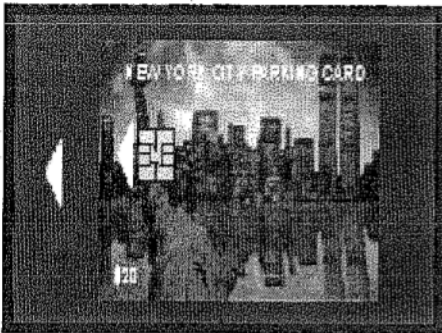


Meet Muni-Meter

Billy Fitzgerald/HGS Instructor

About six feet tall, made of metal, painted dark green, with a display screen and credit-card sized openings, this new arrival on New York City's streets would feel at home on the



starship "Enterprise".

The exotic-looking visitor's nametag says "Muni-Meter." What is Muni-Meter doing here?

Muni-Meter is a project of the New York City Department of Transportation to make payment for on-street parking fast, easy and convenient. Payment for parking is payment for the use of land, or, in a word, rent. Here is how Muni-Meter works:

The driver parks his/her vehicle.

The driver walks to the nearest Muni-Meter, which displays on its screen the cost of parking at that location for a specified period of time.

The driver selects the amount of parking time required. The driver pays Muni-Meter with a prepaid card, known as a NYC Parking Card. This card is similar to a prepaid phone card or Metrocard.

Muni-Meter prints a parking coupon that shows the amount of parking time allowed.

The driver places the parking coupon in the windscreen of his/her vehicle.

Just as the police and traffic agents can ticket vehicles that overstay a parking meter, they can issue a violation for overstaying a Muni-Meter coupon.

Muni-Meter is now in operation

in all five boroughs of New York City.

Muni-Meter has several advantages over existing parking meters, the most notable of which is that it allows various parking pricing plans to be implemented.

Muni-Meter could allow variable rate parking. At times of high demand for parking space, parking charges can be raised, thereby collecting a higher land rent for the community. Drivers who are unwilling to pay the higher parking charges can use cheaper alternatives, or avail themselves of public transportation. When demand for parking space is low, parking charges can be reduced or even eliminated.

In areas where parking space is limited, Muni-Meter could be used to favor commercial use over private use by offering a discount to commercial users.

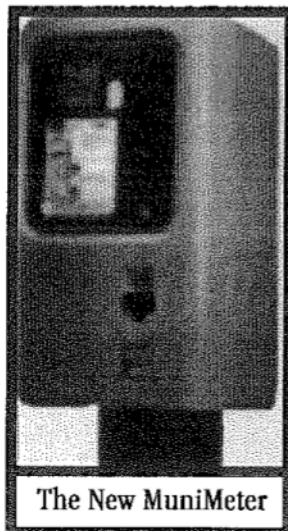


Currently, there is one parking meter per parking space, while there are only a few Muni-Meters per city block. That means less "street furniture" - obstacles for all, but making movement especially difficult for people with disabilities.

Not having to feed Muni-Meter with coins has its benefits, too. Drivers do not have to maintain a collection of coins. Companies will find it easier to administer parking charges by giving the prepaid cards to employees. New York City's expenses are also reduced. Gathering, counting, storing and depositing coins is an expensive process.

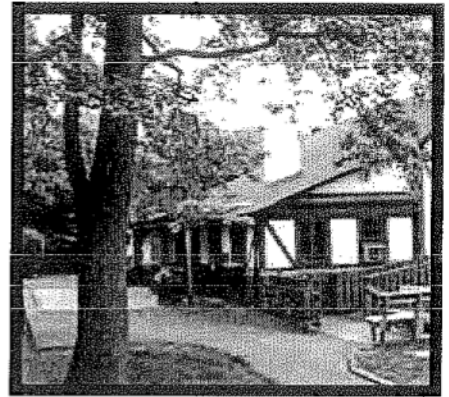
A disadvantage of Muni-Meter? Well, it means yet another card in our wallets. When will someone invent one card that does it all?

Billy Fitzgerald may be reached at: billyfitzgerald@yahoo.com



The New MuniMeter

UPCOMING SEMINARS



Film Forum - *Experimental Village*

Friday, Jan. 25, 6:30pm

In 1895, followers of Henry George tried to convert the State of Delaware to a Land Value Tax system and failed. In 1900, they started a village, Arden, based on the same principles. By charging the full rental value, there was no private property in land. Life-long Arden resident Mike Curtis will present the film *Experimental Village* and discuss the history of Arden.

The Urban Dilemma

Friday, Feb. 22, 6:30pm

For thousands of years cities have been the most economical places to live and work. As civilizations advance, cities naturally tend to grow larger. Why are many American cities losing jobs and revenue? How would LVT reverse this trend? With Mike Curtis.



Taxes, Taxes, Taxes

Friday, Mar. 8, 6:30pm

As tax-time looms, we will consider the following questions, among others: Would lower taxes in general help our workers? Would the Flat Tax with no deductions help workers? How would a national sales tax work? With Mike Curtis.

Noche Literaria Ramon Alvarez

Friday, Feb 15, 6:30pm

Literature as a force for social change. A reading of poetry focusing on social concerns and economic development.