

Towards a User-Oriented Parking Policy

Commissariat Général à la Stratégie et à la Prospective

Summary

Since the 1960's, local authorities have adopted various measures to regulate parking within their urban space. These measures address different concerns. In today's environment, buzzing with mobility services, those authorities responsible for organising transport are using the whole concept of « parking » to:

- promote the emergence of new ways of using the car and the bicycle;
- encourage activity around urban logistics;
- contribute to the protection of air quality as defined by the LAURE law¹.

However, there is a significant gap between the technical and regulatory conditions governing the design and implementation of urban parking policies, and local authorities' ambitions. This report has been produced in order to analyse that gap, by a working group set up by the General Commission for Strategy and Forecasting and presided by Olivier Paul-Dubois-Taine.

Today, local authorities do not have the tools necessary to organise parking solutions appropriate to local specificities, based on stable, predictable revenues. They do not have the means to verify that parking is duly paid for or to enforce payment; both of which are necessary for efficient organisation of parking.

The implementation of parking policy is difficult – there are even inconsistencies – on the one hand because responsibilities are split between urban travel policies and local parking regulation, and on the other hand because the legal tools for regulation and enforcement are not entirely fit for purpose. The inconsistencies are due to contradictions between the goals of urban travel planning, and the local regulation and pricing measures decided on in each neighbourhood.

¹ Law n°96-1236 of 30th December 1996: Air and the Rational Use of Energy, known as LAURE

² It is the special municipal police force for traffic and parking which regulates on-street parking.

The goals of urban travel planning concern agglomeration-scale organisation of mobility, under the responsibility of the urban transport organisation authority; whereas the neighbourhood measures come under the responsibility of the municipal police force. Further inconsistencies are due to the lack of a link between state-owned parking solutions (on-street and in state-owned carparks) and private, commercial parking solutions (subject to local town planning rules).

Further inconsistencies are due to the lack of technical and legal means to enforce locally drawn-up parking rules. Inefficiency in enforcement can lead to organisation issues or even to a loss of credibility for the local system. A proposal to decriminalise parking is currently in the final stages of its passage through parliament, as part of the draft legislation on the modernisation of public territorial intervention and affirmation of large cities. That proposal is a key step in the definition of a remodelled policy.

The first thing to be done is the design and management of agglomeration-scale organisation of parking. That organisation is pivotal for urban travel policies and for the enhancement of public space.

A coordinated parking policy would mean better use of public space both from an economic and a social point of view, through the rationalisation of its use and the improvement of local living environments. The key objectives would be to take back public space for new economic and social purposes, and to make sure the possibilities are suited to the various categories of users (mobile professionals, car-sharers, powered two-wheelers etc.).

To guarantee overall consistency, the authority responsible for this policy would have to be the urban transport organisation authority.

An intermunicipal technical parking service, set up by the urban transport organisation authority, would be the direct link between the agglomeration-scale goals and their neighbourhood-scale application. It would cover all of the actions necessary for the « parking chain » to work properly. This technical department, under the authority of local councillors, would be responsible for:

- organising a system to monitor local parking requirements, both public and private;

- exploring appropriate technical, regulatory and pricing systems concerning the regulation and management of public space allocated to parking, the

