

Subcommittee to the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee

Notes from the meeting on March 12, 2013

The fifth subcommittee meeting took place from 10 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, March 12, 2013, at One South Van Ness Avenue, 6th floor, Corona Heights conference room.

Attendees

- Subcommittee members present: Ann Flemer, Jessie Lorenz (by phone), Carla Johnson, Bob Planthold, Ed Reiskin, Stu Smith, Roland Wong
- Facilitators: Bonnie Nelson, Richard Weiner
- Staff to committee: Lisa Foster, John Knox White, Lea Militello
- Public: Henry Karnilowicz

Meeting outcome: draft policy recommendations

See the appendix for the subcommittee's draft set of recommendations, along with the draft policy package scenarios that they discussed.

1. Opening

After reviewing the agenda, a facilitator reviewed notes from the February 26 full committee meeting.

DISCUSSION ON FEB 26 MEETING NOTES

- Clarify the suggestion for one blue zone per blockface (one side of one block). An alternate proposal would be one blue zone per block (both sides of one block). What would the percentage of blue zones be in that case?
 - *Answer inserted to these notes but not provided at the meeting: one blue zone per metered block would represent approximately 5% of metered spaces*
- Unclear about blue zones that are ADA-compliant and others that are not ADA-compliant. If the City were to stray from the ADA regulations, how would that work?
 - If passed as originally written, the requirements in the draft Pedestrian Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines are much stricter than current ADA standards. The City will need to review all its blue zones to determine their status regarding City/Federal regulations, and then set priorities about which should be updated or replaced. (For example, there is currently a blue zone on a one-way street that is located on the driver's side rather than the passenger's side, which is contrary to current City standards.)

ENFORCEMENT PRESENTATION

Lea Militello, SFMTA Director of Security, Investigations, and Enforcement, spoke about her experience spending an entire day working with the Disabled Placard Detail and her ideas regarding improving the placard enforcement.

- I've attended a number of the committee meetings and am learning a lot from you about these issues. Because the committee is interested in seeing improvements to enforcement, and because this topic is so important, I've been reviewing ways to make our placard enforcement program better.
- On Friday (April 8, 2013) I spent an entire day working with the Disabled Placard Detail.
 - We began at 6:30 am and did a plain clothes operation in the Tenderloin/Lower Nob Hill.
 - On any given block at least half of the meters were taken up by placard users.
 - We ran a few thousand placards, but in the end we only confiscated 13 of them. In the field, teams of two PCOs saturate the sting areas. Every car with a placard is run through the database. Unless the card comes back as stolen, deceased, or canceled; all the team can do is wait for the car owner to return to the vehicle and confirm that the placard holder is not nearby.
 - Often, placards that bring back a date of birth of the 1910s and 1920s raise a red flag. In the event that there is a mismatch between the location of a car's registration and the user's residence, PCOs can only wait for the car driver to return to the vehicle.
 - Overall, this level of enforcement requires a great deal of time and effort, and the results are slim.
 - In just one day, I personally witnessed several incidents where PCOs were subject to hostility and verbal abuse.
 - One driver drove his vehicle directly at me and a PCO. As soon as he saw my PCO's badge, he ripped down the placard, and slammed on the gas while turning the wheel toward us, forcing us to jump out of the way. I would not ask our PCOs to do this work alone; they need to be in two-person teams.
- Based on the input I've heard at committee meetings and my review of our placard enforcement program, I am considering the following changes:
 - Add five PCOs to the Disabled Placard Detail, increasing the numbers from 11 to 16 PCOs. This would amount to a 45% increase.
 - Increase stings from three days a week to four or five. We have found that stings are the most effective way for us to catch placard abuse.
 - Keep the Placard Detail PCOs in plain clothes at all times
 - Get unmarked cars so PCOs aren't in vehicles with the City seal
- I knew placard abuse was a large problem, but even I did not realize how widespread the abuse was or how difficult the job is. Now it's clear to me now that no matter what we do, enforcement alone can't solve placard abuse.

COMMENTS

- Has the SFMTA considered head-mounted cameras to record potential incidents?
 - The tradeoff is the high expense of the camera unit. At this point it may not be worthwhile.
- A question was raised about the viability of violation enforcement by authorized civilians, especially around City Hall.
 - All PCOs enforce blue zone violations on a regular basis. Only the placard team cites for placard misuse.

