



July 30, 2013

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
City and County of San Francisco  
1 Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 244  
San Francisco, California 94102

***RE: Resolution supporting the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee recommendations to increase access to parking for people with disabilities and reduce disabled parking placard misuse***

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:

Attached for your consideration is a resolution supporting the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee recommendations to increase access to parking for people with disabilities and reduce disabled parking placard misuse. Please review the attached Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee Recommendations Report for more details about the stakeholder group's members, process, research, recommendations, outreach, and next steps.

## **Background**

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, and are reducing parking availability for all drivers.

California is just one of five states that require all jurisdictions to exempt disabled parking placard holders from both meter payment and time limits. The California Department of Motor Vehicles issues placards, but has limited resources to track the medical providers who approve the placards.

San Francisco now has twice as many disabled parking placards as metered spaces, with 67,500 placards issued to San Franciscans compared with 29,200 metered spaces and 700 unmetered on-street blue zones. An additional 454,000 placards are issued to people in the other eight Bay Area counties, many of whom drive to San Francisco.



Legitimate placards are often misused by people they don't belong to, increasing rates of use. Many blue zones and metered parking spaces are full all day due to placard use, decreasing access for those who need it.

The SFMTA has a team of parking control officers dedicated solely to enforcing placard misuse, confiscating roughly 1,800 placards per year. However, placard holders can use their placards no matter whose vehicle they drive or ride in, so proving the misuse of legitimate placards is labor intensive. None of the 11 cities studied has been able to significantly reduce placard misuse through enforcement alone.

## Proposal

In October 2012, the SFMTA and the Mayor's Office on Disability convened the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee, a stakeholder group comprised mostly of disability rights advocates, many of whom are placard holders. After six months of collaborative work, the group came to a broad consensus on a package of policy recommendations to increase access to parking and reduce disabled parking placard misuse. Some policy changes are local **(SF)** and some require state **(CA)** law change.

### 1. INCREASE BLUE ZONES

To reserve more parking spaces for people with disabilities, the equivalent of 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. The Mayor's Office on Disability and the SFMTA should reevaluate San Francisco's blue zone placement guidelines to enable zones in more locations. **(SF)**

### 2. IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT OF PLACARD MISUSE

To reduce fraudulent disabled parking placard use, the SFMTA should develop placard enforcement improvements, such as increasing the number of parking control officers that enforce placards, increasing stings, and other options. **(SF)** The DMV should make placard holder photos available to parking control officers. **(CA)**

### 3. INCREASE OVERSIGHT OF PLACARD APPROVALS

To increase transparency and accountability of medical certification, the DMV should develop and maintain a database to track medical providers who certify placards, and should take steps to ensure that the providers are legitimate. The existing DMV placard



application eligibility criteria should be clarified to ensure that placards are issued to people with a functional need for them. (CA)

#### **4. REMOVE THE METER PAYMENT EXEMPTION REQUIREMENT**

In order to reduce placard misuse and improve parking access, the state should allow qualified local jurisdictions to require parking meter payment for vehicles displaying placards. Based on experiences in other cities, requiring everyone to pay at the meter is the most effective way to reduce placard fraud and make parking spaces available. The Committee recommends that this policy should only be allowed as an option in jurisdictions that offer accessible payment options. This recommendation would increase local control, allowing communities to decide whether the payment exemption makes sense for them. (CA)

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

To further San Francisco's significant work 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. (SF)

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

In order to help open up parking spaces, the state should give local jurisdictions the option of establishing time limits for placard holders at regular and blue meters, provided that those time limits are no shorter than four hours. The state should also permit jurisdictions to require time limits in green short-term parking zones, no shorter than 30 minutes, not including time spent getting in and out of the vehicle. Paid for by qualifying merchants, green zones are intended to support local business and reduce double-parking, but are rendered ineffective without turnover. (CA)

### **Alternatives considered**

During its six months of work, the Committee reviewed numerous approaches to increasing parking access and decreasing disabled parking placard misuse. After defining the problem, establishing criteria, and reviewing extensive research, the Committee identified 20 policy alternatives for evaluation. After analyzing each alternative, the Committee concluded that this package of recommendations would increase access for people with disabilities, and that only a multifaceted approach would work.



## Next steps

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 and continues currently.

In the meantime, the SFMTA has taken steps towards implementing the recommendations that are under local control, including identifying potential locations for new blue zones and improving disabled parking placard misuse enforcement by increasing the number of parking control officers serving on the Disabled Placard Detail.

The SFMTA Board of Directors will hear this item at its August 20, 2013 meeting. In September, we will request support from the San Francisco County Transportation Authority Board of Commissioners in addition to the Board of Supervisors. 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 state law changes would not automatically change any local policies. If successful, we would pursue local policy changes to establish meter payment and four-hour time limits for placard holders, after engaging the community in further public discussion.

## Summary of recommendations

The Mayor's Office on Disability and the SFMTA request that the Board of Supervisors support the full package of Committee recommendations, including those under local control and those that require changes at the state level.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact either of us.

Sincerely,



Carla Johnson  
Interim Director  
Mayor's Office on Disability



Edward D. Reiskin  
Director of Transportation  
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency