well as the discussion guide for the focus groups are listed below.

#### Research Objectives:

- Conduct qualitative and quantitative research to ensure relevance and resonance of campaign with target audience.
- Explore attitudes, perceptions and beliefs around disabled parking.
- Establish a baseline level of attitudes, knowledge and awareness regarding disabled parking and the abuse of it.
- Identify knowledge of disabled parking laws and effects.
- Identify, refine and qualify target audience segments.

## II. Topline Findings

- A majority of respondents (73%) drive daily.
- Nearly all (96%) believe that parking lots usually have one or more accessible spots.
- A majority of respondents (67%) think there are enough (50%) or more than enough (17%) accessible parking places. Conversely, only about one-third of respondents think there are not enough accessible parking spots.
  - Disabled respondents are far more likely to think there is **not enough** accessible parking (62%).
  - Young males are far **less likely** to think there is not enough accessible parking (25%). Additionally, 55% of young males believe there are “about the right number” of disabled spots compared to 49% of overall respondents who believe the same.
  - Medical professionals are more likely to think there **are enough** (61%) or more than enough (16%) accessible parking spots.
  - Low SES respondents are more likely to think there is **not enough** accessible parking (44%). They are also more likely to be disabled (49% vs. 43% overall).
- A majority of respondents (69%) think that accessible parking is required by law while 21% think that it is only required in public parking lots.
  - Low SES respondents are less likely (65%) to think that accessible parking is required by law.
- When asked who is allowed to park in accessible spots, respondents largely (87%) answered “disabled persons with a placard or appropriate license plate and their drivers.” The second most common answer (55%) was “temporarily disabled or injured persons with a placard.”
  - A significant portion of respondents (43%) thinks that “anyone with a placard or disabled license plate” is allowed to park in accessible parking.
  - Low SES respondents varied significantly on this question:
    - 81% selected “disabled persons with a placard or appropriate license plate and their drivers.”
    - 48% selected “temporarily disabled or injured persons with a placard.”
    - 36% selected “all disabled persons and their drivers” vs. 26% of overall respondents.
- Nearly all respondents (96%) have seen people who do not appear to be disabled using parking designated for disabled persons.
- Most able-bodied respondents (80%) have never parked nor considered parking in a designated accessible spot.
  - If they have, it is usually because no other spots were available.
- A majority of respondents (85%) agree that accessible parking is **a necessity** for disabled persons.
  - Low SES respondents were less likely to agree (80%) that accessible parking is **a necessity** for disabled persons.
- Fewer, but still a majority (63%), agree that it is a **civil right**.
  - 70% of disabled respondents agree that it is a **civil right**.
  - Fewer professionals (65%) agree that it is a **civil right**.
  - Young males are least likely (55%) to agree that it is a **civil right**.

- More respondents (43%) disagree that accessible parking is **a privilege**, but 37% agree.
  - Nearly half (48%) of disabled respondents agree it is **a privilege**, and 37% disagree.
  - Compared to all respondents, more Low SES respondents (45%) agree it is **a privilege** and fewer Low SES respondents (31%) disagree.
  - 32% of young male respondents disagree that it is **a privilege**.
- Only 10% of respondents have seen or heard advertising messages regarding parking for disabled persons.
  - Of those, most cited TV or radio as the source.
- Of the 10% of respondents who recalled messages the most popular messages recalled were, in order:
  - Think of me. Keep it free.
  - You can have my spot if I can have your legs.
  - Laziness is not a handicap. Park elsewhere.

### AUDIENCE SEGMENTS

Professionals: All medical professionals, law enforcement, parking enforcement, building professionals and property management respondents. N=189

Low SES: Respondents with less than \$50,000 in annual household income and no bachelor's or post-graduate degree. N=235

Medical Professionals: All respondents who identified as a "medical professional." N=156

Young Males: All male respondents under age 35. N=126

### **III. Recommendations**

#### **Create overall awareness of the issue**

We recommend focusing communication efforts on creating awareness of this problem. This should be the main priority, because we need to build sensitivity to the problem before we can expect our target audiences to **a)** pay attention to messaging on the topic or **b)** change their attitudes or behavior. This awareness phase sets the stage for further education and outreach activities in the near term and engagement with our target in the long term. We also recommend a clear call to action that can be measured (post-campaign survey, enforcement data, etc.).

#### **Focus on a single message**

To maximize efficiency of our communication, we recommend using one, clear and concise message for the first iteration of the campaign. Our dollars and efforts will go further if we can be disciplined and work towards creating awareness of the problem, rather than trying to educate vast audiences on several different topics, however deserving they may be. This is especially true of mass media. We can rely on earned and owned media for longer form messages.

#### **Use mass media to create awareness**

For several reasons, we recommend using mass media to build awareness:

- Mass media is still the best tool for awareness-building
- Our target audience is large and mass media is the best way to reach a large and varied audience
- We can reach several different audience segments
- We are able to control our message and unify it for all segments
- We can take advantage of the incomparable efficiency of mass media

#### **Define key audience segments**

We recommend defining our key target audiences as outlined below. Medical professionals, law enforcement, parking enforcement, property managers and other special target profiles will be captured within our primary audience. They are equally, or even less aware of the problem as the general population. Like the general population, they also lack knowledge, understanding and sensitivity of the issue of accessible parking abuse.

##### **1) *Primary target audience:*** Colorado drivers

- With special emphasis on frequent drivers and those under age 35.
- Within that target, skew towards males, as collectively, they are the least aware and the least sensitive to this issue.

##### **2) *Secondary target audience:*** Disabled community

- Because we want to employ the passion and powerful reach of those most affected.
- Because they can start the conversation with their friends and family members who may be tempted to abuse accessible parking.

#### **Provide content to illustrate the problem**

Because our mass media efforts will drive towards awareness of the problem, we need to provide plenty of content to demonstrate that the problem exists, that people are being denied an important civil right, and that there are solutions. This content will probably be housed



mainly on the website, but also in print and other outlets. The content can take the form of PR tools (fact sheets, backgrounder, meet the experts, speaker bios, etc.), key messages (FAQ, At a Glance, About the Council/About Accessible Parking), testimonials, video content showing abuse, partnerships with law enforcement and others. It may include national statistics and our own custom research. This content can be used to elaborate on education around laws, enforcement and civil rights issues. This content will back up our point that accessible parking abuse is going unchecked—and it provides ready-to-use resources for our owned and earned media outlets.

### **Align communication timing with enforcement periods**

To the greatest extent possible, we recommend partnering with law enforcement groups to underscore the importance of our message. Vast amounts of data emphasize the increased effectiveness of awareness and behavior change campaigns when they coincide with enforcement. Use existing relationships with communities already friendly to the Council such as Arvada, Boulder and Englewood to find synergies with the mass media campaign and their enforcement periods. Consider ways to engage local officers in our cause by presenting our campaign and ideas to them, partnering with law enforcement as an ally, providing a leave-behind that may accompany a warning or ticket, or any number of other tactics.

### **Put the research to work for you**

- Consider using this research report in outreach efforts to the disabled community and in legislative efforts.
- Consider releasing the research report to an exclusive media outlet prior to launch of advertising campaign to extend the life of our campaign and gain credibility.
- Use specific data points from the research in bite-sized chunks as content for the website and social media campaigns.
- Repeat this survey as soon as possible after mass media campaigns have run to track changes.



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## OLR RESEARCH REPORT

July 16, 2010

2010-R-0293

### **HANDICAPPED PARKING LAWS IN CONNECTICUT**

By: Paul Frisman, Principal Analyst

You asked about state laws and recent legislation on handicapped parking in Connecticut.

#### **SUMMARY**

The law establishes a formula under which a certain number of parking spaces must be set aside for people who are blind or who have a disability that impairs their ability to walk. People who park in these spaces must display a removable windshield placard (commonly called a permit) or a special license plate bearing the international symbol of access. The law specifies the design and content of these placards and plates.

By law, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) commissioner must issue these special plates and removable windshield placards to:

1. a person who is blind,
2. a person with disabilities that limit or impair the ability to walk,
3. a parent or guardian of any blind person or person with disabilities who is (a) under 18 at the time of application or (b) unable to request or complete an application, and
4. certain organizations that transport blind people or people with disabilities.

The commissioner may also issue temporary handicapped parking placards to people whose ability to walk is seriously but temporarily impaired. Temporary placards are the same as permanent placards, except that the international symbol of access appears on a red, rather than blue, background.

According to DMV, as of July 8, 2010 there were 317,935 active permanent handicapped placards, 10,413 active temporary placards, and 7,975 special license plates.

People applying to the commissioner for these plates or placards must include certification of (1) disability from designated medical professionals or a member of the DMV handicapped driver training unit or (2) legal blindness from designated medical professionals or the Board of Education and Services for the Blind.

The commissioner may not issue more than one placard per applicant, and must keep a record of each placard he issues. He may suspend or revoke any plate or placard for misuse. A recent change in the law requires that, starting January 1, 2010, the commissioner can issue a placard only to a person who has a valid driver's license or non-driver's identification card. However, he may adopt regulations to issue placards to people who, because of hardship, do not hold, or cannot obtain, a license or ID card.

Only those motor vehicles displaying a plate or placard may park in handicapped parking spaces, except that an ambulance transporting a patient may park in a handicapped space for up to 15 minutes while assisting the patient. A person who parks illegally in a handicapped space faces a fine of \$150 for a first violation and \$250 for second and subsequent violations. A motor vehicle illegally parked in a handicapped space for the third or subsequent time may be towed and impounded until any fines are paid.

As the result of a change in the law made in 2009, DMV is phasing out lifetime handicapped placards. It will gradually replace them with placards that will expire at the same time as the placard holder's driver's license or non-driver's ID card. (The department continues to refer to these placards as permanent placards, even though they will eventually expire, to distinguish them from temporary placards.)

Since 2007, the legislature has enacted laws increasing fines for violating handicapped parking laws (PA 07-52), and establishing several new requirements for the issuance and use of placards and special plates (PA 09-187). We summarize these acts as well as several unsuccessful bills in this report. In addition, § 38 of PA 09-187 required DMV to study alternative enforcement of the handicapped parking laws, including enforcement sweeps, media campaigns, and citizen volunteer enforcement programs. We summarize the study's findings below. Additional information is available on DMV's website at: <http://www.ct.gov/dmv/taxonomy/taxonomy.asp?DLN=30289&dmvNav=|30289|>.

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# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

January 18, 2007

2007-R-0007

## HANDICAPPED PARKING LAWS

By: George Coppolo, Chief Attorney

You asked for information about Connecticut's handicapped parking permit law and how it compares with laws in other states.

### SUMMARY

The law requires the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles to issue special handicapped license plates and removable windshield placards to any:

1. person who is blind,
2. person with disabilities which limit or impair the ability to walk;
3. parent or guardian of any blind person or person with disabilities who is under 18 years of age at the time of application; and
4. any organization that meets criteria established by the motor vehicle commissioner and certifies to the commissioner's satisfaction that the vehicle for which a plate or placard is requested is primarily used to transport blind persons or persons with disabilities which limit or impair their ability to walk.

Applications must include certification of disability from designated medical professionals or from a member of the handicapped driver training unit established by law. The commissioner may suspend or revoke any plate or placard for misuse.

A violation of the handicapped parking law is an infraction punishable by a fine of \$131. Only those motor vehicles displaying a plate or placard are authorized to park in handicapped parking spaces except that any ambulance, which is transporting a patient, may park in such area for up to 15 minutes while assisting the patient. Any motor vehicle parked in violation for the third or subsequent time may be towed and impounded until payment of any fines incurred is received.



According to Nancy Dumais of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) as of January 3, 2007 there were 342,914 active handicapped parking placards in Connecticut (3,842 of these were temporary) and 7,119 handicapped parking plates. She reported that approximately 44,000 people were issued two placards; the rest were issued one. She also noted that PA 06-130 allows the DMV commissioner to limit handicapped parking placards to one per applicant, which the department is currently considering. This will only apply to newly issued placards.

We have asked the appropriate agencies in Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island for the number of active placards they have and will forward this information to you as soon as we receive it. We have also enclosed a copy of an OLR Report prepared in 2002 that contains statistics of placards issued by each state for a six-year period ([2002-R-0067](#)).

Dumais noted that DMV has started to be more proactive in its enforcement efforts. For example DMV is contacting all placard and license plate holders to remind them of their legal duties and warning them that misusing the placards or plates can result in suspension as well as fines. She also indicated that DMV is now checking on a monthly basis with the Department of Health to cross check the names of recently deceased people with the names of placard and plate owners. When this reveals that a placard or plate holder is deceased, DMV invalidates the placard and sends a notice to the deceased person's address. She informed us that local and state police can easily access DMV's handicapped parking data base, which indicates whether a placard or plate is valid and provides identifying information about the placard or plate owner including his name, and age. Thus, police can easily enforce the law when investigating a complaint of a possible violation.

PA 00-169 eliminated the requirement that permanent placards be renewed every five years and that a \$5 application and renewal fee be charged. The fee had been successfully challenged in federal court in Connecticut and in almost all other states as a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Without the fee for processing renewals, the DMV recommended that these placards be made permanent. The permanent placards began replacing the dated placards in June 2000.

Connecticut appears to be one of only four states that have permanent handicapped parking placards. Most states issue placards that expire after four or five years. Several expire after two or three years and a few have a longer duration.

In an apparent attempt to reduce misuse and to assist enforcement efforts many of the states issue placards that indicate the expiration date, and others include such information as the applicant's name, and license or identification number. Some states do more. For example, Virginia includes the covered person's name, age, and sex; a misuse hotline; and a warning of possible penalties. At least one state, Iowa, changes the shape and color of the placard every four years.

