

Background & history

What is the Residential Parking Permit program?

San Francisco's Residential Parking Permit program was established in 1976 to reduce commuter traffic and parking impacts in residential neighborhoods. The program makes it easier for residents to find parking in their neighborhoods by exempting permit-holders from on-street parking time limits. Though it gives priority for parking to residents, a permit does not guarantee a parking space.

Residential parking permits have most often been used in neighborhoods close to major transit lines and stations, hospitals, colleges, attractions, employment centers, and other parking generators where spill-over onto residential blocks occurs.

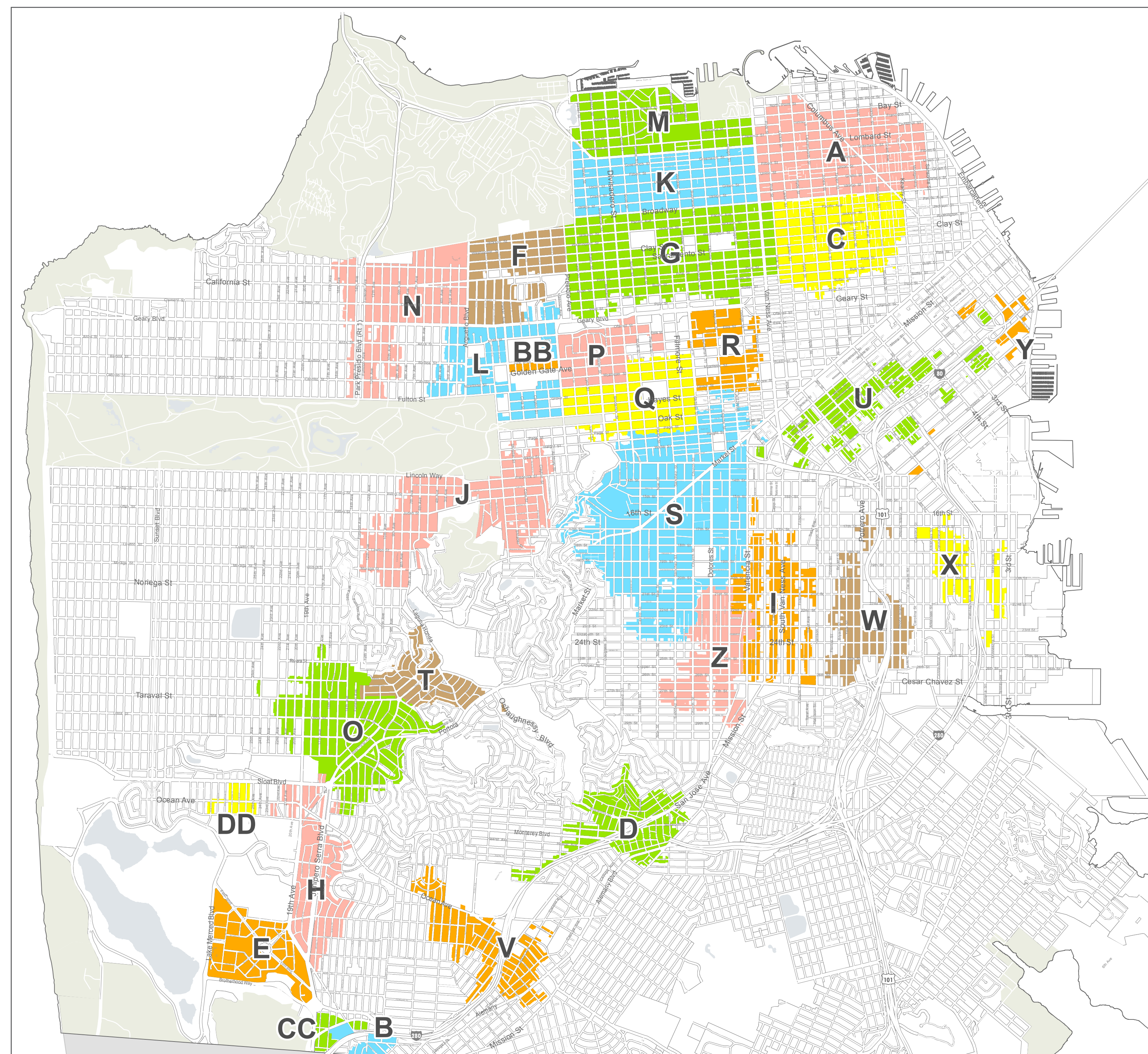
Permits are also available for residents' guests, businesses, medical and child caregivers, teachers, and others.

Program statistics

- 29 permit areas (most recent: *Area Q* est. in March 2015)
- 87,000 permits issued annually
- 153,000 eligible households (44% of S.F. households)
- 78,000 permitted parking spaces (28% of on-street parking)

There is enough permitted parking to stretch along California's coast from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo!

Existing permit areas



Regulation sign



Annual permit sticker

How it works now

Permit types



Residents

Each household within a permit area is eligible to purchase up to 4 annual permits.



Businesses

Each business within a permit area is eligible to purchase 1 annual permit for either the owner or an employee, and up to 3 additional permits for commercial delivery vehicles.



Medical caregivers

Up to 3 permits are available for in-home medical caregivers. These count against the maximum 4 permits per household.



Child caregivers

1 transferable permit is available for in-home child caregivers. These permits are only available on specially designated blocks and count against the maximum 4 permits per household.



Educational institutions

Schools with at least 15 credentialed teachers are eligible to purchase up to 15 transferable permits, limited by the number of parking spaces fronting the facility.



Short-term permits

Each household within a permit area may purchase up to 20 1-day permits each year for guests, rental/shared vehicles, service providers, and other purposes. 2, 4, 6, and 8 week permits are also available.

Permit pricing

Resident annual	\$127
Motocycle annual	\$95
All other annual	\$127
1-day (1-5 per order)	\$5
1-day (6-15 per order)	\$7
1-day (16-20 per order)	\$10
2-week	\$44
4-week	\$64
6-week	\$83
8-week	\$108



Typical regulations

Residential parking permit regulations vary by neighborhood. Time limits can be 1, 2, 3, or 4 hours. A typical block has a 2-hour time limit in effect Monday through Friday from 8 or 9am until 6pm.

Planning process

It takes 2-3 months to process an extension of an existing permit area and up to three years to establish entirely new areas. Following are the main requirements for establishing residential permit parking:

