

Measure title : Zurich parking supply cap
City, Country: Zurich, Switzerland

Year(s): Starting in the early 1990ies, Introduction of a new communal traffic plan in 1996

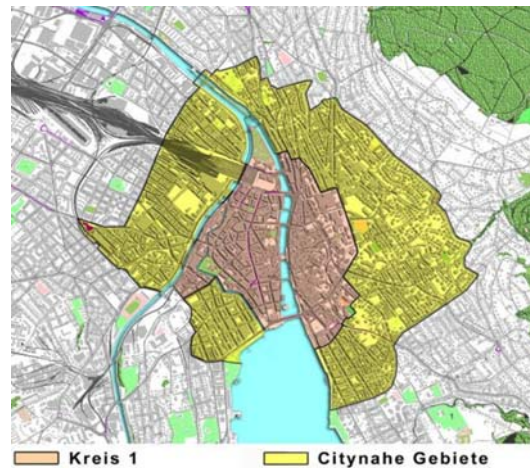
A1 Objectives

The parking supply cap aimed to achieve a balance between the demands for more pedestrianisation and the interests of business to provide enough parking spaces by balancing the creation of additional off-street parking with an equal reduction in on-street parking and usage of these spaces for green spaces, pedestrianisation and bicycle traffic.

A2 Description of the CS

1996, Zürich introduced what is called the “Historical compromise” seeking a balance between the demands for more pedestrianisation and the interests of business to provide enough parking spaces. Since then, every introduction of new off-street parking spaces has to be balanced by taking away on-street parking spaces – this is valid for the inner city as well as a relative large area around the inner city (see adjacent map).

The law thus states, that no new parking can be built unless the City agrees to remove an equal number of on-street parking spaces. From 1996 to 2013 about 800 on-street parking spaces have been taken out and upgraded to more urban, liveable and high quality street space, while about 800 publicly accessible off-street parking spaces have been created. At the same time, business in general has thrived.


B Costs and who paid them

Parking facilities built under public plazas are usually privately operated with the exception of three facilities that are overseen by the city. Private developers get a concession to manage the facilities on public ground. Two large department stores used their own money to build large underground parking spaces.

The city lost some revenue because on-street parking spaces (that you had to pay for) were abolished and off-street parking spaces are mostly private.

C Project objectives, indicators, data and impact/results

| OBJECTIVE | INDICATOR | DATA USED | IMPACT/RESULTS (1996-2013) |
|--|---|--------------|--|
| <i>Maintaining the number of parking spaces</i> | <i>Total number of parking spaces</i> | <i>Count</i> | 7622 (1996) 7801 (2013) Balance: +179 |
| <i>Reducing the number of on-street parking spaces</i> | <i>Number of on-street parking spaces</i> | <i>Count</i> | 4605 (1996) 3667 (2013) Balance: -938 |
| <i>Creating attractive urban spaces</i> | <i>Transformation of urban spaces</i> | <i>List</i> | <i>The “freed” surface has been used for creating attractive new squares, trees and greenery and additional space for pedestrians and bicycles</i> |
| <i>Reduction of cruising (park search travel)</i> | <i>Concentration of parking offer in off street parking</i> | <i>Count</i> | 3017 (1996) 4134 (2013) Balance: +1117 |

The slight surplus of parking spaces is mainly there to give urban architects and traffic planners some flexibility with abolishing on-street parking when they want to create new urban spaces. The amount of search traffic is not measured, but it can safely be assumed that the concentration of parking in park-houses substantially reduces search traffic.



Before/after picture from Sechseläutenplatz (source city of Zürich)

Around 2009, 2010 there was a legal dispute whether the counting method by the city was correct: fix reserved parking spaces were not included in the “historical compromise” – as the parking compromise was about temporary visitors, not fixed parkers. But there was a category “freihausparkkarte” which was a sort of monthly ticket – an interest group demanded that these should also be excluded from the counting as these did also not belong to the visitor category. However, a commission concluded that this type of parking mostly just served to fill under used parking spaces in low parts of the season.

Except for this dispute, the historical compromise has held to date (2014).