2. Review draft policy packages

Staff presented the draft list of policy packages requested by the full committee during its February 26th meeting. Each scenario included a review of the effects of each package of options (numbered per the accessible policy options evaluation dated February 19, 2013), evaluating the impact of each scenario on access, placard misuse, political feasibility, feasibility of implementation, and financial feasibility.

See the appendix for details. Discussion was limited to clarification questions, with more detailed discussion to follow afterwards.

CLARIFICATION QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

- Clarification about adding photo IDs to placards. The Committee decided to add the item to the “Placard issuance” row in the “Additional variations” column in the draft table. The possibility of adding a unique barcode to the placard was also added to the list.

3. Develop draft recommendations

BLUE ZONES

Policy options:

1. Increase blue zones to 4% of metered spaces
 - 1a. MOD reviews City blue zone placement guidelines, exploring options to enable blue zones in more locations (new item)
 2. One blue zone per blockface (note: not feasible on many blocks and not all blocks are desirable)

Discussion:

- All committee members agreed that policy option 1 should be included in the recommended scenario, with the added words “at least 4%”.
- Does the Mayor’s Office on Disability (MOD) have sufficient staff to complete review the City’s blue zone placement guidelines?
 - We are very busy, but we can do this.
- The committee reached a consensus to include policy option 1a.

PLACARD ISSUANCE

Policy options:

7. Certifier verification program with state database overhaul (RTC model)
3. Clarify placard eligibility requirements: add a functional definition to the “limited mobility” criteria
4. Clarify certifiers: remove nurse midwives and chiropractors *OR* only allow them to certify temporary placards
5. Permanent placards approved by state-certified doctor (*note: infeasible due to cost*)
6. Applicant review system similar to paratransit (*note: infeasible due to cost*)
 - Photo or other identifier on placards

Discussion:

- Comment on Scenario III: I’m in favor of policy options 7 and 3. Policy option 4 is more controversial.
- Comment in favor of Scenario II: This alternative is more readily achievable. The options to clarify placard eligibility requirements and clarify certifiers seem more politically difficult. We’d be taking on whole new interest groups like chiropractors.
- Question about option 3: Is the intention of the item to prevent some people from obtaining placards, like blind people?
 - Blindness is a separate line in the eligibility criteria, so this would not affect blind people.
- Additional support in favor of Scenario II: the goals in Scenario III are worthwhile, but ultimately the decision must be strategic.
- In presenting the package to the community, it is desirable to show the reasons behind the options, especially in regard to policy options 3 and 4. The current documentation doesn’t show these approaches to be effective.
- The subcommittee agreed to recommend moving forward with Scenario III, deleting policy option 4.
- The subcommittee also agreed to move forward with a recommendation to include photo or other identifier on placards.

TIME LIMITS

Policy options:

8. Placard holders have four-hour time limits at regular meters, unless posted time limit is longer¹
- 8a. No time limit in blue zones (*new item*)
9. Placard holders observe posted time limits in green zones/meters
- 9a. Placard holders stay up to 30 minutes at green zones/meters (*new item*)

¹ State policy could be set to allow local jurisdictions to institute DP time limits of no shorter than four hours

Discussion:

- Currently unmetered green curb zones have 10-minute time limits. Green meters have 15- or 30-minute time limits, with the vast majority at 30.
- Currently, placard holders can park without limit at green zones.
- Two members supported Scenario III, 9a (Placard holders stay up to 30 minutes at green zones/meters) because it would allow sufficient time.
- Committee members disputed the efficacy of option 8a (no time limit in blue zones).
- In San Francisco, the SFMTA does not create blue zones for individual people in front of their residences, but rather focuses on areas with high public use.
- Blue zones can be requested in front of residences in some Bay Area counties.
- How does SFMTA address difficult situations where a resident with a disability doesn't have off-street parking?
- Comment on 8a: Could option be modified to 12-hour time limit to allow buffer?
- In practice, it would be easier to have no time limit.
- Committee agrees on Scenario III minus option 8a.
- Were option 9a to be implemented, the SFMTA would probably put 30-minute time limits on all green meters (for all users, not just placard holders). Unmetered green curb zones would probably continue to have 10-minute time limits, but placard holders would be allowed to stay for 30.