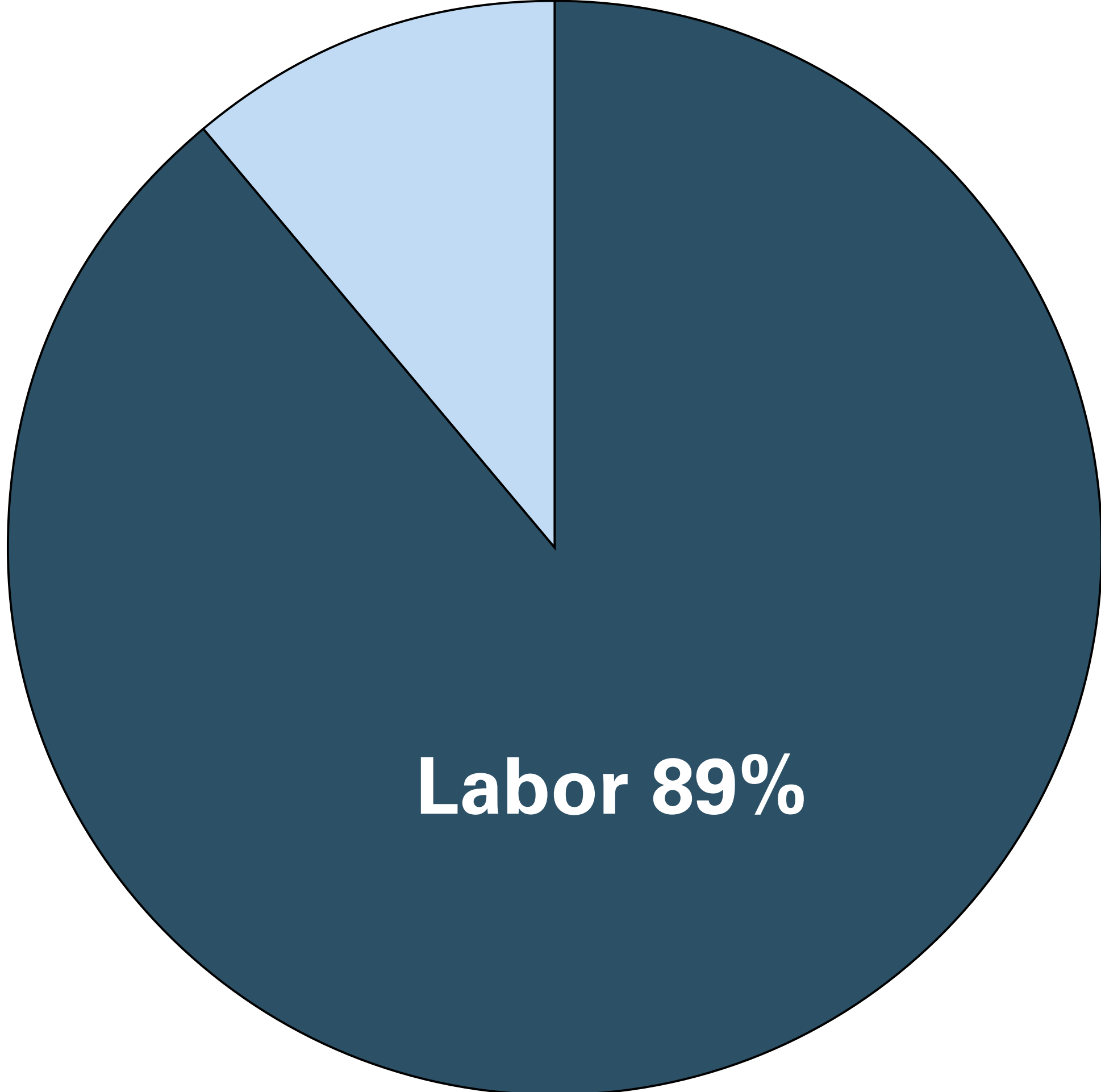
- At least 80% of spaces are occupied during the times of proposed enforcement
- Parking supply is shown to be significantly impacted by non-residents of the area
- Petition in favor of permit parking is signed by over 50% of residents on each block
- For new permit areas: 1 mile of continuous street frontage
- For extensions: blocks are adjacent to an existing permit area

Icons courtesy of The Noun Project and created by (top to bottom): Nicholas Menghini, Joshua Mormann, Luis Prado, Michael Thompson, PJ Souders, and Michele Zamparo

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Program cost recovery breakdown

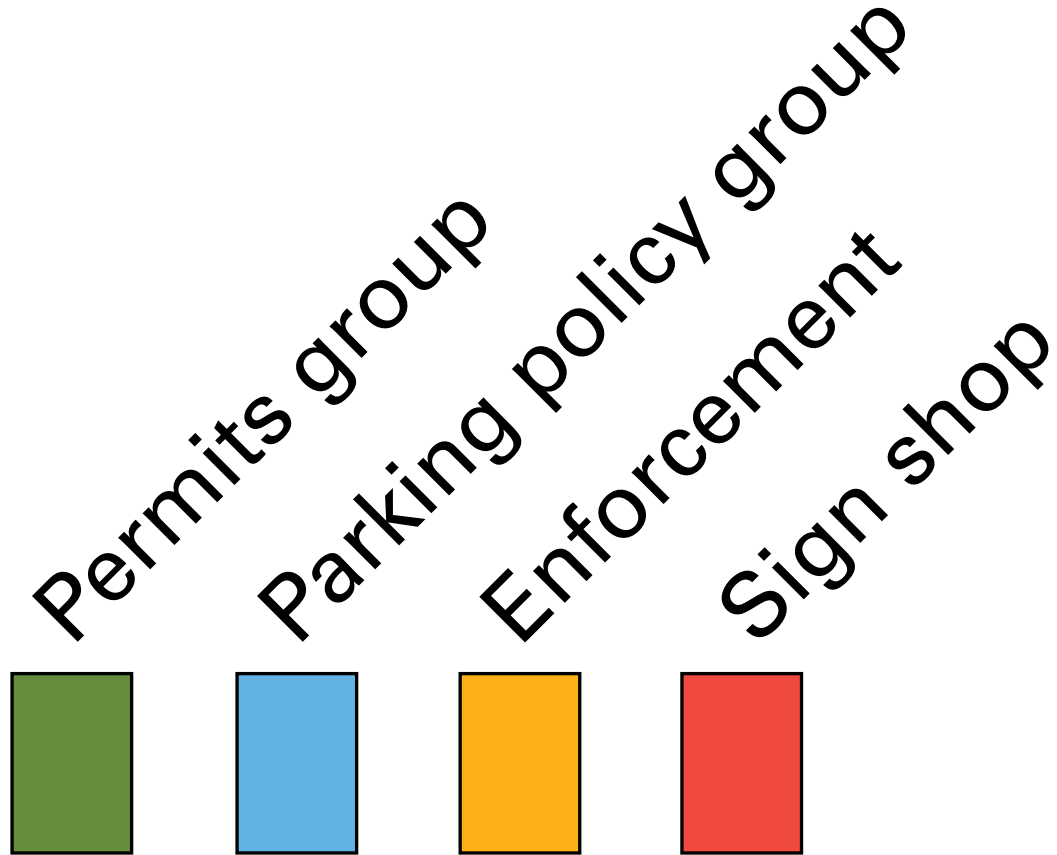
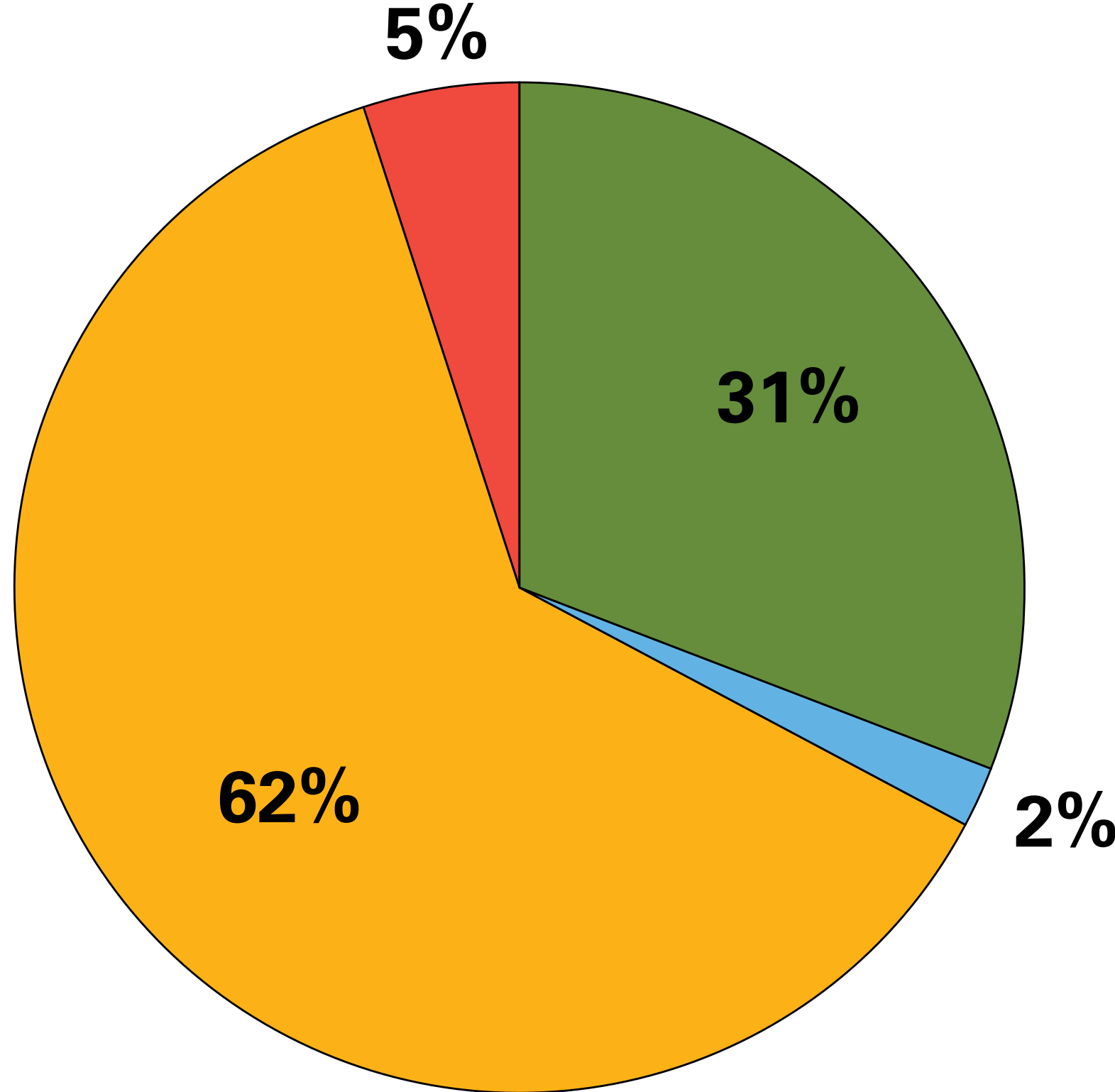
Non-labor 11%



