



**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.



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Summary of accessible parking policies and practices by jurisdiction

Location	Context	Strategies employed	Results
<p>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accessible parking zones • Charge disabled placard holders for parking • Allow additional time • Increase enforcement • Amend administrative rules 	<p>Less fraud and increased access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placards displayed in downtown dropped from 65% to 2%. • On-street parking availability increased from 2% to 13%.
<p>Arlington County, Virginia</p>	<p>In 1998, Arlington County identified that placard abuse was having a significant impact on parking meter availability in their downtown and business districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accessible parking zones • Charge disabled placard holders for parking • Allow additional time • Multiple payment options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access in both accessible parking zones and at standard parking meters.
<p>Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accessible parking zones • Charge disabled placard holders for parking • Allow additional time • Increase enforcement • Multiple payment options • Amend administrative rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased enforcement saw a large increase in the number of citations given. • After receiving negative feedback about the city's proof-of-payment system utilizing multi-space meters, additional payment options were instituted.



Location	Context	Strategies employed	Results
Boulder, Colorado	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More accessible parking zones ● Charge disabled placard holders for parking ● Multiple payment options ● Amend administrative rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Between 1995 and 2005, drive-alone rates fell by a third in Boulder. ● In 2011, 64% of downtown employees used alternative transit to get to work, helping to decrease parking demand and increase parking availability at meters.
New York City	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strict eligibility criteria ● Certification by NYC Dept. of Health doctor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fewer placards are issued in the city than in other jurisdictions. ● Program costs are in the millions annually. ● 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.
Chicago, Illinois	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase enforcement ● Increase fines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Placard abuse continues to be an ongoing problem. ● Access has not improved for placard holders. ● New legislation allows Chicago to begin pricing in 2014, with some exemptions.
St. Louis, Missouri	Placard holders pay for parking in St. Louis, except for those whose disability prevents them from activating a parking meter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Charge disabled placard holders for parking ● Amend administrative rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Abuse of payment exemption was significantly reduced after approval process was amended to include certification of need from physician.



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



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



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
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	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.
Arlington, Virginia	Physician, nurse practitioner, physician’s assistant, podiatrist, chiropractor. Each profession is listed as being able to specific conditions.
Winnipeg, Canada	Licensed medical physician, registered clinic-based nurse practitioner, chiropractor, occupational therapist, or physiotherapist.
Boulder, Colorado	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.
New York City	New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation physician or other Department of Health-designated physician.
Chicago, Illinois	Licensed physician, physician assistant or an advanced practice nurse.
St. Louis, Missouri	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.
Houston, Texas	Licensed physician, podiatrist, or optometrist.
Raleigh, North Carolina	Licensed physician, ophthalmologist, optometrist, or the Division of Services for the Blind.



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



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

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



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



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



Location	Education strategies
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada	30,000 notices to placard holders about need to pay.
New York City	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.”
Houston, Texas	Provide materials to medical offices and county tax assessors who issue the placards to educate them on the extent of abuse of disabled parking. 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.
Phoenix, Arizona	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.

Location	Administrative strategies
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	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.
New York City	City permit lists specific license plate numbers (up to 10) and must be in the vehicle (no copies).
Chicago, Illinois	New placards are clearly marked with expiration dates on mirror tags, along with the user’s birth year and gender.



Philadelphia, PA

Strategies employed 2001

- More accessible parking zones
- Charge for parking
- Allow additional time
- Increased Enforcement
- Amend administrative rules

Results

- Disabled placards displayed in downtown dropped from 65% to 2%
- On-street parking availability increased from 2% to 13%.

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes
Addresses income diversity	No
Addresses disability diversity	No

Philadelphia employs a multi-faceted approach to accessible parking. The city has installed a number of accessible parking zones (blue meters) and in two neighborhoods with new meters it provided one spot per block, prioritizing installation at the block end where feasible. Disability parking placard holders pay the posted rate for metered parking and are provided one additional hour beyond the posted time limit. Vans with wheelchair lifts are exempt from meter payment and time limits.