The standards for issuing the placard are similar in most states to those used in Connecticut. Some issue placards for additional disabilities such as Maine, which issues placards to applicants who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Most states impose fines for violations. Some also have penalties that include possible prison time, the towing of vehicles that are illegally parked, the suspension or revocation of placards for misuse, and in at least one state the imposition of community service on violators.

# **SUGGESTIONS FOR ENFORCING HANDICAP PARKING LAWS**

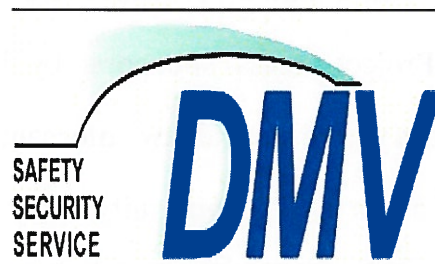


**Prepared For:  
Transportation Committee  
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**Prepared By:  
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**January 15, 2010**



## **SUGGESTIONS**

### **Enforcement Sweep**

Based upon the response to the Department's survey, several police chiefs suggested periods of dedicated enforcement throughout the year. On average most towns in Connecticut issue less than one hundred tickets per year for handicap parking violations, although abuse of placards reportedly occurs far more frequently within the state. Enforcement of handicap parking laws could be increased by dedicating three to four periods a year where local law enforcement concentrates specifically on the handicap parking laws. Similar to the annual "Road Check" program sponsored by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, where for a period of seventy two hours law enforcement concentrates on commercial vehicle safety, the state of Connecticut could introduce a program where for a specified period of time, law enforcement would focus on handicap parking law violations. The periods of enforcement would help to raise awareness about the abuse of handicap parking and act as a deterrent from continuing such violations.

In Albany, New York, a similar program entitled. "Project Access," has been used since 1994. "Project Access" sponsored by the Albany County Sheriff's Department, is a program where several law enforcement agencies work in conjunction to "sweep" areas in the community to enforce parking violations. Although the program in its entirety monitors various types of parking violations, there are instances where a "sweep" is conducted specifically to address handicap parking violations. The "sweeps," or patrols of the area, are conducted frequently



throughout the year, and are believed to help those who need access to handicap parking spaces continue to have access to the parking that is available for them.

## **Media Campaigns**

Similar to the “Ticket or Click It” campaigns, several police chiefs advocated that a similar campaign for handicap parking would be a viable option for addressing abuse of handicap parking and special parking permits. The media advertisements would raise awareness about the abuse of those permits within Connecticut and act as a deterrent. The media campaign could also work in conjunction with a week or several weeks of enforcement throughout the year to help decrease the abuse of handicap parking and special parking permits. Additionally, a governor sponsored week of enforcement and awareness would bring attention to the issue, and inform the public that the state is aware of the issue and will be taking action to correct said issue.

To create the campaign, the state could elicit the suggestions of the citizen’s of Connecticut as well as various disability activists and groups throughout the state. Handicap parking and the abuse of and special parking permits are an important topic that many in Connecticut feel passionate. Allowing them to participate in the process of raising awareness around this topic would be beneficial to the state and to the various individuals who are passionate about this topic. It is also an opportunity for the state to work together with the people in Connecticut to resolve a serious issue in the community.

## **Volunteer Citizens Corps**

Many towns across the country employ a volunteer citizen's corporation, in which volunteers are trained for a varying amount of hours, depending on the town, and gain the authority to issue citations for handicap parking violations. For instance, a program utilized in Huntington, Long Island, N.Y. uses citizen's volunteers to issue affidavits to people who are witnessed violating New York State parking laws for disabled parking spaces. The program is non-confrontational, where from their patrolling vehicle, volunteers photograph the violation, making sure to capture the vehicle, license plate, and parking tag in the photograph. Subsequently, a card detailing: vehicle make and type, plate type, body style, offense date and time, location of offense, and a sworn statement that the vehicle was in violation of the law is submitted to a program coordinator within the town. The program coordinator then files and processes the affidavits' through the courts and a summons is requested. A complete process flow for the Huntington program is in Appendix C.

The program in Huntington could be modified and adopted in Connecticut to help enforce parking laws in areas not normally patrolled by officers. Although the Huntington program allows volunteers to photograph a vehicle that is in violation of the law and also requires a sworn officer to commence official action by the town, Connecticut citizens if statutorily permitted could follow a similar procedure and report such incidents to their local police department. Each town could have a similar form available online and require citizens to photograph the alleged offense, and submit a completed form to the police department.

With regard to the survey responses on this specific issue, a sizable representation of the police chiefs stated that they currently use non-police officers to enforce their respective municipality's parking laws. Moreover, three of the towns that do not use non-police officers to enforce parking laws stated that if the laws were changed, they would consider allowing non-police officers to enforce parking laws. However, some of the police chiefs that responded to the survey did not support the idea of a citizen's corporation. In particular, several of the police chiefs cited that citizens do not have the authority to issue citations or access the Connecticut On-Line Law Enforcement Communications Teleprocessing (COLLECT) system for verification of the Department's handicap parking permit information.

### **COLLECT Enhancement**

Several chiefs suggested in the survey that there should be an easier way to verify handicap parking permit information in COLLECT. In their view, if the information was easily attainable in COLLECT, enforcement would be easier. However, COLLECT is a Department of Public Safety (DPS) information system for which the Department of Motor Vehicles and the DPS would need to work together to identify an easier way to verify the information in COLLECT. Moreover, after identification to what is the best way to facilitate the request, it would require several months of system-related programming to make all the necessary system changes to bring the idea into fruition.

## **Window Stickers**

Another possible idea to enhance compliance with the handicap parking permit laws may be by issuing a handicap parking sticker instead of the portable permit that could be affixed to the windshield of a car. Because the placards are often left on the seats of vehicles, at home, or are simply not hung, many times when an officer issues a citation for violation of handicap parking law, the ticket is thrown out when the placard holder produces the placard. This discourages officers from taking the time to write a citation for the handicap parking violations. Moreover, a window sticker would be easier for an officer to identify, thus making it easier to enforce the laws.

There are some potential drawbacks of using a window sticker. Although the American Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require that a hanger style placard be issued to those eligible for disabled parking access, hangers style placards are the standard across the country for utilizing parking spaces reserved for those with disabilities. Although some states issue window stickers for motorcycles to permit disabled parking access, for passenger cars and trucks all states issue a placard. Given that the placard is the unofficial standard to signify access for disabled parking, issuing a window sticker may cause issues when a Connecticut resident travels out of state and would like to utilize parking spaces reserved for those with disabilities because law enforcement would not recognize the window sticker as the medium for identifying those who are eligible to access those parking spaces.

## **INCREASED FINES**

Public Act 09-187, An Act Concerning the Functions of the Department of Motor Vehicles, section 38, recommended an increase in fines, as well as a mandatory court appearance for persons who violate the state's handicap parking laws. In addition, the Act amended Section 14-253a of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) to increase the fines for handicap parking violations to the following:

- (l) Any person who violates any provision of this section for which a penalty or fine is not otherwise provided shall, for a first violation, be subject to a fine of one hundred fifty dollars, and for a subsequent violation, be subject to a fine of two hundred fifty dollars.
- (m) Any placard or special license plate issued pursuant to this section shall be returned to the commissioner upon the subsequent change of residence to another state or death of the person to whom such placard or license plate was issued. Any person who uses a placard or a special license plate issued pursuant to this section after the death of the person to whom such placard or special license plate was issued shall be fined five hundred dollars.

According to survey results, more than fifty percent of the citations issued for handicap parking violations are issued under the municipal ordinance codes for the towns.

Therefore, if fines were to be increased for handicap parking violations, to be an effective deterrent, the fines should be increased under the municipal ordinance codes for each town in Connecticut. Moreover, each town would be required to update their codes to mandate court appearances for handicap parking violators, as suggested in Section 38 of Public Act 09-187.



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**Downtown Parking Management Program Planning  
Houston, Texas**

Prepared for:

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January 23, 2001

# Houston Downtown Parking Study

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## Summary

All companies contacted report that there is sufficient parking available for their employees and visitors in the area. Some major employers would prefer the parking to be much closer and less expensive. While employers would love to have “free” parking for all of their employees, they realize someone has to pay for the building, operation and development of the garages.

## Downtown Current Supply and Demand

There are approximately 80,000 off-street parking spaces available in the downtown Houston area according to figures provided by the Houston Downtown Management District’s parking study completed in April of 1999. According to statistics from the Downtown District, there are approximately 2,500 curbside-metered spaces in the downtown area for a total of 82,500 parking spaces available.

According to the Houston Downtown Management District’s study there are approximately 150,000 employees working in the downtown area. It is projected that the number of employees downtown will increase by 3 percent per year (approximately 20,000 new employees) over the next five years.

Without any increase in mass transit use and utilizing the current ratio of 1.53 employees per parking space available, approximately 13,000 spaces will need to be added to the downtown area.

The overall projection for the Central Business district is that it will remain economically healthy at least into the first decade of the 2000’s. New buildings being planned are pre-leased before construction begins and companies such as Enron are building to accommodate their own expansion. New buildings planned in



# Houston Downtown Parking Study

the downtown area will not be able to provide adequate parking for their tenants. Employees are going to have to search out alternate parking or find alternative modes of arrival to the work place.

## Parking Zones

To analyze the current demand and supply and the proposed growth for downtown Houston, we took an area bounded by Hwy 59 on the east, IH 45 on the south and the west, and Buffalo Bayou on the north and divided it into 11 separate zones (see exhibit 1). We identified all the available parking within each zone (see exhibit 2) by either surface parking or garages. We then determined the rates charged in each zone (see exhibit 3). Exhibit 4 compares the number of parking spaces with the resident and employee population within each zone. We then researched the proposed growth of parking spaces and potential generators for each zone.

Zone	Description	Parking Spaces	Employees	Rates Surface	Rates Garage
1	Market Square	3,723	5,876	\$ 4.00	\$ 6.00
2	Government	2,883	4,682	\$ 6.00	\$10.00
3	Ball Park	3,508	2,011	\$ 4.00	\$ -
4	Theater	5,840	5,978	\$ 4.00	\$10.00
5	City Hall/Tranquility Park	4,206	2,067	\$ -	\$ 8.00
6	Central Business	8,516	27,603	\$ -	\$10.00
7	Convention Center	13,752	8,917	\$ 4.00	\$ -
8	Retail Corridor	8,912	24,236	\$ -	\$10.00
9	Allen Center	10,890	17,238	\$ 4.25	\$25.00
10	South Business	13,825	24,853	\$ 4.00	\$ 6.00
11	St. Joseph	3,993	4,754	\$ 4.00	\$ 4.00

## Future Parking Demand

### Commercial Real Estate

There are major renovations and expansions that are taking place in many areas of downtown. There are also several new office buildings that are planned. This renovation/expansion/new

## **Houston Downtown Parking Study**

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building activity will have a direct effect on parking supply and demand.

Grady Roberts, a senior director in the Houston Office of Holiday Fenoglio Fowler, LP a commercial banking firm, in an article for the Houston Business Journal wrote that “An impressively strong Houston economy is projected to add 300,000 jobs over the next five years.” As a result, office occupancy levels and rental rates should continue to rise throughout the city. The tightest sub-markets (Downtown, The Woodlands, and Greenspoint) will see the most dramatic change.

Mark Cover, Vice President of Hines has said, “A shortage of well-located, high quality parking is an ever increasing issue of importance as office vacancies drop to historically low levels and older properties with limited parking receive new lives as offices or living spaces. The removal of surface parking for new building is also having an impact.”

### **Residential**

The Urban Land Institute forecasts that rising land prices will force developers to be more particular about the kind of projects they undertake. According to the Urban Land Institutes recent survey, developers are ready to invest in downtown housing. There are several new residential projects planned for the downtown and near town area.

### **Clubs and Restaurants**

Several out of town investors have recognized Houston’s downtown potential. St. Pete’s Dancing Marlin, The Samba Room and The Flying Saucer Draught Bar have opened and are bringing people downtown in the evenings and on weekends.

## **Houston Downtown Parking Study**

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Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, The Palm, Flemmings Steakhouse, and Dicks Last Resort are also considering opening locations in the central business district.

Sambuca Jazz Café, Jamba Juice, Liberty Noodle, Mission Burrito, Urban Foods and Amy's Ice Cream have already opened alongside the Rice Lofts. Tasca, The Travis Café, Spy and Solero have helped to revitalize nightlife in the north end of downtown.

### **Retail**

Retail experts like Ed Wulfe of Wulfe & Co. feel that downtown is really booming and establishing itself as a retail center. With Enron Field on one end and the Landry's aquarium project on the other, the blocks in between have a great deal of potential for redevelopment.

### **Case Studies of Other Cities**

We have researched what other cities in other parts of the nation have done in regards to developing parking to help fuel the revitalization of their downtown areas.

### **Portland, Oregon**

The City of Portland owns several garages and parking lots in downtown Portland. These garages and lots are set up to serve customers of the retail and professional service shops in downtown Portland. The garages and lots discourage all-day and monthly parking and have developed as economic engines to support the retail community.

### **Seattle, Washington**

Seattle city officials poured millions of dollars into revitalizing the downtown shopping district. They feel it has paid off. Pacific Place, a new retail mall, and the expansion of the city's

# Houston Downtown Parking Study

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retail core accounted for at least \$1.1 million more in sales, business and property taxes over the last year according to the City Budget Office.