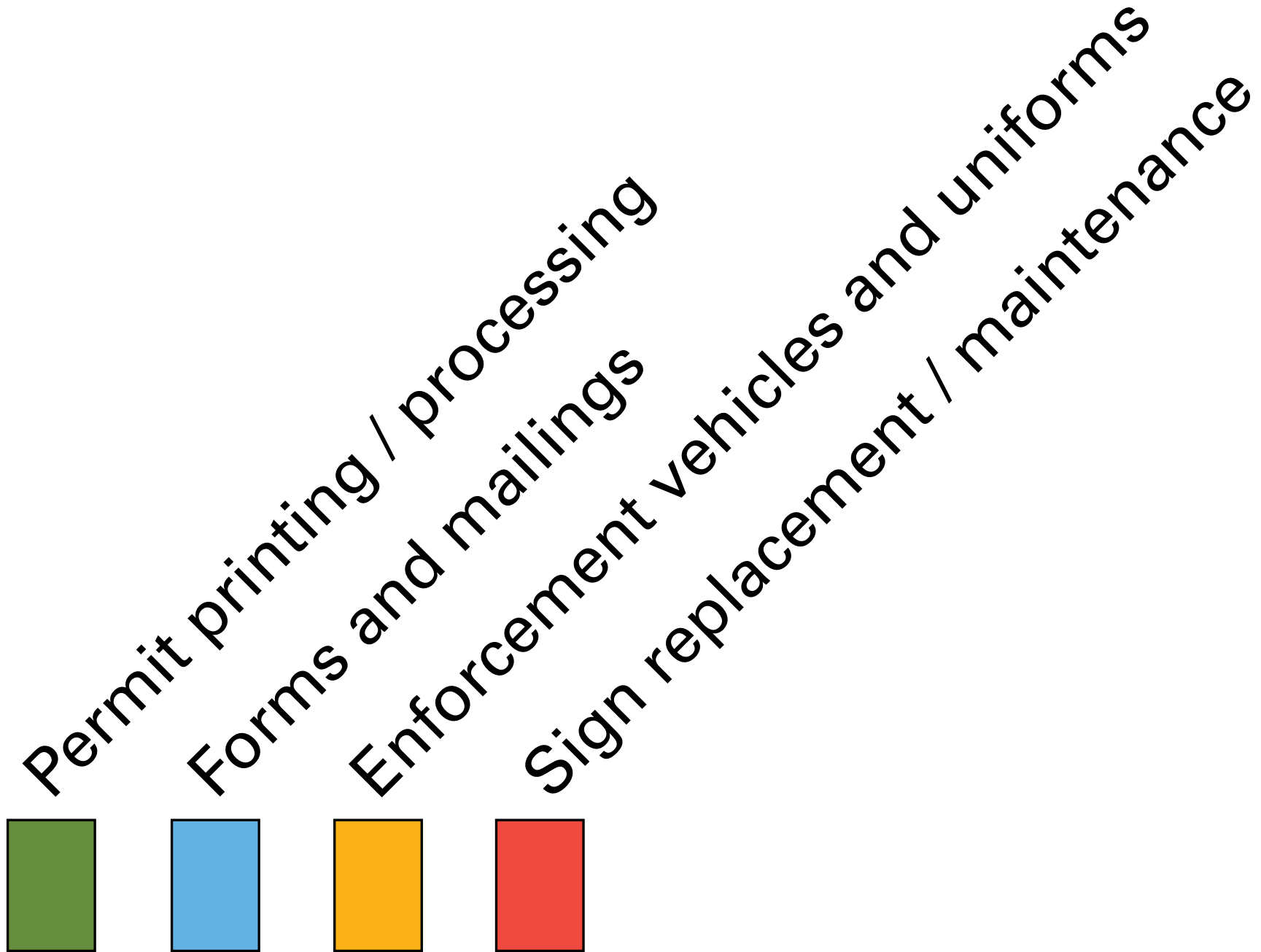
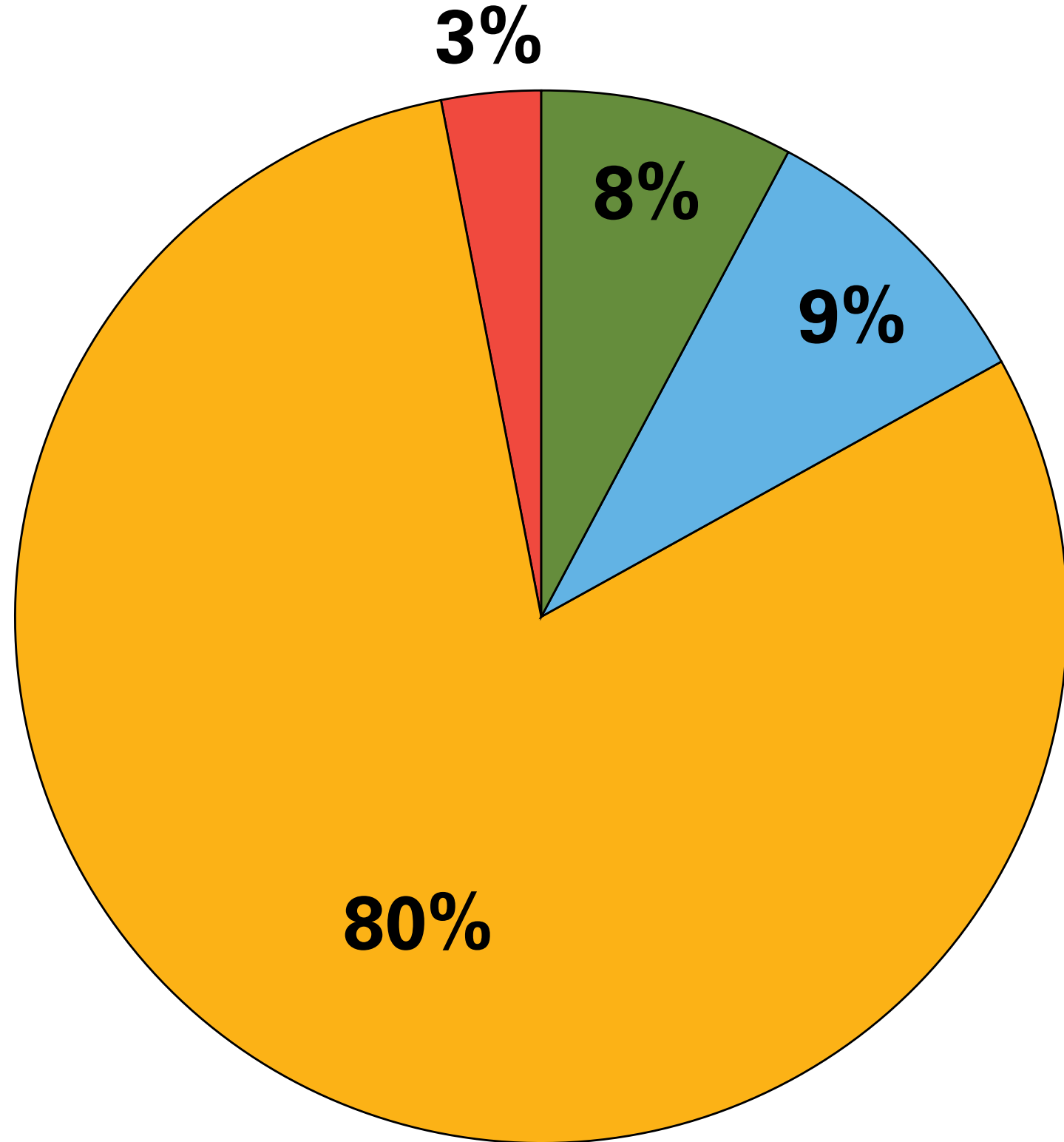
Labor 89%