The city actively enforces ADA-required off-street parking locations and ensures that new developments not only provide the required off-street spots but also certify that they continue to provide them on an annual basis.

The city has installed a number of multi-space meters. Each multi-space metered block has one space designated for the exclusive use of people with disabilities and these spaces are designated by an individual blue parking meter.

Prior to 2001, Philadelphia exempted disability parking placard holders from paying for parking and from all time limits. During the 1990s the city saw a sharp increase in the issuance of placards. Simultaneously, the downtown core area experienced a decrease in the availability of on-street parking spaces. Local merchant groups felt that placard abuse was affecting the ability of their customers to park and shop downtown.

Working with disability rights advocates, additional issues related to access for valid placard users were also identified. A comprehensive plan was put together to increase on-street and off-street accessible parking zone availability while addressing the abuse of placards.



Strategies employed

INCREASED SUPPLY OF ACCESSIBLE PARKING ZONES

Philadelphia installed accessible-parking zones on each metered block in two key downtown neighborhoods

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders now pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME

Placard holders are allowed to park for one extra hour beyond the posted time limits.

INCREASE ENFORCEMENT

Not only ensure that new developments provide required ADA accessible spaces, but also require annual certification from lot owners that the spaces continue to exist.

Increased enforcement on vehicles without placards parking in off-street lots, including privately owned ones.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Philadelphia tightened the administrative criteria for cancelling parking tickets to decrease the number of citations that were being invalidated. New rules require a copy of the ID card that was used to issue the placard, and a copy of the placard. Additionally, if the cited vehicle was not registered to the placard holder, a signed affidavit from the placard holder stating that the use was related to their transportation is also required.

Results

A survey conducted in March 2001 found that 65% of vehicles parked in the downtown core displayed disabled parking placard. In May 2001, after the city implemented its strategies, the percentage of vehicles displaying disabled placards declined to 2%.

Between 2000 and 2002, the availability rate for on-street parking in the downtown core increased from 2% to 13%.



Arlington, VA

Strategies employed 1998

- More accessible parking zones
- Charge for parking
- Allow additional time
- Multiple payment options
- Increased enforcement

Results

- Reduced the number of placards displayed in downtown area
- Positive response from much of the disability rights community

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes
Addresses income diversity	No
Addresses disability diversity	Yes

Since 1998, Arlington has used a comprehensive strategy to address accessible parking. The city has installed more accessible parking zones with a goal of four percent of metered parking spaces dedicated for people with disabilities. Disability parking placard holders pay the posted rate for metered parking and the meters in the dedicated spots allow placard holders to park for twice as long as the posted time at the meter.

Arlington offers a unique payment option, the iPark in-vehicle parking meter, that was created for the city to meet the needs of drivers who may have difficulties paying at the meter. Additionally, the meters that are located at dedicated spots are 42 inches tall to accommodate users with reach constraints.

Arlington is a suburb of Washington, D.C. and the densest county in Virginia with major employers including the Pentagon. The daytime population of Arlington is twice as high as the nighttime population, resulting in a lot of parking demand.

In 1998, counties around the state identified the misuse of disabled parking placard as a large issue that was constraining local parking supply for all drivers, including people with disabilities. The State Legislature amended their laws to allow cities to increase fines for violations of accessible parking zones and, for the first time, to charge placard holders for parking.

Arlington County worked with their Commission on Disabilities to create a program that initially

tripled the number of on-street spaces that were dedicated for placard holders, increased fines for misusing placards from \$100 to \$500, and developed payment options and meter designs that would minimize the impact of paying on those who had physical difficulty paying at the standard meters.



Strategies employed

INCREASED SUPPLY OF ACCESSIBLE-PARKING ZONES

Arlington tripled the number of accessible parking meters to nearly 140 and set a goal of making four percent of on-street meters dedicated for disabled parking placard holders. After the initial meters were dedicated, the County instituted a program that allows residents and businesses to request dedicated spots.