METER PAYMENT**Options:**

10. Placard holders pay regular rate at meter
 11. Placard holders pay at meters except for drivers who physically cannot pay (*new variation*)
 12. Placard holders pay a discounted rate at meters (*note: very logistically difficult*)
 13. Discounted rate in metered blue zones
- 10/11a. Revenue from metered blue zones used for accessibility improvements (*item re-inserted*)

Discussion:

- Option 11 would require changes to the placard itself.
- Should we discuss payment options at all if there has already been a limit placed on time?
- The best and most effective tool to promote parking availability is introducing meter payment.
- Scenario II and III are similar: with variable pricing, higher costs during special events near AT&T Park may prove too much a burden. Would it be possible to ask placard holders to use the lowest possible rate on a meter?
- That would be logistically difficult and, given that the lowest rate is 25 cents per hour, there would still be a lot of abuse.

- Would option 13 (discounted rate in metered blue zones) be a suitable compromise?
- Additional trepidation about supporting meter payment.
- Comment in support of policy option 11 due to as of yet non-universality of “smart parking meters.”
- In San Francisco, we will have new “smart meters” across the city well before this policy would be approved, but DMV actions regarding certification – particularly a process to determine dexterity (to allow option #11) - may take a longer time due to additional complexity, so this could result in long delays to implementation of this policy.
- Grandfathered policies at DMV (i.e., automatic renewal of placards) may further increase the length of time for a full conversion to new process.
- Please do not use the acronym “DP” for “disabled placard” in this table. “DP” can mean “displaced persons”, a term first widely used during World War II. “Placard holders” would be better.
- Regarding payment: especially with improved meter technology, it is likely that very few drivers would not be able to pay for parking due to dexterity issues. (While the implementation of policy option 11 would benefit this very small group of users, it would disproportionately impact overall access for everyone else if we were to delay implementation of meter payments.)
- Consideration: can only charge if meters are fully accessible.
- Committee recommended amending policy option 10 to read “Placard holders pay regular rate at meter (only allowed in jurisdictions that have accessible payment options such as phone payment)”
- Concern about political feasibility of placard holders paying for parking (especially because placard holders will be going from no payment to full payment).
- But knowing that it will be challenging to achieve political feasibility is not a reason to not pursue this. And meter payments for disabled placard holders are applied in 35 states (based on that information, previous speaker withdrew objections).
- Recommend a phased implementation. Implementing payment should be done hand-in-hand with outreach to more community groups and overall accessibility improvements. There is a need to communicate/narrate these changes to the disability community in the wider context of accessibility improvements.
- The addition of more blue zones plus the feedback loop of meter revenue into additional accessibility improvements would be a good way to communicate the idea to the community.
- I have long been uncomfortable with payment, but I now see that it is important for creating access.
- It is important to convey to the community that some of us have gone through a trajectory in our thinking on this subject. Phasing in changes is a safe way to implement the changes; various parts of the proposal may be used as a bargaining chip down the road. Can agree to 13 and 10/11a, knowing this will be a controversial issue.
- Committee recommended Scenario I with the amended policy option 10, with the addition of policy options 13 and 10/11a.

ENFORCEMENT

Policy options:

15. Improve enforcement²
16. Conduct enforcement on those who certify placards, targeted using new data from item 7

Discussion:

- The subcommittee recommended adopting Scenario III, with options 15 and 16.

4. Communications steps after recommendations

Staff reviewed the “Draft communications and implementation steps after recommendations” document.

- Include the PCC in the outreach plan.
- Does SFMTA have access to a PR firm? It would be very helpful to have talking points to respond to common/recurring questions.
- Conduct outreach with disability groups first.
- When speaking to policymakers, it will be crucial to include major disability community names first on the list to ensure that they see that this was a process that had the full involvement of community members and included compromises among them and gradual changes in some of their opinions.
- Potential to coordinate shared meeting between MAAC and MDC PAC?
- Recommendation: Start in May so we have time to prepare the presentation and communications plan.
- The full MDC meeting is cablecast, so more people can watch during/after the meeting.

5. Draft agenda for the March 26 full committee meeting

- Add Lea Militello to the agenda.
- Revise the “next steps” agenda item to be more explicitly about the communications plan.

6. Closing

MEETING/SUBCOMMITTEE EXPERIENCE EVALUATION

- Wonderful, great experience; really thinking through the issues and letting go of preconceived ideas; achieving consensus.
- Staff work was balanced and even-handed.
- Appreciated consistent attendance by the co-chairs.
- Appreciated collaboration: started with divergent opinions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Appreciate everyone’s hard work on this issue.