According to state law, SFMTA cannot charge more for permits than it costs to operate and enforce the program

Labor costs



Non-labor costs



Evaluation project

Why an evaluation?

The Residential Parking Permit program has changed little since it was first established 40 years ago. San Francisco also faces different challenges on the street today than back in 1976. The SFMTA recognizes it is time to update the program to meet the needs of an evolving city.

Much has changed with transportation in 40 years:

- There are more cars in the city (over 500,000 on the street daily), resulting in a growing demand for limited curb space
- The population has increased from roughly 686,000 people in 1976 to more than 850,000 – making S.F. the second-most densely populated city in North America after New York City
- San Francisco's daytime commuter population has grown to 1.3 million people
- By 2040, San Francisco is projected to absorb over 100,000 new households and 190,000 new jobs
- Vehicle sharing services such as City CarShare, Getaround, and Scoot Networks were established

The Transportation Code governing the program was not designed to account for population and car ownership growth, vehicle sharing, or the challenges of residential development in once-industrial areas.

This is why the SFMTA wants to conduct a comprehensive, data-driven review of the program, with ample opportunities for public input.

Project components



Strategic goals & guiding principles

SFMTA Strategic Goals

- 1 Create a safer transportation experience for everyone
- 2 Make transit, walking, bicycling, taxi, ride-sharing, and car-sharing the preferred means of travel
- 3 Improve the environment & quality of life in San Francisco
- 4 Create a workplace that delivers outstanding service

Evaluation Guiding Principles

Active parking management is essential to maintaining an effective transportation system for a growing and inclusive San Francisco.

The Residential Parking Permit Program Evaluation and Reform Project will be guided by the following six over-arching principles:

1. Customer service

The SFMTA delivers excellent customer service in all facets of parking operations by providing ready access to availability and cost information, efficient payment and permit processing, and effective and fair enforcement.

2. Sensitivity to local uses

In predominantly residential areas or blocks, the SFMTA prioritizes access to parking for nearby residents. In mixed use areas or blocks, the SFMTA balances parking access among multiple allowable uses, whether commercial, industrial, or residential.

3. Equity

The SFMTA strives to provide equitable access to efficient transportation services, including on-street parking when no other reasonable alternative is available.

4. Achieving transportation goals

The SFMTA manages parking to achieve the agency's and the City's transportation goals, which prioritize travel by foot, public transit, bicycle, taxi, carpooling, and vehicle sharing.

5. Reduced congestion, improved transit, and increased safety

The SFMTA manages parking to reduce circling for parking, double-parking, and the need to drive for every trip. This decreases congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, makes the public transit system faster and more reliable, and improves safety for all users of the streets.

6. Neighborhood commercial vitality

The SFMTA balances the demand for on-street parking with the need to support the vitality of neighborhood commercial districts.