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders now pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME

Placard holders are allowed to park for twice as long as the posted time limit.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Developed and implemented the iPark meter which is a pre-paid meter that hangs above the dashboard, and set for the amount of time that a driver wants to park before they leave the vehicle.

Installed 42 inch tall meters in all accessible parking zones to better accommodate placard holders who use wheelchairs or other assisted devices.

ENFORCEMENT

The iPark allows enforcement officers to know, without having to log into a separate system, whether the parking has been paid for.

Fines for illegally occupying an accessible parking zone were raised to the state maximum of \$500 and the fines clearly posted.

Results

No specific study has been done on the impacts of these changes, but conversations with both staff and local advocates indicate that these strategies successfully increased parking availability and access for placard users and reduced placard abuse.



Winnipeg, Manitoba- Canada

Strategies employed 1991/2008

- More accessible parking zones
- Charge for parking
- Allow additional time
- Increased enforcement
- Multiple payment options
- Amend administrative rules

Results

- Citations for violations increased 114%

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Unknown
Availability at metered spaces	Unknown
Reduction in placard misuse	Unknown
Addresses income diversity	Unknown
Addresses disability diversity	Unknown

The Province of Manitoba authorizes disabled parking placards for drivers with disabilities living within provincial borders. The placard program is administered for the province by the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, a nongovernmental advocacy organization.

Placard holders pay all rates but are allowed to park for four hours in all spaces regardless of posted time limits, with the exception of short-term meters with time limits of 30 minutes or less.

Winnipeg offers a number of payment options including pre-paid passes for regular parkers and pre-paid parking coupons for less frequent users. Forty accessible parking zones have been installed throughout the downtown core.

In 1991, accessible parking laws were changed to allow placard holders to park for four hours in any metered space, but traditional “crank” style meters made this difficult to enforce. This resulted in a policy of non-enforcement that allowed placard holders to park for free.

In 2008, the growing use of placards was identified as a concern and parking rules were changed to require placard users to pay for all the time that they parked. Winnipeg sent out 30,000 notices to placard holders alerting them to the fact that they would begin enforcing the payment of parking for all users.

In addition, the city installed new meters that provided a broader range of payment options as well as accessible parking zones that dedicated spaces for placard users. Many of the new meters are multi-space meters that require parkers to return to their vehicle with a receipt to show proof-of-payment. After receiving feedback from disability rights advocates about the increased impacts that these meters place on drivers with disabilities, the city has begun to offer pre-paid parking tags and coupons that allow drivers to pay for parking before leaving their vehicle.



Strategies employed

INCREASE SUPPLY OF ACCESSIBLE-PARKING ZONES

The city installed 40 on-street accessible parking zones throughout the downtown area.

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders now pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME

Placard holders are allowed to park for four hours in all metered spaces with posted time limits of greater than 30 minutes.

INCREASE ENFORCEMENT

Winnipeg increased enforcement on vehicles without placards parking in accessible parking zones.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Parking can be paid for with a pay-by-phone option and using pre-paid permits and coupons that are hung from the rear view mirror. These options allow parkers to pay without needing to return to the vehicle with a receipt.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Winnipeg implemented policies that prioritize snow clearance in areas with high parking demand, including accessible parking zones to ensure access even in snowy weather.

Results

As a result of the increased enforcement, tickets written to people parking in accessible parking zones increased 114% after the changes were instituted in 2008.

Disability rights advocates were vocally unresponsive of the payment system that required drivers to pay for parking and then return with a receipt to show proof-of-payment.



Boulder, CO

Strategies

- More accessible parking zones
- Charge for parking
- Multiple payment options
- Amend administrative rules

Results

- 64% of downtown employees do not drive to work
- Multi-space meters not well received
- Increased access

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes
Addresses income diversity	No
Addresses disability diversity	Yes

Strategies employed

INCREASE SUPPLY OF ACCESSIBLE-PARKING ZONES

Boulder installed on-street and off-street accessible parking in areas with high parking demand.

