

Transportation ALTERNATIVES

127 West 26th Street Suite 1002, New York, New York 10001
Ph 212-629-8080 Fax 212-629-8334 info@transalt.org transalt.org

Your Advocate for Bicycling, Walking and Sensible Transportation

Parking Policy: The Key to Reducing Traffic and Dangerous Double Parking in NYC

Traffic problems associated with parking:

•**Cruising for a parking spot creates traffic congestion.** Motorists cruising for parking make up 45% of traffic in Park Slope and 28% of traffic in SoHo. This extra cruising traffic slows buses, pollutes the air, diminishes local quality of life, and saps the economy.

•**Double parking is dangerous to bicyclists and pedestrians and slows bus service.**

According to the NYPD's traffic command, double parked cars endanger cyclists by forcing them to swerve into on-coming traffic, and make it difficult for pedestrians and motorists to see each other.

Solutions:

1. Performance Parking

The proven way to reduce cruising and double parking on commercial streets is to set meter prices based on "parking occupancy targets", a policy tool also referred to as "performance parking". The recommended occupancy rate is 85%. This means that no more than 85% of curbside parking spots should be occupied at any one time. When 15% of parking spots are always available, there is never a need to cruise for parking or double-park. To reduce demand for local parking, prices are gradually raised until demand is lowered to 85%.

Ideally, metered parking should also be extended to arterial streets and meters should be run 24-hours. Studies have shown that when metered parking is suspended during evening hours, traffic congestion created by cruising for a parking spot dramatically increases.

Performance Parking is good for business. When parking spots are available, businesses get more customers and faster deliveries.

2. Residential Parking Permits

Residential Parking Permits (RPP) can be a useful policy tool as a component of an overall plan that incorporates performance parking.

- RPP's should not be valid at metered spots.
- RPP's should be limited to one per household, or include a significant fee for additional permits.
- Provisions should be made for visitors and service vehicles.

3. Reduce Government Parking Placards and Increase Enforcement

The mayor's plan to reduce government permits by 20% is a good start, but more permits should be eliminated and enforcement of improperly used permits greatly expanded.