San Francisco Parking Policy Letters

Jennifer Pearson

To: California Commission on Disability Access-Full Committee

721 Capitol Mall Suite 250, Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Punishing Disabled and Elderly Californians per San Francisco MTA planners propose 'taking' away Reasonable Accommodation in Disabled Parking Statewide

For all nations,the World Health Organization provides guidelines to enable planning for age-friendly livable communities. A livable community is designed for all ages from toddlers to 90 some year olds. In California the generation of Baby Boomers are producing a demographic 'revolution' as they reach the age of 65.

Transportation choices of people with mobility disabilities is limited compared with able-bodied people. While safe streets, accessible parking and sidewalks are best designed for all users of all abilities, the scarcity of blue spots for those of us with blue 'handicapped' placards will worsen as America ages and lives longer-- disabled parking need increases.

1) To legislate detailed State guidelines to INCREASE overall parking access for disabled and elderly is a reasonable action for our State Government.

2) We request you legislate to protect disabled parking concession statewide--indirectly one can argue such is a human right--analogous to the diversity/affirmative action doctrine.

3) Further, we request you consider banning angled and perpendicular parking reconfigurations on hilly thoroughfares, the least accessible and risky for all drivers given the blind spot when backing in or out. (If interested, I can provide my frightening experience with angled parking in Berkeley).

Planners envisage "18 million people over age 65 will be dealing with a disability by 2030, up from 11 million in 2010." (USA) AARP Bulletin Nov 2013.

World Health Organization along with the American Association of Retired Persons and the United Nation's Conventions on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities (2007]. support Transportation policies that embrace safety, accessibility and comfort in design. Cities throughout the nation are approving the newish policy of Complete Streets for 'all people of all abilities." The intent of this policy is inclusive, not exclusive.

Planner Jana Lynott writes for AARP in 2013 "Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America:

Complete Streets planning presents an opportunity to increase the safety and availability of older adults' travel options. Despite the oncoming stream of older boomers, over two-thirds of transportation planners and engineers have not begun to consider the needs of older people in their multimodal street planning."*

Safety efforts in planning parking for the unique limitations and needs of older adults includes comprehending age-related physical and cognitive changes, such as reduced peripheral vision, balance and falling, restricted movement, slower reaction time, loss of visual acuity,lessening of hearing, and degradation in selected and divided attention.

Demand Management Transportation Planning (DMPT)

To impose Demand Management Transportation Planning that operates a technology of control using price marketing strategies would rub out parking concessions (rights) for many lower income elderly and disabled--a huge impact--worrisome, uncomfortable--our elders would be less connected, less engaged, less independent and more isolated. DMTP will not foster Age-Friendly Communities with accessible de facto parking for placard holders.

Market thinking with risk analysis that focuses on OUTPUTS is unreasonable--counter to the philosophical frameworks of Americans with Disabilities Act, the pending Older Americans Reauthorization Act 2013 and the principles of the World Health Organisation and the United Nations. Consider this, instead it is prudent to consider quality of life OUTCOME scenarios. Ticketing vulnerable populations knocks out a segment of social citizenship, a crushing unfair burden. Some say it is discrimination by design. Remember, we did not choose our disabilities.

Imagine a law abiding slow moving happy 90 year old who accumulates parking tickets (as she can't run to feed the meter) where she parks near a recreation center where she goes to gentle exercise classes. She forgets--(common 'senior moments') then discovers they have gone to warrant and DMV has asked for her licence? Living at home in the hills, no other transportation choices are available for her--no bus service, paratransit is full---she will be unable to maintain her independence, perhaps become depressed, fall down--without her legal right to drive to he activities--may end up in a care facility--at far more cost emotionally and financially--eventually the County footing the bill.

Please do not support blame that imposes punishment on those of us who are law abiding blue placard users. Some political actors in San Francisco do take a punitive turn blaming all placard holders--enormously unfair--unkind--in a sense an insidious form of bullying by stealth. They use the pretext of a small percentage of cheating able-bodied persons who are fraudulently using blue placards--as a ploy to promote a catch-all scheme of bits and pieces they favor. We hope this Commission will take care to review the plans and comments. If I can assist in any way, please contact me.

In closing, the issue of cheating is the responsibility of DMV to manage in the application, recertification and enforcement processes for placard use.

Thank you for your attention and good work.

Sincerely, Jennifer Mary Pearson, MSW, Ph.D.

*http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/public_policy_institute/liv_com/2013/road-safety-for-all-lessons-from-western-europe-AARP-ppi-liv-com.pdf

Howard Chabner

Dear Chair Leemhuis and Members:

These comments are submitted about the San Francisco Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee (the "Parking Committee") recommendations. I've lived in San Francisco since 1982 and have used an electric wheelchair since 1990. My wife and I own a wheelchair accessible lowered floor minivan. I no longer drive, but did for around 25 years.

Introduction and Background.

Before commenting on the Parking Committee's recommendations, I will discuss the larger context. The recommendations should not be considered in a vacuum; the following factors must be considered:

1. People with major mobility disabilities have fewer transportation choices available than able-bodied people, and rely heavily on automobiles. (Separately I will distribute an email I've written about this.)

2. Most of the time, people with mobility disabilities park in regular (non-blue zone) metered and unmetered spaces, not blue zones. Almost all on-street parking spaces except perpendicular and angled spaces, those on the driver's side of a one-way street, and those on a steep hill are, in effect, accessible spaces even though not labeled as such.

3. SFMTA ("MTA") is engaged in a relentless campaign against cars that includes reducing the number of on-street parking spaces, adding meters to previously unmetered spaces (including in residential neighborhoods), and increasing the cost and required payment hours at metered spaces. MTA has not shared with the public any overall plan with respect to parking meters, instead opting for a piecemeal, divide-and-conquer, stealth strategy.

Here are some specifics about MTA's campaign against cars and how it is negatively impacting people with mobility disabilities. Because its charge and scope of inquiry from MTA are narrow, the Parking Committee did not consider these essential facts.

- MTA is reducing the number of on-street parking spaces throughout the city by, among other things, eliminating parking spaces and replacing them with bike lanes. The bike lane project on Fell and Oak Streets is but one example. Others include Masonic Avenue, 2nd Street and the plan to eliminate parking along a large commercial/residential area on Polk Street.
- Eliminating parking spaces and replacing them with bike lanes eliminates more parking spaces than acknowledged by MTA, because residents can no longer park in the curb lane across their driveways as they have done for decades.
- Parking spaces that are, in effect, disabled accessible although not designated as such are being removed. For example, all of the parking spaces on Oak Street that were eliminated as part of the bike lane project are on the South side of Oak and, before implementation of the project, were effectively accessible; those that remain are on the North side and are not accessible to wheelchair users because a side ramp or lift would have to be redeployed into travel lanes. The JFK Drive cycle track is another example - by moving the parking lane away from the curb, the number of effectively accessible spaces was drastically reduced, even though a handful of blue zones were added.
- Changing parallel parking to angled or perpendicular also eliminates spaces that previously were effectively accessible for wheelchair users and other people with mobility limitations. For example, as part of the Fell and Oak Street bike lane project, MTA converted parking on several side streets from parallel to perpendicular or angled, which exacerbated, not mitigated, the parking loss hardship for people with mobility disabilities.
- MTA is installing parking meters in spaces that previously were unrestricted or in some cases were in neighborhood permit zones. This is going on not only in commercial neighborhoods, but residential. See Meter Madness http://metermadness.wordpress.com/ for details. For example, on February 21, 2013, I attended a meeting at USF about MTA's plan to install meters in the neighborhood around USF and along the perimeter of the John Adams CCSF campus, near where I live. A roomful of irate, distrustful neighbors were nearly unanimous in their outrage at the plan and their disdain for MTA. As another example, MTA has been trying to install meters in residential/small business/artist areas in the Northeast Mission. Although MTA has in some areas backed off in the face of a neighborhood outcry, this is merely a tactical retreat, not an acknowledgment that its plans are wrong and create hardships for residents, merchants, employees, artists, etc.
- Parking spaces are being removed in order to install Muni rail and bus bulbouts that, in some cases, are unnecessary. For example, around four spaces on Carl were eliminated near the Northeast corner of Cole/Carl to create a larger boarding area for the outbound N Judah, even though few passengers board the outbound train at that stop. (Many passengers exit at that stop; they walk away and don't wait there.)
- Bike parking racks on the sidewalk block access to parking spaces for wheelchair users and others with mobility limitations, thereby reducing the number of effectively accessible spaces.
- Since the beginning of 2013, parkers have been required to pay at metered spaces on Sundays.
- In some areas, parking meters now operate at night.
- The cost of parking at metered spaces is quite expensive in some areas, and it keeps going up.
- The high-tech parking meters make it technically easy for MTA and its contractor, Serco, to continue raising prices and increasing payment hours, and to do so insidiously and without fair notice.

