



Office of the City Manager

WORKSESSION
January 14, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager
 Submitted by: Phillip L. Harrington, Director, Public Works
 Subject: goBerkeley Program Update – January 2020

INTRODUCTION

goBerkeley is a baseline program comprising parking management strategies and projects that support economic vitality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the City of Berkeley. This report provides an update on current and future goBerkeley activities and initiatives, including the grant-funded Residential Shared Parking Pilot project.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Operationally, goBerkeley's primary tool is demand-responsive parking pricing. Staff periodically analyze parking activity to verify that there are at least 1-2 open spaces (or 65-85% occupied) on most block faces¹ in an area. If this target is reached, then no price adjustments are needed. If blocks are too full, then prices need to be increased; if blocks are too empty, then prices need to be lowered. As a secondary tool, time limits are used to reinforce turnover in some areas or entice a shift of demand to areas with longer time limits.

As of January 2020, goBerkeley activities include initiating the grant-funded Residential Shared Parking Pilot project, expanding the existing demand-responsive parking program to other commercial districts, and evaluating evening and special event pricing to address high parking demand after 6 p.m.

goBerkeley Residential Shared Parking Pilot

The goBerkeley Residential Shared Parking Pilot (RSPP) is a grant-funded pilot project with goals of increasing parking availability, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and improving travel and mobility in the Elmwood and Southside/Telegraph neighborhoods.² Inspired by feedback received during the initial goBerkeley pilot, the project is designed to support several groups of people currently sharing residential parking during the day, including residents, local employees, business owners, and visitors. While existing Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) restrictions may work well for residents, the two-

¹ Block face - one side of one block, e.g., the north side of Center Street between Milvia Street and Shattuck Avenue.

² February 23, 2016 Council Meeting: <http://bit.ly/2me6EHN>

hour time limits are challenging for people who need to stay longer, and some non-permitted users move their car every two hours to avoid a citation. This practice causes traffic congestion in neighborhoods, frustration and lost productivity for employees and their employers, and increased pollution from circling for parking, even in areas that have adequate parking availability.

The RSPB project is currently in its information gathering stage, with a consultant team supporting data collection, public outreach, and communication efforts.³ In fall 2019, staff held the first meeting of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which provides feedback on the operational feasibility of the project. The City has also created a brand identity for the project, *goBerkeley SmartSpace*, and a project website is now available at <http://smartspace.goberkeley.info>. In January 2020, staff will convene a Community Advisory Group (CAG), providing opportunities for local neighborhood groups and other representatives to help shape and evaluate the pilot project. Staff will also use a range of public outreach tools to ensure that all voices are heard so the pilot best responds to community needs.

Broader community outreach will occur this spring. With assistance from the CAG, staff will develop a set of pilot recommendations for Council approval this summer and implementation in fall 2020.

Managing goBerkeley in Existing Areas

goBerkeley currently manages public parking resources in the Downtown Berkeley, Southside/Telegraph, Northside (Euclid/Hearst), North Shattuck, and Elmwood commercial districts, including three City-owned parking garages and two off-street parking lots. The expansion to Northside in fall 2018 was the first since the pilot program was made permanent in 2015. On January 1, 2020, the North Shattuck parking meter district joined the goBerkeley program.

The next set of price and time limit adjustments, resulting from data collected in fall 2019, will go into effect February 1, 2020.⁴

Expanding Demand-Responsive Parking Management

Staff are currently working to expand demand-responsive pricing under the goBerkeley program to the Fourth Street and University/San Pablo commercial areas. Each expansion effort includes an analysis of parking occupancy rates to determine where price adjustments may be needed, coupled with in-depth outreach to the local business community to ensure that goBerkeley policies reflect the unique needs of each district. Ultimately, staff are prepared to expand goBerkeley to all metered commercial districts in the City where merchants express interest in better parking demand management.

³ July 24, 2018 Council Meeting: <http://bit.ly/2me7og3>

October 2, 2018 Council Meeting: <http://bit.ly/2lOz4bf>

⁴ December 10, 2019 Council Meeting: <http://bit.ly/37rnogQ>

Evaluating Parking Management for Evenings and Special Events

On-street parking meters in both goBerkeley and non-goBerkeley areas operate from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Parking occupancy studies for recent goBerkeley program adjustments have consistently shown that demand in Downtown Berkeley, Southside/Telegraph, and Elmwood is very high after 6 p.m., particularly on Saturdays, as restaurants, event venues, and other attractions continue to generate demand well after meters are no longer enforced. With off-street parking facilities continuing to charge for parking until midnight or later, drivers are incentivized to circle to find free parking on-street. This is the opposite of the goBerkeley model, which strategically prices public parking garages and lots lower than on-street rates to reduce circling for a spot. Recognizing the need for parking management in the evening, other cities in the Bay Area charge for on-street parking after 6 p.m., including Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and Walnut Creek (until 8 p.m.); and certain areas of Sacramento and San Francisco (until 10 p.m.).

Likewise, during evening special events such as UC Berkeley concerts and sporting events, parking in localized areas near event venues becomes difficult to find and may also lead to circling for a spot, which increases greenhouse gas emissions. Several cities in the region have instituted special event pricing at on-street parking meters, including Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Jose.

In 2014, staff conducted a survey to better understand evening parking needs in goBerkeley areas, and concluded that in some cases, employees were parking in front of businesses after 6 p.m. This information was shared with merchants, which generated interest in an evening metering pilot in Downtown Berkeley and the Elmwood but a pilot was not pursued at that time. However, the demand for parking after 6 p.m. in certain areas remains. Staff will evaluate the need for and merchant interest in evening and special event pricing at on-street meters and expect to bring a proposal to Council in 2020.

Finally, expanding the goBerkeley Program is a Strategic Plan Priority Project, advancing our goals to:

- Provide state-of-the-art, well-maintained infrastructure, amenities, and facilities;
- Foster a dynamic, sustainable, and locally-based economy;
- Be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment; and
- Be a customer-focused organization that provides excellent, timely, easily-accessible service and information to the community.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, the City was awarded a \$950,000 grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) for the goBerkeley Residential Shared Parking Pilot (Resolution No. 67,382–N.S.). The pilot will test policies to increase parking availability for residents, employees, and visitors; reduce circling for parking; and expand access to non-

motorized means of transportation within Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) areas in the Southside and Elmwood neighborhoods.

The goBerkeley program comprises a suite of strategies and initiatives designed to improve economic vitality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. goBerkeley features improved parking availability that in turn improves pedestrian and bicyclist safety by reducing the likelihood of incidents of distracted driving as drivers search for parking. Clearer signage and longer on-street parking time limits also provide better customer service.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

According to the State of California Legislative Analyst's Office, transportation was the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in California in 2016, with 69% of these emissions generated by passenger vehicles.⁵ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions produced by vehicular traffic is one of the City's 2009 Climate Action Plan goals. Parking management based on user demand should ultimately improve parking availability in commercial and residential areas, and lessen traffic congestion and vehicle emissions as drivers are anticipated to spend less time searching for available parking spaces.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Staff will manage the goBerkeley Program, including the Residential Shared Parking Pilot project, as described above and will return to Council for input, updates, and/or approval of new programs and initiatives as needed.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Precise fiscal impacts depend on the nature and scope of future goBerkeley expansions and/or new programs. In most cases, these actions will require their own Council Reports to implement, and fiscal impacts will be presented to Council as part of these efforts. In general, however, fiscal impacts are difficult to forecast as demand-responsive parking pricing may result in increased or decreased parking rates in different areas, and parking behaviors resulting from these price adjustments may vary.

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⁵ Legislative Analyst's Office Report, December 21, 2018 *Assessing California's Climate Policies—Transportation*: <http://bit.ly/2kKfcFN>