The city of Valencia has launched a project to provide 1,060 smart parking spaces for people with reduced mobility, for loading and unloading. The spaces can also be used by taxis. The system allows the intelligent management of these restricted-use parking spaces, showing which places are free or not.

The project will convert ‘ordinary’ parking spaces into smart ones by installing sensors, which can detect if a space is occupied and share this information. The information is available for everyone and can be easily checked using the municipal web portal and the AppValència. The smart parking...
spaces will be created in strategic locations throughout the city. There is a commitment to provide the spaces in crowded areas, particularly those near important services such as health centres, markets, public transport hubs, etc., where finding a parking space can be difficult. Smart parking will make it easier to find a parking space and helps avoid users having to drive around in search of a parking space.

Valencia’s city councillor for Social Welfare, Isabel Lozano has welcomed the project saying it “will mean a breakthrough for mobility in the city of people with some type of disability.” She praised how “the city can take advantage of technology to advance rights and make Valencia a city with universal accessibility for all people”.

Out of the 1,060 parking spaces, 695 spaces which represent 27% of the total spaces in the city will be reserved for people with reduced mobility (PMR). Additional software will be used to control unauthorised use of the restricted parking spaces. PMR Users of the spaces are required to have a special parking card, which can be obtained from the municipality. Users of the smart PMR parking spaces will be able to register their identification once they park, with the specific application for mobile devices and through geolocation. In this way, it will be possible to know if a vehicle parked in one of these spaces has authorisation and to facilitate parking enforcement.

In order to support efficient urban logistics, 329 (16%) of smart parking spaces are dedicated places for loading and unloading. For urban logistics service providers, it will be possible to reserve a loading and unloading area online. This should help improve the efficiency of logistics by reducing ‘search time’ and help scheduling trips with reliable information.

For taxis 36 dedicated spaces have been equipped with sensors, with a maximum of two spaces per location. In this way, information can be provided about locations where at least one or two taxis are available.

In addition to providing useful information to users of the restricted parking spaces, the system of smart parking sensors provides Valencia’s planners and policymakers with useful data to inform decision making, for example on the need to increase or decrease available space in certain areas.

The smart parking project is part of Valencia’s VLCi Impulse smart city initiative, which is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). According to the city councillor for Digital Agenda, Pere Fuset, the smart parking project is “an unbeatable example of how Valencia’s smart city philosophy prioritises improvement of the quality of people's lives and well-being by taking advantage of new technologies. Meanwhile projects like this help to further establish Valencia as a benchmark smart city in Europe”.

The work to install all of the sensors is now underway. The sensors are fitted directly in the parking bay and do not require any wires or street furniture and the communication technology used is the so-called Narrow Band-IOT (NB-IoT) technology. Throughout the summer, sensors have been installed in 65 parking spaces throughout the city to be able to start all the essential technical tests. The complete implementation of the intelligent parking system, with 1,060 initial spaces, is scheduled for the first quarter of 2021.

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