² Ideas to review include: increase stings, conduct outreach regarding placard enforcement, increase the number of PCOs who can enforce placard misuse, add a photo to placards, and begin a volunteer program

Appendix: Accessible parking policy package options for subcommittee discussion, with subcommittee recommendations³

	Scenario I	Scenario II	Scenario III	Additional variations	Subcommittee recommendation
Blue zones	1. Increase blue zones to 4% of metered spaces	1. Increase blue zones to 4% of metered spaces	1. Increase blue zones to 4% of metered spaces	1a. MOD reviews City blue zone placement guidelines, exploring options to enable blue zones in more locations (<i>new item</i>) 2. One blue zone per blockface (<i>note: not feasible on many blocks and not all blocks are desirable</i>)	1. Increase blue zones to at least 4% of metered spaces 1a. MOD reviews City blue zone placement guidelines, exploring options to enable blue zones in more locations
Placard issuance	No change	7. Certifier verification program with state database overhaul (RTC model)	7. Certifier verification program with state database overhaul (RTC model) 3. Clarify placard eligibility requirements: add a functional definition to the “limited mobility” criteria 4. Clarify certifiers: remove nurse midwives and chiropractors <i>OR</i> only allow them to certify temporary placards	5. Permanent placards approved by state-certified doctor (<i>note: infeasible due to cost</i>) 6. Applicant review system similar to paratransit (<i>note: infeasible due to cost</i>)	7. Certifier verification program with state database overhaul (RTC model) 3. Clarify placard eligibility requirements: add a functional definition to the “limited mobility” criteria · Photo or other identifier on placards
Time limits	8. Placard holders have four-hour time limits at regular meters, unless posted time limit is longer ⁴ 9. Placard holders observe posted time limits in green zones/meters	8. Placard holders have four-hour time limits at regular meters, unless posted time limit is longer 9. Placard holders observe posted time limits at green zones/meters	8. Placard holders have four-hour time limits at regular meters, unless posted time limit is longer 8a. No time limit in blue zones (<i>new item</i>) 9a. Placard holders stay up to 30 minutes at green zones/meters (<i>new item</i>)		8. Placard holders have four-hour time limits at regular meters, unless posted time limit is longer 9a. Placard holders stay up to 30 minutes at green zones/meters (<i>new item</i>)
Meter payment	10. Placard holders pay regular rate at meter	11. Placard holders pay at meters except for drivers who physically cannot pay (<i>new variation</i>)	11. Placard holders pay at meters except for drivers who physically cannot pay (<i>new variation</i>)	12. Placard holders pay a discounted rate at meters (<i>note: very logistically difficult</i>) 13. Discounted rate in metered blue zones 10/11a. Revenue from metered blue zones used for accessibility improvements (<i>item re-inserted</i>)	10. Placard holders pay regular rate at meter (allowed in jurisdictions that have accessible payment options such as phone payment) 13. Discounted rate in metered blue zones 10/11a. Revenue from metered blue zones used for accessibility improvements
Enforcement	15. Improve enforcement ⁵	15. Improve enforcement	15. Improve enforcement 16. Conduct enforcement on those who certify placards, targeted using new data from item 7		15. Improve enforcement 16. Conduct enforcement on those who certify placards, targeted using new data from item 7

³ Numbering matches the accessible policy options evaluation dated February 19, 2013, available at SFpark.org/resources/accessible-parking-policy-options-evaluation/

⁴ State policy could be set to allow local jurisdictions to institute DP time limits of no shorter than four hours

⁵ Ideas to review include: increase stings, conduct outreach regarding placard enforcement, increase the number of PCOs who can enforce placard misuse, add a photo to placards, and begin a volunteer program

<p>Package impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access: large improvement • Misuse: large improvement • Political: feasible with committee support • Implementation: feasible • Financial feasibility: positive impact over time for City, no change for state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access: large improvement • Misuse: large improvement • Political: feasible with committee support • Implementation: feasible • Financial feasibility: positive impact over time for City, moderate cost to state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access: large improvement • Misuse: large improvement • Political: additional challenges from doctors, etc. • Implementation: feasible • Financial feasibility: positive impact for City, moderate cost to state 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access: large improvement • Misuse: large improvement • Political: feasible with committee support • Implementation: feasible • Financial feasibility: positive impact for City, moderate cost to state
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