

# Submitted by Councillor Joe Mihevc

## Appendix A Double-Permit System for Accessible Parking & a NYC Comparison: Questions and Answers

### ***Toronto's Accessible Parking Permit System***

#### **What is the issue with Toronto's Accessibility Parking Permit?**

Toronto's Accessible Parking Permit system is controlled *only* at the provincial level with the Government of Ontario overseeing all of the applications from potential candidates. With a single tiered validation system, the City of Toronto is made vulnerable to fraudulent behaviour and the abuse of its accessible permit program.

#### **How can individuals obtain an accessible parking permit in Ontario?**

Drivers may apply by submitting an application in-person at a ServiceOntario or by mail. The application requires personal information and a section to be filled out by the driver's health care practitioner. If the practitioner deems the driver eligible, the form may be sent off and a permit is delivered within 3-7 weeks.

#### **Do accessible parking permits require renewals?**

Permanent and subject-to-change accessible parking permits must be renewed every 5 years. Permanent disabilities do not need to be re-certified by a healthcare practitioner, but require an application with personal information. Disabilities that are subject to change require an application form completed by a healthcare practitioner to re-certify the applicant's health condition. All forms may be submitted to ServiceOntario by mail or in person and require personal identification.

### ***New York City's Disability Parking Double-Permit System***

#### **What is NYC's Double-Permit System?**

New York City has two types of permits for citizens with disabilities: a New York State permit and a *New York City Parking Permit for People with Disabilities*. The New York City permit is a placard from the Department of Transportation that can have several license plates associated with it. The New York City permit entitles the permit-holder to park for free in metered spaces and in all "No Parking" areas. The State permit only entitles the permit-holder to park in designated accessible parking spaces.

#### **When was this double-permit system implemented?**

Around 1990; the exact date is unavailable.

#### **Who is eligible for this permit?**

To be eligible for a City permit, the individual must require the use of a private vehicle for transportation and have a *severe, permanent* disability that impairs mobility as certified by their physician and validated by a New York City physician *as a third party*, designated by the *Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*. Originally, only City residents and those who work or study in the City full-time were eligible for a New York City permit. However, a lawsuit settlement put pressure on this restriction and qualified non-City residents became eligible for New York City permits as of June 2010.

**Where is this permit valid?**

The City permit is only valid within City limits. While New York City itself does not have designated street parking spots for persons with disabilities, drivers with this permit may park at most curb-sides, including all 'No Parking' zones. Drivers with this permit may also park in reserved spaces for authorized vehicles and 'No Standing' zones designated for doctors, press, government agencies and the like.

**How can this permit be obtained?**

Drivers may apply online via ePermits. The application requires personal information and a copy of the applicant's medical history page, as filled out by a physician. Once reviewed for completeness, the application is forwarded to an eligibility assessment center that will contact the applicant to schedule an assessment with a designated New York City physician (third party physician). If approved, a permit is issued within five business days.

**Do these permits require renewals?**

New York State disability license plates are valid for as long as the driver's registration is valid. New York City permits are valid until the expiration date printed on the permit. A renewal application will be mailed to the driver to verify information and request a medical re-examination, if the driver's condition requires it.

**Has there been a noticeable difference in accessible parking permit abuse from before the new system was implemented? Is there any existing data on this?**

Since the system was put in place long ago, there is little/no existing data on accessible parking permit abuse to compare with the current system.

**How did the public respond upon implementation? Did/does the disability community support this new system?**

The current system has been in place for so long that it is hard to say how the public originally responded. However, administrative challenges exist that frustrate the disability community.

**What are the biggest frustrations/difficulties with the existing system?**

Frustrations stem from administrative challenges and incomplete applications. Applicants have the option of applying for a City permit through New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). If they choose to do so, many are denied due to inadequate identification, lack of necessary forms or improper application completion. Many of these challenges are exacerbated by the fact that it is typically the elderly that apply and receive little support in how to fill out necessary applications.

**Why and how is the restructuring of the existing permit system taking place?**

The system restructuring refers to ePermits, the current user interface for online parking permit applications. The online platform is antiquated and does not provide the level of data that the Department of Transportation requires.