

Subcommittee to the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee

Notes from the meeting on February 5, 2013

The fourth subcommittee meeting took place from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, February 5, 2013, at One South Van Ness Avenue, 6th floor, Corona Heights conference room.

Attendees

- Members: Ann Flemer, Jessie Lorenz, Bob Planthold, Stu Smith, Ed Reiskin, Carla Johnson
- Facilitators: Richard Weiner, Bonnie Nelson
- Staff to committee: Lisa Foster, John Knox White

Meeting outcome: honed list of policy options to consider

Note: items have been re-numbered due to changes recommended by the subcommittee. Numbering matches the updated policy options evaluation, but it does not match the meeting notes below this chart.

Recommended policy options to consider	Changes
<p>BLUE ZONES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of blue zones to 4% of metered spaces, referencing the draft Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) regarding distribution 2. Place one blue zone on every metered blockface 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Added PROWAG reference 2. Changed from “block” to “blockface” (one side of one block)
<p>DISABLED PLACARD ISSUANCE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Clarify placard certifiers 4. Clarify placard eligibility requirements 5. Require all permanent placards to be approved by a state-certified doctor 6. Create an applicant review system similar to paratransit 7. State database overhaul and certifier verification program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Current focus is on clarifying the definition of “limited mobility” 6. Formerly worded as “second-level review” 7. New policy option based on the Regional Transit Connection (RTC) Discount Card Program

<i>Recommended policy options to consider</i>	<i>Changes</i>
<p>TIME LIMITS</p> <p>8. Four-hour meter time limits for placard holders (unless posted time limit is longer)</p> <p>9. Placard holders observe posted time limits in green zones</p>	
<p>METER PAYMENT</p> <p>10. All placard holders pay regular rate at meters</p> <p>11. Placard holders pay at meters except for those who physically cannot pay (two-tiered program)</p> <p>12. Placard holders pay a discounted rate at all meters</p> <p>13. Discounted rate in metered blue zones</p>	<p>13. New option, more logistically feasible than #12.</p>
<p>14. <i>Low income placard holders pay a discounted rate at meters, and other placard holders pay the regular rate</i></p>	<p>14. <i>Recommended for removal</i></p>
<p>ENFORCEMENT</p> <p>15. Improve enforcement. The SFMTA should explore the feasibility and effectiveness of various actions, such as increasing stings, increasing the number of PCOs who can enforce placard misuse, beginning a volunteer program, and adding a photo to placards</p> <p>16. Conduct enforcement on those who certify placards</p>	<p>15. Reworked from “empower all PCOs to write placard-related citations” and “conduct monthly stings”</p>
<p>17. <i>Conduct monthly stings on those displaying placards</i></p> <p>18. <i>Use traffic cameras to enhance enforcement</i></p>	<p>17. <i>Folded into #14. The SFMTA already conducts bi-weekly stings</i></p> <p>18. <i>Recommended for removal</i></p>
<p>OTHER</p> <p>19. <i>Require more frequent certification for people over 75</i></p>	<p>19. <i>Recommended for removal</i></p>

1. Meeting opening- welcome and agenda review

The subcommittee will hear a presentation from staff on their analysis of the policy options developed in the last committee meeting and develop recommendations to bring to the committee.

2. Staff presentation on policy options analysis; questions/clarifications

Staff presented analysis of policy options according to criteria agreed on by the full committee:

- Will [policy] make it easier for people with disabilities to find parking in blue zones?
- Will [policy] make it easier to find parking in general metered spaces?
- Will [policy] reduce placard misuse?
- Is policy feasible?

The analysis of policy options provided to the full committee is an updated version of the document received by the subcommittee.

BLUE ZONES

Policy #1. Increase the number of blue zones to 4% of metered spaces: would create a total of 470 new blue zones.

Policy #2. Place one blue zone per metered block: would create a total of 780 new blue spaces.

Overview: increasing blue zones would could increase access to blue zones significantly, but only if placard misuse is addressed. Under current circumstances, zones would fill. Each blue zone would cost \$1,000-\$50,000 to install, depending on the site needs. ADA and City guidelines make it difficult to find eligible spaces where needed.

Clarifications:

- These are on-street spaces.
- “Per block” was taken to mean per two sides of a street; a committee member clarified that he meant it to mean “per blockface” (per each side/face of a block). Staff will re-do analysis to reflect this change.
- “Increase to 4%” is in proposed Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), with some specifications about distribution. Staff will add these specifications to the policy options analysis.