- Serco, the for-profit contractor that operates the parking meters and to which MTA has delegated substantial power over parking policy, has financial and other interests that are different from those of San Francisco residents, businesses, employees and visitors.
- The fines for parking tickets in San Francisco are high and continue to increase. They are among the highest in the nation, if not the highest.
- The cost of being towed is unconscionably high – now around $500 for towing plus a ticket of nearly $100.

Comments on the Parking Committee's Recommendations.

#1 – Increase Blue Zones

San Francisco has fewer blue zones than legally required. This has been pointed out many times over the years. I agree with the general recommendation to increase the number of blue zones in areas where there are metered parking spaces.

San Francisco also has too few blue zones in residential areas and other areas where there are unmetered parking spaces. (MTA argues that there is no legal requirement for blue zones in areas where there are unmetered parking spaces; this is wrong.) San Francisco also should install more blue zones in these areas. Therefore, I support the recommendation to consider changing San Francisco's blue zone placement guidelines, if that is what is required to enable blue zones in more places.

Although the Parking Committee report emphasizes that all of the recommendations function as a package, increasing the number of blue zones should be done ASAP and regardless of whether, or when, the other recommendations are adopted and implemented. Installing more blue zones does not require any change to state law.

The report states that increasing the number of blue zones to 4% of metered spaces would mean an increase of approximately 470 blue zones. To put that number in context, it's important to recognize that during the past few years San Francisco has lost at least that number of de facto accessible unmetered and metered street parking spaces, through outright elimination and changes in configuration (e.g. converting parallel spaces to perpendicular or angled, and moving the parking lane away from the curb).

#2 – Improve Enforcement of Placard Misuse

I agree with these proposals. There should be a photo on the placard itself and on the receipt. Local enforcement should be improved. These recommendations should be done ASAP and regardless of whether, or when, the other recommendations are adopted and implemented.

Moreover, and although not among the Parking Committee's recommendations, San Francisco should consider increasing the penalty for placard misuse. (Although a penalty of $825 and immediate confiscation of the placard seems high, the penalty amount is less than twice that of the towing fee plus parking ticket for someone who, even if mistakenly, in good faith, and for only a short amount of time, parks in a tow-away zone.)

A caveat, however. Placard abuse harms everyone. It must be punished and reduced. But just what constitutes placard abuse isn't as simple as it may appear. Sometimes a

disabled person is accompanied by an able-bodied person in one direction but not both. For example, a disabled person and her able-bodied spouse or friend may park at night in a blue zone or metered space near her home. In the morning the able-bodied person may return to the car alone while the disabled person remains at home, takes a stroll in the neighborhood, or takes public transportation somewhere else. If a parking control officer sees the able-bodied one returning to a car parked in blue zone or metered space with a placard, the officer may wrongfully assume placard abuse. The reverse situation also happens. An able-bodied friend or family member of a disabled person may drive somewhere alone, park at a blue zone or meter, and display the disabled person's placard. The able-bodied person may exit her car alone, meet the disabled person and the two of them leave together, sometimes much later. This, too, is a legitimate use of disabled parking placard even though it may not appear to be. There are other permutations of these situations.

#3 - Increase Oversight of Placard Approvals

The huge increase in placards issued during the past 10 years - an increase far greater than the increase in overall population and seniors - is strong evidence that placards are being issued too easily. It is shocking, and grossly negligent, that DMV does not have the technical capacity to maintain information about medical providers who certify placards in a searchable database. This deficiency makes it difficult or impossible to determine whether any particular healthcare providers are certifying a suspiciously large number of placards, thereby making it extremely difficult to prevent fraud in the certification of eligibility for placards. I support the Parking Committee's three recommendations. These recommendations should be implemented ASAP and regardless of whether, or when, the other recommendations are adopted and implemented.

Placard renewals are sent out automatically. I've had one since I moved to San Francisco in 1982, and after I submitted a doctor's note to get my first placard, the renewals have come in the mail automatically every two years. I could have moved away or died (or my medical condition could have been cured!) many years ago and the renewal placards would probably still keep coming. Recently I was speaking with a friend whose mother died seven or eight years ago, and the placards keep coming to her old house automatically. (He cuts them up, he doesn't fraudulently use them.) Apparently DMV doesn't cross check the list of placard holders against death data, another example of gross negligence by DMV.

In addition to the Parking Committee's recommendations, the following should be adopted:

- Require a new certification every two or three years, even for placard holders with permanent disabilities.
- Have a photo ID on the disabled parking placard and placard ID card, as has been done on drivers licenses for decades.
- Require DMV to cross check the database of placard holders with databases of deaths, to make sure the survivors of decedents turn in the placards after death.
- Consider reducing the types of medical providers eligible to certify people for placards. Not everyone has access to a medical doctor, but the current list of providers

seems too broad. For example, chiropractors should probably not be eligible, and perhaps not optometrists and nurse midwives.

- Conduct an outreach campaign to medical professionals emphasizing the harm done by falsely, or even in good faith but too leniently, certifying patients for placards.

#4 - Remove the Meter Payment Exemption Requirement

I strongly oppose this recommendation. Many people own cars but don't have garages, so they rely on street parking. If local jurisdictions were allowed to require placard holders to pay at meters (including blue zones in metered areas), San Francisco would certainly change its current policy and require payment. If it did this, and if MTA continued to reduce the overall number of street parking spaces, change the configuration of parking spaces to reduce the number of de facto accessible spaces, install meters in residential areas (and, if MTA has its way, do so with minimal notice to the people who would be impacted), increase the price and hours of meters, and increase the penalties for parking violations, some people with mobility disabilities - especially working-class and middle-class people - would end up leaving San Francisco. Others who live elsewhere but work in San Francisco would not be able to continue working here. Moreover, many of those with mobility disabilities who would be negatively impacted are seniors.

These would be terrible demographic consequences and would conflict with the principle often stated by elected officials, civic leaders and San Franciscans of all stripes, of encouraging and supporting a population that is diverse in, among other characteristics, age, disability status, family status, income and occupation.

When the free parking policy was implemented decades ago, among the reasons for not requiring payment were the physical inaccessibility of meters and the physical difficulty for disabled people in returning to meters frequently in order to pay before the time expired. Meter payment technology has changed dramatically since then, and the recommendation would allow jurisdictions to require payment only if their meters have accessible payment options. But in considering whether or not free parking should be continued, it's essential to consider the overall parking situation today. The parking situation in San Francisco today is much more difficult, complex and expensive than when the free parking policy was initially adopted. The transportation choices of people with mobility disabilities continue to be quite limited compared to those available to able-bodied people, and, as referred to at the beginning of this email, many of us with mobility disabilities rely heavily on automobiles. Among other things, major access limitations and problems still exist in public transportation and are likely to persist for the foreseeable future.

The justification for continuing free parking is similar to that for reduced fares on public transportation for disabled people (and for seniors and children), and in other contexts. Although the poorest segment of the population, whether disabled or able-bodied, cannot afford automobiles, many working-class and middle-class disabled people do own and rely on cars. Many people with mobility disabilities, including those who are relatively affluent, have high medical expenses year after year that are not covered by insurance - caregivers who assist with activities of daily living, home access modifications (including installation and ongoing maintenance), long-term care, accessible vehicles, medical transportation, medical equipment (for example, insurance typically does not cover the

entire cost of purchasing and maintaining complex wheelchairs, nor does it cover essential items such as lifts), medical supplies and drugs. Continuing to provide free on-street parking would be a fair acknowledgment of those extra burdens.

The parking situation in San Francisco is uncertain and constantly changing. For those who rely on an automobile and don't have a garage, street parking is essential. But MTA is installing parking meters in residential areas. If this continues, some people with mobility disabilities who rely on automobiles would have to move. It would be a huge mistake to eliminate free parking in such an uncertain, changing environment.

