

February 2019 NYC Press Release

<https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/106-19/mayor-puts-city-path-replacing-broken-placard-system#/0>

The Mayor aims to phase out the use of physical city-issued placards throughout the city in 2021 and eliminate the use of fraudulent placards. This will be accomplished with an increase in penalties, a strict three-strike policy for misusing a placard, culminating in revocation, and dedicated DOT placard enforcement unit. At the same time, a new census of placard misuse will provide groundbreaking data to measure our progress and inform the public. The Mayor is also committed to working with the Council on placard abuse.

Pending the results of DOT's Placard Sticker pilot, stickers will be used to replace DOT-issued placards by the end of 2019 as a bridge towards the Pay by Plate System. The Pay by Plate system will fully phase out all city-issued physical placards by 2021.

**Pilot Program for Placard Stickers:** DOT is currently conducting a pilot program that replaces paper placards with window stickers on 300 DOT owned vehicles. By making it impossible to move an official placard to a different vehicle, the sticker program will eliminate a significant aspect of placard misuse. Replacing placards with stickers is also a key stepping stone towards a fully virtual permit system, and this sticker system will provide a bridge until the pay-by-plate system is fully implemented. Results from the pilot expected summer 2019.

**Pay by Plate:** DOT and NYPD will roll out a state-of-the-art parking management system. An integrated parking management system will eventually link parking meters, hand held enforcement devices and license plates. This parking management system will ultimately say if a car is in violation of parking and placard rules, further automating parking enforcement. Government employees that have authorization to park at certain places and times, which are currently identified with a parking placard, will have those stipulations attached to a license plate that will automatically register as legally or illegally parked—eliminating discretion and confusion in placard enforcement. It will cost \$52 million for installation and new equipment, and the first edition of this modernized system, focused on pay-by-plate meters, will be fully operational by 2021.

#### Stiff Penalties & Dedicated Enforcement

**Strict Three Strikes Policy:** Through DOT and DOF rulemaking, the city will create a strict three-strike policy that will lead to permanent revocation for misusing an official placard three times. This rule would make misuse or fraudulent use an additional, separate violation on top of a parking violation. This rule will be in place by spring of 2019. In addition, the Mayor will advocate for changes to State law to raise the penalty for a placard violation from \$50 to \$250.

**Dedicated Enforcement:** DOT will create a new team of 10 Traffic Enforcement Agents dedicated to targeted enforcement of placard rules. This dedicated team will focus on particular hot spots in Lower

Manhattan or Downtown Brooklyn, the two areas most plagued by placard abuse. Working with NYPD, DOT will hire, train and acquire the equipment for this team within one year. They will be empowered to ticket vehicles abusing their placard privileges or using fake placards. As DOT undertakes this initiative, we will also evaluate its effectiveness and potential next steps, including focusing on other hot spots for placard abuse.

Tracking Illegal Placards: The Mayor's SCOUT team will conduct an annual survey on the rate of illegal placard use in key hotspots throughout the City, to create a baseline of data to track the progress of the placard plan.

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CB8 Prior Action – March 2019: <https://pronto-core-cdn.prontomarketing.com/79/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/03.2019-Transportation-Reso-Parking-Placard-Legislation.pdf>

Transportation Committee Minutes Excerpts

## **Item 2: Presentation by Council Member Keith Powers' Office Regarding a Package of Legislation Related to Parking Placards**

This item is a continuation of initial discussions held at the September 2018 CB8 Transportation Committee meeting. In February 2019, a package of five City Council bills was introduced, which aimed to address ongoing issues related to illegal or inappropriate use of parking placards. The bill summaries for the package of bills are as follows:

### **Intro 1393**

This bill would require the Police Department to evaluate at least 50 sites a week based on 311 complaints relating to the misuse of parking permits and obstruction of a bicycle lane, bus lane, sidewalk, crosswalk, or fire hydrant by a vehicle. The evaluations would include photographic documentation of vehicles parked at the site and a list of enforcement actions. This information would be submitted the Council, the Mayor, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Investigation (DOI). DOI would review these evaluations and analyze their effectiveness. By October 15, 2019, DOI would submit a report with any recommendations on enforcement or the use and issuance of parking permits.

### **Intro 1394**

This bill would prohibit official City vehicles from blocking a bike lane, bus lane, crosswalk, sidewalk, or fire hydrant unless it is an emergency.