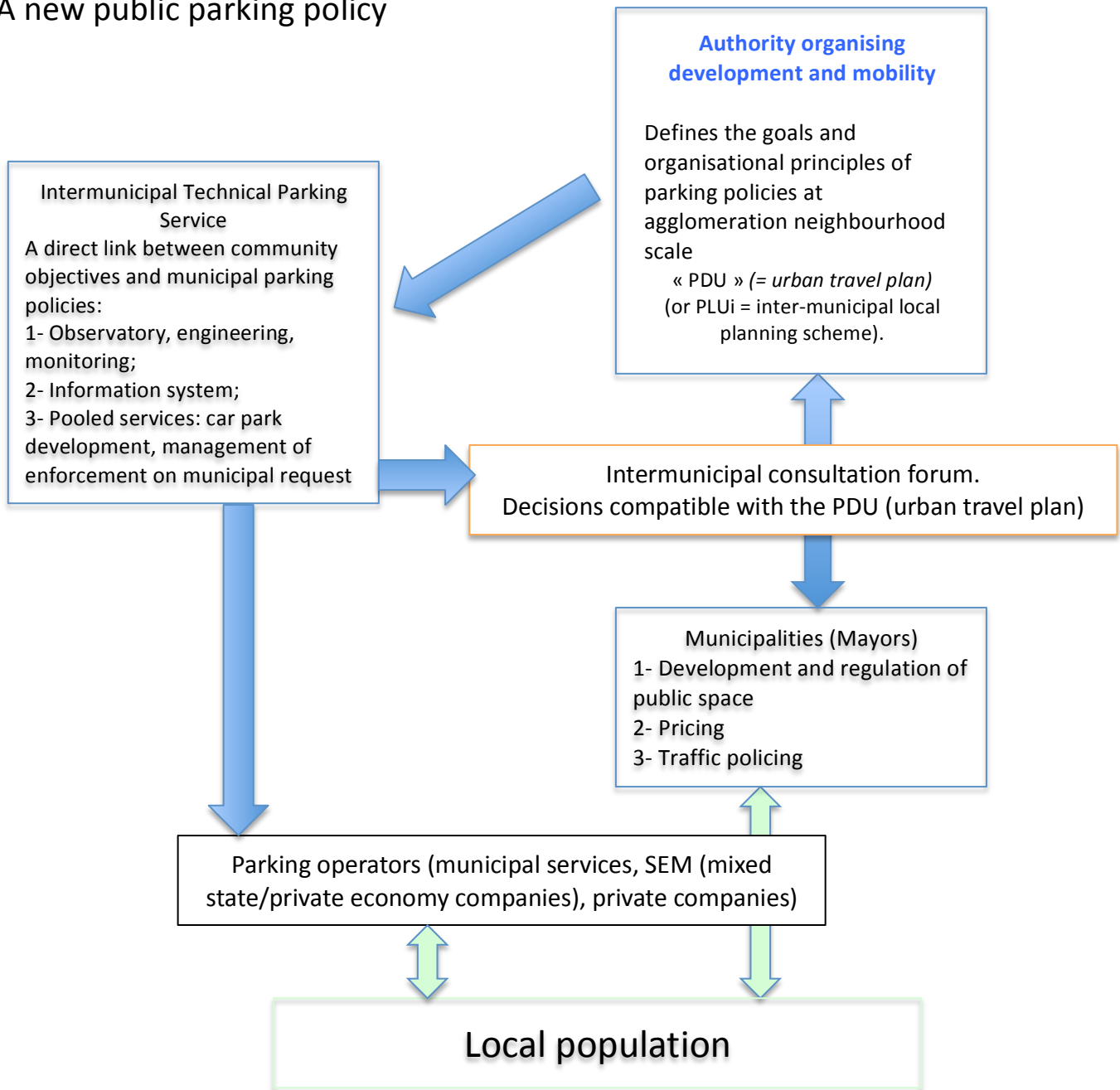
development and management of off-street public car parks, the setting-up and monitoring of contracts making mutualised private car parks available, etc.;

developping and maintaining technical facilities;

the enforcement of regulations and the security of public parking both on and off-street;

the setting-up and management of a general system to keep users informed.
The diagram below shows a summary of the organisational framework proposed.

A new public parking policy



The parking policy must make sure the goals set in the Urban Travel Plan (PDU) are compatible with the means with which they are to be implemented at neighbourhood scale throughout the agglomeration.

Public space in dense urban environments is rare but it is seen as being free of charge by the majority of drivers, who consider that they have a right to free on-street parking. So the gap between drivers' intuitive perception and the economic reality is a sticking point in parking policies. This situation is crystallised as residential parking is free or very cheap in most large agglomerations. This leads to a de facto privatisation of public space by local residents, and that privatisation goes against the principle of optimum use of that space.

Claiming back public space for other uses, considered locally as having priority over parking – public meeting spaces, parking for mobile professionals or car-sharing systems – employs technical and regulatory systems suited to various situations: very active town centres, dense « residential » areas, peripheral secondary centres, etc. Each of these « economic models » can combine restrictions on on-street parking, off-street parking solutions, mobility systems for access (with emphasis on active means of travel – cycling and walking) and the development of public spaces which enhance neighbourhood life.