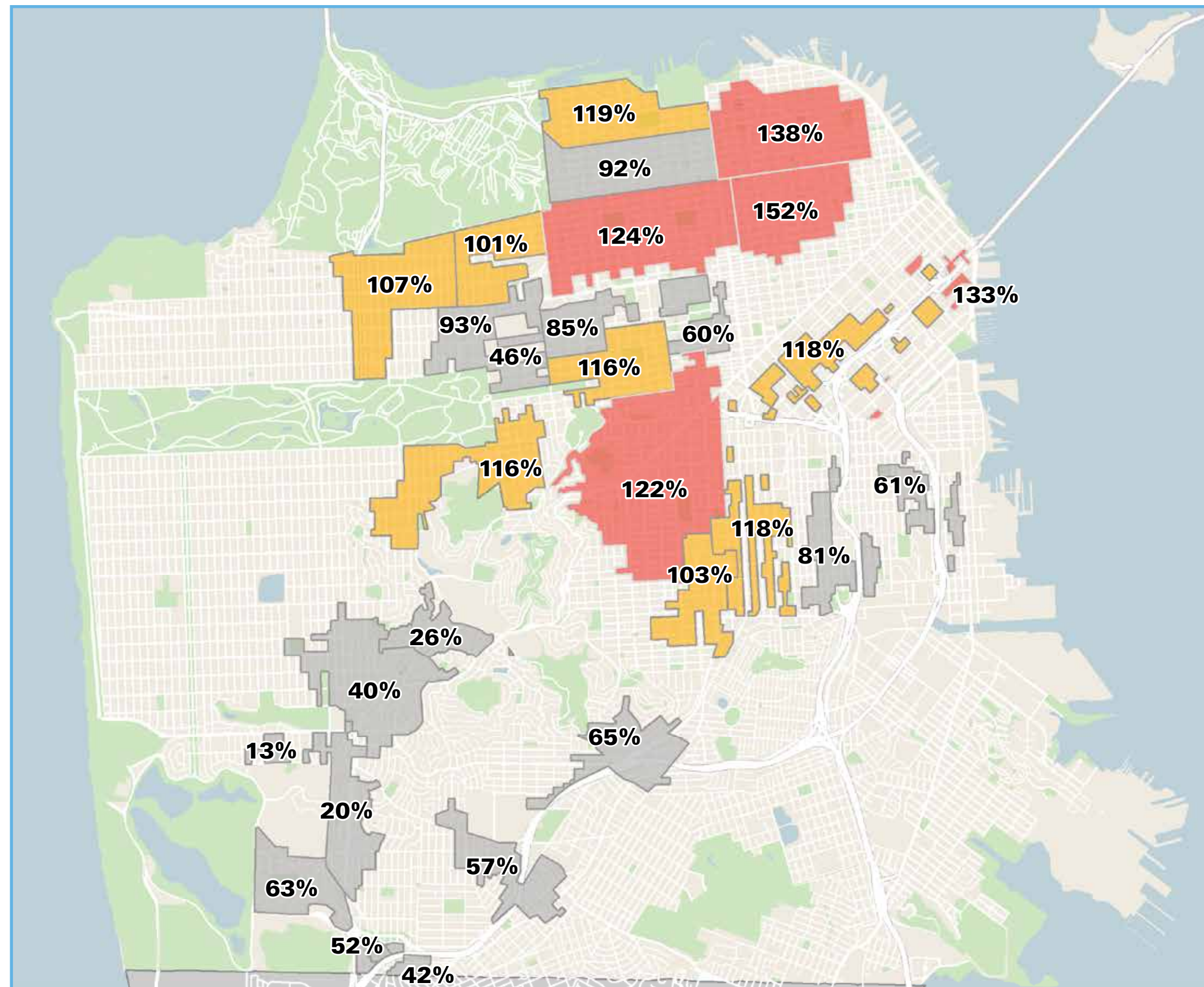


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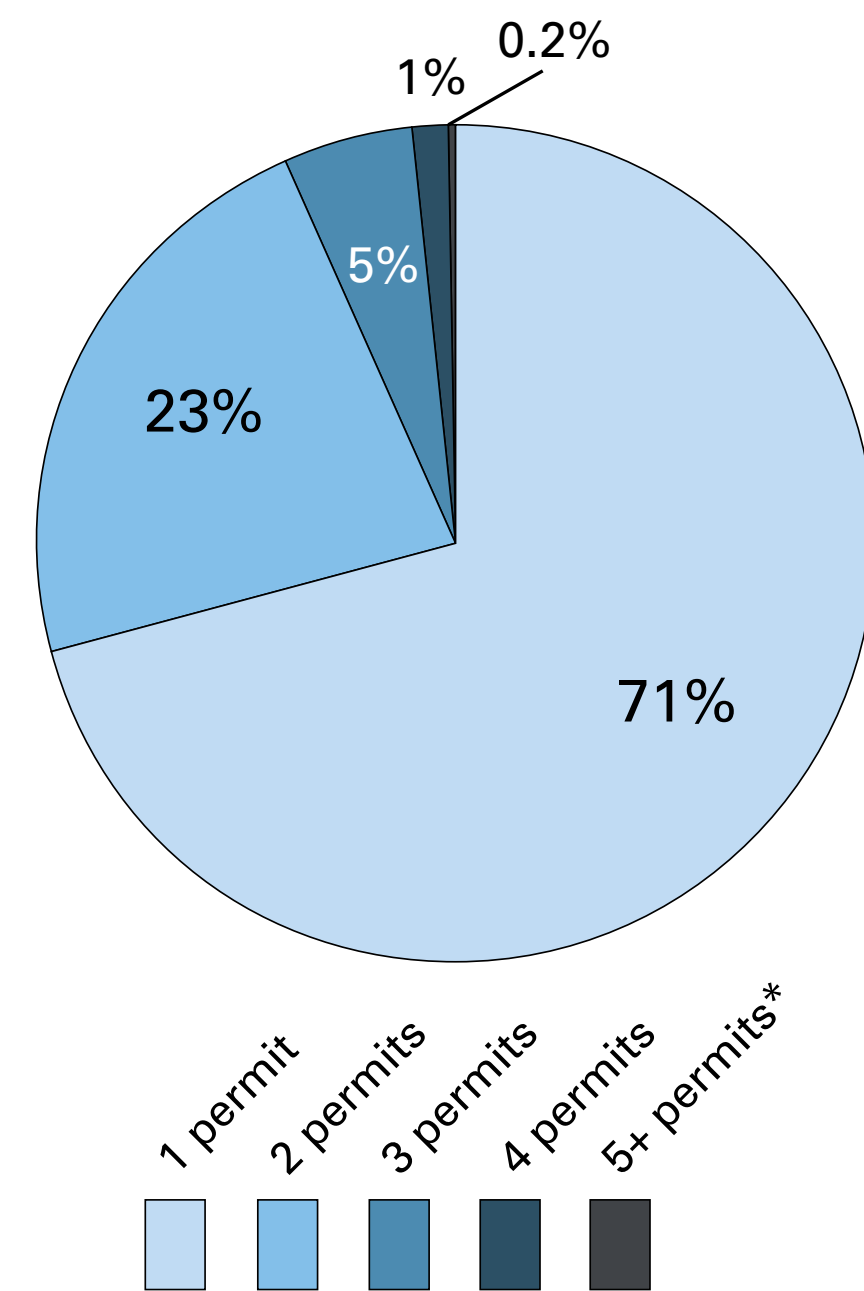
Group 1. Managing demand for parking with limited supply

Demand for parking exceeds curb supply in many permit areas. The existing program inadequately manages this demand, particularly from residents and businesses of the area.

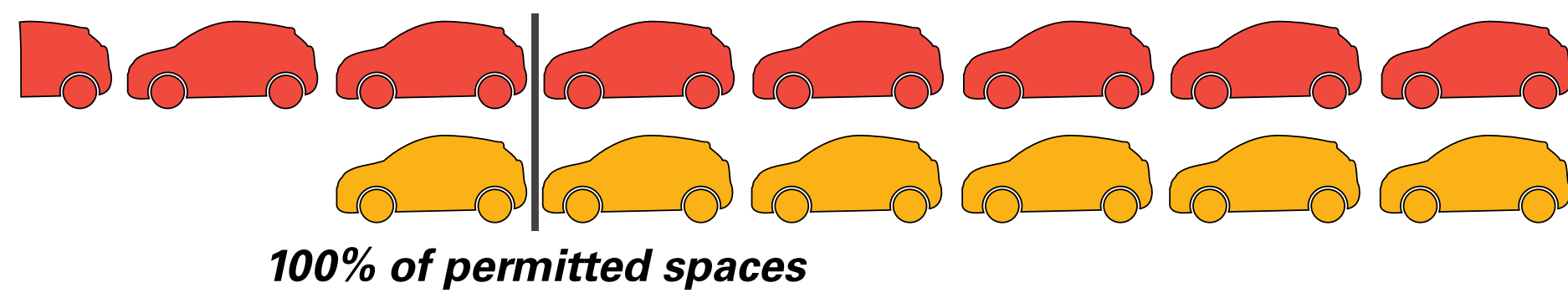
More permits are issued than parking spaces in many areas



Most households buy only 1 or 2 permits



*Additional permits above 4 may be requested upon petition.