MTA has estimated that, at an average rate of $1.50 per hour, it had a revenue loss of $12.3 million in 2013 due to metered hours occupied by cars with disabled placards that park for free, plus $2.5 million in lost revenue because of free parking at blue zones. (Source: July 31, 2013, MTA draft revenue estimate from accessible parking proposal; provided to me per a Sunshine Ordinance request.) (This estimate also includes, as a cost of implementing the recommendations, one full-time equivalent MTA employee salary for one year, at $200,000. If $200,000 is the typical annual cost for a full-time equivalent employee, no wonder MTA is so hungry for money!) It's also important that the revenue impact analysis was prepared after the Parking Committee had completed its meetings. It does not seem that information about revenue lost due to free parking and revenue that would be gained by requiring payment was presented to the committee; if this information was presented at all, it wasn't emphasized. The total of nearly $15 million annually is based on an average rate of $1.50 per hour; since MTA can be expected to raise hourly rates and install more meters in the future, the revenue gain would be even greater. Also, the $15 million does not include parking ticket citation revenue that would be generated from placard holders for parking violations at metered spaces. Although there are one-time costs of installing meters at blue zones, installing more blue zones, and implementing accessible payment options, the revenue gained by eliminating free parking would continue year after year.

I believe that capturing this large amount of lost revenue is MTA's main motivation for promoting this proposal. If MTA were truly interested in increasing overall parking access for disabled people, it would not be doing the things mentioned elsewhere in this email. It's also interesting that this revenue estimate was made months after the Parking Committee completed its meetings and formulated its recommendations. Importantly, MTA Director Ed Reiskin is Co-chair of the Parking Committee, Nelson Nygaard consultants acted as facilitators, and parking contractor Serco was heavily involved in the process. These players have a powerful economic incentive to increase MTA revenue.

Requiring placard holders to pay at the meter is part of MTA's overall "demand management" strategy for parking. Like most goods, increasing the price of parking can be expected to reduce demand, but that shouldn't be the ultimate goal. If MTA charged $20 per hour to park at meters, it would undoubtedly open up spaces, but at what cost? Should San Francisco be a city where only the affluent can afford cars?

It's true that free parking for placard holders invites fraud and abuse. So does any benefit - Medicare, Medi-Cal, Social Security, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, disability insurance. But society should target fraud and abuse, not eliminate a benefit that is justified. According to the evidence in the Parking Committee report, the DMV has not really seriously tried to tackle fraud and abuse, and San Francisco's attempts have been limited. The Parking Committee's justification for eliminating free parking is that

evidence from other jurisdictions indicates that targeting fraud and abuse alone is not sufficient. But why not try it first, instead of throwing out the baby with the bathwater?

The practices of other jurisdictions are of limited relevance. Other jurisdictions are not undergoing a campaign against cars as intense and relentless as MTA's campaign in San Francisco, and mobility disabled people there are not facing the same looming threats to their ability to use and own cars.

Many San Francisco and California officials and employees pride themselves on going beyond legal requirements in access and implementing progressive practices even if not legally required. Certainly San Francisco and California can learn from other places, but they shouldn't emulate places that don't have forward-thinking disability access policies. Moreover, as the Parking Committee notes, 15 states do require cities to exempt placard holders from paying at the meter.

There are other problems with the recommendation:

- Allowing each jurisdiction to formulate its own policy invites confusion and inconsistency. If someone parks near a boundary between municipalities with different policies, how would they know what to do? Signs and meters would have to be perfectly explicit, which is unlikely considering that currently they are often unclear about rules that are simpler than accessible parking payment rules undoubtedly would be.

- A jurisdiction could only require payment if it provided an accessible payment option. How would this be defined? Would each jurisdiction have its own definition? And even if there were a standard, agreed-upon definition, there would inevitably be disputes about whether a particular municipality met the requirement. Municipalities would have a strong economic incentive to plow ahead and charge disabled people for parking even though payment access was incomplete or flawed. Lawsuits would be likely.

- MTA often wrongly issues parking tickets. For example, it issues many tickets for parking in a temporary construction zone to cars that parked there when there was no signage indicating that parking is prohibited. It is difficult and burdensome for the general public to fight wrongly issued parking tickets. For a mobility disabled person who loses his or her initial appeal by correspondence, it is even more burdensome to go in person to fight the ticket than it is for the general public.

Although the Parking Committee's recommendations did not include a discount on parking meter fees for people with low incomes, the final MTA Board resolution of November 19, 2013 directs MTA staff to develop a discount program for low income drivers with a disabled placard. This is certainly a step in the right direction, because disabled placard holders with low incomes would be the most impacted by eliminating free parking. However, such a discount would not be required by the state law changes the Parking Committee and MTA are promoting – whether or not to provide a discount would be up to each individual jurisdiction; therefore, low income drivers would not be protected. Also, there is no definition or threshold of low income, nor any specifics about the amount of discount; this is quite a fudge factor, and quite possibly added by the MTA Board primarily for the sake of optics in its campaign for state law changes. Finally, for the reasons described above, requiring payment would be a hardship for disabled placard holders with middle and upper-middle incomes, although not as great a hardship as for those with low incomes.

#5 – Direct Revenue to Accessibility Improvements

If payment is required for blue zones - which I oppose - the money should go into the same MTA fund as general parking meter revenues, not be specifically earmarked for accessibility improvements. With limited exceptions, money received from taxes and fees should go into a general pot in the relevant jurisdiction (federal, state, or local), and society should decide how to allocate all of that money. Earmarking blue zone meter revenue for access improvements would violate that principle. Parking meter revenue should not be considered a user fee (unlike, for example, admission fees to state and national parks), nor should it be considered like proceeds from a bond issued for a specific purpose.

Access is legally required. It should be part of every project and be funded in the same way as the rest of the project - from San Francisco's general fund, general capital sources, bond proceeds (for example, proceeds from a parks improvement bond should be used to provide access as part of the parks projects funded by the bond), general operating revenues, etc. San Francisco's ADA Transition Plan should be fully funded. Providing complete access should not depend on the existence of "special" sources such as blue zone meter revenues.

Moreover, would there be any mechanism in place under the Parking Committee's proposal to ensure that these funds would be spent on improvements that would not otherwise have been made in the absence of these funds? Isn't it possible or likely that MTA would simply spend less money from other sources on access improvements?

There is also a practical problem. Who would choose how to direct those funds to access improvements, and by what process? This recommendation would invite political wrangling about how to spend the funds and who gets to decide.

#6 - Allow Jurisdictions to Establish Reasonable Time Limits

As with the issue of free parking for placard holders, the overall parking situation in San Francisco must be considered. If MTA continues to install meters in residential and mixed residential/commercial areas that previously didn't have them (and, to make things worse, with even less public notice), continues reducing the overall number of street parking spaces, and continues reducing the number of de facto accessible spaces by changing the configuration of spaces from parallel to perpendicular/diagonal, mobility disabled people would rely more and more on metered spaces, and time limits would create a hardship, especially for those without garages, ultimately forcing some people with mobility disabilities out of San Francisco.

If payment is required for regular metered parking and blue zones, according to the Parking Committee's reasoning, the incentive for abuse would be reduced and the rationale for time limits would be greatly diminished. If payment is required, there should be no time limits.

If metered parking and blue zones continue to be free for placard holders, I would support reasonable time limits but only if MTA stops doing the things described in this

email and significantly increases the number of blue zones in the whole gamut of areas, so that plenty of unmetered spaces remained available in residential and mixed residential/commercial areas.

But a four hour time limit isn't enough. For example, people often spend more than four hours at a park. Golden Gate Park is closed to automobiles on Sundays (which I have supported for years). Meters now operate on Sundays. People with mobility disabilities who find street parking in the neighborhoods near parks should not be limited to four hours. Similarly, people spend more than four hours at music festivals, street fairs and similar events. They often spend more than four hours visiting friends in hospitals or at home. Dinner and a movie or concert can take more than four hours.

I support the recommendation to set time limits for placard holders in green zones. Businesses pay for green zones and rely on them for deliveries and short-term customer parking, so I never park at green zones for more than a few minutes when the business is open. However, time limits should only apply during business hours and days. If, for example, a business is closed on Saturdays and Sundays, time limits should not apply to placard holders parking in that business's green zone on those days.

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Thank you for considering this email.

Sincerely

Howard Chabner

Howard Chabner

Dear Chair Leemhuis and Members:

On January 5, 2014, I submitted comments about the San Francisco Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee (the "Parking Committee") recommendations. I mentioned that I would send a follow-up email discussing why people with major mobility disabilities rely heavily on automobiles. Here it is.

Transportation is essential to living a full, independent life - attending school, working, spending time with family, socializing, volunteering, participating in civic life, attending cultural, entertainment and sports events, shopping, maintaining a home, going on vacation. Broadly speaking, the goal of the disability rights laws is to ensure that disabled people have an equal opportunity in all areas of life. Accessible transportation, and an equal opportunity to choose among modes of transportation, are essential disability rights.

Civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in programs of local government, use of streets and sidewalks, and transportation. California Civil Code Section 54(a) provides that "Individuals with disabilities or medical conditions have the same right as the general public to the full and free use of the streets, highways, sidewalks, walkways… public facilities, and other public places." Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires local governments to provide people with disabilities an

equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services and activities. Sidewalks, streets and parking are programs provided by ADA Title II entities, and therefore are subject to ADA requirements.

Most people with major mobility disabilities are unable to bike, ride a motorcycle, or use a skateboard, razor style scooters, rollerblades or roller skates. Most slow walkers (people who walk slowly and with difficulty, and who may or may not use devices such as canes, crutches or a walker) and many manual wheelchair users can go only a limited distance. Although many pedestrians who use electric wheelchairs and scooters are able to go far, some of them, too, can go only a limited distance. Many people with major mobility disabilities are unable to hold an umbrella, especially while in their wheelchair or when using a cane, crutches or walker, so rainy weather is especially challenging. Many also have difficulty in hot weather (e.g. those with spinal cord injuries) or cold weather (e.g. those with neuromuscular diseases). Carrying packages can also be difficult or impossible for many.

Finding a taxi that can accommodate an electric wheelchair, non-folding manual wheelchair or scooter is problematic. For many years it's been extremely difficult to find an accessible taxi in San Francisco except to/from the airport, and recently it's even become difficult to find one to/from the airport.

Ride sharing companies such as Lyft and Uber don't offer accessible transportation.

Public transportation systems have major access limitations, flaws and gaps. In San Francisco, for example, many of the light rail stops are still not accessible. In some places the accessible rail boarding platform is after the regular (inaccessible) stop, and at rush hour the first car (the only car that wheelchair passengers can board) is full by the time it reaches the accessible platform, so passengers in wheelchairs are passed up even though there may be space in the second car and often despite being at the accessible platform before other passengers are at the regular stop. Unlike regular stops, the accessible boarding platforms are not sheltered from the elements (except for the stops along the Embarcadero, where the regular platform is accessible). Elevators break. Elevators often smell of urine. Instead of leading directly to the boarding platform, the elevators in some underground Muni stations lead to a potentially dangerous alley beyond the platform, and passengers in the alley are not visible to those at the boarding platform.

In San Francisco during rush hour, the buses are often so crowded that there isn't space for any passengers in wheelchairs. For years now, I've essentially given up trying to take the bus during rush hour in the crowded direction. Some bus stops are flag stops, which can be difficult for people with mobility disabilities to access. Not all bus stops have shelters. Most buses are still of the high floor design and have cumbersome, unpleasant wheelchair lifts that can be problematic. Bus lifts break. Some bus boarding platforms, especially on Market Street, are too narrow for a wheelchair, so passengers in wheelchairs must board and exit in the street. Sometimes both wheelchair spaces on a bus are already occupied.

Cable cars, understandably, are not accessible.

Individual circumstances also limit many disabled people's ability to use public transportation. Some bus routes are too steep for some people with mobility disabilities.

As described above, it is especially difficult, or impossible, for some of us with major mobility disabilities to use public transportation in the rain or cold weather. Fatigue is a factor for many people with mobility disabilities, and using public transportation is more tiring than driving or riding in a car.

Many people, including disabled people, are uncomfortable using public transportation at night or in certain neighborhoods. Also, if they have a choice, it is prudent for everyone, disabled and able-bodied alike, to avoid public transportation when they have a contagious illness or feel they are becoming sick.

Many people with major mobility disabilities rely on paratransit. But in order to be eligible for paratransit service, one has to be unable to use regular public transportation, so not everyone with a mobility disability qualifies. Moreover, paratransit has limited availability, must be scheduled in advance, requires a wide time window and allows no spontaneity. In some places, paratransit does not provide intercounty or intercity service, making it difficult or impossible to use for certain destinations and precluding commuting to work in a different city or county from where one lives.

Many people with mobility disabilities rely heavily on automobiles not only because of the limitations, disadvantages and, in some cases, complete unavailability of some of the other forms of transportation, but also because of the great advantages autos afford. Like everyone else, we appreciate the privacy of an automobile, especially on a date or special occasion, with friends, family and colleagues, and when dressed up. An auto is often the fastest transportation mode, especially when one is making several stops far from each other and time is important. It is also the most convenient mode when carrying perishables, valuables or packages. Autos also have major advantages for parents, especially parents of small children. And autos are the only practical way to get to many places outside the city, whether for a drive in the country or dinner at friends.

Whether they drive or are always a passenger, many slow walkers and manual wheelchair users own or rent regular automobiles.

If he or she owns a vehicle, almost everyone who uses an electric wheelchair, and many who use scooters and manual wheelchairs, have either a lowered floor minivan with a passenger-side ramp or a full-size van. (Lowered floor minivans are also available with the ramp in the rear, but this configuration is rare except in taxis.) The largest manufacturers of these minivans are BraunAbility www.braunability.com and VMI www.vantagemobility.com. Full-size vans have lifts on the side or the rear; the side configuration is more common. Many wheelchair users own these vehicles even if they don't drive and are always passengers.

Regular car rental companies such as Hertz or Avis don't offer accessible vehicles (although some offer standard vehicles with manual hand controls, enabling some drivers who use manual wheelchairs to rent from them). The short-term, urban companies such as Zipcar or City Car Share typically don't offer accessible vehicles or, at best, have extremely limited availability. There are specialized companies that rent accessible minivans, typically with side ramps. Prices are much more expensive than renting an ordinary vehicle, and these companies don't have physical locations or parking lots, so one must arrange for delivery and drop-off, usually for a costly fee. The fleets are small, availability is limited, and reservations typically must be made far in advance.

For those with accessible minivans and vans with ramps or lifts on the side, all street parking spaces (except perpendicular and angled spaces, those on the driver's side of a one-way street, and those on a steep hill) are, in effect, accessible spaces even though they are not designated accessible spaces (in California, blue zones). In fact, disabled people park in regular street parking spaces far more often than in blue zones because: (a) the number of blue zones is limited and they are often occupied; and (b) quite often a regular space is available closer to the destination than a blue zone.

Therefore, removing street parking spaces, replacing parallel spaces with perpendicular or angled ones, and moving the parking lane away from the curb all disproportionately impact people with major mobility disabilities.

There is another way in which those with mobility disabilities rely heavily on automobiles. Many rely on service providers coming to their homes, and, therefore, are especially affected by parking scarcity, the high cost of parking, and traffic congestion. We have caregivers who come to our homes to help us with activities of daily living. We get food from Meals on Wheels; home visits from physical, respiratory, occupational and other therapists; and sales visits and repair service from wheelchair dealers. These providers typically use cars, vans and trucks, so as parking and traffic lanes are removed, as free parking is replaced with meters, and as metered parking becomes more expensive, it will become more time-consuming and costly to provide these services, and people with mobility disabilities will be increasingly impacted.

******

Thank you for considering this email.

Sincerely

Howard Chabner

Jane Winslow

Dear Commissioners,
The most important change that needs to be made re: Disability Placards is enforcement/renewal of placards. The administration currently renews placards that were given temporarily for ailments such as knee surgery and hip surgery. The formerly disabled receive renewed placards every 2 years (or whatever the renewal rate is) although the disability was only temporary in the first place.
Please allocate funds so that the administration of placard renewals is brought up to date. Might be a good idea for all holders of placards to renew theirs every 5 years! There are many that are being used by people who are NOT disabled.
Sincerely,
Jane Winslow

Ken Tray

Dear Sirs,

In a transportation landscape becoming ever more unfriendly to senior and disabled neighbors the last thing we need do is curtail or make more difficult their rights to navigate parking opportunities as the SFMTA proposes. This end run around local democratic governance is in play because San Franciscans would never support making transportation for seniors and the disabled more difficult than it already is.
Sincerely,
Ken Tray
Political Director
United Educators of San Francisco

Suzanne Fouche

To: CA Commission on Disability Access

Since becoming disabled at work, my income has dropped considerably and permanently. Getting around is often very difficult. It is so much trouble to find a disabled parking place in San Francisco and other traffic centers, that I go there much less often - I quit my SF church, quit volunteering for the SF City Guides, or seldom go shopping, restaurants and other events in SF either. It's even worse trying to navigate by public transportation - the jerking movements, the length of time required sitting, climbing up and down stairs, etc., all aggravate my chronic pain and weakness in my legs. Taking even more away from the disabled (who are very often on restricted incomes) would be unfair and cruel.

