

# *The* HOTTEST NEW

**How a seemingly unlikely pair is changing the way the parking industry works.**

**By Vanessa Weston, CAPP**

**A**utomobiles have been around for centuries, and from their initial introduction until today, have needed their own storage: parking. Smartphones have been around since 1993 but did not become a part of consumers' everyday lifestyle until the last decade or so. Who would ever think of these two becoming a perfect pair? They are!

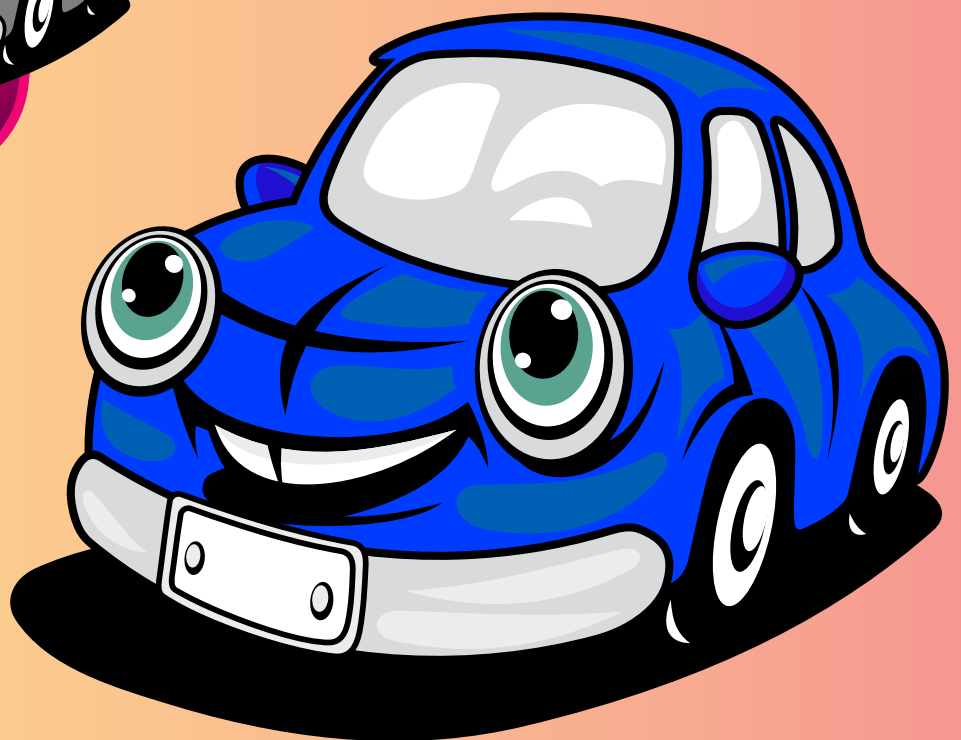
Smartphones have become a leading tool to help drivers find parking spaces. College campuses and cities around the world are turning to them to help individuals locate parking spaces, pay for parking, find someone to share a ride, and decrease the chance of being ticketed, booted, or towed. The hottest couple in town is parking and the smartphone, and it's changing the way we (and our customers) think about getting around.

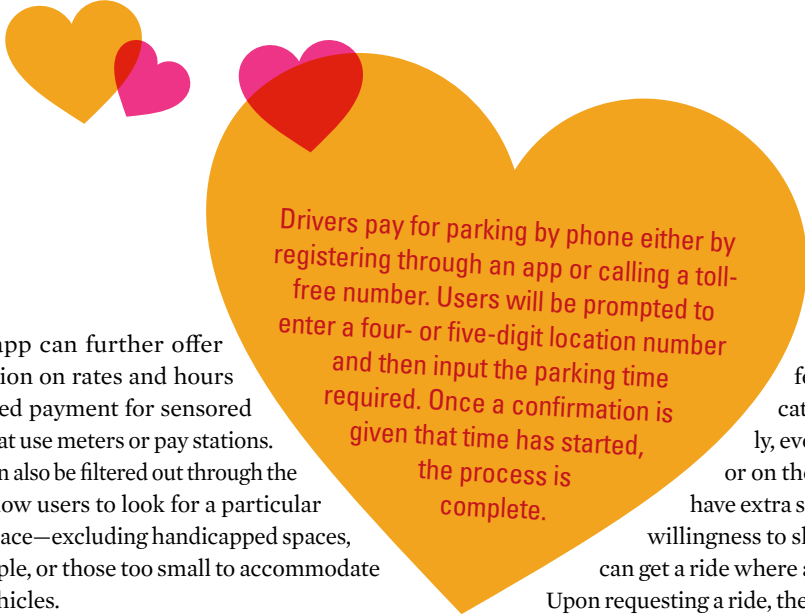
## **Locating a Parking Space**

In cities and on college campuses, one of the most agonizing everyday experiences can be the search for a vacant, legal parking space. Individuals drive around, first hunt in one place, and then hunt in another and another, putting more fuel emissions in the air just trying to find a parking space. Many times this practice leads to late arrival to class and appointments. How can the hottest new couple in town help with these particular issues?

