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BACK BAY

## As motorcycles fill exclusive spots, confusion continues about scooters

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

Four of 39 exclusive on-street parking spots for two-wheeled motorized vehicles along Newbury and Boylston streets in the Back Bay.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

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The city's [pilot program](#) to provide exclusive metered parking spaces for two-wheeled motorized vehicles in the Back Bay has been welcomed by motorcyclists.

But motorized scooters, many of which are not licensed properly and therefore nearly impossible to tag for parking violations, continue to park on streets and sidewalks.

The city announced the pilot program in late July, and the 39 spaces on and around Newbury and Boylston streets were available starting last month.

Motorcyclists sometimes avoid parking in on-street spaces sized for larger, four-wheeled vehicles because drivers parking in front or behind them can knock over the bikes while pulling in or out of the space.

Furthermore, drivers of larger vehicles may quickly attempt to pull into what seemed like an empty space, only to find there was a motorcycle parked there.

Bikes being knocked over are not a rare occurrence, said 52-year-old Larry Diran of Watertown, after parking his motorcycle on a road intersecting Newbury Street Thursday afternoon.

Diran has worked in the Back Bay for the past six years, and he's had his bike knocked over twice – once causing \$6,000 in damage, and the one he was riding yesterday also took a spill, and a \$1,500 repair bill along with it.

“It's tough to find a spot around here, and you're always getting your bike hit and knocked over,” he said.

Other riders will park their motorcycle in between cars parked in regular-sized spots to avoid taking up a full space and also to avoid paying the meter, or even on sidewalks, according to a city parking enforcement officer working in the Back Bay area Thursday.

The parking officer, who declined to provide their name because the person is not authorized to speak on the parking department's behalf, said motorcyclists who are caught parking in between spots or otherwise illegally will be ticketed, and the new spaces provided by the pilot parking program have alleviated much of the illegal motorcycle parking and consequential ticketing.

However, motorized scooter drivers often park in the same illegal fashion or along sidewalks. Often due to confusion over scooter regulations, many scooters that should sport a license plate are not registered with the state.

The Registry of Motor Vehicles announced last year that any bike that can exceed 30 miles per hour, which includes every Vespa scooter and the majority of mopeds in Boston, would need a license plate. But, for scooters of all kinds that remain unlicensed, parking enforcement officials have little

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recourse against meter-avoiding and sidewalk-parking operators. Without a license plate, the city cannot identify whom to ticket.

Parking enforcement officers can contact their headquarters, which can then contact the city police department to remove the violating scooter, but that is a rare occurrence, said the parking officer.

"There are more scooters on the street now than ever before, and It is difficult to enforce scooter parking for unlicensed vehicles," said city transportation department spokesman James Mansfield.

The city will continue to seek ways to address problems involving illegally parked scooters, he said.

Other than the pilot program not changing the behavior of many scooter riders, motorcyclists and the city seem pleased with the move.

"At this point we believe it is going well. We've been monitoring the spaces, they've been being utilized," and the city will keep an eye on the program to see if tweaks need to be made an to determine whether to expand the parking spots to other areas of Boston, Mansfield said.






Diran said he hopes more two-wheeled-only spots will be added throughout the city, most notably the financial district and in Park Square, and roomier spaces to accommodate larger bikes would be another plus.

The meter rate at the new slots is one quarter per hour as opposed to one quarter for 15 minutes at all other on-street spaces, and the spots have no two-hour limit like most other metered spots in the city.

According to a July press release from the mayor's office announcing the new initiative, "The Boston Transportation Department will be keeping a close eye on the Back Bay program over the next several months and changes to the program will be made as necessary."

"Before, it was a crapshoot," he said referring to trying to find an open, safe space to leave his motorcycle. "But now I pretty much always know I have a spot."

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