

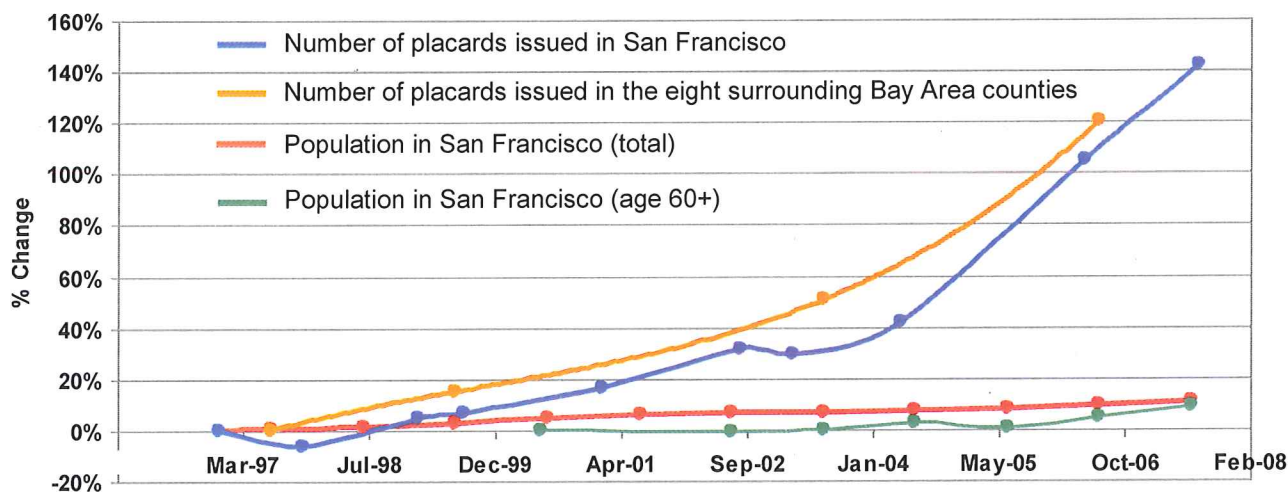
Draft Summary of Proposal to Improve Accessible Parking

Issue

The current approach to managing accessible on-street parking in California is not working. It does not successfully create access for the disabled and instead results in reduced overall parking availability causing various other transportation issues which affect everyone, including the disabled. The existing structure of this program which is legislated by the State but managed locally is disconnected.

In San Francisco:

- There are 28,500 metered on-street parking spaces.
- 56,000 placards were issued in 2007, while in the surrounding eight Bay Area counties, an additional 384,000 placards were issued (2006).
- Misuse of placards is part of the issue, but only part. Undoubtedly, many disabled parking placards are misused or fraudulently obtained. However, by themselves, the growing number of legitimate placards creates a parking management issue that must be addressed.
- As a result of the current approach to managing accessible parking:
 - Many drivers cannot find available parking spaces, so they often circle or double park, which degrades transit speed and reliability, causes unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles travelled, and reduces safety.
 - Worse, disabled drivers who most need an accessible parking space often cannot find one close to their destination.



- The voters in support of the City's Transit First Policy have indicated through the ballot that parking related revenues should be used to support transit needs. Therefore any revenues lost due to the current state policy that disabled placards are not subject to paying at the meter or time limits are not available for transit.

Goals to improve accessible parking

The SFMTA intends to dramatically improve how it manages accessible parking in San Francisco, and has the following goals for this proposal:

1. **Access:** Improve access and mobility for drivers with disabilities.
2. **Convenience:** Provide convenient parking options to people with disabilities who typically have fewer transportation options.
3. **Proximity:** Provide parking for drivers with disabilities to minimize both distances between a parking space and final destination and the need to return to a parked vehicle.
4. **Equality:** Provide the same rights and responsibilities for drivers with disabilities as all other drivers (while still ensuring convenience and proximity).
5. **Eliminate misuse:** Remove the existing financial incentive that leads some motorists to fraudulently acquire and use disabled placards, thereby increasing the number of accessible parking spaces for those who truly need them.
6. **Support City's Transit First Policy and voter mandate:** Direct revenues from removing the financial incentive

Proposal to change state law

State law related to disabled placard is inflexible and provides little ability for municipalities to improve how they manage accessible parking, so big cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles have to manage accessible parking the same way as in Fresno and Redding. The SFMTA is working with other cities and organizations to change state law to give municipalities that designate at least four percent of their on-street metered spaces as blue zones (i.e., for the exclusive use of drivers with disabilities, mirroring the Federal ADA standard for parking garages) more flexibility to try new approaches to managing accessible parking, including:

- Introduce a time limit at regular metered on-street spaces of no less than four hours for disabled drivers.
- Enable cities to require that all drivers, with or without disabled placards, pay at metered parking spaces, which could include metered blue zones.

The rationale for these changes is to use the two primary tools of parking demand management – time limits and prices – to manage demand for a finite number of on-street metered spaces. To ensure that a new approach adopted by any municipality actually results in improved access for the disabled, it is proposed that municipalities that introduce time limits and/or require drivers with disabilities to pay at on-street parking meters must, at a minimum:

- Ensure that low income drivers with disabilities can receive at least a 50 percent discount for metered parking.

- Ensure all metered blue zones (which must total four percent of all metered on-street parking spaces) are within 100 ft of a curb ramp.
- Dedicate revenue from blue zone parking meters to paratransit operations.

With this change to state law, no city would be required to change how it manages accessible parking. This legislation would simply allow cities to adopt other approaches to improve access for drivers with disabilities.

In addition, to provide a strong deterrent for misusing placards, this proposal would also revoke the driver's license of any person caught misusing a disabled placard for six months in addition to the existing fine of up to \$1,000.

Proposal to improve the management accessible parking

With more flexibility from state law, the SFMTA is proposing a new approach to managing accessible parking in the City of San Francisco. Key elements of the proposal include:

- Require all drivers, including those with disabled parking placards, to pay parking meters.
- Double the number of on-street "blue curb" spaces to meet the proposed four percent standard.
- Meter all parking spaces in commercial areas, including on-street blue zones.
- Time limits for drivers with disabilities in general use metered spaces would be at least four hours, with no time limit at metered blue zones, and double the posted time limit at unmetered spaces.
- Low-income drivers with disabilities would qualify to purchase (using the same criteria as the Muni Lifeline Pass) a discount on SFMTA pre-paid parking cards.
- All meters will have the ability to pay with coin, parking card, and credit card for convenient payment.
- Dedicate revenue from blue zone parking meters and disabled placard-related parking tickets to paratransit operations or other mobility improvements for those with disabilities.

This approach will effectively eliminate the financial incentive to abuse disabled placards, improve access for the disabled by improving overall parking availability so that it is easier to find a parking space close to a destination, be easy to implement and enforce, and requiring no new technology or additional medical reviews to obtain placards. This proposal is based on extensive outreach and research into best practices in other cities, such as Philadelphia, PA; Arlington, VA; St. Louis, MO; Raleigh, NC; Vancouver, BC, that have successfully adopted similar approaches¹.

¹ Best Practices summarized in a document available at the SFMTA