## Cleveland, Ohio

Major developments initiated by Cleveland's public/private partnership have since revitalized the downtown area. Jacobs Field and the Gund Arena have been the major catalysts in downtown activity leading to the creation of about two dozen nearby businesses and several housing developments.

In 1995 Cleveland was experiencing a parking glut. The city had helped to create the glut by building two parking garages at the Gateway sports complex. To protect their investment, the Cleveland City Council passed an ordinance banning additional surface lots in downtown. The Historic Warehouse district has seen such success that a recent study conducted by Desman Associates says that when the planned developments are completed there will be a parking deficit rather than a surplus.

Based on the information in this study we make the following recommendations for developing a parking plan that will help to bring more retail to the central downtown area as well as encourage development and revitalization.

- *Adjusting rate structures for retail parking so that short-term rates are less expensive but reach a maximum rate after four hours.*
- *The development of a downtown wide validation program should be explored.*

## Recommendations for Houston Central Business District Parking

# Houston Downtown Parking Study

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- *City developed parking infrastructure that provide subsidies for free or discounted parking for retail parking in the central business district should also be considered and explored.*
- *A comprehensive city sponsored and promoted program to promote alternate means of transportation to the central business district should be implemented.*

## Proposed Retail Garage Sites

We have analyzed five sites for placement of a proposed retail garage. Exhibit 6 at the end of this report maps the proposed locations for a garage.

*Site 1* is a full block between Dallas, Polk, Main and Fannin Streets.

- A garage on this block could effectively serve retail located in both the east/west and the north/south corridors
- Estimated land cost for this site is \$5,000,000.00

*Site 2* is located on the block to the east of site 1, between Dallas, Polk, Fannin and San Jacinto streets.

- Not within the proposed retail corridor - one block away
- Closer to the Park Shops than site 1
- Estimated land cost for this site is \$5,000,000.00

*Site 3* located between Dallas, Polk, San Jacinto and Caroline streets.

- Farthest from the northern and western retail corridor
- Closest to The Park Shops
- Close to the proposed arena site
- Estimated land cost for this site is \$5,000,000.00

## Houston Downtown Parking Study

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*Site 4* is located in the central business core, bounded by Walker, McKinney, Milam and Louisiana streets.

- This site has good access and is close to the western and northern retail corridor
- A garage on this site will serve the central business district
- Can command the most significant rates
- Can serve multiple generators
- Estimated land cost for this site is \$15,625,000.00

*Site 5* is a half block bounded by Texas, Capitol, Main and Fannin streets.

- Site provides access to the north retail corridor as well as the south end of the market square district
- Can serve multiple generators
- Estimated land cost for the half block is \$4,000,000.00

Pro formas attached to this report explore the economic feasibility of operating garages on each site. Based on assumptions made in the pro formas, proposed sites 1, 2, 3 and 5 are the most economically feasible. Sites 1 and 5 are the most desirable locations for garage placement as they are within the TIRZ zone (see exhibit 5) and within the proposed retail zone. Site 1 will allow a larger garage and parking for more vehicles than site 5, however economically after 20 years both garages will perform approximately the same. Site 4 offers less profit after debt service over 20 years than all the other sites.





# **Handicap Parking Abuse: Policy Solutions for Kentucky**

**A report prepared for the Kentucky Council  
on Developmental Disabilities**

**October 8, 2003**

**Martin School of Public Policy and Administration**

**Dr. Edward Jennings**

**Suzanne Swann Dale**

**Jeremy Hall**

## **Executive Summary**

Handicap parking is the cornerstone of accessibility for persons with disabilities. While accessibility has expanded because of handicap parking, new problems have arisen due to the abuse of handicap parking privileges. Three types of handicap parking violations exist:

1. Parking in a space without an appropriate permit.
2. Parking with an appropriate permit but the person does not have a mobility impairment.
3. The fraudulent creation of a permit in order to park illegally.

This paper examines the legal framework surrounding handicap parking in order to understand policy solutions. A maze of laws on the federal and state levels addresses handicap parking. State laws regulate permitting, fines and penalties and enforcement, and these are subject to federal mandates. Local law enforcement carries out the task of enforcing the regulations.

Second, this paper looks at empirical studies which have attempted to determine how often people abuse handicap parking spaces, their rationale for doing so, and the observed deterrents of abuse. Studies have found that abuse is a prevalent problem and that most people violate the regulations because of convenience. Observational studies have shown that the use of vertical handicap parking signs along with messages warning about enforcement have decreased violations. Furthermore, increased enforcement is also a proven deterrent.

Third, this paper surveys the news from states and localities about policy solutions to the widespread problem of abuse. The policy solutions that governments use most often include

- Enforcing Stricter Fines or Penalties;
- Using Technical Countermeasures;
- Tightening Standards for Issuing Permits;



- Increased Enforcement by Police or by Using Volunteers; and
- Implementing Handicap Parking Educational Programs

### **Recommendations for the Council**

From the empirical studies and the policy solutions described above, the Martin School has developed the following recommendations for the Council concerning possible handicap-parking legislation in Kentucky:

- Work with state legislators who are already working on handicap-parking abuse concerns.
- Require more frequent renewal of handicap-parking permits.
- Implement technical countermeasures to deter fraud and abuse.
- Take steps to increase local enforcement of handicap parking violations.
- Require vertical signs displaying a message about the consequences of violations.
- Place stricter requirements on the authorization for disability certification in the permit application process.



**Using Volunteers in Handicapped Parking Law Enforcement:  
Report for the Kentucky Council on Developmental Disabilities**

**Prepared By:**

**The Martin School of Public Policy and Administration**

**Edward T. Jennings, Jr., Project Director**

**Jeremy L. Hall, Research Assistant**

**June 30, 2004**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Police departments in at least twenty states use citizen volunteers to supplement sworn officers in law enforcement activities. These volunteers perform a variety of functions, including, in many cases, writing citations for violations of handicap parking laws. Departments who use volunteers for these and other purposes have identified a variety of challenges and solutions to the use of volunteers and have found volunteers to provide considerable benefit. This report describes

- The use of volunteers in law enforcement around the country
- The apparent lack of such use in Kentucky
- The variety of tasks performed by police department volunteers
- Variations in the authority and approach to practice of police parking enforcement volunteers
- How volunteer programs work in six communities
- Benefits communities realize from the use of police department volunteers
- Problems communities have encountered
- Solutions to those problems

## **BENEFITS**

Suffolk County, New York designates the proceeds from the “Polaroid Posse” efforts to improving handicapped Accessibility in government buildings; In 1996, they raised \$6,000 in fines (Kibbe, 1998).

The Fremont, CA, H.A.P.P. program was established in 1995. This team of about ten volunteers writes an average of 25 citations per month at a rate of \$275 each. The program website reports that parking violations have decreased. Associated benefits of this program are ensuring that parking spaces are properly marked and offering informational talks and seminars.

The Volunteer Services Program of Kingsport, TN, provided 1,566 hours of regular volunteer duties. Included in this total are a net of 1,134 handicap parking citations, and 176 citations for violating the city two-hour parking limit. An interview with police administrators yielded additional information about the program. They average 100 citations per month under the city parking ordinance (which is addressed in city court, not a state-level judiciary). These citations range from approximately \$25 for a first offense to \$50 for a third-time offender. On average, \$2,500 to \$3,500 per month is raised in fines. Handicapped parking violations at shopping centers and the two local hospitals have been drastically reduced since the program’s inception.

The Kissimmee, Florida, Police Department Volunteers delivered 632 hours of service, saving the police department more than \$5,000 in personnel costs.

The San Diego Police Department benefits include: 1) over \$1.5 million worth of policing man hours from 800 volunteers, 2) the addition of new policing services, 3) better community/police relations, and 4) Allowing police officers to focus more time on serious crimes (Kessler & Wartell, 1996).

The Maui Police Department realized 551 handicapped parking violation citations in the first six months following the inception of its Volunteer Disabled Parking Enforcement Project (Hawaii Joint Police Association).

The Colorado Springs Police Department volunteer program nets approximately 48 citations per month (or 584 during 2003).

Jan Koske, Volunteer Coordinator for Kitsap County, Washington, indicated that their Citizens On Patrol (COPs) program has yielded tremendous benefits. For example, in March, 2004, 955 volunteer hours were logged. 51 NOIs (Notices of Infraction—what we would call a ticket) were issued for disabled parking violations. The volunteers issued fourteen citations for other parking violations, marked 80 abandoned vehicles, conducted 155 VIN inspections, and gave 73 written and 59 oral warnings to handicapped parking violators. She noted that parking enforcement was not being done prior to this program, because there was not time for the deputies to monitor parking; since inception, there has been a major decrease in parking violations. Fewer people are parking in disabled parking spots than before the program was instituted. The program has been very helpful to the Sheriff's Department, and the Sheriff has been willing to support the program and help it to grow because of the benefits he receives. The fines levied for parking fines revert to the program to pay for uniforms, vehicles, and other equipment.

The Meridian, MI, Police Department volunteer program nets between 50-60 citations per month, and brings in between \$1,500 and \$2,000/month in revenue from fines. This money reverts to the city general fund, not to the police department. These revenues are up from about \$200/month prior to the program's creation (Interview with Tom Couling).

The Fort Wayne, IN, City Clerk's Office notes that disability zone parking violations have dropped considerably since the program was created, and public awareness of laws and handicapped parking zones has greatly increased. They net approximately 30 tickets per week, with fines of \$50/ticket, yielding \$1,500/week in revenues.

### **PROBLEMS/SOLUTIONS:**

A concern that frequently appears in accounts of volunteer programs is that of drivers who become hostile toward volunteers. Among the solutions to this problem are uniforms, police radios, cell phones, photo identification, and, of great importance, training.

The City of San Diego's volunteer program evaluation (Kessler & Wartell, 1996) identified the following barriers (and solutions) to volunteer policing:

- 1) Concerns over legal liability
  - a. Identify types of liability involved
  - b. Review by legal counsel
  - c. Identify how other organizations manage the problem
  - d. Identify policies and procedures that increase liability and modify them, if possible.

- 2) Union opposition
  - a. Involve Union in the process before implementation
  - b. Provide a comprehensive account of the planned program
  - c. Obtain community backing
  - d. Emphasize enhancement, not replacement
  - e. Identify benefits to the Union
  
- 3) Internal resistance from officers
  - a. Chief executive personal commitment
  - b. Involve paid staff in the planning process
  - c. Deal forthright but sensitively with signs of opposition
  - d. Educate staff on the role of volunteers and benefits
  - e. Cite other successful programs
  
- 4) Perception that the program would cost too much
  - a. Identify hard costs and weigh benefits
  - b. Volunteers save money without using budgeted funds
  - c. Volunteer hours equate to approximately \$12.00 an hour equivalent salary
  
- 5) Volunteers could breach confidentiality
  - a. Conduct background investigations
  - b. Provide instruction and training
  - c. Follow specified procedures in managing information
  - d. Build trust

#### San Diego: Problems Encountered in Implementing Volunteer Program

- Legal Liability
- Union Opposition
- Resistance from Officers
- Potential Cost
- Potential Confidentiality Breaches

#### Problems Encountered by Other Cities:

- Hostile Citizens
- Hostile Volunteers
- Lack of Law Enforcement Agency Cooperation

During interviews conducted with representatives of local police department volunteer programs, we raised questions about problems they had encountered during the program's implementation or administration. The most common problem raised was angry citizens becoming confrontational with volunteer parking enforcement personnel. Limited examples of volunteer hostility were cited, but most agencies are aware that this too is a potential problem. The following are summaries of problems and problem abatement efforts in the interviewed programs:

Fort Wayne, IN, did not report any serious conflicts caused by volunteers yet. They did note that many citizens claim volunteers are unreasonable, particularly in situations

where they are using someone else's placard illegally, and when they are parked in the access aisles adjacent to handicapped spaces noting that "there was nobody parked next to me." Citizens, however, have caused problems for volunteers. Volunteers do not command the respect of a uniformed officer, and citizens feel they are unreasonable. To address this concern, volunteers are sent out in pairs, and their training emphasizes avoiding conflict and informing citizens of the appeals process.

Meridian, MI, Police Department notes that its biggest problem involves the use of senior volunteers who are not very lenient. They have had problems with volunteers losing their tempers and acting inappropriately. Mr. Couling noted that many of these seniors have never been in positions of authority, and they love the opportunity to write tickets; "they are too rigid." He noted that they were forced to let one volunteer go after he twice attempted to arrest individuals who confronted him. The individual called for backup and demanded that the violator be arrested when they refused to move their vehicle out of a handicapped parking space. When the uniformed officer refused, the volunteer threw his shirt on the ground and walked back to the police department. To address this kind of problem, their training emphasizes flexibility with citizens, and encourages volunteers to waive the ticket if the person comes back and gets in the car while they're writing it. Mr. Couling noted that many citizens get upset as a natural reaction to receiving a citation—particularly from someone who is not in a regular police uniform.

Access to Independence, Inc., in Cortland County, NY noted that they had had some problems with both citizens and volunteers, but none that were serious. Their biggest problem was getting the Sheriff's Department to find time to perform the training for the volunteers.

Kitsap County, Washington hasn't had problems with volunteers because of the structure of their training program. They use techniques in their training and selection process to identify potential "hotheads" and weed them out of the group. Volunteer reactions to situational questions demonstrate who is likely to cause a problem, and they are simply not allowed into the program. As for citizens causing problems, their volunteers always work in pairs, and they utilize radios, cell phones, and marked vehicles—these minimize citizen problems. They specifically train their volunteers to back off if someone becomes abusive. They did have one incident where an offender pushed the volunteer with a vehicle.

