The Costs of Disabled Parking Placard Usage in Westwood Village, Los Angeles, California

STUDY PURPOSE

To understand the prevalence of disabled placard and illegal parking and its financial effects, we studied parking behavior on Gayley Avenue in Westwood Village, Los Angeles.

INTRODUCTION

LA ExpressPark is a demand-based pricing system that was installed in November 2015 in Westwood Village, a retail district on the West side of Los Angeles. LA ExpressPark aims to optimize parking availability so that each block has at least one or two spots available at any given time. This goal is undermined by people who park illegally and by those who park legally at no cost.

This behavior, especially disabled placard usage, is rampant across Los Angeles. This behavior distorts LA ExpressPark's ability to adjust rates, which in turn exacerbates existing traffic congestion and pollution, decreases revenue to the city, and reduces parking availability and accessibility for the most vulnerable users.

Westwood Village, Los Angeles



METHODS

Parking behavior data was collected through nine hours of onsite observations during the last week of February 2016. On foot with clipboards, we monitored ten parking meters on the Southwest side of Gayley Avenue. We recorded whether spaces were occupied, paid for, and whether that car had a disabled placard. We recorded the status of each space for every minute of each one-hour observation period.

Study Area



QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS







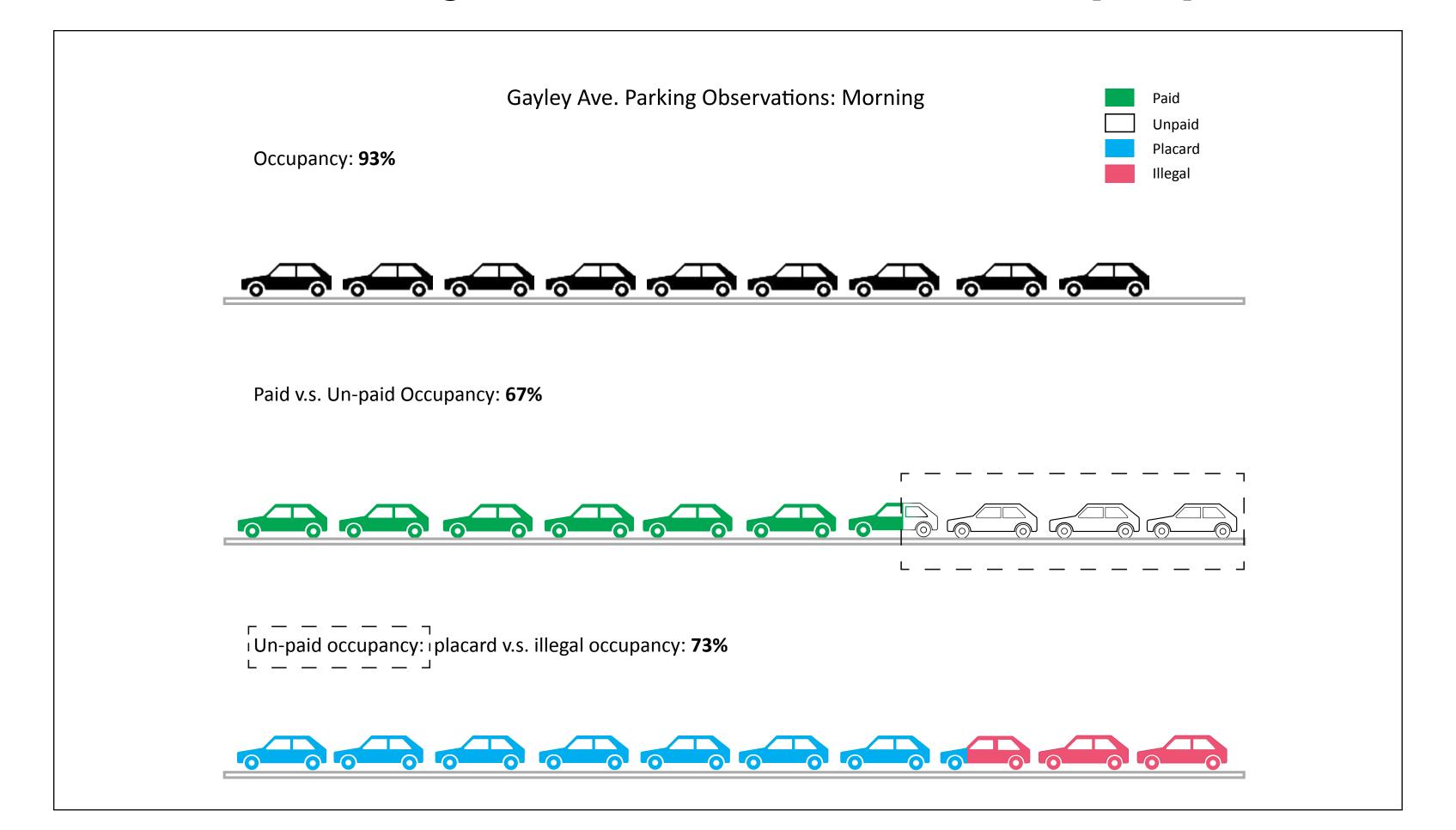






FINDINGS

- · 45% of occupied parking time was not paid for
- Disabled placard use was most prevalent on weekday mornings, taking up 72% of the un-paid occupied time
- We estimate that unpaid and illegal parking in
 Westwood Village result in a loss of \$284,544 per year



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Convert Westwood Village into a Parking Benefit District:

We estimate that Westwood Village parking meters yield more than \$1.5 million per year. This funding can be used to increase parking enforcement, repair sidewalks, and hire staff to advocate for parking policy reform.