D Implementation process

The regular counting of parking spaces in the determined zone is a fix part of the 1996 “communal traffic plan” – and the count should include visitor and customer parking spaces (with up to 3 hour maximum parking time on-street) – meaning parking spaces for which visitors have a realistic chance to indeed find a space. Since 2001, the count is done by a private, independent consultancy.

There are two possibilities for a project:

- The city intends to abolish on-street parking spaces
In this case the city has to initiate a project to build additional off-street parking spaces or negotiate the transformation of fixed reserved off-street parking spaces into public accessible parking spaces
- A private party intends to build a parking garage
In this case, the city has to initiate one or several projects to reduce on-street parking spaces in the surroundings (preferably in a radius of 400m – but the distance is not obligatory, the law just states it has to be in the determined zone for the historical compromise)

The city has produced a whole range of urban transformation project plans, which are implemented step by step.

D1. Stages

There were no clear stages, however, there was a process:

1990 a new “Kommunaler Verkehrsplan” – communal traffic plan - became active.

1992 a “Volksinitiative” – people’s initiative – “for more attractive pedestrian zones” was started.

1996 a new communal traffic plan was introduced and the people’s initiative was withdrawn, as the plan contained the historical compromise: more space for pedestrians but also maintenance of the overall number of parking spaces – this within a clearly determined inner zone of the city.

After 1996 that some fine tuning was needed in the counting methods, as this was always a source of dispute, and the city had to make a systematic range of plans for urban transformation.

D2 Barriers – what were the key problems or difficulties in implementing the

There was a clash of interests: on the one hand, a demand for more pedestrianisation, more green, more cycling – on the other hand the demand from business, not to reduce parking space as this was deemed important for thriving business. It was dissolved through the historical compromise.

Major source of disputes were the determination of the zone and the method of counting the parking spaces – this has to be very clearly and transparently defined – these obstacles did not stop but hindered the process.

The concerned city departments need to have a clear strategy and planning for urban transformation – several options need to be available and good communication is necessary – it this is not available it is a barrier.

D3 Drivers – what factors really helped in implementing the CS? List as many as relevant and explain why and how they helped.

- The political culture in the city of Zürich and in Switzerland – people’s initiatives and votes have a lot of power and have to be taken into account and everybody is used to that – that led to the historical compromise.
- Excellent accessibility of Zürich’s centre by public transport – there are good alternatives to the car.
- High level of planning culture in the planning departments of Zürich: due to their good communication skills, good management skills and good urban transformation planning the historical compromise is realised with steady, step-by-step progress.
- The “historical compromise” is embedded in an excellent overall urban and traffic planning strategy – Zürich has detailed parking and traffic concepts not only for the inner zone concerned by this compromise, but also for the outer zone. That made implementation easier.

○ **Details: what document(s) was (were) used for answering the questions.**

Fact sheet on the status of the historical compromise in 2013 (in German) – short document mostly showing the most up-to-date numbers:

https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/dam/stzh/ted/Deutsch/taz/Mobilitaet/Publikationen_und_Broschueren/Parkierung/14_03_06_GesamtFaktenblatt_HistKomp2013.pdf

Explanation and implementation of the historical compromise (2009) (in German)

Contains many before after pictures.

https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/content/dam/stzh/ted/Deutsch/taz/Mobilitaet/Publikationen_und_Broschueren/Parkierung/Bericht_WEB_Der%20Historische%20Kompromiss.pdf

Europe’s Parking U-Turn: From Accommodation to Regulation, ITDP-report 2011, Michael Kodransky and Gabrielle Hermann, on pages 68-72 – overview over Zürichs’ parking policy – good to understand the wider context.

<https://go.itdp.org/display/live/Europe%27s+Parking+U-Turn%3A+From+Accommodation+to+Regulation>

Webpage of the city of Zürich with the historical compromise: providing links to further documentation, especially on the legal disputes (all in German) and also some before/after pictures as well as the actual numbers of parking places.

https://www.stadt-zuerich.ch/ted/de/index/taz/mobilitaet/autoverkehr_parkierung/historischer_parkplatzkompromiss.html