### **Intro 1395**

This bill would require 311 to accept complaints and photographs related to illegal parking and the misuse of parking permits. The City would be required to respond to complaints about a City vehicle blocking a bike lane, bus lane, crosswalk, sidewalk, or fire hydrant and explain why an emergency existed, making such parking permissible.

### **Intro 1412**

This bill would require enforcement officers to call for towing of any vehicle blocking a sidewalk, crosswalk, fire hydrant, bicycle lane, or bus lane.

## **Intro 1422**

This bill would create a standardized application process managed by the Department of Transportation for City-issued parking permits. Applications would be sponsored by City agencies and each applicant would be required to state why a permit would support such agency. Information on the number of permits requested and issued, disaggregated by sponsoring agency, would be posted online.

Jenna Klaus and Liz Peters from the office of Councilman Keith Powers provided additional detail regarding the proposed legislation and the general issues related to parking placards. It was emphasized that passage of Intro 1422 would help to reduce the number of placards through the creation of a central database, a standardized permitting process for individuals that would only enable them to obtain one placard linked to a city agency that must prove it is being issued to support the agency's critical functions, and require annual renewals (renewals currently are required triennially). Fines for illegal use or sharing of placards would range from \$250 to \$1,000.

The Mayor's office also announced a plan to crack down on parking placard abuse, which focuses more on addressing processes going forward; such measures would complement the package of City Council legislation. DOT Liaison Colleen Chattergoon further explained that much of the abuse of placards stems from the widespread issue of placard forgery. Traffic enforcement is thus unable to issue violations since they don't know whether placards on display in vehicles are authentic.

A member expressed concern that the language of Intro 1422 would prohibit vehicles from parking in areas that would block the movement of traffic, including bus stops, which differs from the language in Intro 1412 which would permit vehicles blocking the movement of traffic from being towed but does not include bus stops. Other members expressed frustration with the impacts that parking placards have had, and expressed support for measures that would reduce or even eliminate the use of parking placards. One member expressed opposition to \$45 registration fees that applicants for placards would be subject to paying.

## **Resolution**

**WHEREAS**, the quality of life in Community Board 8 has been adversely impacted by inappropriate use and lack of enforcement of parking placards issued by the City of New York; and

**WHEREAS**, the presence of fake placards and inability to differentiate them from authentically issued placards further inhibits enforcement and oversight; and

**WHEREAS**, the already limited amount of available on-street parking is further restricted by the extensive use of parking placards; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of New York has put forward a package of bills that includes Intros 1393, 1394, 1395, 1412 and 1422 that would address fake placards, inappropriate use of placards, and aim to reduce the number of placards; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed City Council package of bills regarding parking placards would create databases and install mechanisms to promote enforcement of placard abuse and prevent the transfer of placards;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports the City Council package of bills related to parking placards, comprised of Intros 1393, 1394, 1395, 1412 and 1422;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that the language of the package of bills be consistent to ensure that illegal parking with a placard in a bus stop for non-emergency purposes be subject to towing.

*Yes (9+2):* Lori Bores, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, David Menegon, Rita Popper, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Charles Warren, Peter Borock (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member)

*No (0):* None

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Streetsblog – November 27, 2019

<https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2019/11/27/speaker-johnson-no-really-this-time-the-city-will-end-placard-abuse-or-at-least-start-to-end-it/>

“The City Council passed a package of bills that Johnson says will finally put an end to something that’s been illegal for years: public officials (or their adjacent friends) parking in front of fire hydrants, in crosswalks, in bike lanes and in bus lanes, and even on sidewalks.

