

# 2025 Parking Compliance

TRENDS REPORT



# Table of Contents



Select any section title to navigate to that page.

- 3 Overview**
- 4 Key Findings**
- 5 General Compliance & Policy**
  - 5 | Compliance Goals
  - 6 | Defining Success
  - 7 | Challenges to Progress
  - 8 | Barriers to Switching Vendors
- 9 Paid Parking & Mobile Payments**
  - 9 | Mobile Payment Adoption
  - 10 | Hurdles to Mobile Growth
  - 11 | Enforcing Paid Parking
- 12 Compliance & Enforcement Technology**
  - 12 | Technology That Drives Efficiency
  - 13 | How Strategies Are Changing
  - 14 | Metrics That Matter
  - 15 | Citations Paid Online
  - 16 | Delinquent Notices
- 17 Permitting & Resident Compliance**
  - 17 | Managing Permits
  - 18 | Compliance Issues in Permitting
  - 19 | How Permits Are Enforced
- 20 Curbside Payments & Revenue Trends**
  - 20 | Digital Revenue Share
  - 21 | Benefits of Integration
  - 22 | Alternative Payment Options
- 23 Data Tracking & Future Outlook**
  - 23 | Tracking Compliance Data
  - 24 | Obstacles in Using Data
  - 25 | The Road Ahead
- 26 Executive Summary**
- 27 About This Research**



# Overview

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**Parking compliance is at a crossroads.** Across the U.S., cities are reevaluating how they manage paid parking, enforcement, permitting, and payments amid rising public expectations, limited staffing, and the rapid maturation of digital tools.

To capture how municipalities are navigating this shift, Passport created a 21-question survey and reached hundreds of parking and mobility professionals across North America. The goal: to uncover current practices, challenges, and emerging trends, and to provide benchmarks that help leaders see how their strategies compare, spot gaps and opportunities, and plan for the future based on real-world data.

What emerges is an industry at an inflection point. Compliance is increasingly the stated objective, with many programs tying success to payments rather than citation volume. At the same time, resource constraints, community perception, and legacy practices keep progress uneven. Mobile payments, digital permits, and modern enforcement tools are gaining traction, giving cities clearer visibility into behavior and outcomes.

**This report explores those dynamics in detail, uncovering the challenges, technologies, and trends shaping the next era of parking compliance.**

**21 questions. Hundreds of industry professionals.  
One comprehensive look at the state of parking compliance in 2025.**



# Key Findings

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## Compliance and Measurement

Nearly half of respondents said their top goal is to drive compliance. When asked how success is measured, most pointed to increases in paid parking transactions — a sign that many cities are tying compliance to payment behavior. Still, citations, permits, and disputes remain part of the mix, and nearly one in five said they don't measure compliance at all.

## Barriers to Progress

Limited staff was named the biggest obstacle by 37% of participants, and 35% pointed to public resistance. Technology hurdles ranked lower, signaling that people and perception are the toughest problems to solve.

## Digital Adoption

Most cities process between 26% and 75% of transactions through mobile payments. More than 54% have moved to digital, plate-based permits, though meters and hangtags still play a role.

## Technology Impact

Mobile enforcement software stands out as the most impactful tool, named by 48% of respondents. License plate recognition followed at 31%, but 37% of cities reported that their overall enforcement strategies have changed little in recent years.

## Data in Practice

Disconnected systems were identified as the top barrier to using compliance data effectively by over a third of participants. Another 27% lack the staff to act on insights, and 20% struggle to analyze the data they collect.

## Future Outlook

Looking ahead, 49% of respondents expect greater use of digital enforcement and automation over the next three to five years. Another 24% anticipate wider adoption of alternative payment methods such as mobile wallets and text-to-pay, signaling a shift toward more flexible operations.



# Compliance Goals

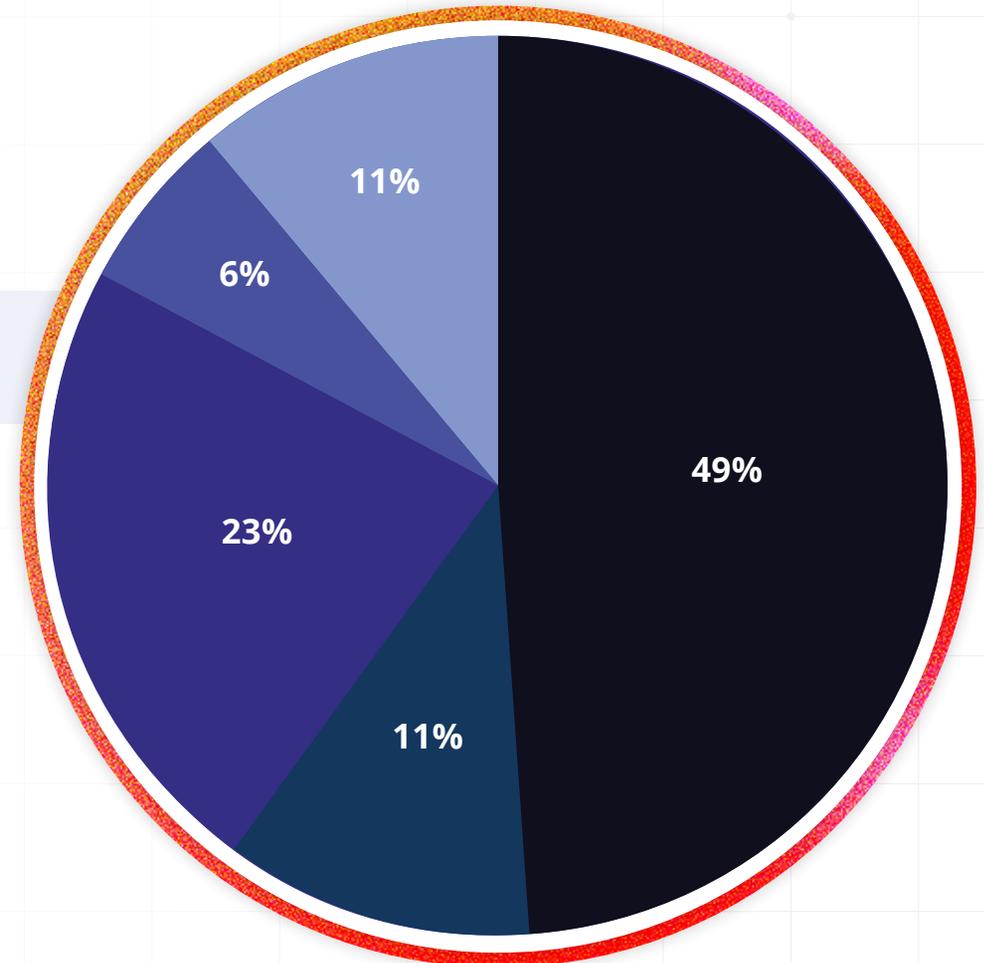
Cities were asked to identify the primary goal of their parking compliance operations. Nearly 50% pointed to driving compliance as their top objective, while others emphasized increasing revenue, streamlining operations, or improving safety.

The results show that most agencies aspire to focus on behavior change rather than punitive enforcement — a signal that compliance-first thinking is gaining traction across the industry.