I would, however, support more enforcement of the laws against the use of placards by friends and family and tightening the gross over-prescribing of those placards to those who really don't need them. It's bad enough that people use disabled parking places without a placard "just for a minute" because they're in a hurry, but using other people's placards and hogging the very few parking places set aside for the disabled illegally is really upsetting and restricts the ability of the disabled to participate in our communities even further.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Fouche

Paul Ekman

i oppose any change. the current parking for disability individuals is crucial for our access to public facilities and to medical appointments.

Paul Ekman

--
Paul Ekman, PhD
Professor of Psychology Emeritus, UCSF
President, Paul Ekman Group LLC (PEG)

Glenn Rogers

Commissioners,

The hunt for more money by the SFMTA by raising the price and reducing the time allowed by the disabled to park is misguided. This agency does not need more money, they need to use their money more wisely. The 19th Avenue Traffic Study is under litigation, yet the SFMTA continues to proceed with plans on this project. SFMTA has not done their research properly on this project and are omitting a stop at a Senior Center, while providing a developer a stop in a quiet residential neighborhood. They pretend this project is 'commuter friendly' when it is not. SFMTA needs to be rebuked, not allowed to sidestep City legislation, by seeking approval for despicable conduct from State government.

This lengthy criticism of the SFMTA answers many question about its incompetence.

Glenn Rogers, PLA
Landscape Architect
Alder Landscape Architecture
License # 3223

http://www.alderlandscapearchitecture.com

19th Avenue Traffic Study: A Study in Flawed Development

The 19th Avenue Transit Study, which proposes to improve traffic conditions along 19th Avenue or Highway One, is a massively flawed effort. The study by the *San Francisco Metropolitan Transit Authority* (SFMTA) seems more focused on money than the public good, does not follow proper rules of transit design, shows favoritism to developers, does not consider how changes will affect senior citizens or the disabled, shows bias to certain businesses over others, provides a design that will create noise and blight in a tranquil residential community and lastly, ignores more satisfactory solutions.

The thrust of the SFMTA plan is for the 'M' streetcar to enter *Parkmerced*, where a new streetcar station would be located. Development of the 'M' streetcar extension and Parkmerced station would be partially funded by the *Fortress Investment Group LLC*, which would provide 72 million dollars. Federal funds are matched 80% by projects considered to be 'commuter friendly', so the Planning Department and developer will consistently showcase the design as such. Unfortunately, this plan is not in the public's best interest because we will be forced to wait 20 years for the future connection to Daly City BART by the 'M' streetcar. Thankfully, *San Francisco Tomorrow* and the political arm of the *Sierra Club* have
provided a serious roadblock by suing the developer over the appropriateness of this project. Please, see the following article:

http://www.westsideobserver.com/2012/Parkmerced.html

If this densification and gentrification of *Parkmerced,* the largest affordable housing community in San Francisco is overturned, all this study and money spent will be for

naught. This requires us all to seriously question the transit cost of many of the SFMTA's current plans, while they design and plan for projects that may never happen.

Moreover, MUNI has serious operational issues that should be corrected before extending the system further. A recent audit of MUNI service showed that 14,000 MUNI runs were canceled last year, at a cost of $4.7 million for overtime help to correct the situation. The 'M' streetcar line proposed in the *19th Avenue Traffic Study* will be impacted by this same poor service. Correcting the situation is difficult since MUNI is unable to determine how many operators are needed, even though they have the money. Research shows that MUNI may be too big to run itself efficiently. Today, MUNI is expected to run bus service, railway service, traffic, parking, bike lanes, and now the *Central Subway*. A solution to correct MUNI's poorly run record might be to break it up into smaller, more manageable pieces. What it does not need is more money to correct the problem! For further details, see the following article, especially the audio interview with Phil Matier:

http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2013/09/18/phil-matier-audit-finds- problems-in-muni-hiring-training/

Mass transit is at its best when it is in a straight line, connects two points or systems directly, and conjoins other lines along its route. The proposed SFMTA solution, unfortunately, has none of these qualities. At the request of the developer, Fortress Investment Group, LLC, the project has been designed to enter a residential neighborhood, Parkmerced, deviating from any preferred straight line route A more direct route of the 'M' streetcar would be to continue along the west side of 19th Avenue directly to Daly City BART. This could be done by traveling over the 1952 Interchange at Brotherhood Way, then over the 280 Highway Interchange in Daly City.

Suggestions were made in meetings to directly link the 'L' line up Sloat Boulevard to the West Portal Tunnel, which would also alleviate traffic issues on 19th Ave and provide direct pedestrian access to the *Lakeshore Mall* and *Stern Grove*. This solution would provide a needed turn-back
and circular loop on the west side, to limit auto usage to local markets. In contrast, the study proposes a continuation of the Parkmerced 'M' streetcar extension with a 'dead end' solution, which only benefits the developer, at the cost of the public good. We need a solution that would provide futuristic transit development and a modern urban planning design.

In the SFMTA study, one of two 'M' streetcar lines is proposed to service Parkmerced exclusively. However, exclusive streetcar service by the 'M' streetcar should be avoided. This is because any lack of service to the Oceanview district could have a detrimental effect on the fragile economy of the Randolph/Broad Street Corridor. If the SFMTA and the developer's present plan goes forward, I can see one streetcar following another, one full of passengers, stopping for every patron and another streetcar just behind, empty and impatient.

The most important omission of this study is that no medical professional or agency has reviewed the SFMTA study for its impact on the physically impaired, seniors or those with serious illnesses. If the study recommendation was adopted, stops would be reduced, thus requiring people to walk a quarter of a mile or longer to new 'M' streetcar stops. Also, the new location of the 'M' streetcar in Parkmerced would eliminate a close stop at the

Temple Methodist Church, where a Senior Center is located. This center provides many important services to disabled adults and seniors. The SFMTA plan has either ignored or missed the importance of this Senior Center. Again, a Parkmerced extension with a dead end solution is at the expense of the public good. The following URL provides more information on the importance of this Senior Center:

http://community.cccyo.org/Page.aspx?pid=590

The plans show bias toward certain businesses and present hardships for others. They include no stop at Ocean Avenue, as the train crosses underground to *Mercy High School* and a *Stonestown* below-grade
station. With the omission of this stop, Ocean Avenue businesses will lose customers. No doubt the SFMTA plan envisions new businesses by *San Francisco State University* (SFSU-CSU) at Buckingham Way and
Holloway Street along with *Parkmerced's* new retail facility on Crespi Drive. Numerous existing stores on Ocean Avenue may go out of business. SFMTA seems to be picking businesses that will become "winners and losers" in this study.

Lastly, one of the many reasons not to direct the route of the 'M' streetcar into Parkmerced is that it will create noise in this tranquil neighborhood, which will have an adverse effect on the residents. Gunshots from the nearby gun club and police range already generate noise pollution for this residential neighborhood. A streetcar moving into and out of this neighborhood, climbing up a grade as currently shown and turning in a tight radius would add an unacceptable level of noise. Urbanizing this tranquil residential neighborhood with a streetcar turn-back, dead-end and station stop would be a big mistake.

Those attending the SFMTA Transit Study meetings may have found the plan with the 'M' streetcar traveling over a bridge to be an attractive option. Residents have been told that commuters traveling by automobile into San Francisco would be presented with a 'gateway' into the City. However, what residents have not been told is that this 'M' streetcar path would be beside an existing tower in Parkmerced. The location of this existing tower (and any future towers) is not included in the presentation drawings of this project. I asked SFMTA to have it included; however, to date I have been ignored.

Why are other solutions not being considered, such as burying the
majority of the line-work from St. Francis Woods to Parkmerced? Why are
there no considerations for a more direct, above ground design?

In previous study submittals, this 'M' streetcar route was beside a tower located on an elevated pathway 15'-20' above Junipero Serra Boulevard. Today, the plan is to excavate Junipero Serra Blvd. so that the 'M'
streetcar would be closer to ground level in Parkmerced when it begins its passage over Juniperro Serra Blvd. In this way, SFMTA believes the streetcar will be less noisy. However, it is not the elevated pathway that creates the noise; it is the 'M' streetcar itself. This noise will cause serious rental turnover, a lack of social cohesion encouraging crime and blight.

Furthermore, if you excavate along Juniperro Serra Boulevard to keep the height of the bridge carrying the 'M' streetcar low, you expose three towers beside Juniperro Serra Boulevard to street traffic noise that do not have it today. If the plan is implemented, noise is no longer blocked by a separation in grade. SFMTA's attempt to solve one problem has only created another. They also have ignored the garage on Parkmerced's eastern edge and the issue of unretrofitted towers: the collapse of one of these towers could damage this proposed "entrance bridge" to San Francisco. Or if a tunnel was built instead, it could be blocked after an earthquake. One must not forget that the San Andrea's Earthquake Fault is only 2-1/2 miles from this location. During the 1906 earthquake, a trestle in this same area moved 12' horizontally and 6' vertically. An earthquake like the one in 1906 would be disastrous for the existing Parkmerced towers, built on sand and vulnerable because of their extreme height. During the Loma Prieta earthquake, one of the towers received serious damage, and was only superficially repaired, residents believe.