- [Intro 314](#) requires the NYPD to issue periodic reports on the improper use of city-issued parking permits. The reports would be due every six months, with the first due no later than June 2020.
  - [Intro 1394](#) makes it illegal for city vehicles to block a bike lane, bus lane, crosswalk, sidewalk, or fire hydrant. • [Intro 596](#) increases the fine for unauthorized or fraudulent city-issued parking permits from \$250 to \$500.
  - [Intro 927](#) requires the NYPD to create a centralized electronic tracking system for all city-issued parking permits; and requires NYPD to issue monthly reports to agencies whose employees have parking permits about any summonses received by those employees.
  - [Intro 1393](#) requires NYPD traffic agents to conduct at least 50 “targeted enforcement sweeps” per week, monitored by the Department of Investigations and based on 311 complaints.
  - [Intro 1395](#) requires 311 to accept complaints and photographs related to illegal parking and the misuse of parking permits.
  - [Intro 932](#) establishes a three-strikes-and-you’re-out rule, revoking the placard if its recipient illegally parks three times; and revokes placards from those who have unpaid parking or traffic violations in excess of \$350.
  - [Intro 942](#) requires each city agency that hands out parking permits to develop a plan for appropriate distribution. Individual plans would be due by Nov. 1, 2020, and a comprehensive city plan, which would include looking at reducing the number of city-issued placards, would be due a month later.
  - [Intro 1422](#) creates a singular application process, and accountability, for parking permits, which, going forward, can only be issued the Department of Transportation, the NYPD, and the Department of Education.
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Streetsblog – April 17, 2020

<https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2020/04/17/advocates-de-blasios-cuts-will-hurt-essential-workers-now-and-in-the-future/>

The Department of Transportation (announced) cuts amount(ing) to \$61.5 million in the remaining part of FY2020, plus FY 2021. On the chopping block? A team dedicated to cracking down on rampant placard

abuse, funding to upgrade citywide parking meters to a license plate-based input system, streetlight maintenance and contract spending, and money for materials and contracts for sidewalk inspection and management.

The city will also eliminate 100 traffic enforcement agents dedicated to intersection control, a savings of \$4 million.

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New York Post – July 3, 2020

<https://nypost.com/2020/07/03/city-hall-admits-new-budget-dismantles-unit-for-placard-crackdown/>

“City Hall has pulled the plug on its latest effort to tackle rampant placard abuse by municipal employees, shutting down the NYPD unit meant to enforce the most recent crackdown.

Officials said Friday they are axing all 116 positions that were dedicated to placard enforcement through attrition and zeroing out the unit’s \$5.4 million annual budget — just a little more than a year after Mayor Bill de Blasio rolled out the effort to great fanfare.

“A dedicated unit is no longer needed because we are enhancing enforcement coverage by introducing new technology and other advancements that allow any TEA to do this work more seamlessly,” said City Hall spokeswoman Laura Feyer, explaining away the budget cuts.

The cuts are projected to remain in effect for at least the next four years — effectively permanently disbanding the effort.”

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Streetsblog – July 10, 2020

<https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2020/07/10/de-blasio-cuts-two-placard-abuse-units-that-did-nothing-saying-but-wait-til-next-year/>

In November 2019, the City Council passed a nine-bill package that Speaker Corey Johnson said at the time would finally put an end to placard abuse. Among the bills was a requirement for the NYPD unit to conduct at least 50 “targeted enforcement sweeps” per week, monitored by the Department of Investigations and based on 311 complaints. Johnson said the new DOI oversight would finally give the crackdown the teeth it needs to succeed since cops often don’t like to ticket other cops, despite the fact that the DOI has also been caught abusing placards.

Before that, in February 2019, de Blasio announced a \$52-million program to end placard abuse by eliminating the current system of laminated cards, and replacing it with a fully digitized system in 2021, called Pay-by-Plate. That program has not launched yet — more than 18 months later.

But a spokeswoman for City Hall says the new automated Pay by Plate system will make up for the now-cut NYPD and DOT units. The system will allow traffic enforcement agents to quickly scan a plate with a hand-held device that will automatically determine if it's the placard is valid for the parking spot — and that's why the city felt it no longer needed a dedicated placard abuse team in the NYPD budget.

“A dedicated unit is no longer needed because we are enhancing enforcement coverage by introducing new technology and other advancements that allow any TEA to do this work more seamlessly,” said mayoral spokeswoman Laura Feyer, who added that Pay-by-Plate is still fully funded and is slated to roll out after June, 2021.

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Streetsblog – August 11, 2020

<https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2020/08/11/the-nypds-non-existent-placard-crackdown-by-the-astonishingly-low-numbers/>

Based on the city's own parking ticket data for fiscal year 2020:

- From July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2020, the NYPD and the DOT issued just 2,444 summonses for the violation, “Fraudulent use of parking permit,” which is the equivalent of fewer than seven tickets a day across the entire city.
- Uniformed cops issued just 33 of those summonses.
- DOT enforcement officers issued zero summonses.
- The remainder of the tickets — 2,409 which takes out two unlabeled tickets — were written by Traffic Enforcement Agents, who work for the NYPD and are reluctant to write summonses to their colleagues.