*Driving compliance is the leading priority, named by nearly half of respondents, ahead of revenue, efficiency, and safety.*

- Drive compliance
- Increase revenue
- Streamline operations/optimize efficiency
- Officer or constituent safety
- Other

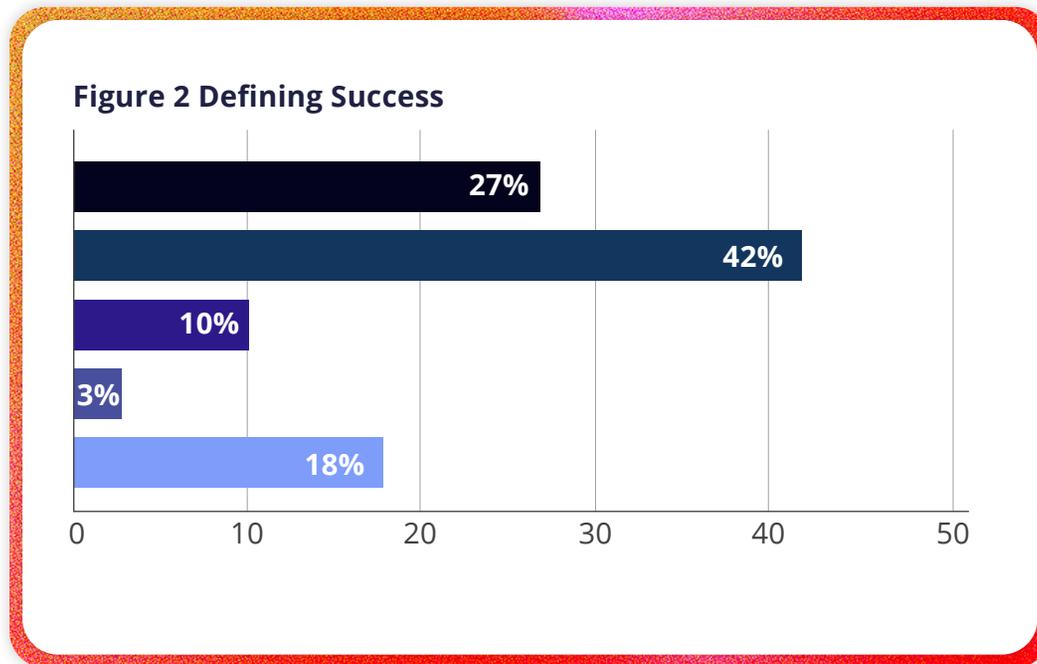
Figure 1 Compliance Goals



# Defining Success

When asked how they measure parking compliance, the leading response was an increase in paid parking transactions, as shown in Figure 2. This reflects a shift toward tying success more directly to compliance behavior rather than punitive outcomes.

Still, enforcement remains part of the picture. More than a quarter said they track reductions in citations, while smaller shares pointed to disputes or permit adoption. Notably, 18% selected "Other," with many either citing a mix of measures or acknowledging that their city does not measure compliance at all — showing that benchmarks for success are still taking shape across the industry.



- Reduction in citations issued
- Increase in paid parking transactions
- Decrease in appeals / disputes
- Higher permit adoption rates
- Other

*Most cities measure compliance through paid transactions, while over a quarter still focus on citations.*

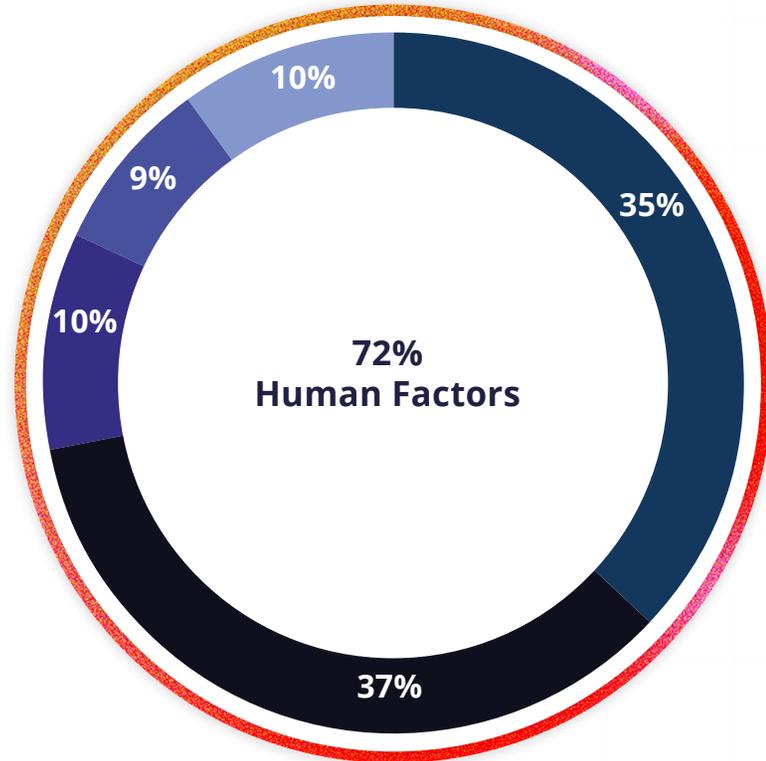


# Challenges to Progress

We wanted to understand the biggest obstacle cities face in improving compliance. Limited enforcement resources (such as staffing shortages) emerged as the top challenge, closely followed by public resistance and perception. Technology-related issues, such as outdated systems or lack of real-time tracking, ranked much lower.

The findings point to compliance as a human-centered challenge. Even as digital tools advance, progress is still constrained by the resources available to staff operations and the way communities view enforcement.

**Figure 3 Challenges to Progress**



- Limited enforcement resources
- Public resistance or perception
- Outdated technology (i.e., disconnected or disparate systems)
- Inability to track real-time compliance
- Other

*Staffing and public perception make up the majority of compliance challenges, outweighing technology-related issues.*

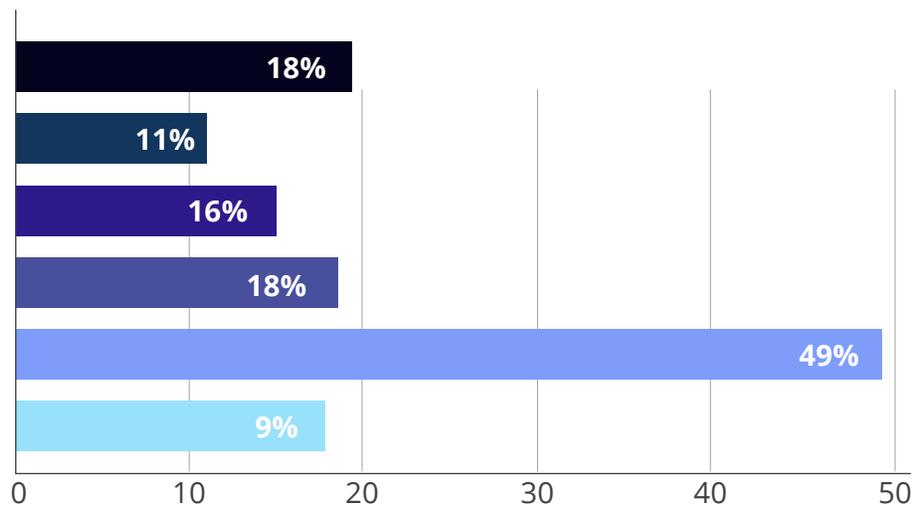


# Barriers to Switching Vendors

As shown in Figure 4, satisfaction stands out as the biggest barrier to switching vendors, with nearly half of respondents saying they see no need to change providers.

Still, for cities that do weigh their options, risk and complexity loom large. About 18% said they've relied on the same provider for so long that change feels risky, while another 11% pointed to procurement hurdles. Budget and leadership constraints and integration concerns add to the friction, creating an environment where staying put often feels easier than exploring new solutions.

**Figure 4 Barriers to Switching Vendors**



- We've used the same provider for many years and change feels risky
- The RFP / procurement process is too complex or time-consuming
- Concerns about implementation effort or potential data / integration issues
- Budget constraints or lack of political / leadership support
- Satisfied with current vendor and see no need to change
- Other

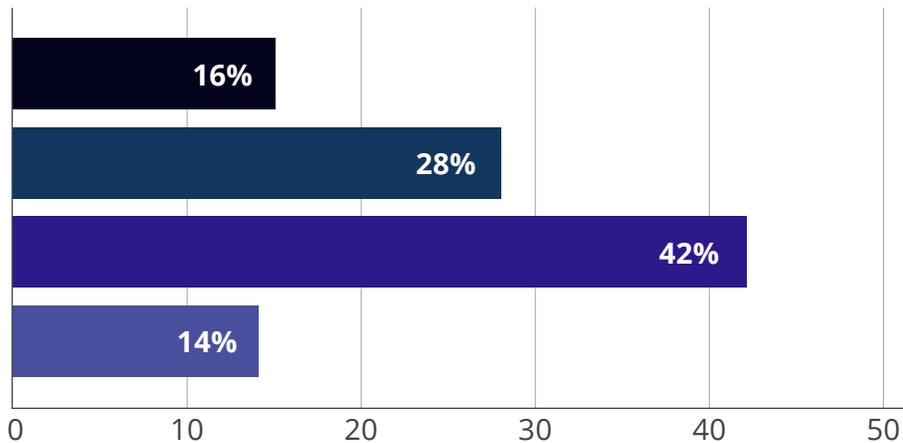
*Respondents could select more than one answer, so totals exceed 100%.*



# Mobile Payment Adoption

We were curious about what share of parking transactions are processed through mobile payments. Most respondents reported adoption between 26% and 75%, showing that mobile has become a core part of operations but has not yet fully displaced meters or other traditional methods.