Kingsport, TN has had no problems with its volunteers, noting that all of the people who are cited deserve the citations. Citizens frequently get angry when they receive a ticket—especially when they use a placard but are not handicapped. Frequent excuses are used to avoid the fines, such as "I was just in the store for a minute," and "the placard must have fallen off the mirror."

In addition to these questions, specific questions about problems with insurance and liability were addressed. The following responses were generated:

The City of Colorado Springs covers volunteers for both injury and liability. Whatever their personal insurance does not cover with regard to personal injury, the City may also pay (such as deductibles and co-insurance) up to a certain amount. If the volunteer or the

department is sued for liability, they are insured, so long as they were active and trained when the infraction took place.

The City of Kingsport encountered a liability issue when a volunteer who was placing a roadside sign or radar device was struck by an automobile that left the roadway. They did not recall how this issue was resolved. Kitsap County, Washington did not report any problems with insurance or liability. They carry volunteer insurance that covers law enforcement activities for this program and other law enforcement volunteers.

Access to Independence, Inc., in Cortland County, NY, did not report any liability issues, but added that the volunteers are insured "to a certain extent."

The Meridian, MI, Police Department has not had any liability problems. Their volunteers are tied in with RSVP (the Retired Senior Volunteer Program operated by Catholic Services) throughout the greater Lansing area. RSVP provides volunteers with medical insurance, worker's compensation insurance, and a stipend for gasoline expenses.

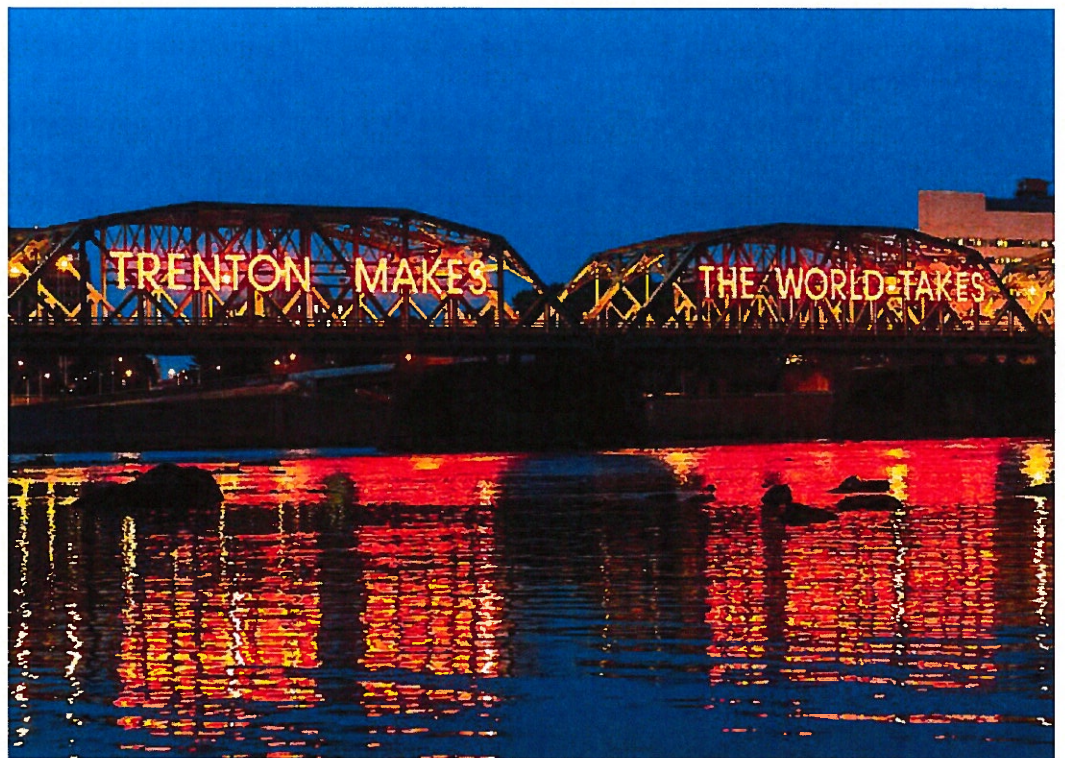
Fort Wayne, IN, did not report any liability problems, but did note that volunteers were responsible for providing their own insurance.



Trenton, New Jersey

# City of Trenton

## Parking System Review



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## Executive Summary

The City of Trenton Parking Authority engaged Bier Associates, on behalf of the City and the Parking Authority to perform an analysis of the City's Parking Utility and On-street Parking System management and operations. The Scope of the Services included the following:

- Review current parking rates and parking rule structure
- Review parking regulations and time restrictions
- Suggest possible improvements to optimize operations
- Suggest ways to increase the convenience of parking patrons
- Outline potential revenue enhancements
- Recommend demand management solutions
- Provide a guideline for recommended policy options

Based on our review and observations, the City of Trenton Parking System contains approximately **936** parking spaces consisting of approximately **83** off-street metered and permit spaces located in 4 small neighborhood commercial parking lots and **853** on-street metered spaces. There are opportunities to enhance the Trenton Parking System in order to effectively address and fund the present and future parking needs of downtown redevelopment, residents, shoppers, and business owners. This report presents various recommendations that are financially self-supportive, and includes modifications to select on-street parking fees, time limits and enforcement policies. The parking study's recommendations include:

- Enhance parking patron convenience with investment in and implementation of parking technology such as;
  - Convert all existing mechanical/electronic meters to new electronic parking meters
  - Implement pay by cell phone technology for meters in Government/CBD
  - Purchase credit card enabled parking meters for primary meter locations
  - Hang tag permits for neighborhood commercial parking lot monthly parkers
  - Purchase software to manage Resident and Monthly Permit parking systems
  - Consider multi space pay stations for off street parking facilities if needed
  - Insure that all 937 on- and off-street parking meters are functional
- By using appropriate next generation payment technologies to increase convenience and payment options, the City's parking system will become; more user friendly, with more parker payment compliance and increased parking meter revenue. Newer parking technology enables parking trends to be better analyzed by using data generated from the smart parking meter & phone payment technology.
- Adjust Primary Government District & Federal, State and County Courts District parking meter rates from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per hour.
- Discourage handicapped parker abuse by increasing the time limits on State Street and other primary Government/CBD meters to 4 or 8 hours, so that on-street daily parking rates are the same as Trenton Parking Authority off-street parking facilities hourly and daily rates.
- Enforce time limits, to promote parking meter turnover and discourage business owners and

public and private sector employees from utilizing the most convenient on-street parking, thereby making on-street parking available for visitors to state government offices, federal, state and county courts and CBD businesses.

- Maximize the utilization of the City's existing curb-line by installing additional meters where appropriate and effectively enforcing existing time limits.
- The management of the existing Parking System by the Parking Utility is presently decentralized with several City departments having a role in the management and operation of the Parking System without any entity in charge of management and planning. Enforcement has been tasked to the Police Department. Meter repair and collection is assigned to the DPW, Traffic and Signals Division. Meter coin is deposited and accounted for by the Tax Collections and Finance Department.
- Improve parking management and operations by centralizing all parking management functions within the Parking Utility or Parking Authority. The City's Parking System both on and off-street is best managed and operated by a single point of responsibility centered within the City government that has full authority to plan, manage, and implement parking policies and initiatives.
- Upgrade the appeal and user experience of off-street parking lots to complement neighborhood revitalization efforts. City parking lot provides users with a lasting image of the City. It is critical that neighborhood commercial district parking lots be safe, clean and attractive.
- The City must repair and upgrade the neighborhood parking lots including; meter replacement, lighting, signage, repair or repave asphalt drive surfaces, repair or replace curbs, restripe parking stalls, provide litter patrols and maintain landscaping in all public parking lots.
- The City of Trenton must consider ways to generate and enhance parking revenues to support the maintenance, upkeep and capital improvements for existing and future parking facilities.
- Specific parking recommendations include:
  1. Adjusting State Street and other primary Government Center on-street parking meters rates from \$1.00 to \$2.00 per hour.
  2. Change Time Limit of Primary and Secondary Government Center parking meters from 1 and 2 hours to 4 hours and 8 hours.
  3. Enforce Handicapped Parker maximum fee compliance at on-street parking meters
  4. Promote the consistent enforcement of fee compliance at on-street meters.
  5. Install additional on-street meters where appropriate near the County Courts and Hughes Justice Complex.

The implementation of these recommendations for adjustments to; parking meter time limits, and meter rates, as well as revisions to the management of the parking permit system outlined in this report, are projected to generate additional revenue which in turn can fund parking system enhancements, parking facility repairs, dedicated parking personnel, and new parking meter equipment.





**Accessible Parking  
Policies and Practices in Other Jurisdictions  
January 21, 2013**





## Executive summary

Statistics from the California Department of Motor Vehicles indicate that the number of disabled parking placards issued to San Francisco residents is increasing rapidly. Moreover, data gathered from SFMTA surveys and enforcement activities suggests that fraudulent placard use is a significant problem.

This document examines existing practices for managing accessible parking (sometimes referred to as disabled parking) in other jurisdictions. It is meant to inform a discussion about how to change the SFMTA's policies in this area in order to improve access, mobility, and quality of life for drivers with disabilities while simultaneously helping to meet the city's overall transportation goals.

A number of communities are known to have implemented innovative strategies to manage accessible parking. This document provides an overview of accessible parking practices in:

- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Arlington County, Virginia
- Winnipeg, Canada
- Boulder, Colorado
- New York City, New York
- Chicago, Illinois
- St. Louis, Missouri
- Houston, Texas
- Raleigh, North Carolina
- Detroit and Warren, Michigan
- Phoenix, Arizona

Not all the strategies identified below will be appropriate for San Francisco. Rather, these strategies are intended to help the SFMTA and other stakeholders learn from the experience of other communities. In no way does this document make recommendations or propose new policies. The ideas and strategies summarized in this document will be discussed as part of community outreach.

**Note:** The term “accessible parking zones” is used throughout this document to identify spaces that provide dedicated parking spaces for people with disabilities. As each locality refers to these spaces differently—disabled parking spots, handicap spaces, blue zones, red meters—this is done to have a consistent vocabulary for understanding the issue.



## Summary of accessible parking policies and practices by jurisdiction

Location	Context	Strategies employed	Results
<b>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</b>	In 2001, the city worked with the community to identify strategies to address parking issues related to the abuse of placards, which provided free, unrestricted parking at meters, that affected people with disabilities along with downtown businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accessible parking zones</li> <li>• Charge disabled placard holders for parking</li> <li>• Allow additional time</li> <li>• Increase enforcement</li> <li>• Amend administrative rules</li> </ul>	<p>Less fraud and increased access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placards displayed in downtown dropped from 65% to 2%.</li> <li>• On-street parking availability increased from 2% to 13%.</li> </ul>
<b>Arlington County, Virginia</b>	In 1998, Arlington County identified that placard abuse was having a significant impact on parking meter availability in their downtown and business districts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accessible parking zones</li> <li>• Charge disabled placard holders for parking</li> <li>• Allow additional time</li> <li>• Multiple payment options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased access in both accessible parking zones and at standard parking meters.</li> </ul>
<b>Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada</b>	In 2008, the city determined that its policy of exempting vehicles with placards from time limits and meter payment fostered widespread abuse that reduced access to the curb for people with disabilities and other drivers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accessible parking zones</li> <li>• Charge disabled placard holders for parking</li> <li>• Allow additional time</li> <li>• Increase enforcement</li> <li>• Multiple payment options</li> <li>• Amend administrative rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased enforcement saw a large increase in the number of citations given.</li> <li>• After receiving negative feedback about the city's proof-of-payment system utilizing multi-space meters, additional payment options were instituted.</li> </ul>



Location	Context	Strategies employed	Results
<p><b>Boulder, Colorado</b></p>	<p>Boulder has long-standing accessible parking policies that include using parking funds to pay for free transit passes for businesses in the downtown. Accessible parking policies dovetail with their transportation program's overall goal of modal shift away from driving and making sure that those who need to drive have access to metered parking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accessible parking zones</li> <li>• Charge disabled placard holders for parking</li> <li>• Multiple payment options</li> <li>• Amend administrative rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 1995 and 2005, drive-alone rates fell by a third in Boulder.</li> <li>• In 2011, 64% of downtown employees used alternative transit to get to work, helping to decrease parking demand and increase parking availability at meters.</li> </ul>
<p><b>New York City</b></p>	<p>New York City has its own placard program and does not provide any parking privileges for people who display placards from out-of-state or from New York State. New York's unique parking rules add complexity to parking access for people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strict eligibility criteria</li> <li>• Certification by NYC Dept. of Health doctor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer placards are issued in the city than in other jurisdictions.</li> <li>• Program costs are in the millions annually.</li> <li>• Access for city-placard holders is better than for non-placard holders, but low overall parking availability means less parking access for people with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chicago, Illinois</b></p>	<p>Since 2006, Chicago and the State of Illinois have focused on enforcement and penalties to curb the abuse of placards, a problem that decreases access for people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase enforcement</li> <li>• Increase fines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placard abuse continues to be an ongoing problem.</li> <li>• Access has not improved for placard holders.</li> <li>• New legislation allows Chicago to begin pricing in 2014, with some exemptions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>St. Louis, Missouri</b></p>	<p>Placard holders pay for parking in St. Louis, except for those whose disability prevents them from activating a parking meter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charge disabled placard holders for parking</li> <li>• Amend administrative rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abuse of payment exemption was significantly reduced after approval process was amended to include certification of need from physician.</li> </ul>





Location	Context	Strategies employed	Results
<p><b>Houston, Texas</b></p>	<p>Until 2006, despite an aggressive enforcement program, the city identified placard abuse as having a significant impact on access to parking for people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accessible parking zones</li> <li>• Charge disabled placard holders for parking</li> <li>• Allow additional time</li> <li>• Multiple payment options</li> <li>• Increase enforcement</li> <li>• Education programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to parking, both at meters and accessible parking zones has increased since the comprehensive set of strategies were put in place.</li> <li>• However, some placard fraud continues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Raleigh, North Carolina</b></p>	<p>In 2006 and 2008, two task forces identified placard abuse as having a significant impact on parking availability and accessibility for people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charge disabled placard holders for parking</li> <li>• Allow additional time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where parking meters are installed, access has increased.</li> <li>• Placard abuse continues in accessible parking zones that are not metered due to the lack of parking availability in those areas.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Detroit and Warren, Michigan</b></p>	<p>Detroit and Warren, Michigan, both have the same policies, but Warren is more proactive in enforcing accessible parking zones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charge for parking</li> <li>• Multiple payment options</li> <li>• Increase enforcement (Warren)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placard abuse is a problem in accessible parking zones in Detroit, especially during the winter.</li> <li>• Warren's more active enforcement has resulted in more access for valid placard holders.</li> </ul>



Location	Context	Strategies employed	Results
<p><b>Phoenix, Arizona</b></p>	<p>In 2001, Phoenix identified the misuse of placards as having a significant impact on parking availability for all drivers, including people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More accessible parking zones</li> <li>• Charge for parking</li> <li>• Allow additional time</li> <li>• Increase enforcement</li> <li>• Education programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placard holders have increased access to dedicated parking spaces.</li> <li>• Parking availability has increased for all users</li> <li>• Placard abuse has diminished.</li> </ul>



## Accessible parking management strategies

### Eligibility

Typically, the qualifications to receive a disability parking placard is governed at the state and do not vary in great amounts from state to state. However, New York City has developed its own placard program with more stringent requirements and the city does not recognize non-city placards on its streets.