PLACARD ISSUANCE

Policy #3. Limit placard certifiers

Policy #4. Permanent placards approved by state-certified doctors

Policy #5. Placard applicants receive second-level review before permanent placard is approved

Policy #6. Clarify and amend placard eligibility requirements

Overview: in our research, we have found no correlation between cities with successful placard programs and those with shorter certifier lists or stricter eligibility lists. California's certifier lists and eligibility criteria are similar to many other states, with an exception: many states include more specific definitions of "limited mobility" based on distance a person can ambulate.

Creating certification processes, like requiring state-certified doctors or second-level review, would reduce the number of placards issued but would not reduce placard misuse after issuance. Recertifying all existing CA placards by programs like these would cost upwards of \$252 million, not including costs to set up the programs.

Clarifications:

- #4 is modeled on paratransit. Would this be a regional or state process? New bureaucracy needed.
- Expensive: NYC requires placard holders to visit NYC Department of Health physicians, and city staff would not specify expenses but said they spend "millions and millions" every year. Does NY know what offset they receive in terms of increased parking revenue from less placard abuse? This may not be knowable.
- What if we grandfathered in existing placards and use this program for new applicants only? It would be less expensive, but also less effective because all those who currently have placards and should not would be able to enjoy parking privileges indefinitely. Staff will add cost analysis to reflect this idea.
- A distance limitation like other states use for "limited mobility" is similar to definitions used now in ADA paratransit eligibility process.
- In packet, there is a detailed comparison among states and within CA on these eligibility criteria.
Note: this information is now the policy options analysis appendices.

TIME LIMITS

Policy #7. Implement meter time limits of no less than four hours for placard holders

Policy #8. Placard holders observe green zone time limits

Overview: a reasonable time limit should improve access to blue zones and regular metered spaces slightly. This would remove an incentive for abuse, but it doesn't appear to be the primary incentive: placard use continued to climb after one quarter of SF meters switched to long time limits. Based on reports from disability rights advocates and staff in Philadelphia, Arlington, and Houston, four hour time limits should provide sufficient time for people with disabilities.

Green zones are short-term parking zones meant to support local merchants and reduce double-parking. Currently, placard holders are not required to observe time limits in green zones and often stay for long periods of time, so the zones don't serve the intended purpose. Green zones are located directly in front of relevant businesses, and loading and unloading does not count towards time limits. It would be important to combine a policy with an increase in blue zones.

Clarifications:

- If time limits work in Philadelphia, they might work in SF, since both cities have a similar high density employment core.
- Time limits could be acceptable to disability advocacy community.
- SF has 1,200 metered green zones: merchants pay to get these installed but don't pay an annual fee.
- SF has 360 *unmetered* green zones: these require an annual fee from merchants for curb repainting. Some merchants choose not to renew, complaining that zones do not provide short-term parking for customers because placards holders park in them all day.
- Merchants are not represented on this subcommittee but they are a significant group we need to listen to.
- Messaging and equity are both important. Every group needs to feel they are getting something from any changes we recommend.
- Why does #8 require a state law change? Current law precludes any time limits for placards holders except in certain zones—yellow and white zones, but not green zones.

METER PAYMENT

Policy #9. All placard holders pay regular rates at meters.

Policy #10. As above, with exemption for those who physically cannot pay.

Policy #11. All placard holders pay a discounted rate at meters.

Policy #12. Low income placard holders pay a discounted rate at meters.

Overview: Placards are meant to increase access, but free parking creates a substantial incentive to abuse the system, reducing access. Thirty-five states have some form of meter payment for placard holders, and they employ various methods for making payment accessible. In our research, every city with a successful placard program (one that has reduced placard misuse and created parking access) has a meter payment component.

Clarifications:

- Along with meter payment, increased blue zones is the other common policy among all cities staff found that have successfully reduced placard abuse and increased access to parking.

ENFORCEMENT

Policy #13. Empower all PCOs to write placard-related citations

Policy #14. Enforcement on those who certify placards

Currently, all PCOs cite blue zones, ramps, and expired placards; but only the Disabled Placard Detail PCOs cite placard misuse, confiscate placards. The Detail confiscates about 1,800 placards per year and works in teams of two for safety and witness. It is not feasible for all PCOs to confiscate placards or cite for misuse. These take a long time to investigate, taking PCOs off their beats and reducing other types of citations.

In our peer review, cities that only use enforcement have had little success protecting access for placard holders. While an important component to a successful placard program, using enforcement alone is not expected to reduce placard misuse or increase access to blue zones and general metered spaces.