There are companies in the parking industry that use the pair to help individuals find a parking space in real time, safely and effectively. It can also be used to improve the carbon footprint of the area. Sensors can be installed in individual parking spaces and, with the use of modern technology, detect if a parking space is vacant or occupied. This information can be communicated to the driver through a free smartphone app. By downloading the app, the driver has access to a real-time map that shows available parking, and a voice guidance system that leads the driver to a specific space.

# COUPLE *in* TOWN





*Drivers pay for parking by phone either by registering through an app or calling a toll-free number. Users will be prompted to enter a four- or five-digit location number and then input the parking time required. Once a confirmation is given that time has started, the process is complete.*

The app can further offer information on rates and hours of required payment for sensed spaces that use meters or pay stations. Spaces can also be filtered out through the app to allow users to look for a particular type of space—excluding handicapped spaces, for example, or those too small to accommodate larger vehicles.

Lastly, the analytical parking data can help improve parking efficiency and increase revenue generated by pay stations or parking meters. Clemson University Parking and Transportation Services uses an app to guide parkers to available spaces that are available to visitors for three hours and to faculty, staff, and students for one hour. Plans are underway to use the same app to guide ADA permit holders to handicapped parking spaces that are spread across campus. This app is available for both iPhone and Android users.

**Paying for a Parking Space**

An individual finds a parking spot at last only to realize a pay station or parking meter has to be paid before his vehicle can legally occupy the space. Looking for loose change in all the compartments of the car to no avail, the driver learns there is a pay-by-phone option available. This option allows for a simple, secure, and convenient way to pay for parking.

Drivers pay for parking by phone either by registering through an app or calling a toll-free number. A valid credit card is usually required to use the pay-by-phone option, but some systems are beginning to offer options to add parking fees to cell phone bills or pay online via PayPal. The service provider may charge a fee per transaction to cover the cost of the service. Users will be prompted to enter a four- or five-digit location number and then input the parking time required. Once a confirmation is given that time has started, the process is complete. The vehicle will appear on handheld units used by parking enforcement officers on patrol, who will instantly know how much time was purchased and when. The user may receive text reminders when time is about to expire and opt to extend their time via phone. This app also allows the user to view recent parking locations he's used and manage the account.



**VANESSA WESTON,** CAPP, is a program assistant at Clemson University Parking Services. She can be reached at [vanrob@clemson.edu](mailto:vanrob@clemson.edu) or 864.656.0867.

**Finding a Ride**

An individual may be on a college campus or in a big city without a car, but with many places to go and no way to get from point A to point B. How can our hot new couple help?

Parking vendors offer apps that let users catch a ride with friendly, everyday people in a city or on the college campus who have extra seats in their cars and a willingness to share their rides. Users can get a ride where and when it is needed.

Upon requesting a ride, they can watch the driver approach in real time. The users may also send their trip information to friends so they can see when they arrive. Ridesharing via smartphone is an increasingly popular option for college students, especially those leaving for home during holiday breaks.

This app offers great way to meet people, see the area in a new way, and get to the destination safely. Payment is voluntary and made through the smartphone. The user can pay what he feels is appropriate and without worrying about holding cash.

At Cornell, all drivers using the app are checked out for safety, all rides are GPS-tracked, and everyone who rides is covered by our unique \$1 million insurance policy. To maintain the safety and security of the users, the vendors will conduct background checks on drivers to look for driving violations, DUI, sexual assault, and other criminal offenses. The vendor files each driver's pertinent information, such as driver's license number, vehicle registration, and insurance.

**Avoiding a Citation**

Individuals travel unfamiliar cities and college campuses every day. Because they're driving and parking in a new area, they might take a chance on a space and hope not to receive a parking citation or worse. Signs may not be clear, and well-meaning bystanders may give incorrect information when asked. The hottest new couple can help drivers in this dilemma, too.

There is an app available to help individuals decrease their chances of being cited, towed, or booted because they did not know where to park. This app informs the user of the parking rules and regulations for cities and college campuses. The user can search by zip code within the app and view parking rules and regulations for the specific campus or municipality he's visiting.

Combining a list of rules with the GPS function of a smartphone, the app is an educational tool that helps people know, respect, and follow the parking rules and regulations.

So there you have it. The hottest new couple in town and on campus is parking and the smartphone. Together, they're making headlines!