### Accessible parking zones

Like San Francisco, many cities have installed on-street, accessible parking zones that are reserved for people with disabled parking placards, but practice varies. For example, Arlington has a goal of installing accessible parking zones in four percent of on-street metered parking while New York City provides no dedicated accessible zones but allows city-permit holders to park in many of its “no parking” zones.

### Parking rates and time limits

Parking rates and longer time limits are increasingly being used by communities to manage access to parking. Strategies range from charging nothing to charging the full rate for parking. A few localities offer an exemption from parking payment for those who are physically unable to feed the meter. Strategies regarding the duration placard holders can stay in one spot range from observing the posted time limit, to providing some additional time to the limit for placard holders, to having no time limit at all.

### Payment methods and technology

Communities that require placard holders to pay parking meters typically offer a range of payment options, sometimes with the explicit goal of enabling placard holders to pay the meter. Strategies include shortening the height of parking meters for those in wheelchairs, in-vehicle meters, pay-by-phone systems, smartphone apps, pre-paid smart cards, pre-paid parking permits/coupons, and credit cards in addition to coins. Some of these systems allow parkers to remotely add to their time without returning to their vehicle.

### Enforcement

Enforcement strategies include stings, increased patrols, and volunteer enforcement. Parking enforcement officers also received new tools such as hand-held devices and access to databases of permit holders. Existing fines were increased and new ones added for those who park in accessible spaces without a placard or are caught misusing placards.

### Education

Most communities have information about accessible parking on their websites and many provide pamphlets outlining their parking programs. A few cities have instituted educational programs that go beyond providing information and target specific actions. Notable examples include Houston, where they educate doctors on



the scope and impact of placard abuse and Phoenix’s “Save Our Space” campaign which informs the public on the importance of honoring accessible parking zones.

**Administrative**

A few cities have changed their rules and ordinances to address specific local issues. In New York City, local permits must list the license plate (up to 10) for which the permit is being issued and permit holders must be qualified by a Department of Health physician, or their designee. In Philadelphia, the proliferation of people using placards to get out of parking tickets resulted in the city changing the rules for addressing parking ticket complaints.



## Accessible parking management strategies by jurisdiction

Location	Eligibility and certification strategies
<b>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</b>	Physician, chiropractor, podiatrist, physician's assistant, or a certified registered nurse practitioner licensed or certified to practice in this commonwealth or in a contiguous state. A health care provider may only certify disabilities within his or her scope of practice.
<b>Arlington, Virginia</b>	Physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, podiatrist, chiropractor. Each profession is listed as being able to specific conditions.
<b>Winnipeg, Canada</b>	Licensed medical physician, registered clinic-based nurse practitioner, chiropractor, occupational therapist, or physiotherapist.
<b>Boulder, Colorado</b>	Physician, physician assistant, podiatrist, advanced practice nurse. License in Colorado or a state that shares a common border with Colorado. Commissioned medical officers of the armed forces or of the United States public health service or of the United States Veteran's Administration.
<b>New York City</b>	New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation physician or other Department of Health-designated physician.
<b>Chicago, Illinois</b>	Licensed physician, physician assistant or an advanced practice nurse.
<b>St. Louis, Missouri</b>	Licensed physician, chiropractor, podiatrist, physician's assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, or optometrist. Obtaining a disabled parking payment exemption permit includes a placard application with a doctor's statement as well as an interview with the Commissioner on the Disabled.
<b>Houston, Texas</b>	Licensed physician, podiatrist, or optometrist.
<b>Raleigh, North Carolina</b>	Licensed physician, ophthalmologist, optometrist, or the Division of Services for the Blind.





<b>Location</b>	<b>Eligibility and certification strategies</b>
<b>Detroit and Warren, Michigan</b>	Physician, chiropractor, optometrist, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner.
<b>Phoenix, Arizona</b>	Authorized physician (doctor of medicine, osteopathy, podiatry, or chiropractic, licensed in US), registered nurse practitioner, or hospital administrator.



Location	On-street accessible parking zone provision strategies
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased the number of placard-required spaces</li> <li>● Except when infeasible, accessible spaces are at the block ends</li> <li>● In newly metered areas, install one space designated for people with disabilities on each metered block</li> </ul>
Arlington County, Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At the request of a person with disabilities, a metered space can be designated for people with disabilities</li> <li>● Currently about 2% of spaces have been designated as accessible only</li> </ul>
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Added 40 new placard-only spaces near health clinics</li> </ul>
Boulder, Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spaces are provided downtown and near the university campus</li> </ul>
New York City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● City permit allows the driver to park at any space south of 59<sup>th</sup> St on weekdays</li> <li>● City permit allows parking in "No Parking" or "No Standing" spaces except for specified restricted hours</li> </ul>
Chicago, Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spaces available in residential areas</li> </ul>
St. Louis, Missouri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spaces available in residential areas</li> </ul>
Houston, Texas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The number of spaces has grown from 45 in 2005 to 180 in 2011</li> <li>● New installations planned</li> </ul>
Raleigh, North Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Available in some neighborhoods</li> </ul>



Location	On-street accessible parking zone provision strategies
Detroit and Warren, Michigan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Limited number downtown</li> </ul>
Phoenix, Arizona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Available throughout downtown</li> </ul>

Location	Meter payment and time limit strategies
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders pay posted meter rate</li> <li>● Placard holders allowed one free extra hour beyond posted limit</li> <li>● Vans with wheelchair lifts are exempt from payment and time limits</li> </ul>
Arlington County, Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders pay posted rate</li> <li>● Placards holders may park twice as long as the posted time limits</li> </ul>
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders pay posted meter rate (depending on meter technology, may only pay for first two hours in some cases)</li> <li>● Proof of payment, drivers must return to car to display ticket unless paid by cell</li> <li>● Placard holder can park for up to four hours</li> </ul>
Boulder, Colorado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holder pays posted rate</li> <li>● Placard holders observe the posted time limits</li> </ul>
New York City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● City-issued permit holders do not pay for meters</li> <li>● City-issued permit holders have no time limit in on-street spaces</li> </ul>
Chicago, Illinois	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders do not pay for meters (subject to change in 2014)</li> <li>● Placard holders do not have a time limit, unless time limit is 30 minutes or less</li> </ul>





Location	Meter payment and time limit strategies
<p><b>St. Louis, Missouri</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders pay posted rate</li> <li>● Payment exemption for people who are physically unable to pay the meter</li> <li>● Placard holders observe the posted time limits</li> </ul>
<p><b>Houston, Texas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vehicles with placards may park for free for the time limit posted at the meter zone, and then can pay for the second cycle</li> </ul>
<p><b>Raleigh, North Carolina</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders pay posted rates</li> <li>● Placard holders have no time limits in metered spaces</li> </ul>
<p><b>Detroit and Warren, Michigan</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders pay posted rate</li> <li>● Payment exemption for people who are physically unable to pay the meter</li> <li>● Placard holders observe the posted time limits</li> </ul>
<p><b>Phoenix, Arizona</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard holders pay posted rates</li> <li>● Placard holders have an additional hour beyond posted time restrictions</li> </ul>



Location	Payment methods and technology strategies
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Coins and bills, smart cards, credit cards
Arlington County, Virginia	Coins, credit cards, in-vehicle parking "meters" for lease or purchase (iPark)
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	Coins, credit cards, pay-by-phone, prepaid permit, coupons
Boulder, Colorado	Coins, tokens, credit and debit cards, prepaid parking coupons, smart cards (Meter Key)
New York City	Coins, credit cards (muni meter only), smart card (muni meter only)
Chicago, Illinois	Coins, credit cards
St. Louis, Missouri	Coins
Houston, Texas	Pay-by-phone, mobile app, internet payment
Raleigh, North Carolina	Cash, credit cards; purchase as much time as needed in a single purchase
Detroit and Warren, Michigan	Cash, credit and debit, cell phone payments, smart cards
Phoenix, Arizona	Coins, credit cards



Location	Enforcement strategies
<p><b>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased enforcement on illegal parking in ADA required accessible spaces in off-street spaces.</li> <li>● Ensure that developments with off-street parking provide the required ADA spaces.</li> <li>● Require parking lot owners to annually certify that they are providing their required spaces.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Placard-related parking tickets increased by 114% from 2007-2008 to about 7,400.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Chicago, Illinois</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sting operations utilizing a new database tracking placard registration, officers stop random vehicles displaying placards and ask users to produce identification indicating they are the individual with the same name on the disabled placard registration.</li> <li>● In 2006, drivers misusing accessible parking spaces and placards began facing stiff financial penalties, license suspensions and, for repeat offenders, license revocations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Houston, Texas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Volunteer parking enforcement program.</li> <li>● Monthly sting operations are done with the Houston Police Department to target violators who misuse placards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Detroit and Warren, Michigan</b></p>	<p>Warren uses police officers to enforce using the state placard database for verification.</p>
<p><b>Phoenix, Arizona</b></p>	<p>Accessible Compliance Enforcement (ACE): volunteers issue citations for the misuse of disabled parking in private lots.</p>



Location	Education strategies
<p><b>Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada</b></p>	<p>30,000 notices to placard holders about need to pay.</p>
<p><b>New York City</b></p>	<p>Created in 1999, the Handicap Parking Surcharge and Education Program imposes a \$30 mandatory surcharge in addition to any other sentence, penalty, or fine assessed for parking illegally in a designated accessible parking space. Counties collect the revenue and are authorized to use their funds to contract with private organizations to provide advocacy, education, literature distribution, and public awareness of the laws and proper use of accessible parking spaces and “to educate New York drivers on the importance of making handicap spaces available to those who really need them.”</p>
<p><b>Houston, Texas</b></p>	<p>Provide materials to medical offices and county tax assessors who issue the placards to educate them on the extent of abuse of disabled parking.</p> <p>The Parking Management Division of Administration and Regulatory Affairs and Houston Commission on Disabilities have created an accessible parking awareness campaign to help reduce the misuse of accessible parking permits.</p>
<p><b>Phoenix, Arizona</b></p>	<p>Save Our Space program educates the public about the importance of saving disabled parking spaces for the people who depend on them. Members of the public report by phone if they see vehicles parking in disabled spaces without placards.</p>
Location	Administrative strategies
<p><b>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</b></p>	<p>Cancelling parking ticket for car not registered with placard requires a copy of the placard holder’s driver’s license and a signed affidavit that they were using the car when ticketed.</p>
<p><b>New York City</b></p>	<p>City permit lists specific license plate numbers (up to 10) and must be in the vehicle (no copies).</p>
<p><b>Chicago, Illinois</b></p>	<p>New placards are clearly marked with expiration dates on mirror tags, along with the user’s birth year and gender.</p>



# Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee Recommendations Report

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Updated October 22, 2013

## Executive summary

On a daily basis, people with disabilities have trouble finding parking in San Francisco, making it more difficult to access their destinations. Current disabled parking placard and blue zone policies are failing to increase access for people with disabilities, reducing parking availability for all drivers. The City's Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee worked together to find a better solution.

In October 2012, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and the Mayor's Office on Disability brought together the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee, a stakeholder group comprised mostly of disability rights advocates. After six months of collaborative work, the group came to a broad consensus on a package of policy recommendations to increase access to street parking and reduce disabled parking placard misuse.

The Mayor's Office on Disability, the SFMTA, and members of the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee are conducting significant stakeholder outreach regarding these recommendations. Outreach began in May 2013. At the same time, the SFMTA has taken steps towards implementing the recommendations that are under local control. Local recommendations including increasing the number of blue zones and improving disabled parking placard misuse enforcement. Other recommendations require changes at the state level. These include improving the DMV's oversight of placard approvals and allowing qualified jurisdictions the option of requiring meter payment and four-hour time limits for placard holders.