Figure 5 Mobile Payment Adoption



- 0-25%
- 26-50%
- 51-75%
- 76-100%

*Mobile payments account for a significant share of transactions, most commonly between 26-50% or 51-75%, with only small groups reporting very low or very high usage.*

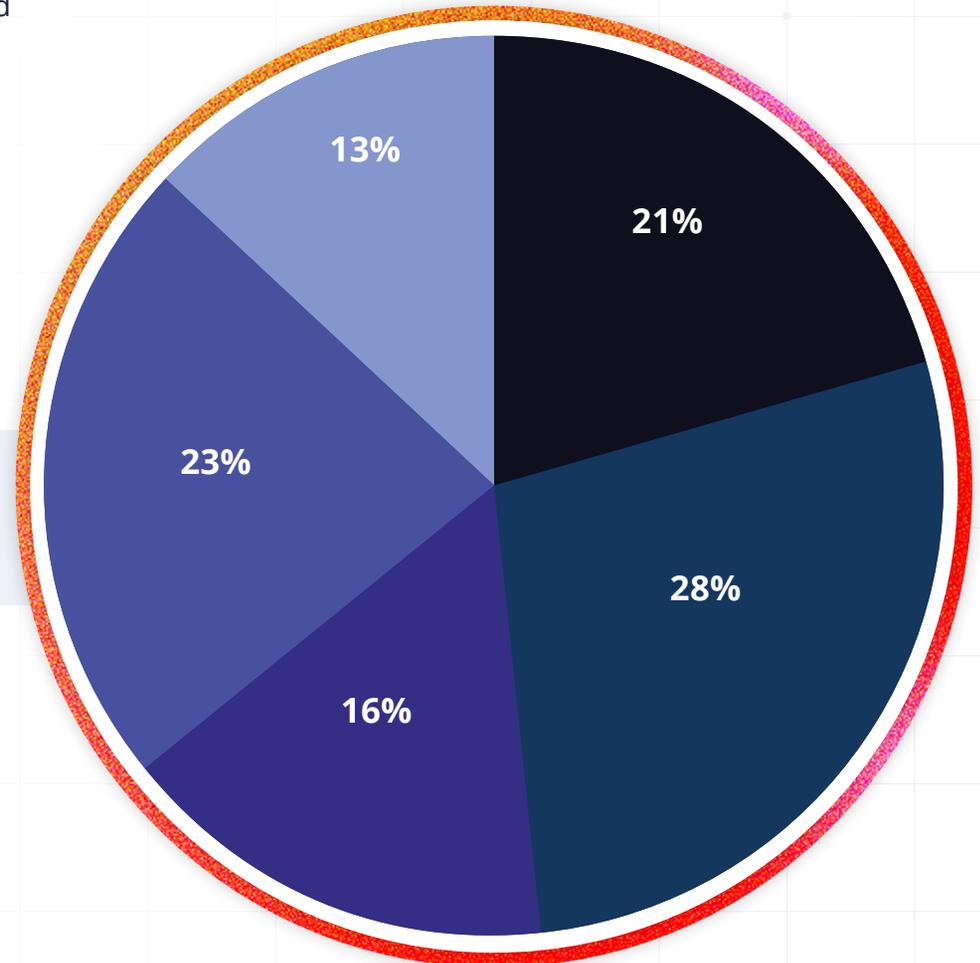


# Hurdles to Mobile Growth

Mobile payments have gained traction, but adoption still faces practical challenges. Preference for traditional meters was the top hurdle, cited by 28% of respondents. As digital adoption grows and camera-based technology evolves, continued reliance on these already-antiquated payment methods raises an important question: how long will cities maintain physical hardware that's steadily being replaced?

Other barriers included lack of awareness among drivers, public resistance to expanding paid parking into new areas, and concerns about digital security and privacy, showing that adoption challenges are rooted more in communication and perception than in system limitations. Notably, about 13% selected "Other," with many of those write-ins noting that their operations are already fully mobile pay.

Figure 6 Hurdles to Mobile Growth



*Preference for traditional meters is the leading hurdle to mobile growth, followed by awareness, public resistance, and security concerns.*

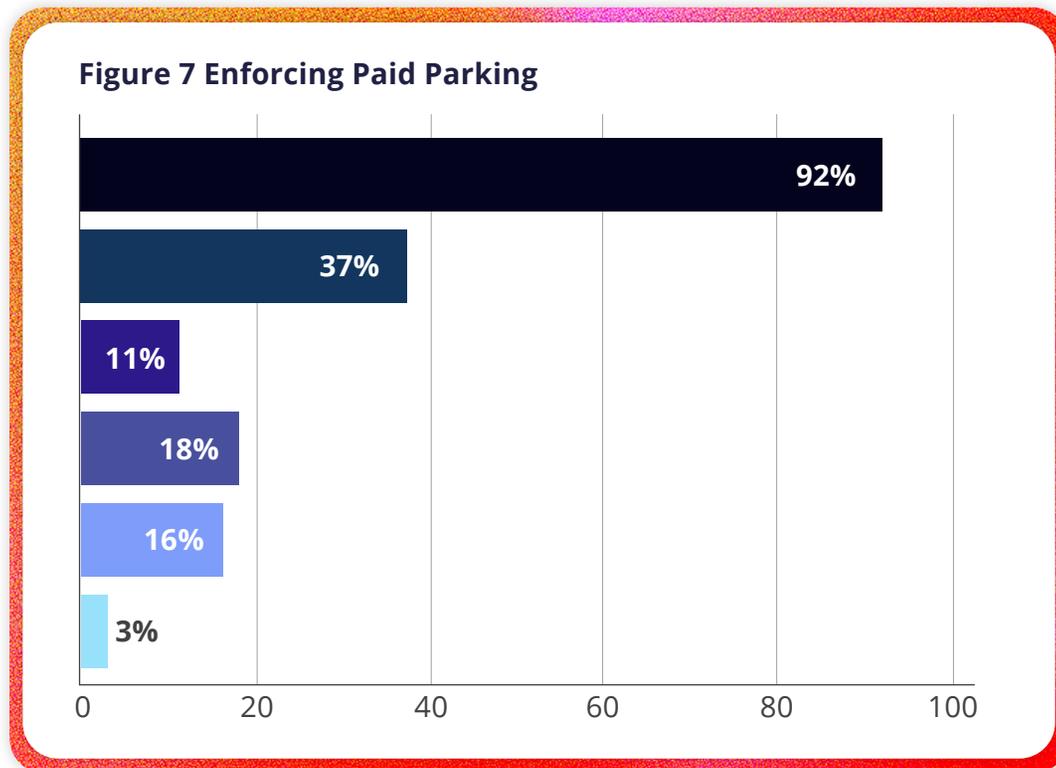
- Lack of awareness among drivers
- Preference for traditional meters
- Concerns over digital security / privacy
- Public resistance to expanding paid parking into new areas (e.g., residential or less dense neighborhoods)
- Other



# Enforcing Paid Parking

Participants were asked how they primarily enforce paid parking compliance.

Figure 7 below shows the majority said officers issuing citations (92%), followed by license plate recognition (LPR) technology. Smaller shares pointed to warning notices, booting or towing repeat offenders, or collections efforts.