With 514,000 placards in the Bay Area alone, it would be difficult to catch enough fraudulent placard certification to meaningfully reduce placard fraud. To pursue this, it would be important for the DMV to start collecting data on certifiers, which would require new database systems.

Clarifications:

- Of all placard misuse citations, only 10% are dismissed after protest, which is a reflection of how meticulous the Disabled Placard Detail PCOs are and that the process includes two people who are trained specifically for this purpose.
- Houston, Chicago found enforcement alone to be ineffective for decreasing placard abuse.
- Note: enforcement needs to be part of overall strategy; otherwise the recommendations won't have credibility with the community.
- Discussion of #13: Why are teams of two needed for enforcement?
 - Witness (perhaps this is why there is such a high success rate for upholding citations)
 - Safety (placard fraud is a very expensive citation and there have been incidents where officers have been attacked). Is there data, or is it a perceived risk? We should find out from SFMTA staff at the next meeting.
 - Need for higher level of training (to NOT ask what a person's disability is, for example)

POLICIES NOT SUBJECT TO FULL ANALYSIS

Policy #15. Conduct monthly stings on placards

- The SFMTA currently conducts stings twice per week.

Policy #16. Use traffic cameras to enhance enforcement

- Would require a change in state law, as was true for red-light cameras
- Looking through video is time consuming with minimal benefits

Policy #17. Require more frequent certification for those over 75

- Placards are already reissued every two years, including a purge based on death certificates. It would also be an extra burden for seniors.
- Could be an opportunity for coalition-building with people who want to more frequently retest people's vision after the age of 75.

3. Develop recommendations for honing the list

All proposals will go forward to larger committee except for 12, 15, 16, and 17.

Comments:

- Many of these policies would require a change in state legislation. Things change during the process of becoming state law. A way to circumvent this issue might be to use provisions in state law that allows us to model an approach on another city's success. This way we could attempt something without having the details killed in the process of becoming state law.
- The devil is in the details but this committee is not going to hammer out the details. We're sending our sense of what to try to the SFMTA and to state legislators, who will take it from there.
- Whatever moves forward will be part of a package; will not be taken in isolation.

BLUE ZONE CHANGES, #1 AND #2

Note: Should we incorporate the suggestion re: one new blue zone per street section rather than per block, which would create a larger # of blue zones?

The subcommittee agreed to move this forward.

PLACARD ISSUANCE

On first vote, three people voted to move this policy package forward but others hesitated, so each was gone through individually.

#6: Clarify and amend the list of disabilities: the committee unanimously agreed to move this policy proposal forward.

- Blind people may be supportive of eliminating vision as a category.

#3: Limit placard certifiers: one member disagreed with this one.

- Many people don't have access to all levels of health care.
- Physicians assistant and nurse practitioners do a lot of diagnoses.
- On the other hand, those two job categories are always under a doctor's supervision.
- Midwives and chiropractors are allowed to certify for permanent placards. Remove?
- Research seems to say this approach is not very effective in reducing placard misuse and increasing parking access.

- What about changing wording to “clarify” rather than “limit,” and still honor comment about access to levels of health care.

#4 and #5: State certified doctor OR utilize something modeled on current paratransit process; second-level review before permanent placard approval.

- Perhaps use for new placards only.
- Cost: numbers seem too high for the return.
- Worker's comp system, which has a similar system to the proposed one, is a mess.

The suggestion was made and agreed on to move these policy proposals forward to the full committee, noting the subcommittee’s reservations that they are costly with unknown benefits. Changed as below:

- 3. ~~Limit~~ Clarify placard certifiers.
- 4. Permanent placards to be approved by state-certified doctor.
- 5. Placard applicants receive second-level review before permanent placard is approved.
- 6. Clarify and amend placard eligibility requirements.

TIME LIMITS

#7. Implement meter time limits of no less than four hours for placard holders.

#8. Placard holders observe green zone time limits.

Clarification: This proposes that if the current time limit at a metered spot is 4 hours or less, a placard holder can stay for up to 4 hours.

All subcommittee members agreed to move this group of policy proposals forward for discussion.

PAYMENT

#9. Placard holders pay regular meter rate.

#10. As above, except for those who cannot physically pay.

#11. All placard holders pay discounted rate.

#12. Low-income placard holders pay discounted rate.

- #12: There’s no data, and it sets up civil rights questions. It mixes the issue of income and disability.
- #12 conflates income and civil rights and creates a bureaucracy to check and monitor income status. How long do you stay low-income? There is a functional impracticality about this.
- #11: Discounted rate for placards creates a logistical issue for SFMTA.
 - A solution might be to attach discounted payment to blue zones only.