SFMTA is not considering any elevated 'M' streetcar solution because they believe it to be unpopular with the public. However, each elevated solution should be explored and polled by the public individually. Those who live in this district are not interested in 19th Avenue being involved in a protracted traffic jam for years, due to road closure from construction on grade or below grade. Besides, the belief that an underground traffic solution would take 2 to 3 years to complete could be in error, using the *Bay Bridge* as an example, which was many years behind schedule and over budget. An elevated transit solution is likely to be easier to construct.

Lastly, a connection to Daily City BART by the 'M' streetcar, which was originally suggested by the developer and SFMTA, has not been seriously studied. Only last month they corrected an error in their proposed route of the 'M' streetcar that would have been blocked by three towers on the way to Daly City BART. This lack of serious study of this line to the Daly City BART is disappointing since this station has more ridership than any other BART station in the system. Connectivity to this station by the 'M' streetcar would be most important. Today, the existing parking garage at the Daly City BART station has reached capacity and cannot be enlarged with the existing structure. A new 'M' streetcar station could be combined with a new parking garage. If a new 'M' streetcar station were planned, from the beginning, alongside the BART station, in an intermodal fashion, with a new parking garage expansion, we would have a futuristic plan. This plan could be paid for with proper assessment of transit fees of *Stonestown's* future development, with *SFSU-CSU's* increased enrollment fees and the *Parkmerced* donation to transit infrastructure. This would be money well spent and this would be a departure from the way this plan is being designed today.

Sherrie Rosenberg

Dear Members of the CA Commission on Disability Access and Legislators,
I urge you not to make it more difficult, and indeed often impossible, for those of us with disabilities to park in San Francisco and other cities. Many times I am unable to go places because I cannot find a close enough place to park. I can only walk very short distances. Having designated disabled places helps as does the current situation where those of us with disabled placards or license plates can park for longer than the posted amounts of time.
The amounts of time at meters are often too short to complete needed business. This is indeed a hassle for all drivers and especially true for those of us who move slowly. It also affects merchants since shoppers will often go out of their way to places with parking lots and forgo neighborhood shops.

As a disabled woman, I cannot run out and move my car. It puts too great a strain on my body. Also, the anxiety inherent in worrying about having an expired meter is overwhelming and causes me even more problems.
Please do not make our disabled citizens suffer unduly. A positive step that can be continued is that parking officers sometimes ask people with disabled placards for their names and identification. This has happened to me two or three times and I appreciate it. This way, if people are found with stolen placards, those can be taken off of the street so that those of us who need the parking spaces can use them.
Thank you for your consideration.

Peace, Hope, and Respect,
Sherrie Rosenberg

Jonathan Lyens

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you to the Commission for considering the recommendations of San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to implement drastic changes to the state's disability parking placard system. As President of the FDR Democratic Club of San Francisco, for seniors and people with disabilities (FDR Dems), I write to communicate the strong objections of our members to the SFMTA proposals to begin charging disability parking placard holders to park and impose time limits. It is important for the Commission to be aware that the SFMTA brings these proposals to Sacramento as City policy; though the proposals have never been voted on by any body of San Francisco elected officials. The FDR Dems believe this to be a subversion of the democratic process.

The FDR Dems are dedicated to the enfranchisement of seniors and people with disabilities into all aspects of society. At our meeting on November 6, 2013, the

membership of the FDR Dems voted unanimously to oppose the SFMTA proposals to impose time limits and begin charging disability parking placard holders to park.

We oppose these recommendations because of the undue financial hardship placed on placard holders, and a rejection of the premise that the only effective way to deal with fraud and misuse is removal of benefits the program offers. Seniors and people with disabilities face much higher rates of poverty than many other communities. Indeed, the unemployment rate in the disability community remains nearly twice that of the non-disabled population; and seniors continue to make choices between which essential needs they can afford each month, like groceries and prescription drugs. Moreover, mass transit is not always a feasible alternative for people with disabilities, and as every driver knows, the cost of parking does not end with feeding the meter – it includes paying ever more expensive parking tickets. Placing this additional financial burden on disability parking placard holders will inhibit seniors and people with disabilities from equal participation in society. What's more, the FDR Dems reject the notion that fraud and abuse of the current system is so pervasive that the only effective solution is removal of these two benefits. We would draw an analogy to the position of some law makers in Congress, who believe the abuse of food stamps and unemployment benefits is so wide spread that the only option is cutting these already meager programs. We call upon the SFMTA to rethink their pursuit of these harmful policies and seek strategies that maximize benefits while limiting harm. Unexplored alternatives exist.

In addition to our concerns regarding the impact of these recommendations, we have serious reservations about the process the SFMTA used in formulating the entire package and the lack of community input during their formulation. The FDR Dems first became aware of this Committee after reading the outcome of its work in the local news media. In concert with the Committee, we held a community forum to discuss the policy recommendations on July 31, 2013, with nearly 40 attendees. At that meeting it was apparent that nearly all in attendance had serious concerns about the recommendations and the lack of involving the community in their formulation. In response to this concern, we were informed that the recommendations were final and would proceed as an "all or nothing" package. After prolonged discussion, and direct appeals to me from multiple members of the Committee, the FDR Dems decided to delay taking a formal position on the recommendations at our August 2013 meeting. This was done with the expectation that the SFMTA staff would engage with our members in a sincere effort to craft a reasonable package that would have broad based support. Unfortunately, this has not happened. Moreover, while actively lobbying organizations that represent seniors and people with disabilities to not oppose these recommendations, the SFMTA actively sought support from business interests more likely to be supportive, such as the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and the City's Small Business Commission.

Our communities have achieved great strides in the past generation. However, major gains in full societal integration remain allusive. Implementation of these recommendations will set seniors and people with disabilities back years. The FDR Dems call upon the SFMTA to jettison these harmful proposals. Let us find a way to

deal with the real issues of misuse without placing additional undue hardship on law abiding people with disabilities.

Regards,

Jonathan Lyens,
President, FDR Democratic Club of San Francisco
www.fdrdemclub.com

Carol Loeffler

Dear Richard,

I am not sure I can risk taking the time on January 8th. I am barely keeping my job as it is right now and if they knew I was on hold or taking time to address my concerns, I don't think it would bode well for me. Is there any other way? These points might be of benefit?

1) I am 53. Since I have the diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis. I do not use adaptive aids for walking (unless you consider my husband's hand an aid as he helps me negotiate the SF terrain!) Fatigue is a major challenge for me and managing my level of heat tolerance.

a) Covered parking or under trees is critically important to me year round due to my difficulty with handling heat. Disabled parking spaces often are in unprotected locations, no trees and no cover. I purposefully avoid many parking spots purely because my health would be compromised by parking in the "assigned" location. Often a spot or two behind that "assigned spot" is a better location and the use of the placard in a non-handicapped designated parking space allows me the opportunity to protect my health.

b) I would like to share that by the time I would get to where I am walking to, I would then have to turn around and feed the meter. I don't know how best to convey it, but the money gained from feeding the meter would be lost and so would the money I would spend in that store since I don't have to worry about how to carry the package all the way to my vehicle or the ticket and the gift items I would purchase at the ballet. The community revenue loss would be significant in comparison to the money "earned" from a parking meter. We all would lose out.

c) If you are the driver and noone else is in the car with you, how could you get "dropped off?" I will not forget the lack of parking when going to the opera at the Sacramento Community Center. I was alone and meeting friends. I drove around looking for a spot to park. Finding none, I found a short-term spot to park and walked in to ask where parking could be had. The person told me to "just get dropped off" and let the driver park. I told him I was the only person in the car, and the car couldn't drive

itself! He had no solution for that one! I was dressed nice, wearing low pumps, and I had to park many blocks away. Fortunately I knew I was fine with the placard. It took forever it seemed to walk to the building and then after the performance it was a trudge back to the car. No way could I have made it in time to beat the meter.

d) I have often discovered the placard spaces are taken and/or too far away from where I have to enter a building. The ability to park at a metered location or a time limited one, such as 15 or 30 min parking, for a longer period of time allows me the opportunity to do the business that needs to be completed. That is worth more than the change for the machine.