- Parking enforcement officers issuing citations
- License plate recognition (LPR) technology
- Warning notices before citations
- Booting / towing repeat offenders
- Collections efforts as an alternative to immobilization / towing
- Other

*Respondents could select more than one answer, so totals exceed 100%.*

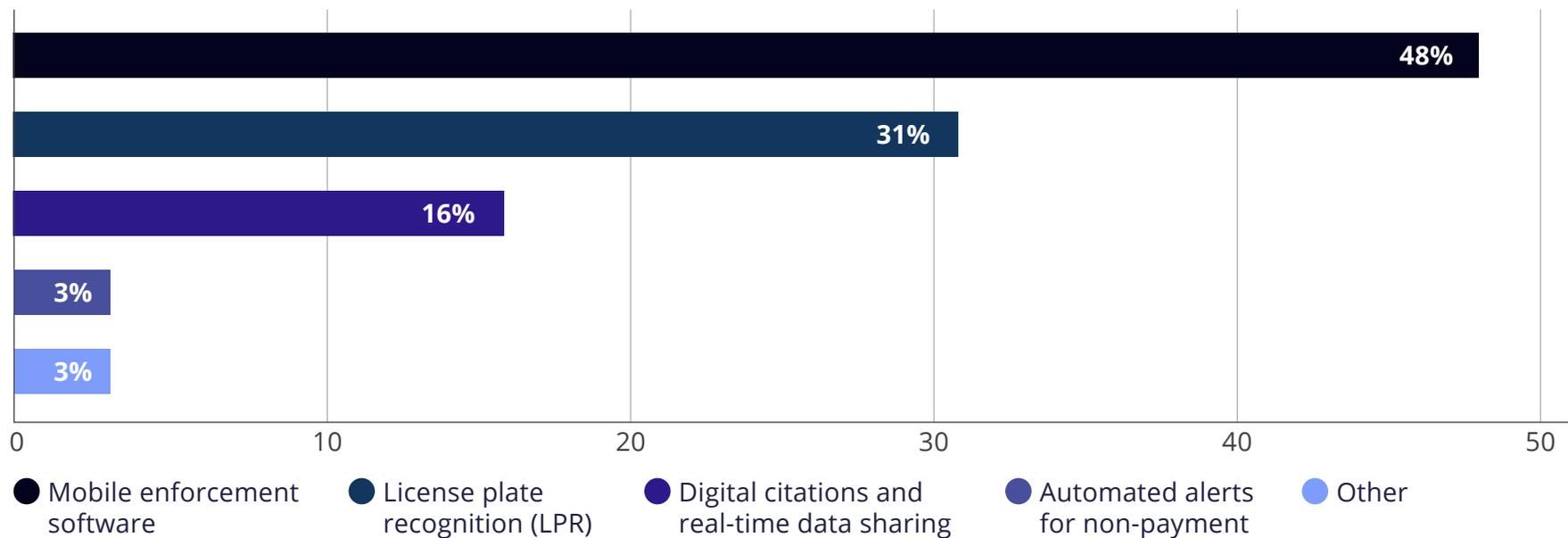


# Technology That Drives Efficiency

When asked which technology has had the biggest impact on parking enforcement efficiency, nearly half of respondents pointed to mobile enforcement software. Once again, license plate recognition (LPR) was the next most common answer, while smaller shares highlighted digital citations with real-time data sharing or automated alerts for non-payment.

The findings suggest that the tools delivering the greatest efficiency are those that directly support enforcement officers in the field.

**Figure 8 Technology That Drives Efficiency**



*Mobile enforcement software is seen as the most impactful technology for efficiency, with LPR and other digital tools also contributing.*



# How Strategies Are Changing

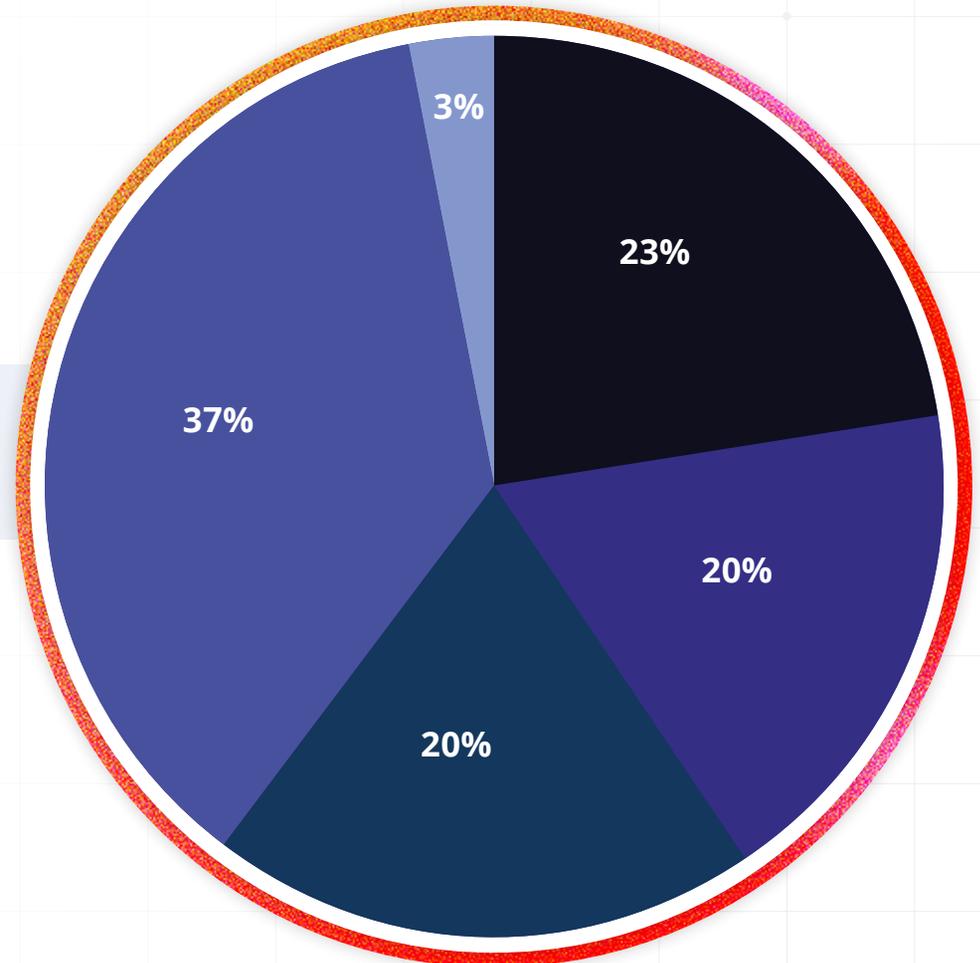
We wanted to know how enforcement strategies have shifted over the past 3–5 years. The most common answer was no major changes, with more than a third of respondents saying their approach has stayed largely the same.

Among those that did report a shift, the leading changes included an increased focus on compliance rather than citation volume, reinforcing that while compliance-first thinking is gaining traction as an operational goal, many agencies are still in the early stages of translating that mindset into day-to-day strategy.