2. Increase the level of parking enforcement:

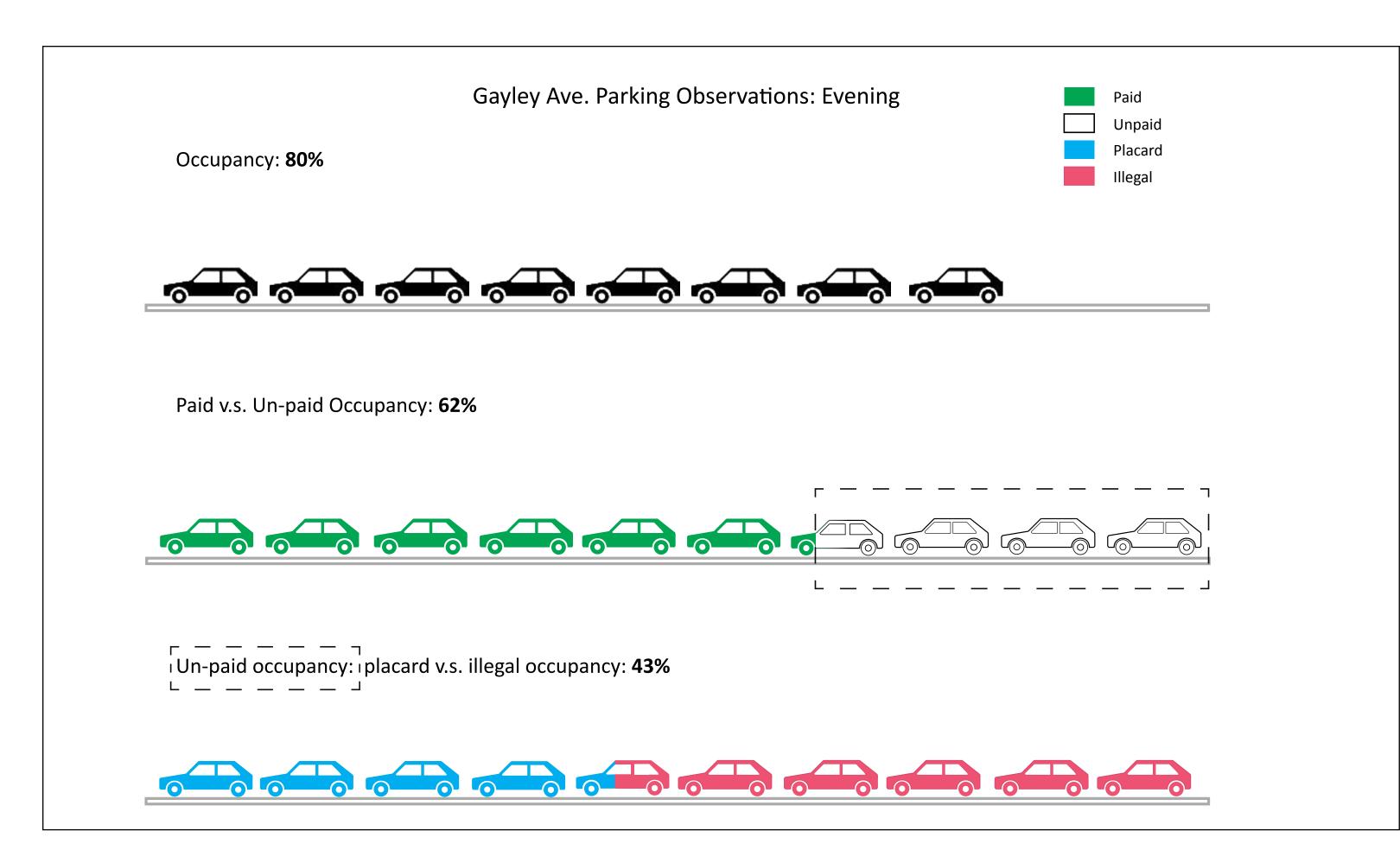
This is a short-term strategy to keep demand-based pricing working while policy makers develop a more efficient solution to regulating disabled placard parking

ACKNOLWLEDGEMENTS

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On average, or at any given time:

- Nine out of ten spaces on our block were occupied
- Two of these displayed placards, and
- One out of nine was parked illegally



3. Use PBD revenue to improve accessibility for disabled people in Westwood Village:

The Westwood Improvement Association could make approximately **189 sidewalk repairs** with the revenue regained from a year of unpaid and illegal parking (\$284,544)

4. Advocate for Parking Policy Reform

We suggest pursuing a policy similar to the State of Illinois' two-tiered solution: People with severe disabilities who cannot physically operate a meter are exempt from payment and receive a designed placard. People with less severe disabilities are required to pay and receive another style of placard.