2) There is too much flawed information in the Parking Modernization pdf .

a) The "majority of the day" is not quantified. What is that and when does it start and end? Someone monitored 158 parking spaces and wrote the license plates of the cars for an entire weekday from 8 am to 6 pm to see which cars stayed and which moved? The question I would pursue in the next research, Is close parking available for all employees? Perhaps if alternatives for parking are considered, would the meters generate the entire revenue that is mentioned? That should be the issue to pursue, and it might provide staggering results that the revenue, hundreds of thousands of projected General Fund dollars, may not really be in the meters.

b) I investigated public transportation. You decide whether "individual motivation for seeking alternative mode use is diluted" is propaganda or truth. It would take me 10 minutes to walk to the bus stop by my house, standing and waiting at the stop for the bus for at least 10 minutes to make sure I didn't miss it, then 50 minutes and a bus transfer later I would arrive at the stop, and then a four block walk about 15-20 minutes depending on my endurance, to get to my work. I drive to work and park, generally within 2 blocks, and enter my work in 20 minutes on a busy traffic day. I am at work approximately 10 hours since it takes me longer to accomplish what I need ot do in an 8 hour day. If I had to use "alternative mode use," my travel to work would begin at 6:30 am versus 7:30 am, my work day would be shortened to ensure I could catch the bus for the 50 minutes of travel time with the bus transfer and then have to walk home in the dark. All this is assuming there is a route at the times of the day I need it.

It is astonishing in this 21st century, the author of the Parking Modernization pdf would state I have diluted motivation. In this scenario, would any able bodied person choose alternative mode use? When I lived in Chicago, I rarely used my car, since alternative modes of transportation were more prevalent to all regions of the city and suburbs. Sacramento is not that well equipped. I routinely have at least one medical appointment a week to places as far as Roseville, necessitating a vehicle. I should not be accused of not being motivated because I have the opportunity to park a few blocks from my work for free.

c) Reduced turnover of parking which negatively impacts businesses is a misnomer. Provide a study which shows the parking time ratio to parking spaces at businesses in

the Old Sacramento, downtown, East End Complex, midtown and Sutter's Fort area. Then we can collect data and analyze if the business is impacted by a lack of vehicle turnover or not.

d) Shame on you, author of the Parking Modernization pdf, for also stating reduction of greenhouse gas emissions are not achieved as intended by the substantial public investment in alternative mode infrastructure improvements, There have been no infrastructure improvements on my routes of travel to three business where I have worked since 1989, the year I moved here and wanted to avoid driving a vehicle but discovered limited "alternative modes of transportation" instead.

e) Yes, it creates financial inequity because only individuals displaying a disabled placard/plate receive payment amnesty while all others are required to pay. However, if I could park further away to be free, like my friends, I would do so.

To require a person displaying a disabled placard/plate to pay, purely because the person is limited in the ability to walk from the free spaces, creates financial inequity because only non-disabled individuals receive payment amnesty while all others are required to pay.

Changing the current legislation to require everyone to pay for on-street parking will not have a positive influence on all five issues identified. In fact, I am interested to learn how, with the current structure of free placard parking, "there is sufficient funding within the Parking Services Division of the Public Works Department to fund the analysis necessary to bring the detailed information back to City Council for further consideration."

Obviously, the "slush" fund isn't for lack of revenue from placard parkers.

Carol Loeffler

Tom Ammiano

California Commission on Disability Access

Statement in Opposition of the SFMTA Proposal to Charge and Time Limit the Disabled

As a proud member of the California Commission on Disability Access and representative of San Francisco, I want to ensure the Commissioners are aware of my view on this issue.

I am very opposed to the efforts of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency to begin imposing time limits and charging people with disabilities to park. I am shocked that SFMTA would put forward a series of proposals that would so negatively impact millions of Californians and reduce their ability to access public places and services. Too many people with disabilities are already fighting long- term

unemployment, and live on fixed incomes. These proposals will only exacerbate their challenges. As the cost of living skyrockets across California,
these proposals are simply bad policy.

There is no dispute that some people with disability parking placards misuse them, or simply should not have them. Local governments should focus on fighting this fraud by enforcing current laws rather than coming after people with disabilities who use their placards lawfully. I am interested in exploring ways of improving the DMV's database system for verifying and tracking disabled placards.

I agree,parking, especially in San Francisco, is limited, but placing the burden and barrier on the disabled community is not the answer. The SFMTA compiling these legislative recommendations without including balanced community input and representation from disability advocates is upsetting. People with disabilities deserve to have their voices heard, particularly when the issues under consideration directly impact them. This is a right we would afford any other community, and I believe people with disabilities should be heard on this issue.

Lastly, as a former San Francisco Supervisor, I am interested in knowing the positions of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on such a significant piece of City policy. It seems only appropriate that the Board of Supervisors hold a public hearing on this issue prior to the SFMTA bringing these proposals to Sacramento
seeking sponsors for statewide legislation.

Connie Arnold
Disability Rights Advocate
January 8, 2014

Guy Leemhuis, Chair
Members of the Commission
California Commission on Disability Access
721 Capitol Mall, Suite 250
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Commission on Disability Meeting 118/14 Agenda Item # 6 S.F. Disabled Parking Presentation, Opposition Comments to MTA's proposal to impose time limits and/or restrict parking for disabled persons carrying a placard or having DP plates

Dear Chairperson Leemhuis and Members of the Commission:

These comments are in opposition to the Accessible Parking Policy Advisory Committee recommendations made by the S.F. Metropolitan Transportation Agency in relation to reductions in disabled access to parking for persons with significant mobility disabilities. I have lived in Elk Grove, California since 2000, and I have previously lived in the several different cities in the Bay Area after growing up in Los Angeles County. I have used an electric wheelchair for over 30 ears. I am a person of short stature with limited

range of motion in my arms and legs which makes it impossible to reach meters or place a credit card into a meter due to reach and grasping problems.

Asking people to have smart phones or pay for disabled parking is not an affordable expenditure for the majority of persons with disabilities who barely survive on very low disability incomes such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security-based benefits. Most persons with disabilities and many seniors do not even have computers or smart phones.

I am opposed to the horrible proposal to impose time limits on accessible disabled parking. I struggle to find accessible or on-street parking eat meters everywhere I drive my full-size highly modified van, and I live on a low-fixed disability income. I face many difficulties in locating usable on-street parking at meters, and I rarely find a blue zone to park in. Even at meters the crown of the street can be so steep that I have to keep searching for an on-street metered parking space that allows me to park which is often blocks away from where I need to go in order to be able to deploy my modified van side wheelchair lift.

I am unable to pinch and grasp objects likes coins or cards making inserting anything into a meter impossible. I cannot reach a metered unit ever or take a ticket out of a ticket gate machine, and I would need a passerby to provide me hands-on help if I was forced to pay at meters. The lack of affordability to pay for meters on my fixed income would keep me at home more often than not. This sets me up for greater vulnerability, theft, and jeopardizes my personal safety in all kinds of weather, day or night.

I have been looking for a state job for over three years, and I have a Master's degree, but I have not been hired, and the competition is fierce. Often, individuals with much less significant or even minimal disabilities can get in under the state LEAP rules for persons with disabilities because they have a back problem or a disability unlikely to require reasonable accommodations. Employers still discriminate by selecting a candidate who they can foresee may need fewer if any reasonable accommodations on the job.

My disability income is not rising with inflation or with the ordinary costs of living to keep up with affording basic living necessities to afford to pay for metered parking or risk getting a ticket. I cannot reach a meter, cannot conduct my business to get back to a meter from a distance away to feed a meter in all kinds of weather conditions, and it is so hard to find a usuable on-street parking space that moving my van to find another place to park, in the not very accessible built environment, is another unreasonable hardship to make my life more difficult.

Parking at meters for many reasons can be or difficult and challenging including having to spend more time driving around expending gas just to find an accessible parking space or one done properly (i.e. does not have an adjacent tree, pole, sign or objects, or too steep of a crown or slope to safely deploy my wheelchair lift).

Requiring me to move my van every four or so hours means going blocks in all weather conditions to avoid a ticket and fine. The burdens imposed would be numerous and would tend to keep me from going out of my house. It would require me to always have an attendant with me which I do not get enough hours to cover that cost to go places. It means I would have more difficulty holding down a job because I would need to leave the job, a time consuming process, to go move my van which, if it is raining, would mean needing help with putting on a coat in rainy weather, going blocks and taking much longer than an able-bodied person to enter and exit my van lift, driving around to find another place somewhat accessible to park. Disability expenses are already a costly burden that able-bodied persons do not face.