*More than a third of respondents report no major changes to their enforcement strategy, while others point to compliance-first approaches and digital adoption.*

- Increase focus on compliance rather than the number of citations issued
- Reduced manual enforcement efforts by switching to a digital system
- Expanded digital enforcement tools
- No major changes
- Other

Figure 9 How Strategies Are Changing

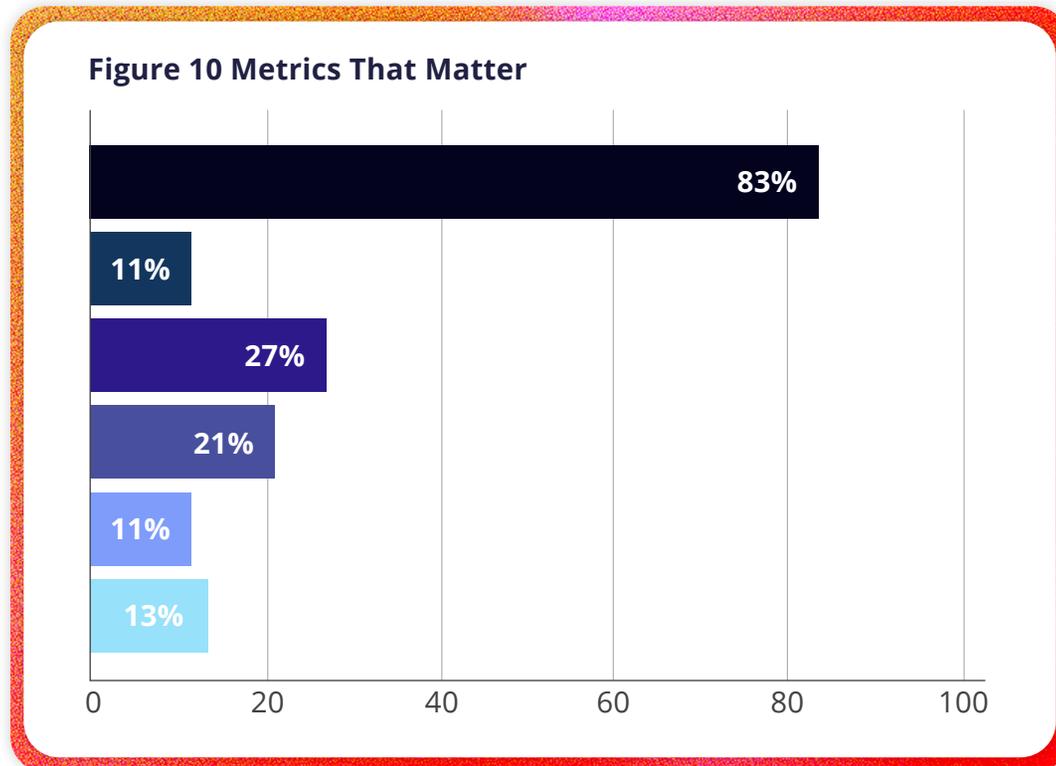


# Metrics That Matter

When it comes to evaluating parking enforcement, the most common metric is still total citations issued. This reliance on volume highlights how traditional measures continue to shape the way many cities define success.

Other metrics included LPR scans, voided or dismissed citations, and officer idle time. While these provide a more nuanced view of efficiency and fairness, they were far less frequently cited than citation counts. Notably, 13% selected “Other,” with several write-ins pointing to citizen complaints as a key measure of how enforcement impacts the community.

The findings suggest that most agencies continue to track outputs, while outcome-based measures are only beginning to emerge.



- Total number of citations issued
- License plate recognition (LPR) scans
- Number of voided citations
- Number of dismissed citations
- Officer idle time (e.g., time between citations during active shifts)
- Other

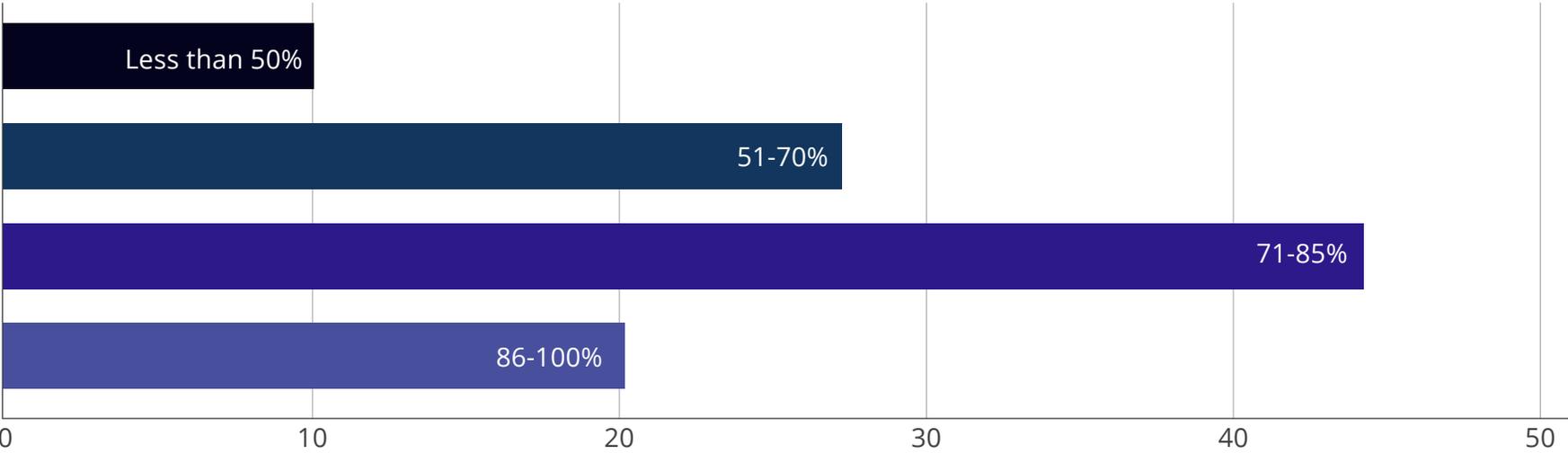
*Respondents could select more than one answer, so totals exceed 100%.*



# Citations Paid Online

In order to understand how cities evaluate enforcement outcomes, participants were asked what share of citations are paid online. The majority reported more than 50%, while only a handful reported less than that.

Figure 11 Citations Paid Online



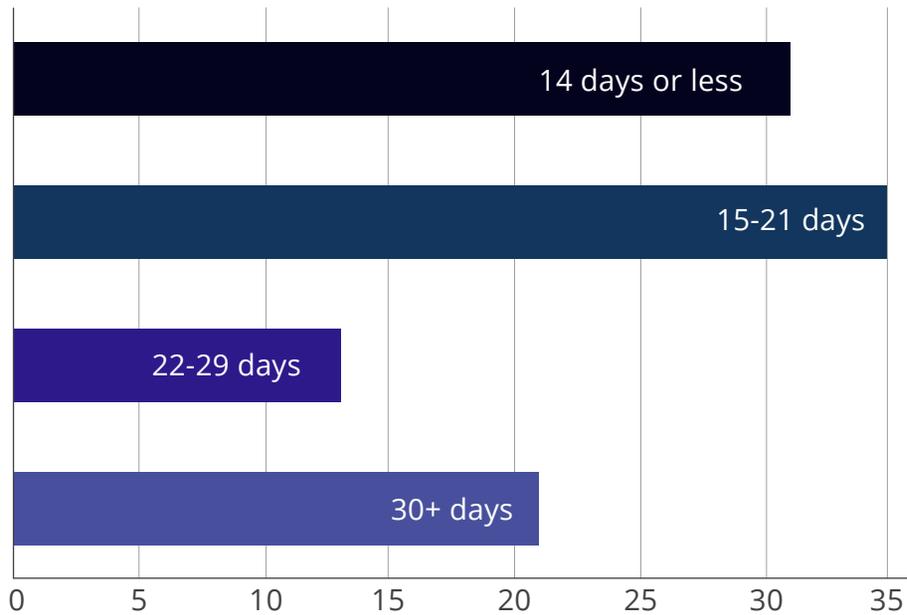
*Most respondents said more than half their citations are paid online.*



# Delinquent Notices

Continuing the theme of enforcement metrics, we were curious about when municipalities typically send the first delinquent notice after a citation is issued, and most said 15-21 days.