- #9: this has a major problem of public acceptance (this is a feasibility issue).
 - Whether or not it is intended to be punitive, it will be perceived as punitive (to require disabled people to start paying when they haven't been paying). It will clearly be seen as the removal of a benefit. But if it makes parking available close to where you need to go, it might be worth trying.
 - Would benefit from legal analysis. Can you take away this benefit legally? Is it the same principal as reduced transit fare for disabled?
 - Discounted transit fares for disabled people stem from when people couldn't physically ride the bus, so experienced reduced service. It wasn't based on income.
 - Was the free parking at meters originally based on physical ability to pay? That's right. It wasn't based on lower income.
 - We try to connect disability to its accommodation. I don't see the connection between paying at a meter (affordability) and disability except for physical ability to pay
 - If we've reached a point where technology makes it possible for people to pay even if physically challenged.... People can now ride transit, so are discounted transit fares going to be brought into question as well?

Vote: Subcommittee agrees to move the first three policies in this section forward to the full committee plus a new one with a discount in metered blue zones only. Discussion of these items should include comments about community concerns about paying full metered rate, given that until now parking has been free.

ENFORCEMENT:

13. Empower all PCOs to write placard-related citations.

14. Enforcement on those who certify placards.

- What about issue of adding some form of ID to placards? Do we add it to this section?
- State law allows this.
- We hear concerns about safety of PCOs, stories of assaults. SFMTA is just conceding their people are going to get bashed. If disabled people did the enforcement, would this be a solution? I would like to see a volunteer enforcement option on the table.
- It could be easier for PCOs if placards had photo ID—not visible to everyone on street; concealed but PCO can check it. OR bar code that can be scanned from outside car, connected to photo at DMV. No personal interaction with driver needed.
- I think cell phones with audio and video could substitute for second officer.
- We could also pay for a local nonprofit to conduct a public relations campaign telling people about the phone number you can call to report violations.
- We may want to add a new option: add some identifying marker on placard.

- While improvements from enforcement alone are negligible, it is important to include enforcement as part of the package of policies; it would help build trust.

Subcommittee agrees to move these policies forward, incorporating comments about possible feasibility problems. Suggestion made to generalize the recommendation to simply “improve enforcement” and explore several possible components, such as increasing the number of PCOs who can enforce proper placard use, employing volunteers, adding ID to placards, and increasing stings.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES NOT ANALYZED IN DEPTH

- Monthly stings
 - Include in enforcement policy package
 - Why bother when it's already being done twice a week?
 - Maybe it should be worded: “increase stings”
- Traffic cameras
 - Very high cost, low benefit
- Requiring more frequent certification for over 75
 - No one wants to move this forward

Have we missed anything?

- RTC has an approach (and software) that DMV could possibly use to keep track of certifiers. This can be added to section on enforcement of certifiers.
- RTC’s system can make sure a signature is accurate, and that the medical license exists. When a new doctor joins the system, RTC interviews them, and then they’re in the system. They can also be flagged if there’s a suspicion of abuse or overuse.
- Proposed variation on enforcement of certifiers: apply RTC-type screen to those who certify people for placards
- Also note that state law includes “nurse midwives” as eligible to certify placards. Nurse midwives are full nurse practitioners, unlike regular midwives.

4. Determine additional data and evaluation needs

Figure out the cost for new placard apps or a second level doctor review for new placards ONLY (not existing placards).

5. Review draft agenda for February 26 full committee meeting

Ann will present the subcommittee report.

When does feasibility question kick in for discussion?

- Do we come out of Feb. 26 meeting with honed set of policies and then conduct a fuller feasibility review?
- If we had a shorter set of policies we could go into more details.
- Some of the most effective options are also some of the more complicated ones to implement.
- Issue of it being a package—then feasibility of individual policies can be increased.

Keep others throughout state in the loop: we've done some of that in various constituencies.

- It would be useful to have some informal vetting to see if there are any big red flags.
- Lawyers for state representatives authoring new legislation will be the ones to do a full legal analysis.
- We should take some of these recommendations to our various advisory bodies before they're final.
- This committee has worked together so tightly and learned a lot together. Bringing ideas to people outside the committee may result in ill-informed feedback. Our original idea was to bring the committee's recommendations to other groups after the process is complete.
- There's a historical problem with SFMTA not vetting things with various disability advocacy groups; better to make them feel over-involved.

6. Closing

- Meeting evaluation
 - Amazing analysis by SFMTA staff
 - Good job facilitating
- Public comment
 - No members of the public were present