● Above 120% 5 areas
● 101% - 120% 8 areas

Today, each household may purchase up to 4 annual permits...

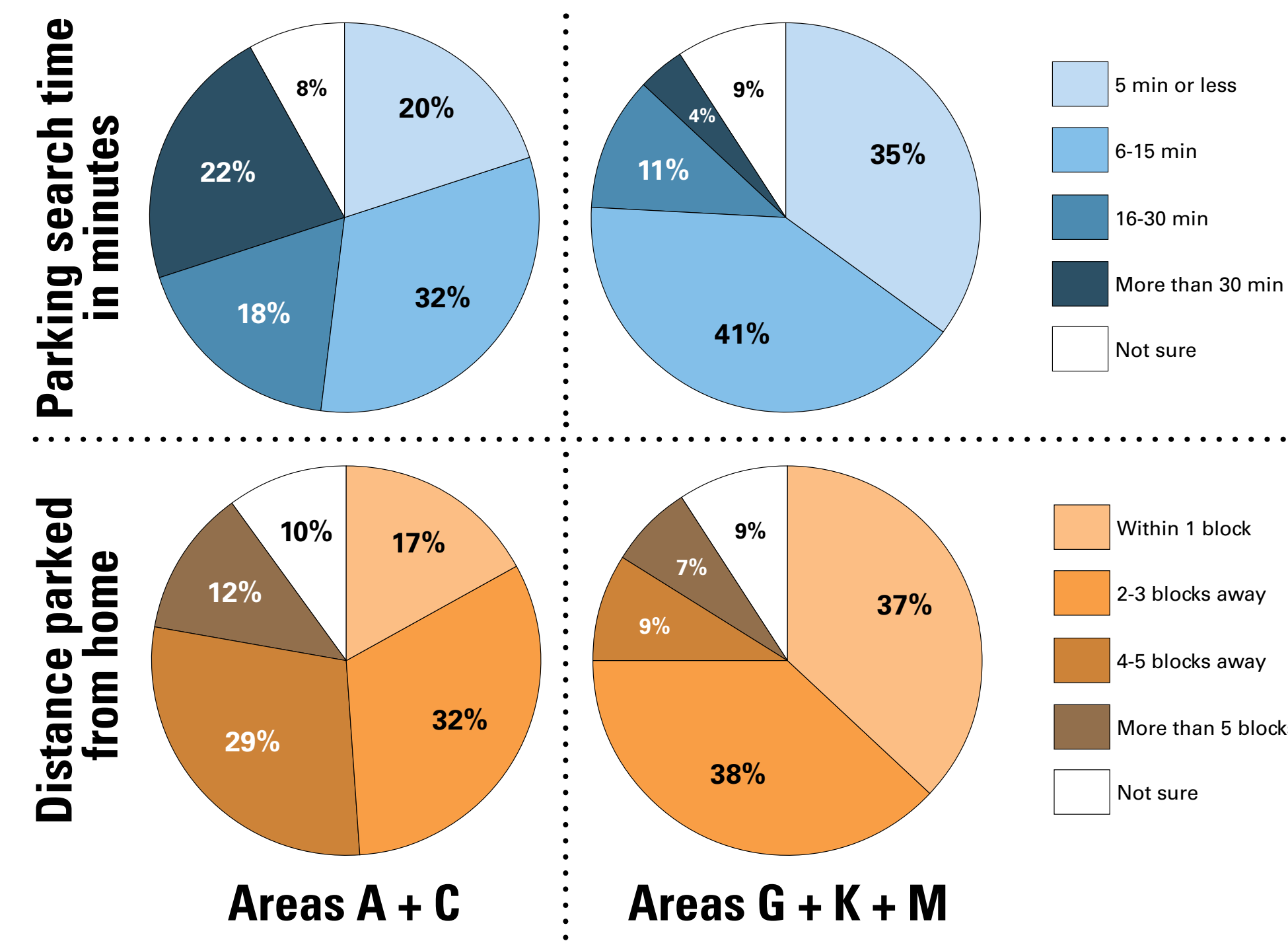
...and there is no cap on the total number of permits sold in an area

Percentage of occupied spaces high despite permit parking¹

Neighborhood	Permit Area	Weekdays				Weekends	
		4:30am-5am	10am-12pm	2pm-4pm	7pm-9pm	2pm-4pm	7pm-9pm
Nob Hill & Telegraph Hill	Area A	95%	91%	90%	94%	92%	96%
Russian Hill	Area A	92%	92%	88%	86%	84%	88%
Inner Richmond	Area N	95%	91%	88%	92%		
So. Noe Valley	Area Z	86%	89%	88%	90%		
NE Mission	Area I		83%	85%	96%		
Inner Sunset	Area J	86%	80%	83%	88%		

Prevailing effective hours of permit parking (boxed):
 Area A – Monday-Saturday, 8am-9pm
 Areas I, N, J, and Z – Monday-Friday/Saturday, 8am/9am-6pm

High parking search times in many areas²



In Areas A and C, 40% of people circle for over 15 minutes and park 4 or more blocks away from home

¹ Residential Parking Permit Evaluation Parking Utilization Study, Aug-Nov 2015
² Residential Parking Permit Evaluation Household Survey, Nov 2015

Group 1. Managing demand for parking with limited supply

Option 1-A: Area-wide permit caps

Cap the total number of permits issued in each permit area based on the total supply of permitted parking spaces

How it works today:

- No limit on permit issuance by permit area

Details:

- Area-wide cap set at 120% of the supply of permitted spaces
- Once cap is met, a waitlist would be established
- Existing permit-holders able to keep permits and renew them

Option 1-B. Cap of one permit per driver

Each licensed driver in a permit area could only purchase 1 permit

How it works today:

- Drivers may purchase multiple permits up to 4 per household

Details:

- Household cap (currently 4 permits) would still be in effect
- Drivers currently with multiple permits able to keep and renew

Option 1-C. Cap of two permits per household

Each household could only purchase 2 permits (caregiver permits excluded)

How it works today:

- 4 permits can be issued per household (up to 8 by petition)

Option 1-D. Graduated permit pricing for multiple permits

Instead of each permit costing the same price, change permit pricing so each additional permit costs more

How it works today:

- 1st - 4th permits cost the same
- Graduated rates in effect for 5th - 8th permits (by petition)

Details:

- 4 permit household cap remains (could become a hard cap)
- Discourages multiple permits without lowering household cap

Option 1-E. Permits cost more if have off-street parking

Residents with access to a garage or driveway would be charged a premium over the base price for a parking permit to encourage use of available off-street parking rather than limited on-street parking

How it works today:

- Permits cost the same regardless of access to on-site parking

Details:

