

5 Mobile Parking Apps to Help Cities Ease Traffic Congestion

Jason Shueh | February 6, 2015



Finding parking in crowded cities can be a pain. The truth is, despite recent upticks in alternative transit methods like ride booking, efficient busing — and traditional automotive substitutions such as bikes and rail — America’s parking lots are still congested. And experts calculate the overcrowding is on track to continue. According to the International Parking Institute (IPI), 60 percent of the world will live in cities by 2030, and IHS Automotive, an industry research group, estimates that the number of vehicles on the roads will tally 284 million, up from 253 million today.

The parking chokehold on city streets has compelled decision-makers and residents to toy with a number of new civic tech solutions. Chief among these, IPI reports, are the use of automated payment methods through mobile apps and innovations in street sensors, navigation, ticketing and reservation systems.

The smart parking solutions have been met with little criticism, with the exception of a few apps — in 2014, [MonkeyParking received pushback](#) from cities for its auction-styled business model. Overall, however, [research shows](#) that the current market for global parking systems has reached \$60 million and is expected to generate \$360 million in annual revenue by 2020 when smart parking accounts for roughly 1 million spaces.

To get a glimpse at a few of these notable technologies making headway, here are five apps and platforms of note.

1. [Parker](#)

Parker is a mobile app that takes the guesswork out of parking with a space locator, voice navigation and timed notifications to prevent tickets. The app accomplishes all this by partnering with cities to install RF sensors beneath parking spaces, a mechanism that detects the status of open or closed spaces.

Parker has been released in more than 24,000 parking lots and 30-plus cities from moderate-sized municipalities like [San Carlos](#), Calif., to sprawling metropolises like Los Angeles, New York and Boston. Most helpful is the app's filtering feature to tailor searches to specific types of parking, such as garages, handicapped spaces and credit-card-friendly meters.

2. [Ticketzen](#)

Whether a frequent offender or occasional transgressor, parking fines can be paid easily through Ticketzen, a mobile app that only requires motorists to scan a ticket bar code to pay it off via credit or debit card. Crafted by Boston-based Terrible Labs, the service recently partnered with PaybyPhone, a mobile payment company that will likely scale Ticketzen's reach to hundreds of communities nationwide. The simple solution just might be the answer for cities looking to increase revenues from paid parking. Currently the app lists nine participating cities, including Boston.

3. [gtechna](#)

gtechna is a company that offers a paperless mobile tool for city parking attendants. With its software, parking enforcement officers enter and verify a license plate number with Samsung Galaxy Note smartphones, after which they can issue an electronic ticket with an attached photo for evidence. Additionally, the citation data is immediately transmitted in real time to the city servers for processing.

4. [Airport Parking Reservations](#)

The name is clear-cut — Airport Parking Reservations is exactly what the mobile app provides. Yet despite its seemingly unimaginative moniker, the app is surprisingly handy for frequent flyers. Airport Parking Reservations bills itself as the “only” way to book airport parking on mobile devices, and has discounts that save travelers up to 70 percent. Currently 85-plus airports within the U.S. and Canada support the app and 2.6 million reservations have been made to date.

5. [ParkWhiz](#)

For drivers who want a 100 percent guarantee they'll have a place to leave their vehicle, the mobile app ParkWhiz allows parking spot reservations to be made in 160-plus cities across the nation. The app includes user reviews and real-time availability updates, and users can cancel their reservations free of charge right up to reservation start times. The app also specializes in short-term parking for events.

<http://www.govtech.com/transportation/5-Mobile-Parking-Apps-to-Help-Cities-Ease-Traffic-Congestion.html>