

Goal 1: TRANSPORTATION – DPPP (February 2021 version)

Orange County is one of the fastest growing aging counties in the country. Within the next 15 years, the senior population will grow by 63%. (OCSPA, Cynthia Okialda).

In this goal, we are honoring seniors who wish to stay active and independent by protecting the DPPP (Disabled person Parking Placards) and special parking places. Disability advocate, Sharon Toji has stated, ***“Even though people are, on the whole, living longer and no longer want to just sit in a rocking chair, it does not mean that they don't have problems walking!”***

The problem is that there are not enough spaces for disabled drivers so increasing the number will help solve this problem.

Proposal: Increase the number of parking spots for disabled. This can be done in two ways.

1. **Recalculate the outdated ratio of disabled of parking spaces to the total.**

There must be 4 assigned disabled parking places per 100 total spaces. We recommend that as the percentage of seniors increase, the percentage of disabled parking places must also increase.

2. **Decrease misuse, abuse, and fraud of the DPPP.**

Misuse of the placards decreases the available spots for those who legitimately need them. The problem of abuse is more widespread than people realize. Melissa McCall, in Legal Beagle, 12/27/2018, reported that, “It’s estimated that around one-third of vehicles that display disabled placards are doing so fraudulently.

The State of California audit of 2016 shines light on this problem. As of June 2016, almost 3 million people had disabled placards and it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of them could be in use illegally.

a. Problems include:

- i. Fraud and abuse by closing the gaps in this inefficient system which includes doctors not filling out papers correctly and officials accepting them anyway.
- ii. Forged medical provider signatures.
- iii. Use/abuse the placards of dead people.
- iv. Fraudulent use of expired temporary placards is widespread after final date.
- v. Officials failing to cancel cards when people die.

b. Solutions include:

- i. Prioritize enforcement of all rules.
- ii. Create a task force including leaders from the senior and disability communities.
- iii. Enforce paperwork protocols including doctors, officials, forgers.
- iv. Enforce misuse of placards of dead people or temporary placards.

- v. Increase use of citizen policing to include misuse of placards.
- vi. Revise reporting procedures.
- vii. Match placard holders against the U.S. Social Security Administrations death file.
- viii. Rebate a small amount when placard is returned at the death of a person or temporary tie limit has occurred.
- ix. Allow parking officers and citizen police to access files.
- x. Integrate placard checks with other police work – routine stops, roadblocks, during issuance of tickets.
- xi. Raise fines. The misuse of handicapped tags or plates can be charged as a misdemeanor under California Vehicle Code 4461. When charged as a misdemeanor, potential penalties for VC 4461 can include: Up to 6 months in county jail; and/or. A fine of between \$250 and \$1,000. (Huntington Beach raised their fine to over \$800 and Los Angeles raised their fine to \$1000.
- xii. Create a marketing campaign which has 2 parts: (1) Encourage people to save parking places for those who need them ... Be nice. (2) Be firm about result consequence for not following the rules – Get fined.