The city's own data show that the NYPD issued 1,660 tickets between July and December, 2019, but only 783 tickets in the first half of 2020, when the supposedly new crackdown was in effect

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The City – September 10, 2020

<https://www.thecity.nyc/2020/9/10/21431577/no-placards-revoked-under-de-blasio-employee-parking-crackdown>

A parking-placard enforcement push Mayor Bill de Blasio announced with fanfare last year has yet to yank a single permit away from any municipal worker, according to the chief agency issuing the prized perk.

“No placards have been officially revoked,” Scott Gastel, a spokesperson for the city Department of Transportation, told THE CITY.

The revelation comes as a special interagency placard enforcement unit de Blasio launched in February 2019 has been dismantled, a victim of cuts in the pandemic-battered city budget.

And it comes even after some placard-holders — among them City Council members — have racked up unpaid bills for traffic and parking violations. Repeat violators also include a recently deceased Board of Elections official who played Tony Soprano's driver on "The Sopranos."

Placards allow parking in designated areas and are intended to help city employees fulfill their work duties. But some workers flaunt them to illegally park — much to the consternation of many New Yorkers.

In 2018, city agencies issued more than 125,000 placards.

Under a three-strikes policy introduced last year, any city worker found to have repeatedly misused or fraudulently used a permit is supposed to lose the placard, after getting a warning and an opportunity to appeal the decision.

A placard holder can also have their parking permit revoked or suspended if parking and traffic violations in excess of \$350 go unpaid for 90 days.

Gastel confirmed that his agency has sent some city employees warning letters for misuse of a placard, triggered when a placard-holder gets a first violation for misusing the permit or amasses at least \$150 in unpaid traffic or parking violations. In July, the New York Post reported that warning letters were on tap for 389 city employees.

But a review and appeals process can brake the procedure for stripping away permits.

A DOT committee examines the appeal and decides whether the placard holder gets to keep their pass, Gastel said.

In July, according to Gastel, DOT sent 10 notices to city employees that their placards would be revoked. Of those, he said, eight did not have three citations for placard abuse, he added.

The remaining two, he said, "did not return appeals, and will be sent official revoke final notices shortly

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New York Post – January 3, 2021

<https://nypost.com/2021/01/03/de-blasios-war-on-nyc-parking-placard-abuse-has-stalled/>

The city has barely made any headway on changes intended to combat rampant parking placard abuse that Mayor Bill de Blasio promised nearly two years ago, officials have admitted.

Digital stickers — pitched in February 2019 as a cure to prevent holders from switching placards from vehicle to vehicle — have reached only a tiny fraction of the city’s tens of thousands of placard holders.

The Department of Transportation has issued decals to just 1,700 drivers, officials said — out of an estimated 125,000-plus placards in circulation.

Meanwhile, Hizzoner’s plan to switch the entire city over by the start of 2021 to a digital “pay-by-plate” parking system — designed to automatically register cars as legally or illegally parked — has also stalled, officials said

“We’re going to phase out placards as we know them entirely by 2021,” de Blasio had said at the time.

But pay-by-plate is now expected “get underway” sometime this year, according to a city official, who blamed the delays on “the unprecedented, unexpected, and dual public health and budget crises we’re facing.”

“The pay-by-plate system requires a total overhaul of the city’s 14,500 parking meters,” a the official said.

“That’s a massive undertaking at any time, and certainly even more so given the unprecedented challenges we’re continuing to face. We’re on track to get this project underway this coming year.”

Parking placards ostensibly exist to give municipal employees better access to curbside real estate when they’re on the job. In reality, they are widely abused. City blocks are littered with government workers turning sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, bus lanes, and no-standing zones into permanent parking for their cars.

An annual survey of placard misuse, meanwhile — which Hizzoner had said would be conducted by his office’s Street Conditions Observation Unit — simply did not happen in 2020, the city admitted.

The city official said COVID-19 on-street dining enforcement took up the unit’s time in 2020.

And only a handful of placards have been revoked under a “three strikes” policy against lawbreakers, while a dedicated enforcement unit also launched in 2019 was axed over the summer amid pandemic-induced budget woes.