Mayor's Office  
on Disability



## IMPROVING PARKING ACCESS IN SAN FRANCISCO

### Problem: insufficient access for people with disabilities

The Committee's first task was to define any problems related to disabled parking placards, blue zones, and on-street parking access in general. They identified the following:

- People with disabilities can't find parking
- There isn't enough parking turnover to ensure there's enough parking for everyone
- Public perception that people with hidden disabilities don't deserve placards

### Criteria: ensuring solutions that increase access

Based on the existing problems, the Committee then developed criteria by which they would evaluate possible policy solutions.

#### EFFECTIVENESS CRITERIA

Effectiveness criterion	Measure	Desired results
Makes it easier for people with disabilities to find parking in blue zones	Change in parking availability in blue zones	Improved parking availability in blue zones
Makes it easier for people, especially those with disabilities, to find parking in general metered spaces	Change in parking availability at general metered on-street parking spaces	Sufficient parking availability at metered on-street spaces (improved in congested areas)
Reduces placard misuse	Expected change in placard misuse	Reduction in placard misuse
Recognizes diverse needs/requirements of the disabled community	Whether or not policy is suitable for people with disabilities who are low income vs. not low income, and for different types of mobility impairments	Policy designed to be suitable for some variability in income and disability type



**FEASIBILITY CRITERIA**

Feasibility criterion	Measure	Desired results
Approval feasibility	Policy/legal change requirements  Likelihood of support  Ease of explanation to policymakers	Sufficient comprehension and support to achieve approval
Ease of user interface	Whether it meets ADA requirements  Whether policy is easy to understand	Fulfills ADA, and existing communications channels are sufficient to make outside visitors understand changes.
Implementation and operational feasibility	Capability (ability + resources + technology) of relevant agency/agencies to implement and operate solution  Feasibility in other California jurisdictions	Relevant agency/agencies have sufficient capability  Feasible in other jurisdictions
Financial feasibility	Fiscal impact to City	No adverse fiscal impact to City
Time needed to get new policy approved and implemented	Anticipated year of implementation	A mix of near- and far-term solutions

## **Recommendations: proven solutions to improve access**

The San Francisco Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee achieved a broad consensus on an integrated program of policy recommendations to increase parking access for people with disabilities and improve parking availability overall. All recommendations passed with at least 70 percent of the committee expressing support. To see the final votes and discussions, including dissent statements, see the [March 26 Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee meeting notes](#).<sup>xii</sup> Committee members emphasized that the recommendations function together as a package, and noted that some policy changes are local and some require state law change.

### **1. INCREASE BLUE ZONES**

#### **1a. Increase blue zones to at least four percent of metered spaces (local)**

To reserve more parking spaces for people with disabilities, a number of spaces equivalent to four percent of metered parking spaces should be blue zones, representing a 70 percent increase (equivalent to roughly 470 blue zoned spaces) beyond what is in place today.

#### **1b. Review San Francisco's requirements for blue zone placement (local)**

Under current [ADA and City guidelines](#),<sup>xiii</sup> many locations in need of blue zones will not be eligible. The Committee recommends that the San Francisco Mayor's Office on Disability and the SFMTA consider changing San Francisco's blue zone placement guidelines to enable blue zones in more places (ADA guidelines would not be altered).

### **2. IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT OF PLACARD MISUSE**

#### **2a. Photo or other identifier on placards (state)**

The Committee recommends the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) make a photo available to personnel enforcing placard use. This could be achieved by placing a photo on the placard itself, on the placard receipt, or tying a photo to the placard database used by enforcement personnel.

#### **2b. Improve local enforcement (local)**

To reduce fraudulent use of placards, San Francisco should explore options to improve placard enforcement and implement best practices. This could include increasing the number of PCOs on the Disabled Placard Detail, increasing stings, conducting outreach regarding placard enforcement, and beginning a volunteer program.



### 3. INCREASE OVERSIGHT OF PLACARD APPROVALS

#### 3a. Certifier verification program with state database overhaul (state)

The DMV does not currently have the technical capacity to keep information about the medical providers who certify placards in a searchable database. To increase transparency and accountability, the Committee recommends that the DMV develop and maintain a database to track and verify medical providers, using a system similar to the Bay Area Regional Transit Connection (RTC) Discount Card Program. First-time certifiers would be verified utilizing state medical licensing databases, and subsequent certifications by the same professional would be verified using the provider's previously scanned signature.

#### 3b. Clarify placard eligibility requirements by adding a functional definition to the "limited mobility" criteria (state)

The Committee recommends further defining the following eligibility criterion from the DMV's placard application: "disease or disorder which substantially impairs or interferes with mobility". Examples of functional definitions used in other states include "cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest" and "uses portable oxygen". The DMV's remaining eligibility criteria would not change.

#### 3c. Conduct enforcement on those who certify placards, using data from upgraded database (local)

The Committee recommends that police officers use the DMV placard certifier database recommended in 3a to focus enforcement on medical providers that repeatedly issue more placards than one would expect.

### 4. REMOVE THE METER PAYMENT EXEMPTION REQUIREMENT

#### 4a. Provide local control, allowing jurisdictions with accessible meter payment options to require parking meter payment for vehicles displaying placards (state)

Based on experiences in other jurisdictions, meter payment is the most effective way to reduce disabled placard abuse and make parking spaces available because it removes the financial incentive to cheat.<sup>5</sup> The Committee recommends requiring placard holders to pay at the meter in San Francisco, including blue zones that are in metered areas.

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<sup>5</sup> See [Accessible Policy Options Evaluation](#) and [Accessible Parking Policies and Practices in Other Jurisdictions](#)

Statewide, they stipulate that this should only be allowed as an option in jurisdictions which provide accessible payment options for all meters.

This would mean that qualified local jurisdictions would be able to decide whether a meter payment exemption makes sense for them. California is one of only fifteen states that require local jurisdictions to exempt placard holders from meter payment, and one of only five that require both payment and time limit exemptions.<sup>6</sup>

## **5. DIRECT REVENUE TO ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

### **5a. Revenue from metered blue zones used for accessibility improvements (local)**

To further the significant work San Francisco has done to make its public rights-of-way increasingly accessible, the SFMTA should designate funds from metered blue zones for accessibility improvements that would enhance mobility for people with disabilities.

## **6. ALLOW JURISDICTIONS TO ESTABLISH REASONABLE TIME LIMITS**

### **6a. Allow local jurisdictions to implement time limits at regular metered spaces and blue zones, provided that those time limits are no shorter than four hours (state)**

In order to help open parking spaces, the committee recommends that placard holders in San Francisco have four-hour time limits at regular and blue meters, unless the posted time limit is longer. At the state level, the state should give local jurisdictions the option of instituting time limits for placard holders, provided those time limits are no shorter than four hours. Disability rights advocates in jurisdictions with three- and four-hour time limits report that the time seems to be sufficient for people with disabilities.<sup>7</sup>

### **6b. Allow local jurisdictions to implement time limits in green zones, provided that those time limits are no shorter than 30 minutes (state)**

Paid for by qualifying merchants, green zones are short-term parking zones intended to support business and reduce double-parking. State law currently exempts placard holders from time limits in green zones, rendering many green zones ineffective. The Committee recommends that a time limit be set for placard holders in green zones, not including time spent getting in and out of the vehicle. Green zones are generally directly in front of the relevant business.

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<sup>6</sup> October 16, 2012, memo from the California Senate Office of Research

<sup>7</sup> See the [interviews with advocates and staff in other jurisdictions](#)

## Timeline of next steps

Working with Committee members, the Mayor's Office on Disability and the SFMTA identified the following action plan.

### 1. CONDUCT OUTREACH REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS

#### May 2013 and ongoing

The Mayor's Office on Disability, the SFMTA, and members of the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee are conducting significant stakeholder outreach regarding these recommendations. Outreach began in May 2013. See list of presentations in the next section.

### 2. TAKE STEPS TO IMPLEMENT ITEMS THAT ARE UNDER LOCAL CONTROL

#### June 2013 to 2015

The SFMTA has begun taking steps to implement the recommendations that are under local control. As of July 2013, the SFMTA has done the following:

- Increased the number of PCOs serving on the Disabled Placard Detail by over 25 percent, so now the SFMTA has 14 PCOs dedicated to enforcing placard misuse.
- Identified a project lead for establishing more blue zones and begun identifying potential new blue zone locations. The SFMTA aims to install some new blue zones by the end of the year and complete the project by mid-2015.

### 3. SEEK LOCAL RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT

#### Late 2013

- SFMTA Board of Directors
- San Francisco Board of Supervisors
- San Francisco County Transportation Authority Board of Commissioners

### 4. STATE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

#### Late 2013 to January 2015

With local support, we would pursue a state legislative sponsor in fall 2013. At the earliest, a bill could be introduced in 2014 and go into effect in 2015. The League of California Cities Transportation, Communications and Public Works Policy Committee

has provided conceptual support for the state law changes and directed League staff to continue working on the issue.

The state bill could include the following:

- Improve DMV oversight of placard approvals, including tracking and verification of the medical providers who sign placard applications.
- Clarify placard eligibility requirements without removing any existing qualifying criteria.
- Make placard holder photo available to placard enforcement personnel.
- Remove the meter payment exemption requirement, so that local jurisdictions with accessible meter payment options can choose to require placard holders to pay at the meter.
- Allow jurisdictions the option of establishing placard holder time limits of no shorter than four hours in regular metered spaces and blue zones, and no shorter than 30 minutes in green zones.

## 5. ESTABLISH LOCAL POLICY

### Early 2015

The state law change would authorize but not require qualifying jurisdictions to require time limits and meter payment for placard holders; San Francisco would still need to pass its own local policy.



# Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates

## Disabled Parking Work Group Recommendations



[dol.wa.gov](http://dol.wa.gov)



**Department of Licensing**  
**Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates**

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# Department of Licensing

## Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates

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### The Challenge

Each day, people with and without disabilities have difficulty finding parking within many urban areas of the state. It is perceived by some that there is abuse in the use of disabled parking placards and disabled special license plates. Disabled placards and license plates are being fraudulently used to park in reserved spaces and are being used to obtain free and unlimited parking privileges that are provided to persons with disabilities through chapter 46.19 RCW. As such, the Legislature directed the Department of Licensing (DOL) to establish a work group to study disabled placard and special license plate use and to develop a strategic plan to end any abuse.

- Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5024 directed DOL to convene a work group to:
  - Examine the use of parking placards and special license plates for persons with disabilities; and
  - Develop a strategic plan for ending any abuse
- In developing this plan, the department must work with:
  - The Department of Health (DOH);
  - Disabled citizen advocacy groups; and
  - Representatives from local government
- The work group must be composed of no more than two representatives from each of the above entities. The work group may, when appropriate, consult with any other public or private entity in order to complete the strategic plan.

The work group consisted of representatives from DOL, representatives from DOH, representatives from the City of Seattle, and representatives from disabled citizen advocacy groups. The work group gathered input from the public via an email address for the workgroup that was published by several media outlets. In finalizing the recommendations contained in this strategic plan, the work group shared its proposed recommendations with disabled citizens and disabled advocacy groups, local and state law enforcement, local government, and the Seattle Commission for People with DisAbilities.

### The Options

The work group considered many options to reduce abuse. After researching best practices of other cities and states, reviewing many different surveys and studies, gathering public input and examining the pros and cons of the options, the work group came to a consensus on its recommendations to reduce the opportunity for abuse.

While many of the stories and information are anecdotal, the work group concluded that the disabled parking privilege is easily abused and the verifiable data does show there is abuse of the system. In fact, several members of the work group witnessed the suspected abuse of a parking placard while on a tour by Seattle parking enforcement officers. During this visit, an officer was citing a vehicle in front of the work group for using an expired placard and

## Department of Licensing

### Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates

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discussing his observations of abuse. During this discussion, a person kept walking back and forth by the work group and listening to the conversation; He proceeded to jump into his vehicle (a few cars down), hastily pulled the placard from the mirror and drove off. His behavior led the work group to believe he was using an invalid placard in a metered and time limited parking space.

### The Recommendations/Strategies

#### Recommendation #1: Establish a new payment exempt disabled permit

##### Description:

- Revise the existing metered parking exemption and the additional time allotment by transitioning the current permanent disabled parking permit system into a standard permit and a payment exempt permit.
- Allow local jurisdictions to pass ordinances regarding meter parking.

##### Why:

In reviewing the many studies<sup>1</sup>, reviewing the many media articles, analyzing the available information, and listening to the public, it is apparent that free parking or allowing time beyond that posted for those with the disabled placard or license plate are the likely root causes to fraudulent use of disabled parking privileges. Experience from other states indicate that other reforms, in absence of removing free parking for all placard holders, are not effective at reducing placard abuse. The workgroup concluded that eliminating these would have the greatest impact on reducing abuse.

The standard permit would retain all current privileges except the ability to park in paid parking zones without making payment and parking in a stall for beyond the posted maximum time limit. Local jurisdictions could exercise discretion, by ordinance, to allow such standard permit holders free parking where payment is otherwise required and to allow time beyond the maximum posted limit.