**Figure 12 Delinquent Notices**



*Most cities send the first delinquent notice within 15-21 days.*



# Managing Permits

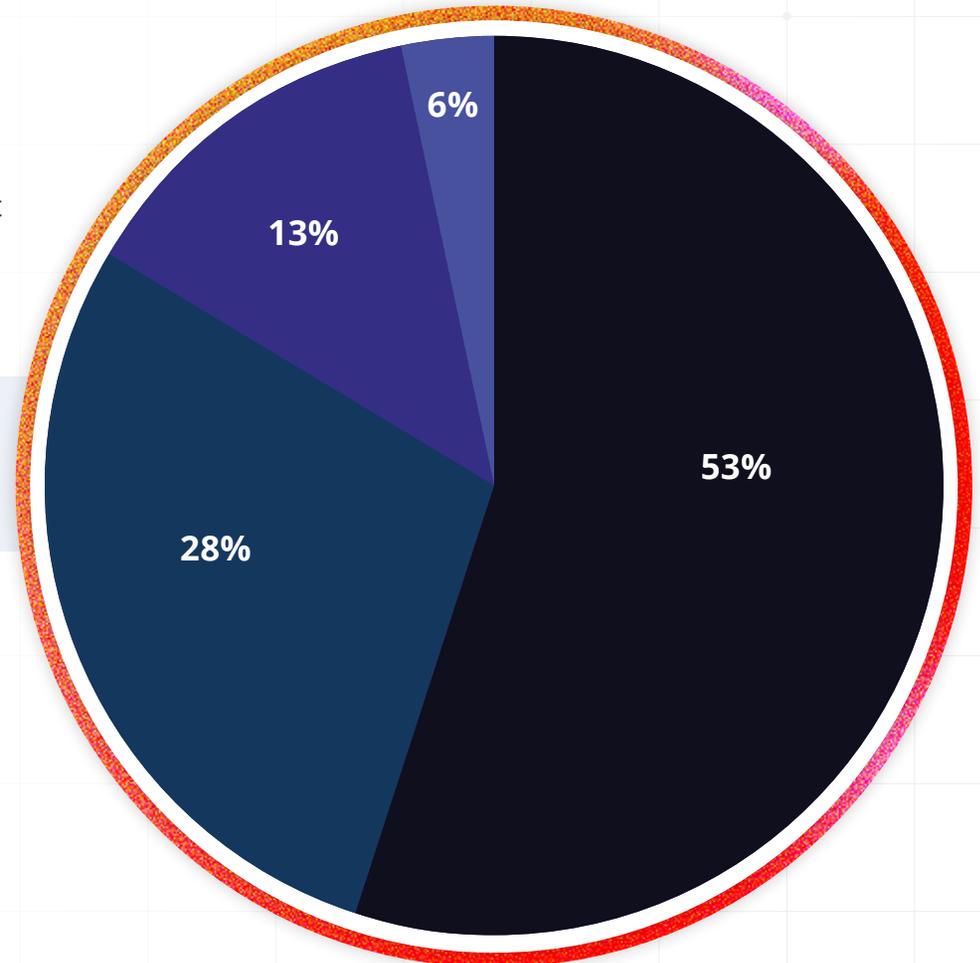
As cities modernize other aspects of their parking operations, permitting is following suit. Most respondents said they've moved to digital permits tied to license plates, reflecting a shift toward greater efficiency and easier enforcement. Still, many continue to rely on physical stickers or hangtags, and a notable number use a hybrid approach that blends both digital and manual methods.

The mix shows that while digital transformation is well underway, not every city has fully made the leap — particularly where residents or legacy systems remain part of the equation.

*Digital, plate-based permitting leads the way, but many cities still rely on physical or hybrid systems.*

- Digital permits tied to license plates
- Physical stickers or hangtags
- Combination of both
- Other

Figure 13 Managing Permits



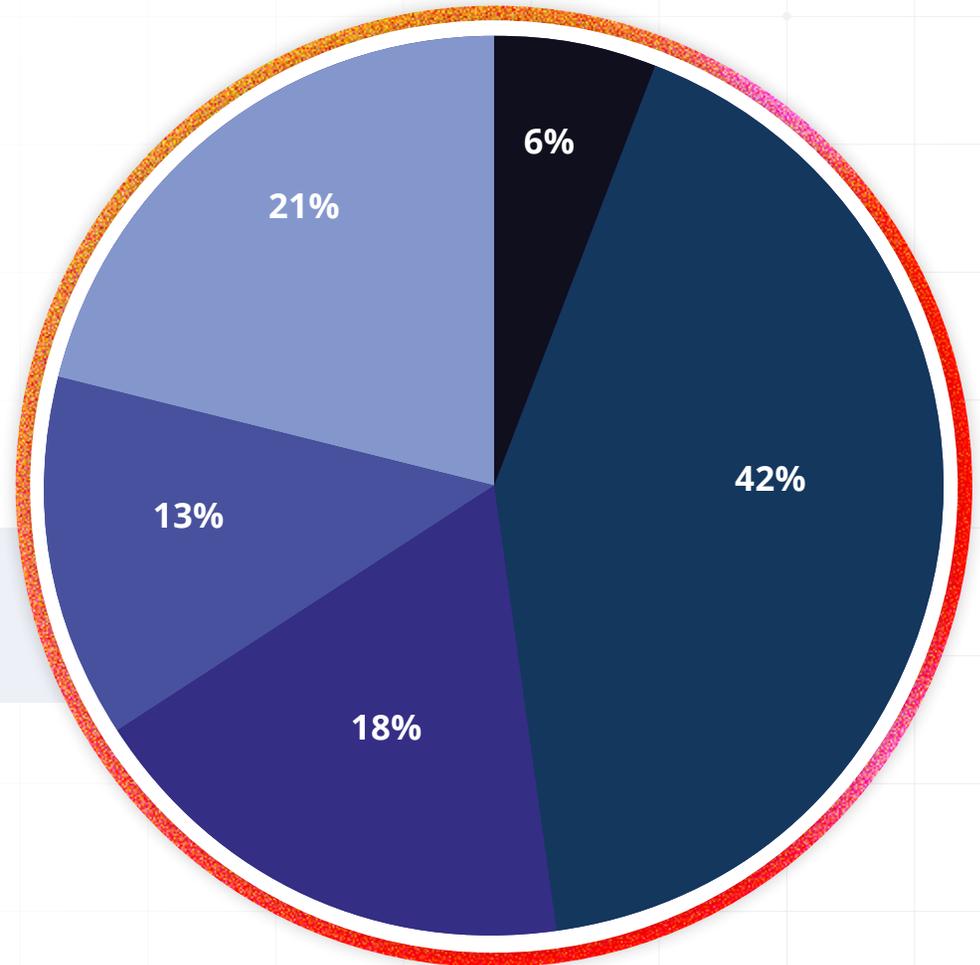
# Compliance Issues in Permitting

Even with permitting going digital, many cities say the toughest part of maintaining compliance comes down to resources, not technology. Limited enforcement resources were cited most often, underscoring that staffing and time — not system capability — remain the biggest constraints.

The second most common response was “Other,” with write-ins that shed light on the everyday realities of permit management — from customers failing to update plates or multiple vehicles tied to one permit, to limited enforcement hours and “no real challenges” at all. Smaller shares pointed to fraudulent use, outdated technology, or lack of public awareness.

Together, these results show that cities are largely confident in their permitting tools but continue to grapple with the human and operational side of compliance.

Figure 14 Compliance Issues in Permitting



*Limited enforcement resources are the top challenge in permit compliance.*

- Fraudulent or unauthorized permit use
- Limited enforcement resources
- Lack of signage or public awareness
- Outdated permitting technology
- Other

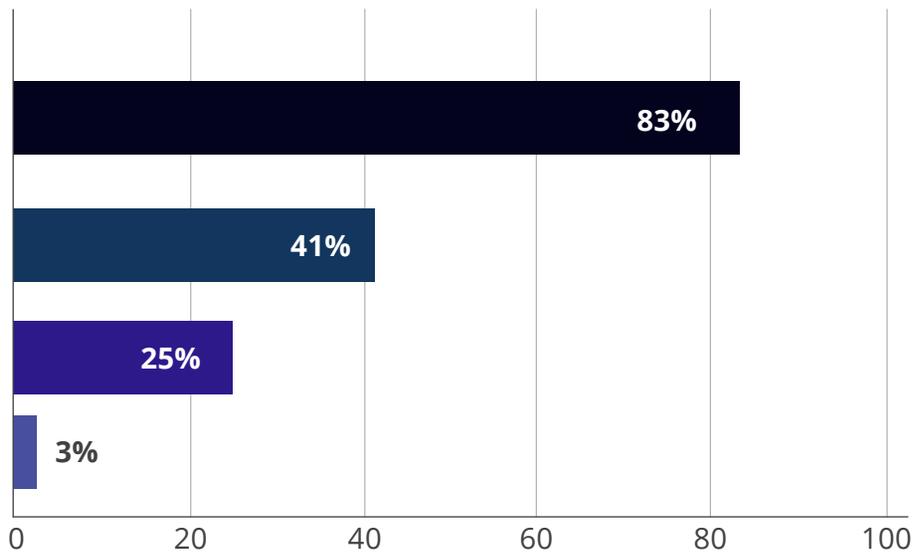


# How Permits Are Enforced

Permit enforcement remains a blended effort between officers and technology. Officer-issued citations were selected by 83% of respondents, making it the most common enforcement method by a wide margin. License plate recognition (LPR) technology followed at 41%, while permit database cross-referencing was used by about a quarter of respondents.