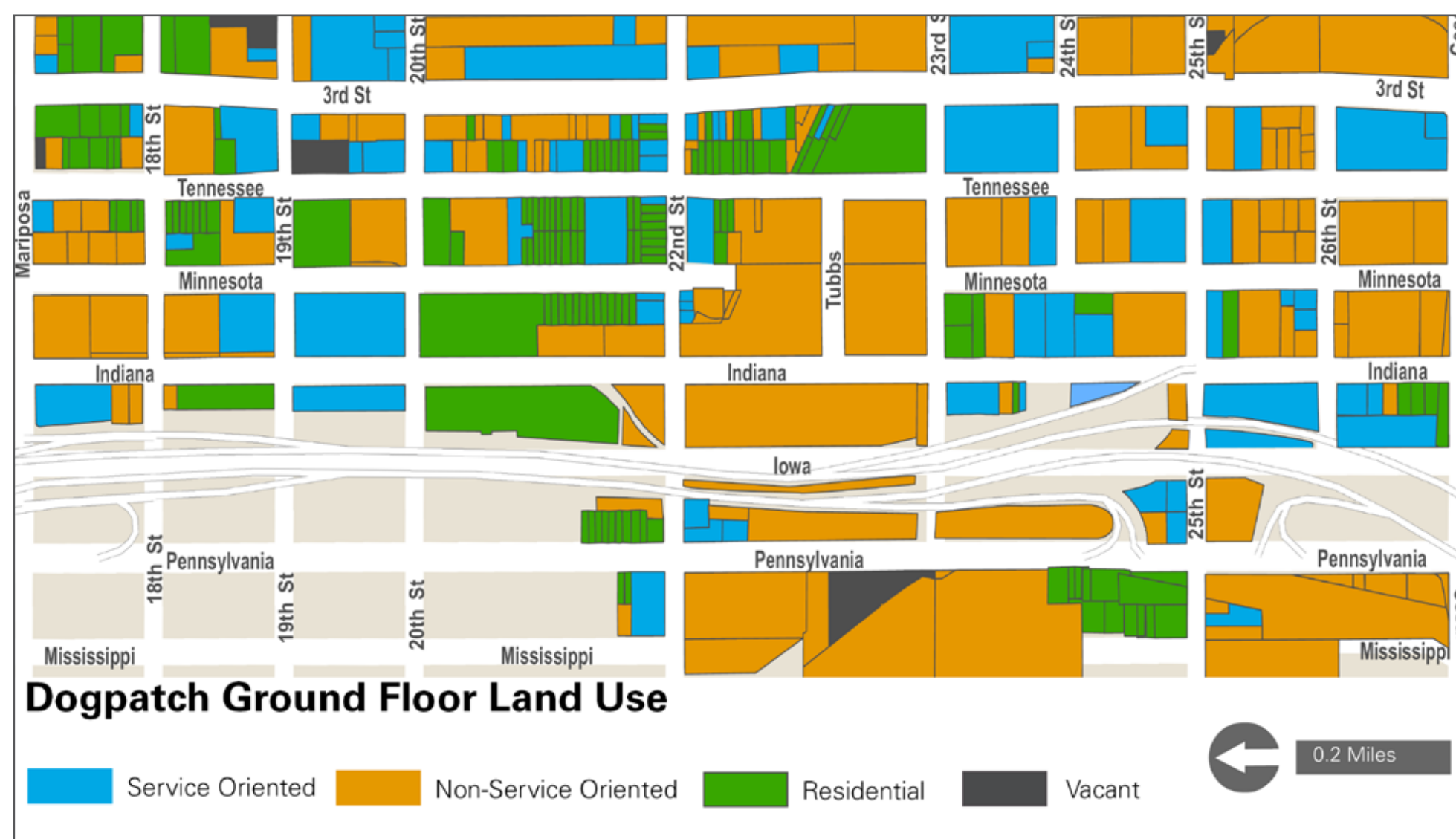
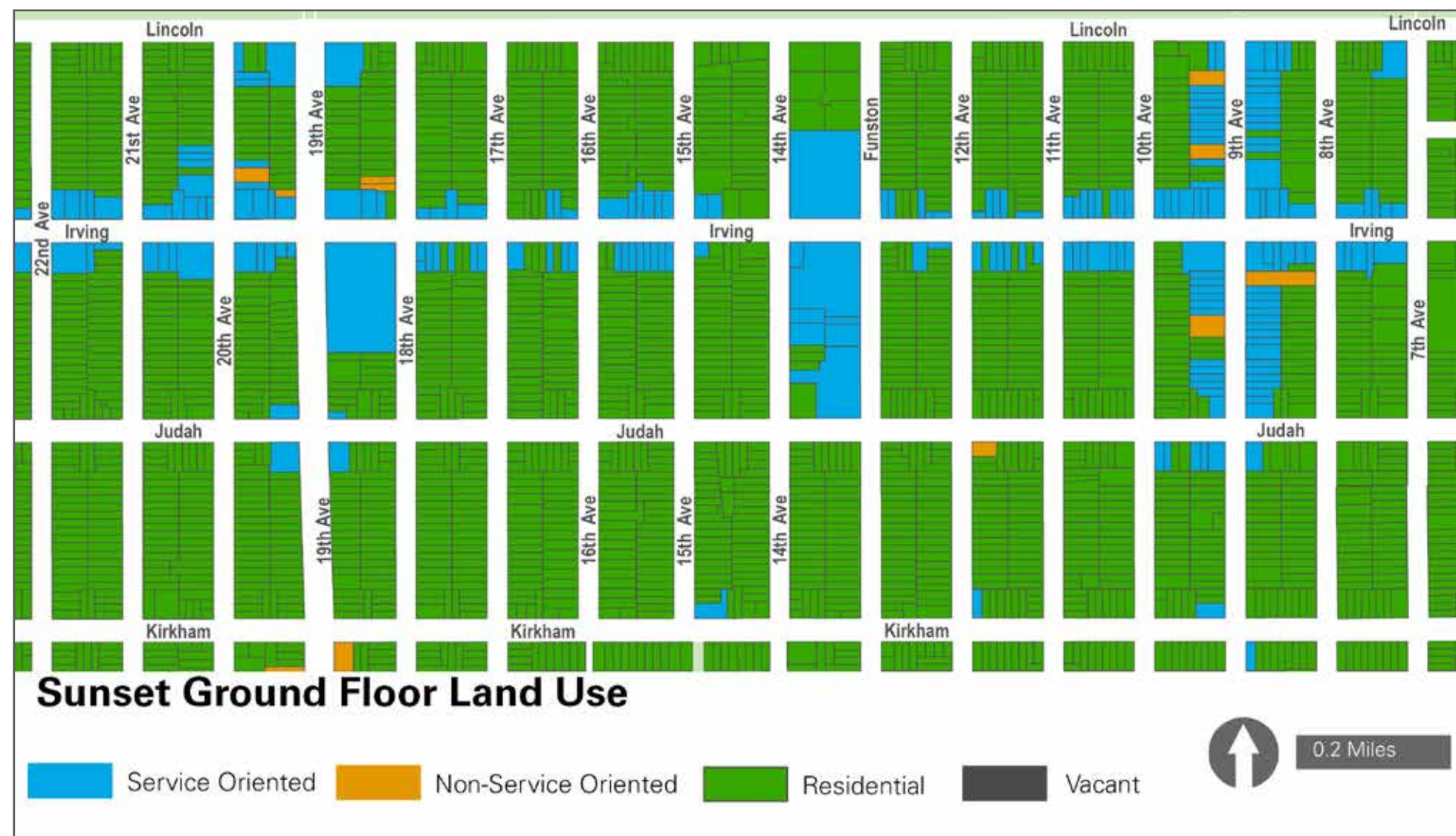
- Honor system – asked about off-street parking on application
- Possible penalties or permit revocation for fibbing

Group 2. Managing parking in areas not entirely residential

The existing program prioritizes parking for residents – but businesses, service providers, and visitors also need access to neighborhood curb.

In mixed-use areas, the existing permit program needs changes to effectively manage parking for a more diverse mix of users.