This proposal will act as a job killer for persons with disabilities who struggle in ordinary circumstance to find and accessible space or useable on-street metered parking space to park in every city in California. At the same time, persons with disabilities continue to have one of, if not, the highest unemployment rate at about in the 70 percentile range. This proposal is wrong and very harmful to persons with disabilities, seniors and frail elders, and returning wounded and disabled veterans, many who have pain and mobility disabilities added on top of post-traumatic stress disorders.

There is not enough accessible parking spaces and on one-way streets as it is, and he designated blue zone space, in many cases, is put on the wrong side of the street so my side wheelchair van lift cannot deploy.

Many persons with disabilities, seniors, and veterans have trouble walking and walk lower so a time limit restricts ability to conduct community business. This a really a tax hike on the disabled to enhance city revenue at the expense of our civil rights to have equal access in parking that accommodates our disability needs including ability to afford to leave our homes.

This proposal makes me angry as it is absolutely wrong. Cities are looking to enhance revenues on the backs of the disabled who can least afford the cost, both in parking fees, and imposed time restrictions.

If there are issues concerning too many placards being issued then educate the medical community who sign off on them for people who may not really need them in order to not have to pay for parking. Also, have law enforcement check that persons parking at meters with a placard are eligible to use the placard because a person issued the card must carry it on their person or be accompanying the person who has the card in their vehicle.

I am opposed to imposition of time limits and imposed metered on-street parking fees on persons with disabilities, seniors, and veterans who can least afford this ridiculous proposal. I fully concur with the comments submitted by Howard Chabner and the FDR Democratic Club of San Francisco. I will fight this proposal to impose time restrictions on parking and cost hikes to ark for disabled persons using placards or DP license

plates which will limit my access to and ability to park or afford to park. It is the wrong public policy.

Sincerely,

Connie Arnold
Disability Rights Advocate

Helen Walsh

Remarks to the California Commission on Disability Access

Public Meeting Agenda, Item 6, San Francisco Report

1/8/14 Sacramento
Thank you for the opportunity to address the Commission.

It is important that the Commission provide a forum for public input on accessibility issues.

My name is Helen E. Walsh and I am speaking on my own behalf.

For identification purposes only, I want to add that I am the founder and director of Diverse Disability Media as well as a member the Berkeley Commission on Disability. I am here to address the issue of parking accessibility, including the report provided by San Francisco.

There should be no question that currently parking allocated for placard parking is inadequate. In fact in most communities it appears to be inadequate to meet needs of persons with disabilities. Particularly with an aging population, we can assume that the need will even further increase.
Another reality is that persons with disabilities are becoming more engaged and seeking opportunities to increase their mobility whether self-driving or as passengers.

Not unexpectedly there is an unmet demand for accessible parking.

I must take issue of any claim that those with disabilities are abusing these accommodations and that paid parking is the only solution for, perceived abuses of the placard system.

The San Francisco report indicates that the number of placards issued has been growing significantly and the report observed that significant numbers of placard holders particularly in the SF financial district area are not residents.

So, my first point is that parking in communities should not be resident centric but rather should provide access to all with disabilities.

Whatever improvements are made to the placard system must not be biased toward locals but must extend these accommodations to all.

As an example let me cite a change in public garage parking accessibility made in 2013 by Berkeley.

Berkeley allowed anyone with a disability placard to park without cost in its city garages.

It assumed this arrangement was being abused at the expense of revenue.

Berkeley adopted a policy that only allowed for free parking if an individual first obtained a special electronic pass.

This effectively limited free parking to those "in the know" and who went to the considerable trouble of obtaining a pass, for which an administrative fee was charged.

This local policy also seems in violation of CA Motor Vehicle Code 22511.57.

So, any change in placard policy must not limit access to only those "in the know."

Any change should make for equal access no matter where they live or park.

There is widespread assumption that many placards are being misused by persons without disabilities.

The SF report suggests that by charging for parking the incentive for abuse will be significantly reduced.

With respect to those who cheat the system, the motivation is likely more the opportunity for a parking place in an area where parking is very limited rather than the cost. Furthermore, by focusing on who uses a placard it puts legitimate users in the role of being a SUSPECT as to the enforcement.

The solution to abuse should not be putting those with disabilities who use placards under suspicion but for the government that issues such placards to better control their availability.

The State needs to take more care in issuing placards to begin with. It is shocking to read in the SF report that apparently the DMV doesn't appear to check on the health care professional's status or check on the legitimacy of a health provider's signature before processing the permit.

DMV should update its listing of authorized issuers and consider requiring issuers to register with DMV so DMV will have easy ability to verify the legitimacy of the

applications. Additionally, consider reviewing current standards for issuing - are they sufficiently clear?

There are significant penalties both civil and criminal for falsely using a placard, perhaps there should be the potential for penalties on the signing health care professional too.

Doctors and other professionals should be accountable, their countersigning applications for those with questionable need.

Blue placards are issued for two year periods and then automatically reissued.

To reduce abuse, one approach would be to eliminate automatic renewal but require reapplying.

Surely, someone with a qualifying disability should be getting regular medical care so that having to reapply should not be burdensome.

The next rotation for renewal of Blue Placards is June 2015, which should provide sufficient time to legislate a change in the law.

Removal of automatic renewal should also take out of circulation significant number of questionable placards.

In sum, I am suggesting some DMV upgrading of process and placard issuance housecleaning.

These are a few suggestions and I am confident that the Commission could serve as a forum and voice for the broader community on placard abuse issues.

As to enforcement, everyone receiving a placard gets a certificate of "entitlement" from DMV which should be kept with the placard.

Enforcement officers should be provided such evidence and if not available then that could be a basis for confiscating a placard.

I am not sure such a step is needed as it appears that police have fairly ready access to verifying who is entitled to a particular placard.

Couple of years ago while parking for a SF Giants game, some enforcement person challenged the placard on the car I was riding in and demanded driver's license and the officer was able to immediately call in to confirm the placard agreed with license.

While I felt it was overkill at the time, as the certificate was in the car, this demonstrated that local enforcement is currently possible.

While I do not believe it is unreasonable for everyone to potentially pay for parking, provided payment can be made without compromising the accommodation.

Many studies in the SF Report and elsewhere have suggested that credit card or smart phones might be used to pay. Also, that limiting time for parking will generate more parking.

The question is to what end?

When considering the SF report it appears that there is significant number of low income placard users, whose mobility would be further challenged if they had to pay for parking or have to purchase technology to have access to pay for metered parking.

Of further significant consideration, is the accessibility of the meters themselves.

San Francisco is an example of a place of many hills, which sidewalks already present challenges to those using mobility devises.

Taking SF as an example, very few meters in service currently are of the height that makes them accessible to someone seated.

The cost of converting meters is not insignificant in itself.

There are a number of examples as to how parking changes actually are not beneficial to persons with disabilities.

So, any changes should not be made selectively and should work statewide, so everyone knows the rules.

As an example of poor planning, take Washington, DC, a jurisdiction not reviewed in the SF report.

DC had a blue top meter program where persons with placards could park for free. They then went to a red top meter program to address placards abuse. The Red top meter program reserved for motorists with valid disability
placards or plates. A persons parking at a red top meter paid for parking and had double the time.

The red top meter program when installed had significant issues and later was halted, a significant loss of money.

DC currently has a blue top meter system.

The current blue top meters are pay for parking and anyone with or without disability can park at the meter.

Basically the blue top meter means the meters are accessible and that the spot is not a dedicated accessible spot.

In the interim millions have been wasted on these versions.

This illustrates why any changes require careful consideration and input.

With respect to time limitations, depending on an individual's ability or circumstances, the amount of time needed to unload and load an individual (to say nothing of a van group) with a placard can be significantly greater than for a fully able body person.

Putting realistic limits on parking need further public input. Simply doubling the time for regular users is likely to be inadequate.

Creating classes of placard holders with different levels of entitlement is likely to be too complicated to administer.

Illinois had been working on multiple level program that currently as it comes into law has a grace period. Thus far it's been highly problematic as it creates different classes depending on mobility issues and the ability to be able to walk 20 feet or not.

It has been the policy of this state, as legislated, to not make money on providing accessible parking.

By charging for parking, as has been proposed, this represents a significant departure from current public policy and should not be a basis for revision in placard policy.

This public policy regarding providing accessible parking should be revenue neutral and not provide parking authorities with license to raise revenue from those with so many challenges. The solution to perceived abuse is most likely to be found in the issuance process and better control there is likely to be most fruitful.

Lastly, further efforts to educate the general public as well as persons with disabilities as to the purpose and use of placards should be a further priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Commission and I hope that the Commission will facilitate further forums for fulfilling its mission and further serve its community with respect to accessibility.