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Multi-space meters allow for more payment options including a parking smart card.

Pre-paid parking coupons allow payment without having to visit the meter and return.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

Parking money is used to fund an EcoPass transit pass for downtown employees.

Results

Boulder’s parking and travel demand strategies have had significant impacts on making the downtown more accessible for all. Between 1995 and 2005, the drive-alone rate for downtown Boulder workers fell by more than one-third, while public transit use more than doubled. In March of 2011, about 64% of downtown employees used alternative modes of transportation to travel to work, freeing up parking supply for other users including people with disabilities.

Multi-space meters have met with lukewarm reviews due to the need to return to a person’s vehicle with a receipt.



New York, NY

Strategies

- Strict eligibility criteria
- Certification by NYC Dept. of Health doctor

Results

- Reduced placard abuse

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	No
Availability at metered spaces	No
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes
Addresses income diversity	Yes
Addresses disability diversity	Yes

New York City does not allow weekday, on-street parking south of 59th Street unless a vehicle displays one of a number of special permits. The city has implemented its own permit for people with disabilities which allow holders to park in any spot for free and no time limit.

Holders of the state issued disabled parking placard are not provided any on-street parking privileges in New York City; the state placard is only valid in off-street lots.

The core of the city's disabled parking program is the city-issued permit, for which the city pays for a third-party assessment of persons with disabilities to certify eligibility.

Strategies employed

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The qualification process for the permit requires a New York City Department of Health physician to certify that the applicant's disability is permanent, severely affects their ability to walk, and that the individual requires a private vehicle for transportation.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

The city does not have on-street accessible parking zones. But city-issued permit holders are allowed to park in many areas where parking is otherwise not allowed, including spaces marked "no parking" and "no standing," with some exceptions.

Results

City-issued permit drivers have access to more spaces than other drivers, but illegal parking and the number of vehicles with city, commercial, or diplomatic permits can make parking difficult to find.

New York City's many older buildings often have garages that were not being built to accommodate accessible vans. Because of this, visitors in vans with wheelchair lifts can find themselves parking at the edges of Manhattan where the majority of surface parking lots are located.

The assessment process has been revamped recently after complaints about the length of the evaluation period. The process currently takes about 60 days after submitting completed application paperwork.



Chicago, IL

Strategies employed 2006-12

- More accessible parking zones

Results

- Placard abuse and access continue to be an issue
- New legislation is being sought to address access issues parking payment

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	No
Availability at metered spaces	No
Reduction in placard misuse	No
Addresses income diversity	Yes*
Addresses disability diversity	Yes

*2014 changes will remove free parking without exempting based on economic status

Chicago allows disabled parking placard holders to park for free with no time limits. State-issued placards display the birth year and gender of the holder and the Chicago police are able to verify the registration of the placard via the Secretary of State's website.

There are high fines for people fraudulently using disabled parking placards.

The state has identified placard abuse as a significant issue, and since 2006 has taken a number of steps to increase the penalties for misusing placards, most recently in 2012.

The city recently signed a 70-year lease with a private firm to allow them to run the city's meters. But the city remains responsible for the enforcement of the meters.

Strategies employed

INCREASED ENFORCEMENT

Chicago police have launched ongoing sting operations and proactive enforcement of placard use.

Results

Of the 781 placards that were checked in the first half of December, 2012, nearly one third were thought to be fraudulent and cited or confiscated.

Despite this enforcement, the city has not seen a reduction in the use of placards, and placard abuse continues to be seen as a significant problem.

In 2012, the State Legislature ended the meter payment exemption for placard holders but created a payment exemption for people with dexterity or severe mobility disabilities. The new law will go into effect on January 1, 2014.



St. Louis, MO

Strategies employed 1995/2009

- Charge for parking
- Amend administrative rules

Results

- Improved access

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes
Addresses income diversity	No
Addresses disability diversity	Yes

Disabled parking placard holders in St. Louis pay the posted rate for parking, but the city provides an exemption for people who have a physical disability that prevents them from activating a parking meter (i.e., putting coins in it).

In the fifteen years leading up to 2009, there was abuse of the St. Louis ordinance whereby parking payment exemption permits were issued to placard holders who did not meet the dexterity requirements. As a result, downtown parking meters were often occupied all day by cars with exempt placards and disabled drivers who had business downtown had a difficult time accessing parking.

Strategies employed

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders now pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

Those who are physically unable to activate a parking meter can apply for an exemption from meter fees.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

Change the process for receiving an exemption from payment. Applicants must now include a

signed affidavit from a doctor certifying that they meet the dexterity qualifications for the exemption and meet with the Commissioner on Disabilities.

Additionally, the city worked with placard holders who had been parking at meters all day for free to identify adequate all-day, off-street parking for them in the impacted areas.

Results

Abuse of payment exemption was significantly reduced after approval process was amended to include certification of need from physician



Houston, TX

Strategies employed 2006

- More accessible parking zones
- Charge for parking
- Allow additional time
- Multiple payment options
- Increased enforcement
- Education programs

Results

- 26,000 citations written in 2011/12
- Parking availability for disabled drivers has increased.

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes
Addresses income diversity	No
Addresses disability diversity	Yes

Houston uses a multi-faceted approach to access for disabled drivers that includes aggressive enforcement.

A cornerstone of Houston's program is its Volunteer Parking Enforcement program that trains individuals to ticket vehicles that park in accessible parking zones without a placard. Volunteers cannot investigate placard holders whom they suspect of using an illegal placard.

Houston has two separate educational campaigns. One focuses on medical offices and the county tax assessors who issue placards on the extent and impact of fraud. The second program is a public awareness campaign aimed at reducing the misuse of placards.

The volunteer enforcement program has been in place since about 2000. In 2006, Houston identified placard abuse as a continuing problem that reduced access for disabled drivers as well as able-bodied drivers.

In response the Houston Commission on Disabilities advised the Houston Parking Commission about the need for more accessible parking spaces in the central business district and at public entertainment venues. Subsequently, new accessible parking zones have been added and more are planned.

In 2011, the city began to enforce meter time limits for placard holders, but allow vehicles with placards to park for a second parking-cycle, this time paying the posted rate. As a part of this

change, Houston added additional payment methods to make it easier for people with disabilities to make the payment without returning to the vehicle.

At the same time, the city put in place its education programs at this time, along with beginning stings through the police department to uncover fraudulent placard use.



Strategies employed

INCREASED SUPPLY OF ACCESSIBLE-PARKING ZONES

From 2005 to 2011, the city installed 135 accessible parking zones, an increase from the original 35. Twenty more spaces were scheduled for installation in 2012.

CHARGE FOR PARKING

By state law, placard holders are exempt for paying for metered parking within the posted time limit. They may park for a second parking cycle, but are required to pay the posted rate for that cycle.

ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME

Placard holders are allowed to park for twice as long as the posted time limit.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

The Parkmobile app allows payment via phone, a mobile app, or internet access and enables placard users to pay for their second meter cycle once their initial time has expired without returning to the vehicle.

INCREASE ENFORCEMENT

500 trained volunteers are writing over 5,000 citations a year for parking in an accessible-parking zone and parking enforcement and police officers are writing an additional 8,000 citations.

Use monthly stings to identify the fraudulent use of placards.

BROAD EDUCATION

Provide materials to medical offices and county tax assessors who issue the disabled placards to educate them on the extent of abuse of disabled parking.

Created a public awareness campaign to help reduce the misuse of accessible parking permits.

Results

Through the combination of strategies, Houston has seen an increase in the availability of accessible-parking zones, as well as greater availability of parking for all vehicles.



Raleigh, NC

Strategies employed 2010

- Charge for parking
- Allow additional time

Results

- Localized increase in access

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	No
Addresses income diversity	No
Addresses disability diversity	No

Raleigh requires disabled parking placard holders to pay for metered parking but exempts them from time limits, allowing for paid all day parking. The city has installed new meters that enable placard holders to purchase as much time as they need at one time and allow for effective parking enforcement of meter parking in general.

