

From Queen's park by Sylvia Jones MPP ? Changes to accessible parking permits good to see

The provincial government has made some changes to the accessible parking permit that includes enhanced security features. The new features include a bar code, a serial number, heavier-stock paper, copy-resistant markings and raised surfaces. These additional features will help prevent the possibility of easily duplicating the permit, which has been a persistent problem with these permits in the province.

To be eligible for an accessible parking permit, you must have a specific health condition or disability, such as the inability to walk without some form of assistance, severe loss of vision, or suffering from a cardiovascular disease or a lung disease. Discuss with your health care provider to determine your eligibility for a parking permit before applying.

I am pleased to see improvements to the permits that are intended to prevent fraudulent use. These changes are a step in the right direction to help ensure that the accessible parking spaces available are being used by individuals who need them, but I believe the province can do more. I have heard from residents in Dufferin-Caledon who believe there are too many misusing these permits. That is why I have written the Minister, suggesting that an audit of all passes currently issued would help in identifying passes that have not been turned in when expired or when the owner of the permit has passed away. The government could do a better job informing individuals that permits must be turned in when no longer needed.

As of Jan. 11, the new accessible parking will be issued. With the introduction of the enhanced security, the previous version of the accessible parking permit will remain valid. Ontarians in possession of a valid parking permit will receive the enhanced parking pass on their next renewal date.

Accessible parking permits are a valuable tool for individuals with a disability. That is why it is important that we ensure these permits are only used by individuals who truly need them. For more information on obtaining an accessible parking permit, please visit www.ontario.ca/page/get-accessible-parking-permit or contact my office at 1-800-265-1603 or by email at sylvia.jonesco@pc.ola.org for assistance

