



To: Neighbourhoods and City Development

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Subject: Essential Evidence on a page: No. 105 The benefits of residential motor vehicle parking management

Top line: Motor vehicle users have come to expect free residential parking, yet free parking is not an entitlement. Market prices can allocate parking spaces fairly and efficiently, and in doing so reduce congestion and emissions, and support sustainable transport use.

Although parking policy has attracted much attention over the past decade, residential parking has remained largely overlooked. Nonetheless, if residential parking were a normal market, the change of supply would affect the parking price—a shortage would increase the price and abundance of parking would reduce the price. Parking price should affect car ownership cost, and subsequently the car ownership level. Yet there is usually no price for residential parking on- and off-street no matter how scarce or abundant it is.¹ Governments in many jurisdictions in the UK have failed to convince many drivers (and sometimes the wider community) that effective and rigorous control of parking is equitable and necessary, not just desirable.² 'Free' parking has to be paid for through higher prices for all other goods and services, but not everyone benefits equally from free parking.

In Guo's recent study of residents parking supply in New York the researcher targeted 770 households randomly selected from a regional household travel survey and measured their complete parking availability, including garage, driveway, and on-street parking, using online street images, such as Google Streets and Bing Maps. Modelling results showed that parking supply can largely determine household car ownership decisions in dense urban settings where parking is in short supply aiding congestion and carbon reduction.

One outcome of free or cheap parking is the percentage of local traffic which is searching for parking spaces, often as much as 30%.³ In Amsterdam, for example, cheap residents parking has been noted to lead to significant cruising for spaces.⁴ The market price for kerb parking is the price that matches demand with supply and keeps a few spaces vacant. Traffic engineers usually recommend a vacancy rate for kerb parking of at least 15% to ensure easy parking access and agrees. If prices curb parking to balance supply and demand with a few empty spaces on every block, motor vehicle users could always find a convenient parking space close to their final destination.⁵

Many European cities not only vary on-street parking charges to maintain 85% occupancy rates, but the most progressive cities are harmonizing on-street and off-street parking fees. This minimizes cruising and rationally allocates parking to those who need it most. The most progressive cities are also ring-fencing or earmarking parking revenues to support public transport services and/or bike sharing.⁶

¹ Guo, Z. 2013 Does residential parking supply affect household car ownership? The case of New York City, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 26: 18-28.

² Kerley, R.2007 Controlling urban car parking, *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 20(6): 519-530.

³ Shoup, D. 2007 Cruising for parking, *Access*, 13: 16-22.

⁴ Ommeren, J, Wentink, D., Dekkers, J. The real price of parking policy, *Journal of Urban Economics*, 70: 2-31.

⁵ Shoup, D. 1999 The trouble with minimum parking requirements, *Transportation Research Part A3*: 549-574.

⁶ Institute for Transportation Development Policy, 2011 Europe's parking U-turn, New York. Accessed 18th July 2013.

http://www.itdp.org/documents/European_Parking_U-Turn.pdf