These results suggest that while automation continues to expand, human oversight remains essential — with most cities layering digital tools onto existing enforcement programs rather than replacing them entirely.

**Figure 15 How Permits Are Enforced**



- Officer-issued citations
- License plate recognition (LPR) technology
- Permit database cross-referencing
- Other

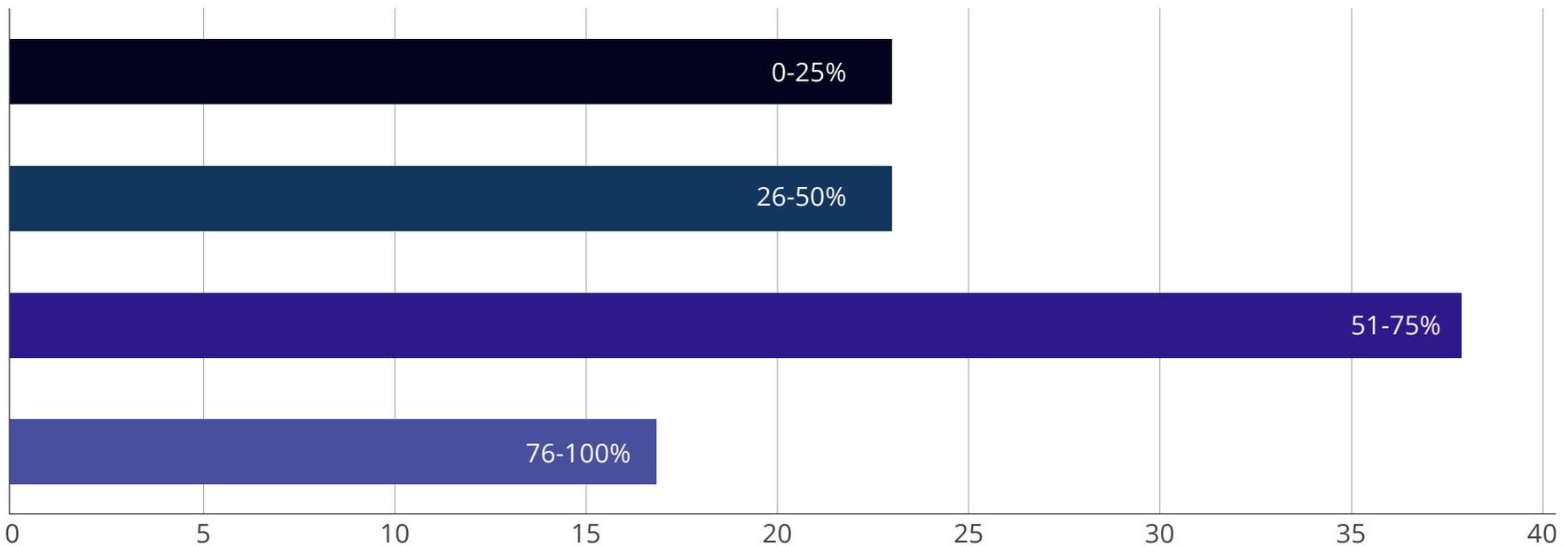
*Respondents could select more than one answer, so totals exceed 100%.*



# Digital Revenue Share

We wanted to know the factors influencing how much parking and curbside revenue cities collect through digital payments. The largest share (38%) reported that 51–75% of revenue is digital.

**Figure 16 Digital Revenue Share**



*Digital payments account for a substantial share of revenue in most operations, most commonly in the 51–74% range.*



# Benefits of Integration

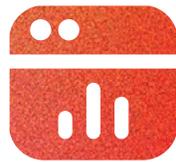
Participants were asked to rank the benefits of an integrated payment processing system in order of importance. The results reveal a clear hierarchy: increased payment compliance ranked highest overall, followed by simplified reconciliation and reporting, more flexible payment options for parkers, and better revenue capture.

While flexibility and capture remain important, the findings show that cities are most focused on improving operational control and compliance performance — the fundamentals that keep financial operations transparent, efficient, and accountable.

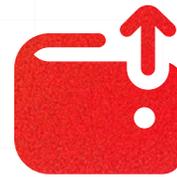
**Figure 17 Benefits of Integration**



Increased Payment  
Compliance



Simplified Reconciliation  
and Reporting



More Flexible Payment  
Options for Parkers



Better Revenue  
Capture

*Payment compliance and streamlined reporting rank as the most important benefits of an integrated system, well ahead of flexibility or revenue capture.*



# Alternative Payment Options

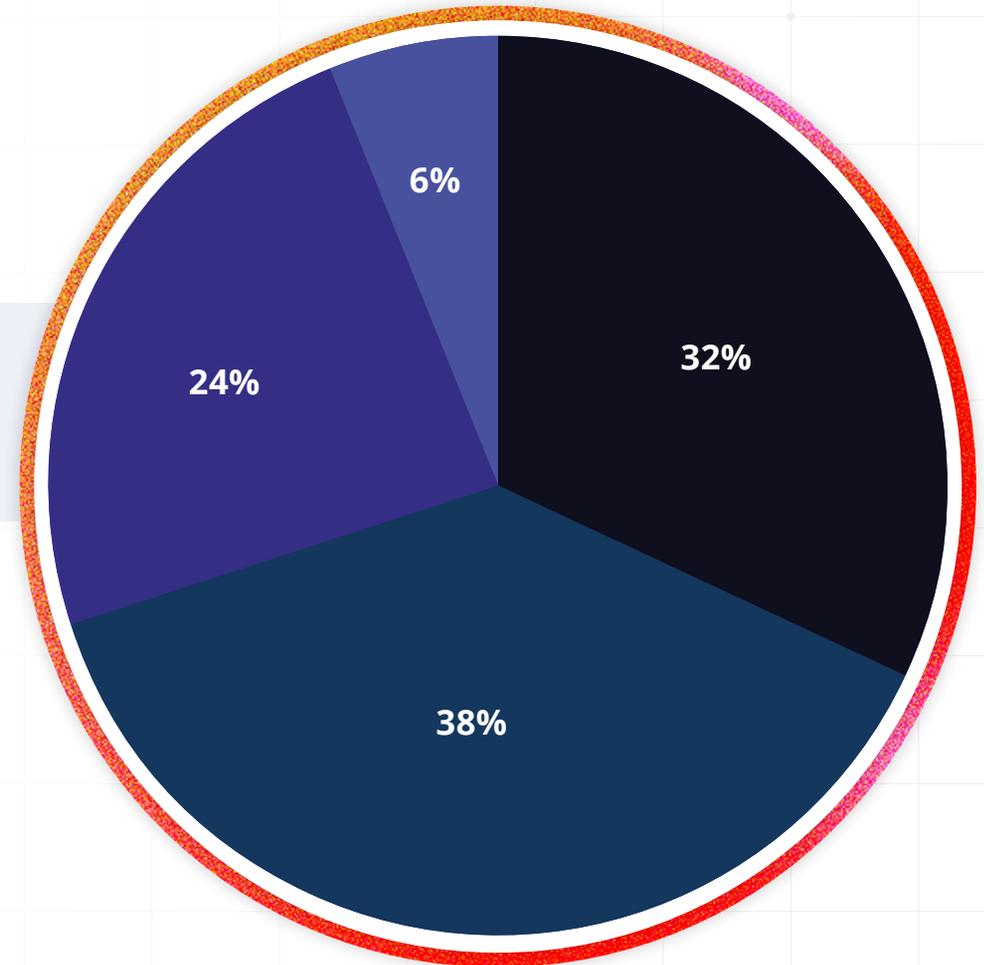
Cities were asked whether they've implemented or are considering alternative payment methods such as mobile wallets, text-to-pay, or ACH.