As they are responsible for parking policy, the urban transport organisation authorities will necessarily have to work in coordination with municipal police forces², both in the preparation and the implementation of decisions which fall under the remit of the latter.

With this in mind, it may be necessary to set up a debate and consultation forum, in other words an « intermunicipal forum for consultation and monitoring », in order to align the general goals set by the PDU (urban travel plan) – or by the inter-municipal local planning scheme (PLUi) – and the provisions for implementation in each of the neighbourhoods, taking into account their specificities.

The efficiency of the parking policy will depend on the « toolbox » available to the authorities.

The application of police rules for traffic and parking is a complex jigsaw puzzle which does not facilitate efficient use of public space. Whence the need for

² It is the special municipal police force for traffic and parking which regulates on-street parking.

simpler regulatory instruments, better suited to certain categories of vehicle, user and development – those which the local authorities wish to encourage (deliveries, mobile professionals etc.).

Insufficient enforcement of regulations and parking payment is the main problem with the current system. Therefore, it is essential that a new 'chain of enforcement' be put in place (which could, for example, follow the measures for the decriminalisation of parking, currently in the final stages of its passage through parliament).

The new intermunicipal technical structure would be responsible for carrying out « engineering missions » to align various local parking systems; for designing and implementing systems to rationalise the use of available resources; and for pooling the technical and human resources at agglomeration-level.

The working group's conclusions were the following six recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION N°1

Promote and encourage the implementation of a user-oriented parking policy, designed in close collaboration with those dealing with urban travel organisation and the enhancement of public space on the scale of the mobility zone.

This policy, under the authority of local councillors, would aim to :

- organise a system to observe and monitor the situation in order to determine local public and private parking needs;
- explore technical, regulatory and pricing tools suited to the various neighbourhoods of the agglomeration : on-street parking, public car parks or private, mutualized car parks;
- develop and maintain technical facilities;
- monitor and control public on-street and off-street parking;
- set up and manage a general system to keep users informed...

This policy would cover the various ways in which public space (and private, mutualized-use spaces) is occupied: by cars, powered two-wheelers, bicycles, pedestrians etc. It could be financed by the fruit of the immediate payment for parking, provision for which has just been adopted as part of the draft legislation on the modernisation of territorial public intervention and the affirmation of large cities.

RECOMMENDATION N°2 Entrust the general design and monitoring of agglomeration-scale parking policies to the urban transport organisation authority.

The goals and implementation principles concerning in particular private parking, the pricing of post-parking charges and keeping users informed, could be added to PDUs (urban travel plans) or PLUi (inter-municipal local planning schemes), (with special measures for Île-de-France (*Greater Paris*)).

RECOMMENDATION N°3 Call for the setting up of intermunicipal technical parking services, responsible for observation, design and monitoring of agglomeration-

scale parking policies, as well CGSP Décembre 2013 as the implementation of shared services for the agglomeration (information systems, off-street public car parks etc.).

RECOMMENDATION N°4

Set up an intermunicipal forum for consultation and monitoring of the measures for the development and regulation of public space under the responsibility of the roads management authority and the municipal police force.

Through consultation between local councillors, this forum would foster compatibility between the various local parking measures and the provisions in the PDU (urban travel plans), or the development and planning orientations in the PLUi (inter-municipal local planning schemes).

The implementation of such a parking policy will involve the renewal of technical and legal tools for regulation-pricing, which would otherwise no longer be suitable.

RECOMMENDATION N°5

Adapt the provisions of the Highway Code and the General Code of Regional and Local Authorities (CGCT) (concerning the mayor's regulatory powers over roads) to new types of use of public space, such as parking conditions for deliveries and mobile professionals. These adaptations must take into consideration innovative digital systems for pricing and control.

RECOMMENDATION N° 6

Carry out trials in 'test towns' of innovative parking systems (demonstrators) so as to validate the technical, contractual and regulatory provisions likely to improve the local living environment.