For those who have certain physical limitations the work group recommends a *new* placard that allows free parking and parking beyond the posted time limit. While the work group acknowledges there would still be an avenue for abuse with a new permit, this 'Payment Exempt Disabled Permit' would be created to allow parking free of charge and for time beyond the posted limit (unless otherwise signed) for holders with the following qualifications:

- Cannot insert coins in parking meters or obtain tickets from ticket machines in parking lots or ramps due to a lack of fine motor control of both hands.
- Cannot reach up to 42 inches from the ground, due to lack of finger, hand, or upper extremity strength or mobility.
- Cannot approach a parking meter due to use of a wheelchair or other device.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B, beginning on page 39



## Department of Licensing Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates

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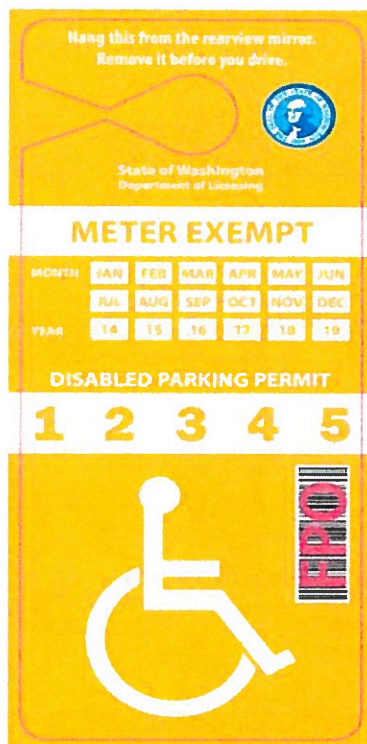
- Cannot walk more than 20 feet due to an orthopedic, neurological, cardiovascular, or lung condition which is so severe that the ability to walk is almost completely impeded.

The work group attempted to determine the intent behind the laws of 1984 in which the option for free parking was created. We were not able to determine intent and could not find a nexus between having a disability and being able to pay for parking. The work group recognizes the economic factors of time, the additional time some persons with disabilities need, and increased costs for some within the disabled community and believe we addressed those issues with creating the 'Payment Exempt Disabled Permit' and providing local jurisdictions with the authority to administer their on-street parking.

The move to a payment exempt permit retains an access provision for users who have a physical impediment to paying for parking. It has been implemented in Illinois and Michigan. Oregon has introduced a similar permit system. In Illinois, 10% to 15% of disabled placard holders qualify for a payment exempt permit based on similar criteria.

This recommendation will require a minimum of twenty four months from effective date of legislation for implementation.<sup>2</sup>

Following is the front of a mock 'Payment Exempt Disabled Permit':



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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A, page 19

## Department of Licensing Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates

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### Recommendation #2: Change temporary placard validity period

#### **Description:**

Change the temporary disability placard maximum validity period from six months to twelve months.

#### **Why:**

A temporary disabled parking privilege cannot be renewed. If the applicant's condition lasts for more than six months a new application with a health care practitioner signature must be submitted to the department. When completing the application for a temporary placard the health care practitioner is currently limited to two options: check the box for temporary privileges (6 months) or give the applicant permanent status which is good for five years. By extending the temporary privilege period to twelve months, the health care practitioner has the option of authorizing up to a year of parking privileges with one application.

We estimate most applicants would recover from non-permanent injuries within the one year timeframe. If after one year the applicant has not recovered, another application can be submitted by the health care practitioner.

Allowing temporary disabled parking privileges to be issued up to twelve months will reduce the burden on customers that have conditions expected to last more than six months but do not qualify for permanent privileges. This will also reduce the chance of health care practitioners certifying permanent privileges when a patient has a condition that will last for more than six months but is not permanent.

The health care practitioner will have the opportunity to approve the disability parking privilege for any number of months, from one to twelve. If a condition is anticipated to last three months, the person will be provided a temporary placard that expires in three months (end of month).

### Recommendation #3: Clarify and increase penalties for fraudulent use

#### **Description:**

Clarify and increase or create penalties (misdemeanors) for:

- Unauthorized Use
- Illegal obtainment
- Selling a privilege (placard/plate/tab)
- Allow law enforcement to seize invalid/illegally used placards, plates, tabs and identification cards

#### **Why:**

One of the more popular suggestions given by the public during our outreach was to increase the penalties. Ideas varied from impounding the vehicle to creating a heavy financial penalty to revoking the driving privilege. The work group considered the varied ideas and settled on establishing or increasing penalties as misdemeanors and authorizing

## Department of Licensing Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates

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law enforcement to confiscate placards, plates, tabs, and identification cards. There is currently no penalty for selling a disabled parking privilege and unauthorized use is vague. Identifying and clarifying this in law is one step to deter the potential fraudulent use. Increasing the penalty for unauthorized use or illegal obtainment is a likely step to deter fraudulent use. In determining the level of violation, the work group reviewed other similar violations within title 46 RCW and concluded that misdemeanor is the most appropriate.

It is not clear if law enforcement can take custody of invalid or illegally used placards, plates, tabs, or identification cards as the law is silent in this area. Providing law enforcement with this tool will reduce the future ability to fraudulently use that privilege. The work group heard stories of the same vehicle violating the disability parking privilege continuously; one example was the same vehicle utilizing an expired placard every day of the week. If that placard could have been confiscated, that person could no longer violate the disabled parking privilege.

### Recommendation #4: Clarify language for citation dismissals

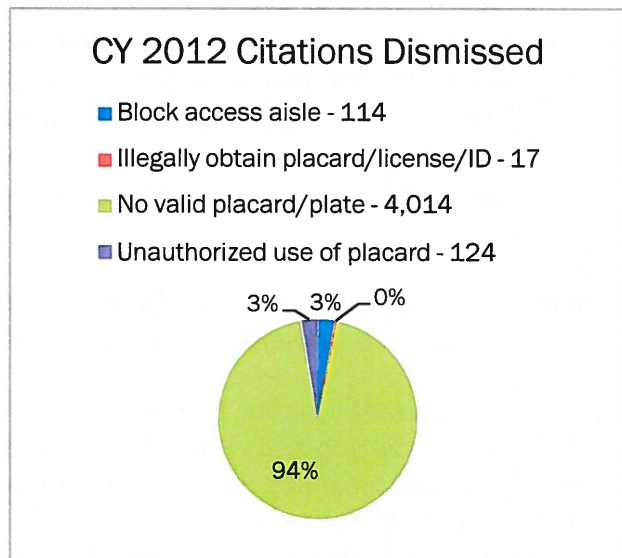
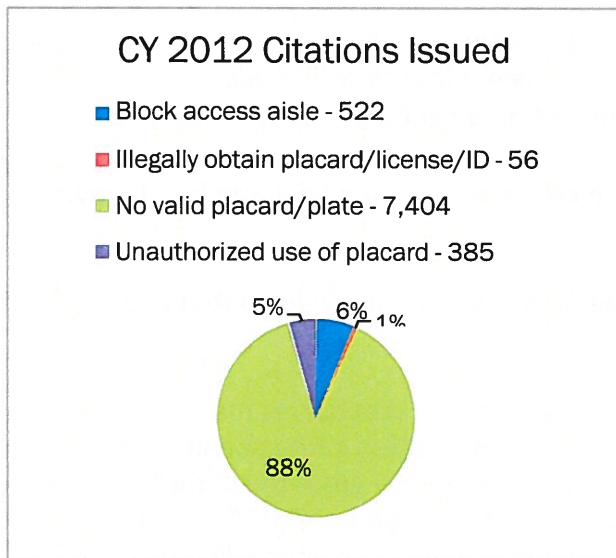
#### **Description:**

Amend the language related to suspension of penalty in RCW 46.19.050(4).

#### **Why:**

The vast majority of citations issued in 2012 were for not having a valid placard or plate and as you can see in the chart below, 54.2 percent of these citations were dismissed.

Workgroup members heard from magistrates and judges that if an individual presents an unexpired placard at the court hearing, the penalty is suspended and no finding is entered. Adding language to this statute gives courts more flexibility to appropriately enforce the law and allows legitimate users that forgot to hang their placard have the infraction dismissed.





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### Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates

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#### Recommendation #5: Placard redesign

##### **Description:**

##### Placard changes:

- Serial number at the center of placard
- Barcode at the bottom of the placard
- Enlarge print on the placard if space allows
- Place a statement regarding free parking eligibility/ineligibility on placards
- Place a statement on placards that the holder of the placard must be present to utilize placard

##### **Why:**

The proposed revisions to the placard incorporating the serial number and enlarged print will further assist law enforcement personnel in enforcing the disability parking laws. As well, as technology advances continue and law enforcement is obtaining new tools, a barcode will allow enforcement officers the ability to scan a placard and have the holder's information returned (as currently done through entering the serial number or calling DOL).

In addition, placing a statement on the placard clarifying placard privilege rules will help to inform those that transport persons with disabilities that the placard is not a permit

#### Recommendation #6: Improve the disability certification process

##### **Description:**

##### Application changes:

- Add language regarding violation of the Uniform Disciplinary Act, which provides disciplinary and licensure procedures for the licensed health and health-related professions and businesses, with standardized procedures for the licensure of health care professionals and the enforcement of laws.
- Add language to better explain to health care practitioners how to deal with a condition that will last longer than twelve months but less than five years.
- Add language indicating that health care practitioners should only approve for the expected temporary disability duration.
- Add a field on the application for the health care practitioner's DEA number, if any.

##### **Why:**

There are several changes to the Disabled Parking Application for individuals that could clarify expectations for health care practitioners.

1) The form currently states, "A parking permit for a person with disabilities may be issued only for a medical necessity that severely affects mobility or involves acute sensitivity to light. Knowingly providing false information on this application is a gross misdemeanor. The penalty is up to three hundred sixty-four days in jail and a fine of up to \$5,000 or both." This language appears directly under the health care practitioner's signature line and applies to the health care practitioner and the applicant. However, that is not necessarily

## **Department of Licensing**

### **Reducing Fraudulent Use of Disabled Parking Placards and Plates**

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clear to the reader. This language should be amended in statute to clarify to whom it applies. Additional language should also be added to alert the health care practitioner that knowingly providing false information could result in disciplinary action:

- A parking permit for a person with disabilities may be issued only for a medical necessity that severely affects mobility or involves acute sensitivity to light. An applicant or health care practitioner who knowingly provides false information on this application may be guilty of a gross misdemeanor. The penalty is up to three hundred sixty-four days in jail and a fine of up to \$5,000 or both. In addition, the health care practitioner may be subject to sanctions under chapter 18.130 RCW, the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

2) In addition to a signature, the form currently requires the health care practitioner's name, professional classification, license number, business address, and telephone number. All of this information is publicly available. A dishonest applicant could easily fill out this information and forge a signature. This issue could be mitigated if the form also asked for the health care practitioner's DEA number. Although not all practitioners eligible to sign these applications may possess a DEA number, it should be provided if it exists.

3) The language on the application may not adequately inform the health care practitioner about how to authorize a temporary placard. It currently has boxes that may be checked for "Permanent" or "Temporary for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 months." The practitioner is not given direction regarding how to choose between temporary or permanent or how to select the duration of a temporary authorization, nor is he or she informed that a temporary authorization can be renewed. As a result, practitioners may be authorizing permanent placards for temporary disabilities.

The language should be amended to add more information such as:

- Permanent – The disability is not expected to end or improve within five years.
- Temporary – The disability is expected to end or improve within twelve months or less. Anticipated length of disability is months. Note: authorization can be reissued if disability does not end or improve within the expected timeframe.

#### **Recommendation #7: Require the use of a prescription pad or letterhead for certification**

##### **Description:**

Have health care practitioners with prescribing privileges approve disabled parking privileges on a prescription pad and chiropractors approve on their office letterhead. Documents are to be included with an application for disability parking privileges.

##### **Why:**

As noted above, the form currently requires information about the health care practitioner that is publicly available. This, combined with a forged signature, may allow dishonest people to submit fraudulent applications.

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The rules for obtaining disabled parking placards, plates, and tabs could be amended to require that in addition to signing the application, the health care practitioner must also provide a signed authorization written on a tamper-resistant prescription pad or paper as defined in RCW 18.64.500. Chiropractors, who do not have prescriptive authority, must provide a signed authorization written upon their office letterhead. The authorization must be attached to the application and contain identifying information for the health care practitioner.

This measure would significantly reduce the potential for fraudulent applications.

### Oversight Measures of Medical Professionals

ESSB 5024, section 208(9) (c) required the strategic plan address “oversight measures to ensure that parking placards and special license plates for persons with disabilities are being properly issued, including: (A) The entity responsible for coordinating a randomized review of applications for special parking privileges; (B) a volunteer panel of medical professionals to conduct such reviews; (C) a means to protect the anonymity of both the medical professional conducting a review and the medical professional under review; (D) a means to protect the privacy of applicants by removing any personally identifiable information; and (E) possible sanctions against a medical professional for repeated improper issuances of parking placards or special license plates for persons with disabilities, including those sanctions listed in chapter 18.130 RCW”.

Possible sanctions have been addressed within the recommendations made above. We agree that practitioners should be subject to the sanctions in chapter 18.130 RCW, the Uniform Disciplinary Act, for intentional violations and have recommended placing that language on the application. However, the remainder of subsection (c)(i) assumes that there is abuse or fraud by health care practitioners taking place during the authorization process. The work group’s research did not find this to be true.

Currently, the law allows allopathic physicians, osteopathic physicians, chiropractors, podiatrists, naturopaths, advanced registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants to sign disabled placard parking applications. To determine trends related to health care practitioner authorizations, we analyzed all applications for the month of January 2013, a total of 8,212.

Profession	Permanent	Temporary
Allopathic Physician	3,112	2,849
Osteopathic Physician	226	223
Chiropractor	35	49
Podiatrist	46	439
Naturopath	7	8
Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner	291	221
Physician Assistant	223	483
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,940</b>	<b>4,272</b>



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Of the 8,212 total applications, only 75 health care practitioners signed more than 5 during the one month period. Of those 75, the vast majority of authorized placards were temporary rather than permanent. The most prolific practitioner, an allopathic physician, authorized 24 placards, 23 of which were temporary. He is an orthopedic surgeon specializing in foot, ankle and knee surgery.