Most respondents have either already implemented these options (32%) or are considering them soon (38%). About 24% said it's not a current priority, while a few noted partial implementations.

*Alternative payment options are becoming standard, with most cities either adopting or planning to adopt flexible digital methods, signaling a broader shift toward convenience and inclusion in parking payments.*

- Yes, already implemented
- Considering it in the near future
- No, not a priority
- Other

Figure 18 Alternative Payment Options



# Tracking Compliance Data

To better understand how cities use information to guide decisions, respondents identified which compliance-related data points they track most frequently.

Most focus on core metrics like citation issuance and payment compliance, while areas such as permit activity, payment trends, and enforcement efficiency are tracked less consistently.

*Cities most often track citation issuance and payment compliance, while deeper indicators such as permit activity and payment trends are monitored less frequently.*

**Figure 19 Tracking Compliance Data**

<b>Citation issuance volume</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Payment compliance</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Permit usage &amp; renewals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Trends in how users pay</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Enforcement efficiency</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Citation disputes &amp; appeals</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>Regularly</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Never</b>

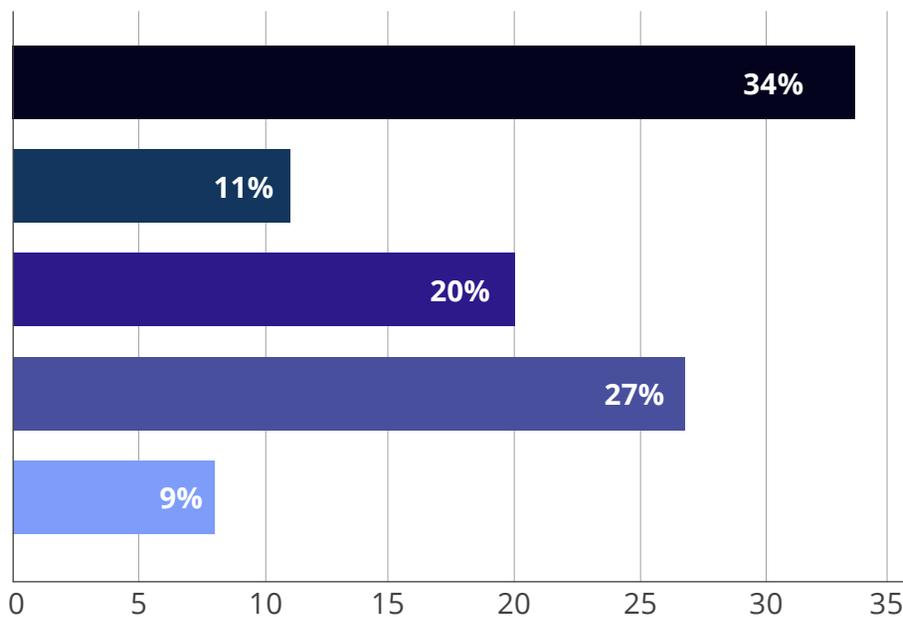


# Obstacles in Using Data

When it comes to applying compliance data effectively, cities face familiar challenges. The most common barrier is data living in multiple, disconnected systems (34%), followed by a lack of staff resources (27%) and difficulty interpreting or analyzing data (20%).

These results point to an ongoing gap between data collection and data action—cities are gathering the right information, but limited integration and capacity keep it from driving day-to-day decisions.

Figure 20 Obstacles Using Data



- Data living in multiple, disconnected systems
- Lack of real-time visibility into compliance trends
- Difficulty in interpreting or analyzing data
- Limited internal resources to act on data insights
- Other

*Disconnected systems and limited resources remain the top barriers to using parking compliance data effectively.*



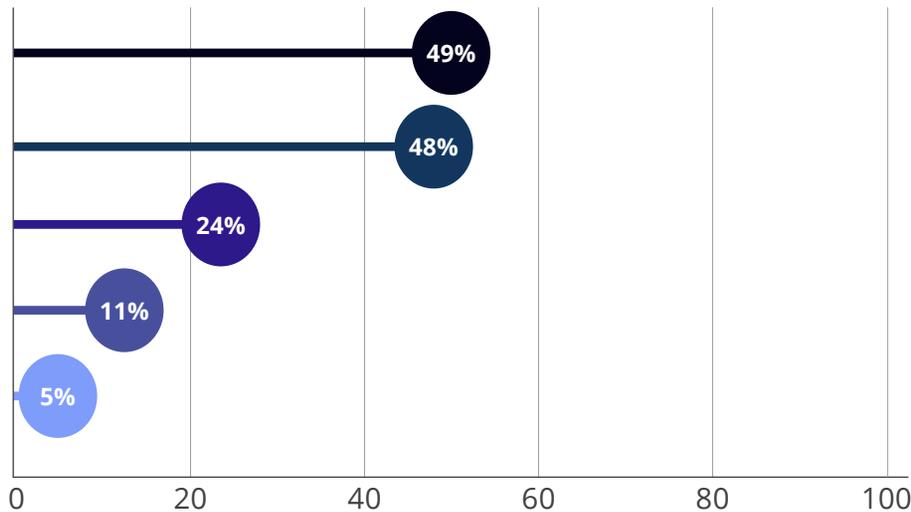
# The Road Ahead

To close the survey, respondents were asked which trends they expect to have the biggest impact on parking compliance in the next three to five years.

The leading responses centered on digital enforcement and greater automation across end-to-end operations, both reflecting a growing focus on efficiency and real-time visibility. Alternative payment methods ranked third at 24%, followed by a shift toward compliance-based approaches at 11%.

Together, these responses reinforce that the future of parking compliance will be increasingly connected, data-driven, and automated, with technology helping cities bridge the gap between intent and implementation.

**Figure 21 The Road Ahead**



- Increased digital enforcement
- Greater automation across operations
- Greater use of alternative payments
- Shift toward compliance-based approaches
- Other

*Respondents could select more than one answer, so totals exceed 100%.*



# Executive Summary

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The results of Passport's 2025 Parking Compliance Trends Survey reveal an industry in motion. Cities across North America are rethinking how they approach compliance—balancing the need for enforcement with the desire for fairness, accessibility, and efficiency.

Most respondents said their primary goal is to drive compliance, yet many still measure success through enforcement-based metrics like citation volume. The findings suggest that cities are evolving their mindset faster than their measurement models.

At the same time, staffing limitations and public perception remain persistent challenges, even as digital tools like mobile payments, LPR, and online permits become standard parts of day-to-day operations. These technologies are helping agencies connect systems, streamline tasks, and improve the parker experience—but integration and data usage still lag behind their potential.

Looking forward, respondents expect digital enforcement and automation to define the next era of parking operations, supported by expanding payment options and smarter use of compliance data. Together, these trends point toward a more connected and adaptive future—one where compliance is guided less by punishment and more by insight.



# About this Research

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To better understand how cities approach parking compliance, Passport used the Pollfish survey platform to reach parking and mobility professionals across North America. Participants played a “game of 21 questions,” offering a glimpse into how they manage paid parking, enforcement, and permitting—and what they expect for the future.

The survey was distributed to hundreds of industry professionals, including representatives from cities, universities, and private operators. Their responses provide a grounded, real-world perspective on the evolving landscape of parking compliance and mobility management.

Passport is the trusted technology partner for more than 800 cities and private operators across North America, unifying paid parking, enforcement operations, and payment infrastructure into one platform. By simplifying how municipalities manage and monetize the curb, Passport empowers local leaders to boost compliance, unlock new revenue opportunities, and improve how people move around their communities.



For more information, visit [passportinc.com](https://passportinc.com).

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