In 2006 and 2008, the city convened task forces with the goal of reducing the misuse of placards. At that time, Raleigh allowed people with disabilities to park for free and without time limit. Placard abuse was found to negatively impact parking availability not only for qualified placard users but also customers interested in shopping downtown.

In 2010, Raleigh expanded its metering program to more areas and began requiring placard users to pay for the time they parked.

Strategies employed

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders now pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME

Placard holders continue to be exempt from time restrictions.

Results

Placard abuse diminished in the metered areas, with

significantly fewer vehicles displaying placards in these areas.

Individuals who had been fraudulently using placards at meters have migrated to areas where the city has not installed meters and the parking is free.



Detroit and Warren, MI

Strategies

- Charge for parking
- Multiple payment options
- Enforcement (Warren only)

Results

- Greater access to accessible spaces in Warren
- Placard abuse continues in Detroit

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?	
	Detroit	Warren
Improved blue zone availability	No	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes	Yes
Addresses income diversity	No	No
Addresses disability diversity	Yes	Yes

The state of Michigan mandates that disabled parking placard holders pay for metered parking but provides an exemption for people whose disability meets a strict list of dexterity and mobility criteria. When the state instituted this exemption only two percent of placard holders were eligible for the parking exemption sticker.

Accessible parking zones are available in private lots and there are a small number of on-street spots. Accessible on-street spaces are metered. Many Detroit meters accept credit cards and fees can be paid via mobile phone as well.

Strategies employed

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders now pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Parking can be paid for with prepaid municipal smart cards, mobile phones, as well as credit cards.

INCREASED ENFORCEMENT (WARREN)

Warren uses sworn police officers to cite for fraudulent placard use. Officers can access a state database on placards and can identify who a placard belongs to and whether the appropriate person is using it.

Results

According to advocates in Detroit, access to accessible spaces is low due to the fraudulent use of placards. The issue is significantly worse in the winter, when the proximity of the accessible parking zone to one's destination becomes a significant factor in parking decisions. Warren, Michigan, a Detroit suburb with a population of 130,000 and home to GM, was held up as a success because of the stronger enforcement, which helped ensure that accessible parking zones were available for qualified placard holders.



Phoenix, AZ

Strategies employed 2001

- More accessible parking zones
- Charge for parking
- Allow additional time
- Increased enforcement
- Educational programs

Results

- Increased access for placard holders
- Reduced placard abuse

Meets SF effectiveness goals

Goal	Meets goal?
Improved blue zone availability	Yes
Availability at metered spaces	Yes
Reduction in placard misuse	Yes
Addresses income diversity	No
Addresses disability diversity	No

Phoenix uses enforcement, education, and pricing to ensure accessible parking availability. Disabled parking placard holders pay the posted rate for parking and are given a one-hour grace period in addition to posted time restrictions.

The city has a volunteer enforcement program to supplement its parking enforcement efforts and has instituted the “Save Our Space” education program to inform people about the impact of parking in accessible parking zones.

Accessible parking zones are found throughout downtown Phoenix and are metered.

Strategies employed

INCREASED SUPPLY OF ACCESSIBLE-PARKING ZONES

Phoenix has installed accessible-parking zones throughout its downtown.

CHARGE FOR PARKING

Placard holders now pay the posted rate for parking whether in an accessible zone or not.

ALLOW ADDITIONAL TIME

Placard holders are allowed to park for one extra hour beyond the posted time limits.

INCREASED ENFORCEMENT

The volunteer enforcement corps has written over

30,000 citations for illegally parking in accessible spaces since 2001. Additionally, the Phoenix Police Department writes about the same number as the volunteers.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Save our Space: Police officers send letters to people illegally parked in spaces requiring placards.

Results

The combination of active enforcement and requiring the same rates for placard and non-placard vehicles has improved parking availability in accessible parking zones and diminished the fraudulent use of placards.