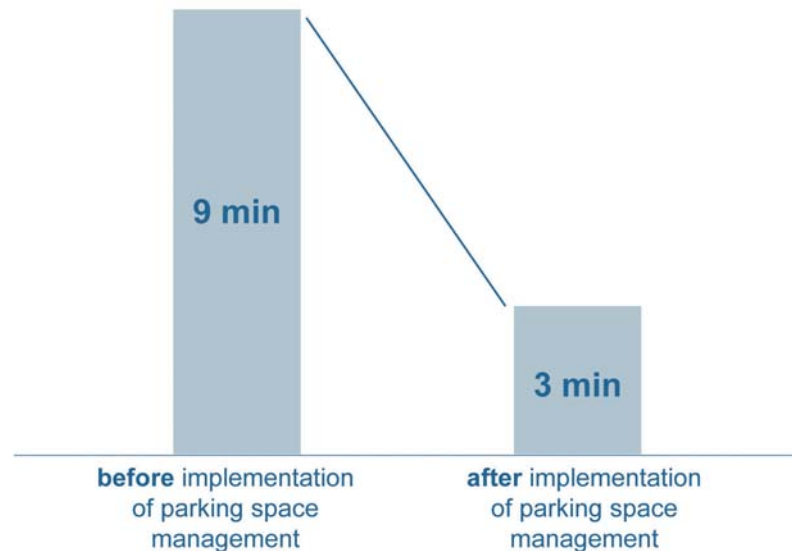


Average time to find a parking space

Vienna, district 6-9



Fact is: Parking Management leads to less park search traffic!

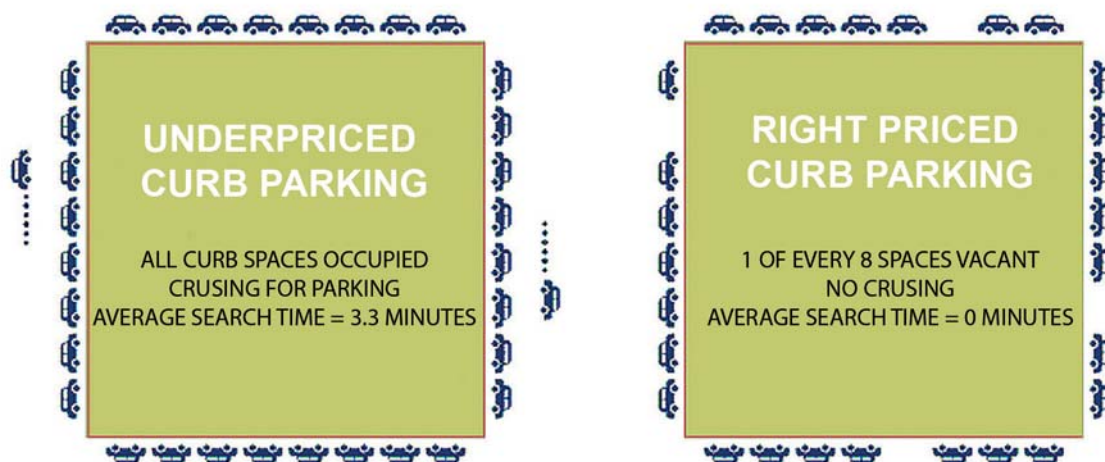
Cruising for parking (parking search traffic) leads not only to additional costs for drivers (extra time and fuel) – but it has also negative externalities for society such as extra pollution, noise and accidents. Normally speaking cruising takes place in intensively used urban areas and this make these externalities a serious problem for policy makers. Evidence suggests that effective parking management can considerably reduce cruising for parking.

“A surprised amount of traffic isn’t caused by people who are on their way somewhere. Rather it is caused by people who have already arrived” (Shoup, 2007). This quote illustrates very well the problem of cruising for parking, or search traffic. In many cities and towns the percentage of people driving around searching for a parking spot might be relatively high. Cruising for parking is not only something that visitors of a city do; it is very often caused also by residents trying to park close to their homes. For example, in Amsterdam it has been estimated that every day residents cruising for parking accounts for 50,000 km, which is approximately 18 million km a year! This is because residents first try to park in front of their doors and, when they find out that there is no place available, they keep searching around until they finally get a place somewhere in the proximity of their home (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2013).

Further, cruising may negatively affect other motorists since it may slow down overall traffic (Van Ommeren, 2012). In North-America evidence suggests that on average 30% of urban traffic is cruising for a parking spot and the average cruise time is 8 minutes (Shoup, 2007). While average searching time does not differ much among different locations within the same town, it does increase sharply when on-street parking becomes free (Shoup, 2005).

Cruising for parking is often caused because motorists consider the price of garage parking to high and, accordingly, try to find a cheapest place on street. The relationship between price of off-street and on-street parking is not the same across cities. Some cities apply higher on-street fees, others have higher off-street prices. Generally speaking, higher on-street parking fees – compare to off-street – might lead to fewer searches for traffic. The diagram below well illustrates how the right price for on-street parking might reduce the problem of cruising (Shoup, 2007).

Curb parking prices and cruising



Kodrinsky and Hermann (2011) estimate that up to 50% of traffic congestion is caused by drivers cruising around in search of a cheap parking space. Evidence suggests that effective parking management with economic mechanisms that harmonize on-street and off-street parking fees can considerably reduce cruising for parking.

A before-after evaluation in Vienna's districts 6-9 shows a decrease in parking search traffic from 10 million passenger car km per year to 3.3 million km, that is, two thirds. While before the introduction of the management of parking places parking search accounted for 25 % of the total volume of traffic, it now accounts for only 10 %. It was ascertained in the districts 6 to 9 that the average time it takes to find a parking place has been reduced from about 9 minutes to barely 3 minutes after the implementation of parking space management (COST 342, 2005).

See also Argument "Striking the right balance is what brings success!"

References

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