Some permit areas are not entirely residential



Option 2-A. Neighborhood parking planning

Expand the existing permit parking planning process into a more comprehensive effort that includes residents, businesses, and other neighborhood stakeholders and multiple parking management tools

How it works today:

- Residents petition for permit parking (businesses can't)
- Other parking management tools not considered

Details:

- Petition supplemented with larger neighborhood engagement
- All parking management tools considered
- Involves a larger area, rather than block-by-block planning

Option 2-B. Paid + permit parking (overlay)

Visitors pay to park; Residents and others with permits don't pay (price for visitors set to retain availability of parking for permit-holders; payment via pay-by-phone/app)

How it works today:

- Visitors park for free up to the posted time limit

Details:

- Permit-holders exempt from payment (no change in benefits)
- **Option:** Time limits remain
- **Likely benefits:** (1) Price better dissuades all-day parking by non-residents, (2) Easier to enforce, (3) More flexibility for guests

Group 3. Supporting City policies to reduce car use

Some neighborhoods have area plans that specify the maximum number of parking spaces that can be built in new multi-family housing to encourage new residents to reduce how much they drive.

However, the Residential Parking Permit Program allows all residents to purchase a parking permit.

Option 3-A. Omit permit eligibility for new housing

Residents of new housing developments in specific planning areas (where there is a cap on the maximum number of parking spaces that can be built) would be ineligible to purchase parking permits

How it works today:

- All residents in a permit area are eligible to purchase permits
- If a new housing project is adjacent to a permit area, residents may petition for eligibility (with a parking utilization study)

Details:

- This would not affect permit eligibility for existing residents
- Goal is to align program with City policies to reduce car use

Group 4. Revising eligibility for other permit types

Option 4-A. Teacher permits

How it works today:

- Must have 15 teachers to be eligible for permits
- Maximum 15 permits issued per school (+5 upon review)
- Number of permits limited by parking spaces fronting school

How it could work:

- 15 teacher minimum requirement eliminated
- Max. 20 permits per school *or* 30% of teachers get permits (the City's drive alone mode split goal) – whichever is lower
- Schools encouraged to allocate permits based on need

Option 4-B. Day care permits

How it works today:

- Day care centers ineligible for permits unless have 15 teachers

How it could work:

- Staff eligible under proposed rules for teachers above

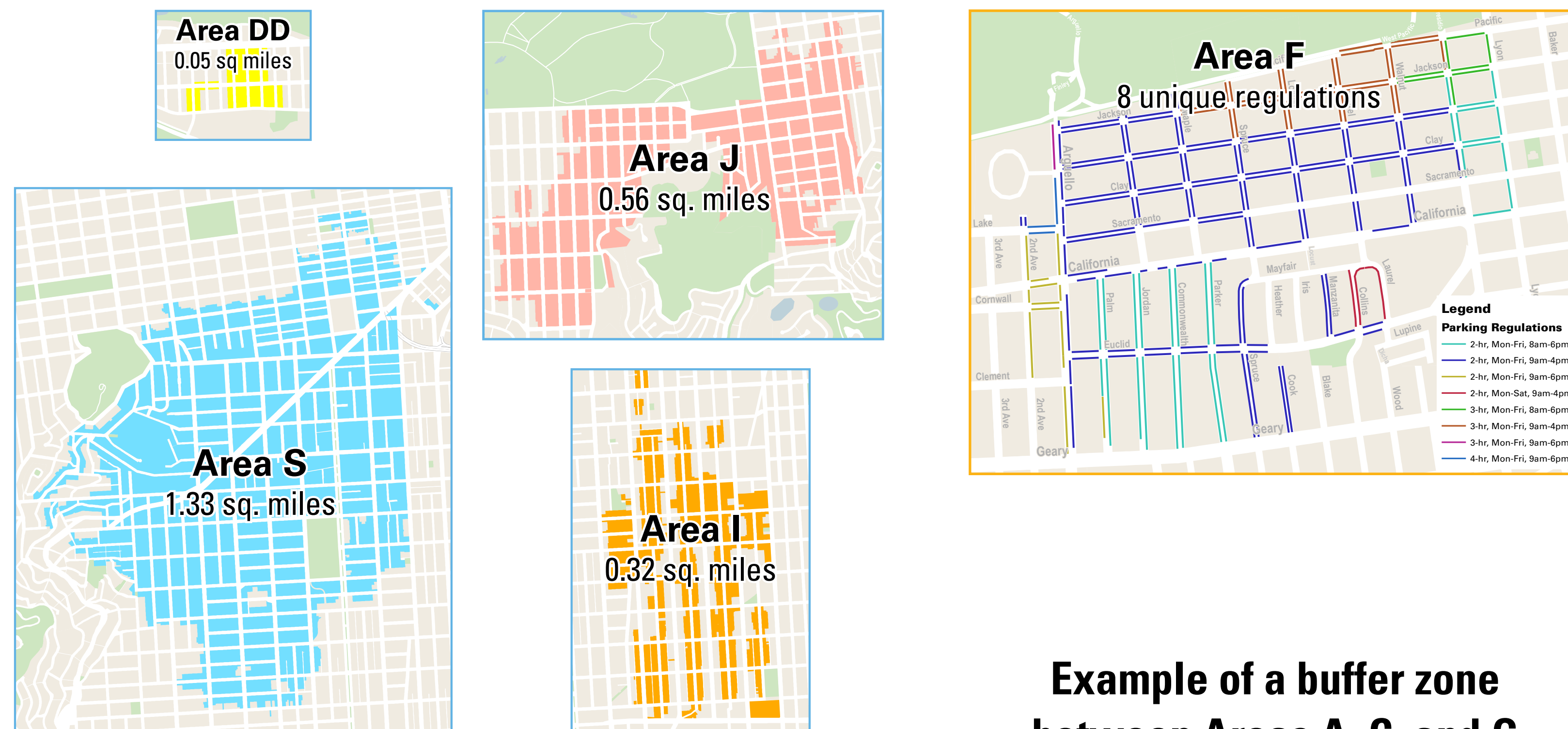
Option 4-C. In-home child caregiver permits

Residents who wish to purchase permits for child caregivers must currently circulate a special petition to neighbors on their block – SFMTA proposes to eliminate this burdensome requirement

Group 5. Rationalizing permit area boundaries and regulations

Permit area boundaries and on-street regulations (i.e., effective hours/days, time limits) are irregular and inconsistent, resulting in difficulties finding parking and ineffective enforcement.

Boundaries and regulations vary greatly in size



Example of a buffer zone between Areas A, C, and G



- Areas grow organically – usually one block at a time
- Boundaries and regulations are not determined based on data
- Pockets of unpermitted blocks within and between areas are common
- Enforcement is less effective and cumbersome when regulations vary and with permit areas that are too large or small

Option 5-A. Define ultimate boundaries of permit areas

Establish the boundaries of existing and potential permit parking areas

Details:

- Consider distance from major traffic generator(s) and natural neighborhood borders (e.g., dividing streets, topography)

Option 5-B. Sub-divide large permit areas

Large permit areas would be divided into several smaller areas that are easier to administer, enforce, and better follow neighborhood borders

Details:

- Necessary for other changes – particularly an area-wide cap

Option 5-C. Apply buffer zones 2 blocks b/w abutting areas; Grant permit eligibility w/in 2 blocks of an area

Details:

- Buffer zones are blocks on which residents of multiple, abutting permit areas can park (see photo to right)
- These policies have the goal of reducing the disadvantages of living near the borders between permit areas

Option 5-D. Define/rationalize permit parking regulations

The range of possible permit parking regulations would be defined and existing on-street regulations would be examined if they meet needs