

Why Helping Drivers Find Parking Should Be a Priority

By [Jessica Britton](#)

ON AVERAGE, Americans spend 17 hours a year looking for parking. In urban centers, the problem is far more acute. New York City residents spend a painful 107 hours per year searching for parking spaces.

However, the scarcity of legal parking is not limited to megacities. Residents of San Francisco and Seattle spend an average of more than 80 hours per year competing for parking spaces in their dense cities. Experts anticipate returning to similar congestion levels and numbers post-COVID.

The effects of parking difficulties go beyond simple inconvenience. Real economic costs include wasted gas, increased emissions, inability to keep appointments, and cancelled dining or shopping trips. In addition, the stress of fighting for a spot to park makes personal trips unpleasant

and can wreak havoc on the scheduling of business trips.

Fortunately, thanks to technology, this anguish is almost over. More and more drivers are embracing parking guidance systems, map-based parking apps, and reservations for private lots. These affordable innovations direct drivers to available parking, allowing them to save countless hours, stress, wasted gas, and produce less emissions. In fact, demand for off-street parking management solutions is expected to grow by **8.9 percent by 2025**.

Congestion Relief

Big cities continue to experience population explosions. The world is trending toward increased urbanization, with **an estimated 66 percent of global population** expected to dwell in cities by 2050. This trend, coupled with population growth, will make cities even more crowded and parking extremely scarce.

Hong Kong serves as an excellent example of just how scarce parking can get in large, densely populated metro regions. Parking there is so challenging that a resident bought the world's most expensive parking space for **\$664,000**. New York City, Seattle, and San Francisco already have parking shortages. As their

populations boom, will residents end up paying as much for parking as the owner of Hong Kong's most valuable space?

When cities have too many people driving around looking for parking, congestion builds to crippling levels. This discourages people from visiting the city and its businesses. In addition, too much congestion



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makes the area unappealing to many employers. They may struggle to retain workers, and customers may avoid visiting.

Ultimately, municipalities need congestion relief, and that is exactly what better parking management solutions can provide.

Parking Guidance Systems

Urban dwellers are seeing the benefits of parking guidance systems. In fact, a 2018 study from the International Parking & Mobility Institute (IPMI) found that [parking guidance systems were a top priority for 43 percent](#) of respondents. Guidance systems save them time and money while helping drivers have a pleasant experience, even in congested urban centers.

Parking guidance systems work because of their ability to capture information about available parking in real time. In addition to parking guidance systems, combining emissions-based pricing strategies can further help to improve the quality of life and the environment in particular areas depending on the incentives given. As the technology continues to advance, these systems can be enhanced using sensors, the Internet of Things (IoT), and data infrastructures that provide even more parking information and a larger number of choices. Other new tech under exploration in this space includes:

- Variable message sign technologies.
- LED lights that guide drivers to parking structures.
- Apps that offer user-centric experience.
- Mobile payment solutions.

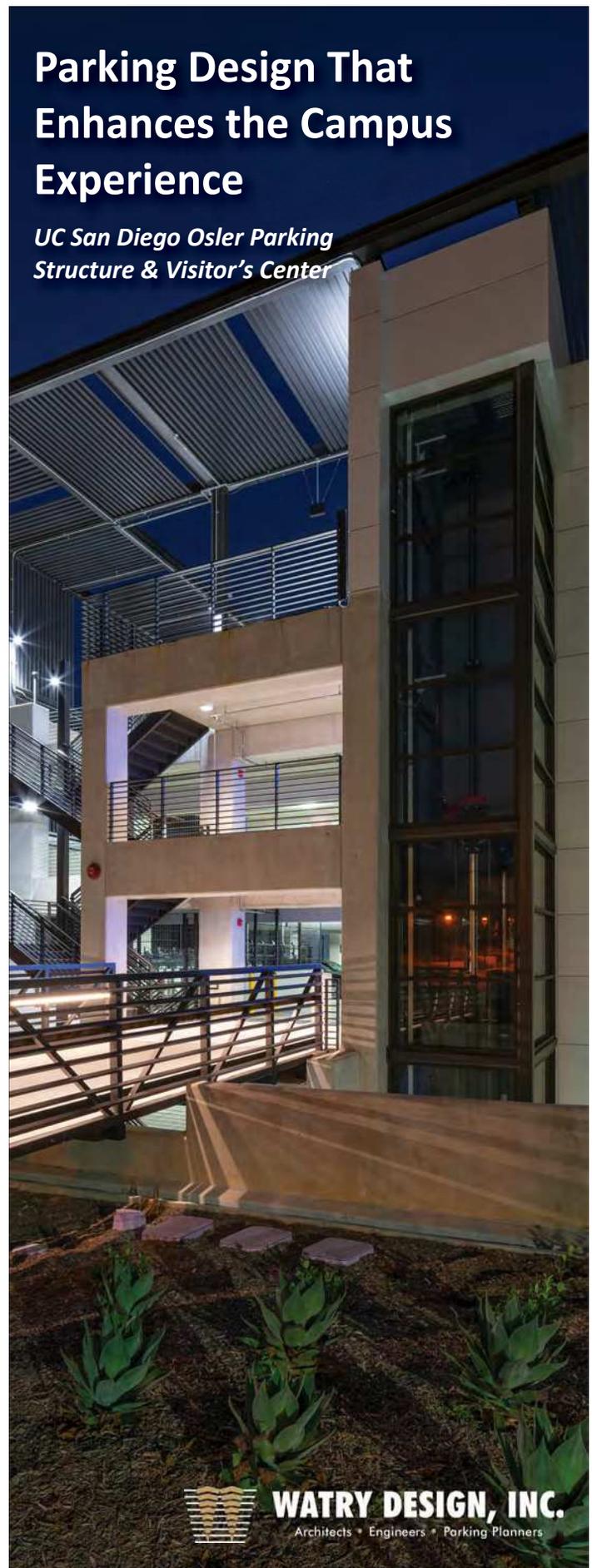
As curbside congestion continues to be an issue for cities and drivers after COVID-19, especially because of the rise in e-commerce deliveries and ride-sharing, these technologies will become more and more important to help with making the curb nimble for multi-use. Parking management systems facilitate off-street parking—a vital resource in urban centers. By directing drivers to safe, off-street parking, parking management solutions minimize congestion and, hopefully, eliminate the need to pay \$664,000 for a private parking space. ♦



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