A much more alarming trend was the significant number of applications where the name and license number of the practitioner did not match in the Department of Health's licensing database, the practitioner's license was expired, or the practitioner was deceased at the time of the application. Because all of the practitioner information required on the application is publicly available and signatures can be forged, it is reasonable to assume at least some of these applications were fraudulently submitted to the DOL.

Verification of practitioner names, license numbers, and active status does not require review by a panel of medical professionals. This task can be performed by anyone by simply accessing the Department of Health's website and using the Provider Credential Search function.

In addition, review of applications by a panel of medical professionals would likely be unhelpful. The majority of applications are based on the patient's inability to walk 200 feet without stopping to rest or their ability to walk is severely limited due to an arthritic, neurological or orthopedic condition. Review of the application itself would not reveal whether the cited condition actually exists. Meaningful review would require an independent medical examination of the patient. This would be time consuming, intrusive and non-confidential for all parties. Practitioners would be unlikely to volunteer their valuable time and patients could not be expected to travel to the practitioner's location.

### CY 2012 Count of Placards by Disability

Disability	Permanent	Temporary	Total
Acute sensitivity to automobile emissions	326	14	340
Cannot walk 200 feet without stopping to rest	87,552	7,426	94,978
Cannot walk without the use of assistive device	23,827	2,036	25,863
Cardiovascular disease/condition - Class III	5,505	144	5,649
Cardiovascular disease/condition - Class IV	869	15	884
Legally blind with limited mobility	967	7	974
Limited ability to walk due to arthritic/neurological/orthopedic condition	133,662	15,125	148,787
Lung Disease	4,990	122	5,112
Porphyria/Acute sensitivity to light	59	2	61
Use portable oxygen	4,306	134	4,440
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>262,063</b>	<b>25,025</b>	<b>287,088</b>

For these reasons, we suggest that the oversight measures described in subsection (c)(i) not be considered. Other more effective and efficient measures that have been recommended within this plan can be implemented to help ensure the application process is better controlled and subject to less abuse.

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#### The Options Not Chosen

The work group considered many other options that we determined did not rise to the level of the recommendations put forth. In considering these options, we looked at their benefits, their burden on the disabled community, their practicality, their likelihood of reducing fraudulent use, their ease of enforcement, and their financial costs.

As stated in the recommendations, the majority of studies indicated free parking was the likely primary cause for fraudulent use. The change within recommendation #1, in itself, should substantially reduce the fraudulent use and therefore many other options were given great consideration but not put forth as recommendations.

We believe the change to provide free parking and allow time beyond the posted limit to those with certain qualifying conditions creates a fair and equitable system. Also, authorizing local jurisdictions to allow for free parking or additional time for all placard holders provides greater flexibility. As well, other measures taken such as creating misdemeanors for violations, requiring approval through prescriptions, additional language on the application, creating a twelve-month temporary parking placard, and design changes to the placards will significantly reduce fraudulent use.

We also looked into the existing disabled parking database. While there are many ideas for improvement, we decided not to recommend any changes at this time. The DOL is currently engaged in a business and technology modernization project. As part of this modernization, the agency will have the opportunity to examine the disabled parking database's deficiencies and will be making a host of improvements to the agency's IT capabilities over the next several years that will lead to better data reporting capability and accuracy.

Some of the ideas/options not recommended, gathered from public input or generated by the work group, are:

- Place color strips/stickers on the placard for month and year expiration
- Have the placard holder's photo on placard
- Have the placard holder's disability listed on placard (or some indication)
- List allowable license plates on the placard for those transporting an authorized person
- Require expired or damaged placards be returned
- Reduce the number of placards issued per individual from two to one
- Create a wallet card for those that drive the disabled person
- Have a wallet sized placard that inserts into a clear hang-tag
- Place a sticker on the windshield that has a photo of the person
- Create a sliding scale for metered parking based on income
- Provide reduced rate parking
- Eliminate placards, issue plates only
- Eliminate plates, issue placards only
- Issue a plate only, no placards, for those that operate their vehicle

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- Renew privileges more frequently than the 5 years
- Tighten qualifications – make more stringent
- A loss of disabled parking privilege for violations
- Impound vehicles violating disabled parking laws/rules
- Revoke a driving privilege for violations
- Have prison terms for misusing parking privileges or for providing false information
- Revoke disabled parking privilege after 3rd illegal use
- Allow online access to placard holder's information
- Offer rewards for reporting abuse
- Require placard holder to renew the disabled parking privilege in-person
- Eliminate the entire system to fund parking subsidies or transport

### The Publicly Accessible System

Section 208 (9) of ESSB 5024 requires the department to investigate a publicly accessible system and stipulates that:

“This system must not allow the public to access any personally identifiable information or protected health information of a person who has been issued a parking placard or special license plate.”

A web-based system can be created that will do the following:

- Provide validity results of the disabled parking privilege.
- Provide the following search methods:
  - Disabled parking placards serial number
  - Disabled special license plate number
- Return only restricted information to determine if a disabled placard or plate is valid.
- Include security to ensure that personally identifiable information or protected health information about the person who has been issued a parking placard or special license plate will not be released from the site.

The system will not:

- Provide any personally identifiable information.
- Require the user to have a SAW account.
- Capture any data about the searches being performed.
- Validate whether the plate or placard is being used by the correct person or on the correct vehicle.

The design and testing of this publicly accessible system will take approximately two months.



To:	Heather Earl		
From:	John Seyer, PE, PTOE	Project:	Laramie ADA Parking Study
CC:	project file		
Date:	March 4, 2008	Job No:	67187

RE: Parking Study Technical Memorandum

Ms. Earl:

This project was initiated to address concerns that have been raised by the Traffic Commission regarding the adequacy of current ADA-compliant {Americans with Disabilities Act) parking supply in downtown Laramie. This memorandum documents the analyses that we've performed to evaluate the state of current ADA-compliant parking supply, as well as our recommendations for improvements that would be necessary to bring this parking supply into ADA compliance. We believe that the information contained in this document will assist you in responding to the Traffic Commission. The process that we followed for this project involved the research into the required number of ADA-compliant parking spaces, the determination of the actual number of such parking spaces that are already provided in downtown, and the documentation of our findings in this memorandum.

### Parking Supply Requirements

The first step in this project's process involved the research into the required number of ADA-compliant parking spaces for the downtown area. Local and national resources were tapped to assist with this research.

Local resources included City staff members and members of the Downtown Development Authority. The culmination of these contacts pointed us in the direction of Chapter 17.40 of the City of Laramie Municipal Code. This chapter of the Code is titled "Standards for Parking, Loading and Trash Handling Facilities." Text in this chapter of the Code describes that off-street parking supply is not required of "Developed Areas" in which at least 25 percent of a given city block was occupied by non-residential buildings prior to March 3, 1964. Given the historic nature of downtown Laramie, this text would lead to the conclusion that no level of off-street parking supply, ADA-compliant or not, would be required of the City to provide in the downtown area. This finding was shared with City staff early on in this project as a potential answer to the Traffic Commission's concerns. Staff made the policy decision that this conclusion would not adequately serve the citizens of Laramie and, thus, would not be acceptable.

Further research into this chapter of the Code revealed requirements for the total number of parking spaces that would be required for various zoning districts throughout town; this chapter also documents the required number of ADA-compliant parking spaces. The metric by which the calculation of the total number of parking spaces would be made includes downtown's gross building area in square feet. However, DDA staff and other City contacts were unable to generate a definitive square footage of building throughout downtown, stating that the age of the buildings



in downtown and the lack of sufficient information make it extremely challenging to make an accurate calculation or even estimation. In addition, the variability of single-story and multi-story occupation makes even an aerial survey of the downtown area extremely difficult. Therefore, for purposes of this study, it was determined that the total number of parking spaces already provided in the downtown area would satisfy the Code requirements and the remainder of this study would focus on the resultant need for ADA-compliant parking spaces.

The noted requirements for ADA-compliant parking supply are based on the total number of off-street parking spaces throughout downtown. These requirements are chronicled in this chapter of the Code. National resources that were contacted regarding ADA-compliant parking supply included the ADA division of the Department of Justice (DOJ). This contact showed that the requirements in the Laramie Municipal Code, Title 17 (Zoning) are consistent with the DOJ's requirements for off-street ADA-compliant parking supply. The DOJ also noted that there aren't any requirements for on-street ADA-compliant parking supply. As such, the "Recommendations" section of this memorandum addresses only off-street parking supply.

### Current Parking Supply

The second step in this project's process involved the development of an inventory of ADA-compliant parking spaces that are already provided in downtown.

The limits of this study area include the DDA boundary, which includes 1<sup>st</sup> Street on the west, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> streets on the east, Clark Street on the north, and generally Sheridan Street on the south. This area includes 25 city blocks and six city-controlled surface parking lots; parking structures are not provided in downtown Laramie. The study area also includes on-street parking along both sides of virtually every street within the study area. On-street parking consists of a variety of diagonal and parallel parking spaces.

**Off-Street Parking:** As noted above, there are six city-controlled surface parking lots within the study area. There are several other surface parking lots in downtown, but those lots are privately owned and maintained. The six city-controlled surface parking lots can be found at the following locations:

- Y North of the University Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersection
- Y North and west of the University Avenue and 4<sup>th</sup> Street intersection
- Y North and west of the Grand Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street intersection
- Y South and east of the Grand Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Street intersection
- Y West of 1<sup>st</sup> Street between Custer Street and Garfield Street
- Y North of Custer Street between 1<sup>st</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

These lots are displayed in Figure 1, ADA-Compliant Parking Supply Inventory. Also provided on this figure are the number and locations of all non-reserved, designated handicapped parking spaces in downtown; this inventory includes on-street spaces and off-street spaces.

The total number of off-street parking spaces provided in these six lots is 256, with 28, 60, 22, 40, 80 and 26 provided in each lot, respectively. The total number of designated handicapped parking spaces in these six lots is ten. It should also be noted that ten of the 22 spaces in the City Hall lot at Grand and 5<sup>th</sup> are reserved for City employees.



On-Street Parking: As mentioned above, both sides of virtually every street in downtown provide on-street parking; the north side of Grand Avenue, from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street, is the only street section that does not permit on-street parking. The total number of on-street parking spaces in the study area was estimated at 843 parking spaces. This number was estimated only because the limits of each parallel parking space are not delineated, so it is difficult to measure exactly how many spaces there are. The total number of on-street designated handicapped parking spaces that are available to the public {excluding reserved spaces} is 16; this number is included in the 843 on-street parking spaces. These 16 designated handicapped parking spaces include those that are signed and/or striped as handicapped parking spaces.

**Conclusions**

This project estimated that there are 1,099 parking spaces throughout downtown Laramie. Of these 1,099 spaces, 256 are provided within city-controlled off-street surface parking lots and 843 are provided on-street.

As noted above, federal requirements for ADA-compliant parking supply applies only to off-street parking, so the calculations in this section of this memorandum considered only off-street parking supply. These federal requirements can be found in tabular format in the appendix of this memorandum. Based on the number of parking spaces provided in each of the six lots and the ADA requirements, each lot should provide the number of ADA-compliant parking spaces as listed in Table 1, Required Number of ADA-Compliant Parking Spaces.

**Table 1 - Required Number of ADA-Compliant Parking Spaces**

Surface Lot	Total No. of Spaces	Required Number of ADA-Compliant Parking Spaces (Total/Van Accessible)	No. of Designated Handicapped Parking Spaces Provided	Needs to Meet ADA Specs	
				Upgrade Existing Spaces	Provide Add'l Spaces
University and 1st	28	2/1	2	1	0
University and 4th	60	3/1	0	0	3
Grand and 5th	22	1/1	1	1	0
Grand and 1st	40	2/1	4	4*	0
Depot Lot	82	4/1	2	2	2
Custer and 2nd	26	2/1	1	1	1

\* Number of spaces in this lot could be reduced from four to two

The phrase "ADA-compliant parking space" applies to a parking space that has been striped to meet the ADA's specifications for such a space. In the "Inventory" section of this memorandum, the phrase "designated handicapped parking space" was used instead of "ADA-compliant parking space" because most of the intended ADA-compliant parking spaces do not meet ADA's specifications. These spaces fall short of the specifications for varying reasons, including non-compliant signage, inadequate width, non-compliant striping or any combination of the three.

As can be seen in the table, not one of the surface lots provides a sufficient number of ADA-compliant parking spaces {including van-accessible parking spaces}. Based on the total number of parking spaces in each lot, there should be 14 ADA-compliant parking spaces available; the total number of designated handicapped parking spaces is ten. As such, all but one of the ten spaces should be upgraded in various forms to meet ADA specifications and four additional spaces should be provided.

It is also worth noting that the idea of including the City's supply of on-street designated handicapped parking spaces was considered as a way to offset deficiencies in the off-street parking supply. However, a representative from the ADA division of the DOJ asserted that it would not be appropriate to use on-street spaces for such an offset. The primary reason given for this assertion is that the ADA does not have a design standard for an on-street ADA-compliant parking space. The typical cross slopes of streets in downtown Laramie would also make it very difficult to sufficiently augment the vertical geometry of an on-street parking space to make that space compliant with the design features of an off-street parking space.

### Recommendations

This project determined that there are ten designated handicapped parking spaces contained within the six city-controlled off-street surface parking lots in the downtown area and 18 such on-street spaces. It was further determined that all but one of the off-street spaces need to be upgraded in one form or another. This section of the memorandum recommends improvements that could be made to these spaces to make them ADA-compliant.