



Environment and Climate Commission

[CONSENT OR ACTION]
CALENDAR

[Meeting Date (MM dd, yyyy)]

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Environment and Climate Commission (ECC)

Submitted by: Cecilia Lunaparra, Vice Chair, ECC

Subject: Referral to develop Curb Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager and the Transportation and Infrastructure Commission to develop a Curb Management Plan, in order to ensure public curb uses align with City goals and priorities, and advance the City's Climate Action and Vision Zero goals. The Curb Management Plan should consider including:

- 1) Inventory the City's existing curb allocations,
- 2) Ensure adequate loading zones (yellow curbs) and <1 hour parking zones (green curbs) in all appropriate areas of the city,
- 3) Ensure adequate disabled parking (blue curbs) and review the City's existing process for blue curb requests,
- 4) Ensure daylighting of all intersections (red curbs) in accordance with AB 413 to improve visibility of road users and reduce traffic crashes,
- 5) Support emergency vehicle access and emergency evacuations in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone,
- 6) Additional parking meters, bicycle parking, or other curb management and use practices that may be appropriate to align curb uses with City goals and priorities.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Development of a curb management plan will require substantial staff time and likely additional consultant support (tentatively estimated at \$100,000-\$250,000). Implementation of the plan and ongoing upkeep may have additional costs and staff time required.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Transportation has stubbornly remained Berkeley's largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, contributing over 60% of the city's total emissions. The City of Berkeley has adopted goals of being a Fossil Fuel Free city and becoming a net carbon sink by 2030, achieving carbon neutrality by 2045, achieving an 80% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050. However, greenhouse gas emissions from transportation are currently expected to increase, and have not meaningfully declined as a proportion of total city emissions since 2008.

Berkeley's Strategic Plan sets the goal of being a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment. Addressing climate change as it applies to transportation, and in particular driving emissions, will require the city to engage in a multipronged strategy, including:

- increasing and improving bus service,
- improving the ability to bike safely throughout the city,
- developing complete streets improvements, and
- reducing excess parking spaces where appropriate to encourage alternative transportation.

The City has developed several individual plans to accomplish these goals, including the 2017 Berkeley Bicycle Plan, the 2020 Pedestrian Plan, the Berkeley Strategic Transportation (BeST) Plan, the 50/50 Sidewalk Program and the Long-Term Paving Plan, the ADA Transition Plan, the Gilman Street Interchange Project, the Streetlight Comprehensive Plan, and Southside Complete Streets. One key aspect that has received less focus in these plans is curb management.

Curb management plays an important role in ensuring that roads are able to be effectively and safely used by all road users. Presently, based on data from the Mineta Transportation Institute at San Jose State University, Berkeley has an estimated 72,193 on-street parking spaces, with another 71,773 off-street parking spaces (a total of 143,966 spaces), or 21.3 spaces per acre. The Bay Area median Census block group-level parking density was 19.7 spaces per acre, while Berkeley's median Census block group-level parking density is 23.5 spaces per acre.

At the same time, Berkeley households had roughly 57,500 registered vehicles, or about 2.5 parking spaces per automobile.

Parking abundance and underpricing encourages automobile usage, driving up greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, in many parts of Berkeley, there is frequently insufficient parking available due to low parking turnover (extended parking duration), often resulting in double-parking that endangers cyclists and other drivers, and can delay transit riders or impair emergency vehicle access. Many areas of Berkeley need a review and adjustment of the allocations of different curbside uses to better align this public resource with City goals and the needs of existing businesses and residents.

Other cities, such as San Francisco and New York, have begun to prioritize the creation of more loading zones to reduce parking spots that accommodate driving trips into the city, while improving the efficiency of within-city short-term trips such as meal pick-up. Understanding how curb use is apportioned in Berkeley, especially in heavily trafficked areas, will help the City understand how to shift curb usage away from car storage and towards more dynamic use. A curb management program could function as a Strategic

Plan Priority Project advancing the City of Berkeley's goal to be a global leader in addressing climate change, advancing environmental justice, and protecting the environment.

A presentation and reference map have been created by the Environment and Climate Commission's ad-hoc Transportation Subcommittee quantifying the total number of loading zones on over 30 streets within Berkeley, including all commercially-zoned corridors. A member of the subcommittee counted the total number of loading zones on each street using Google Satellite Imagery, Google Street view, and in some cases physically walking along streets to confirm loading zone presence. Based on this methodology, there are roughly 330-360 loading zones (yellow curbs) and 220-240 <1 hour parking spots (mostly green curbs). There are additionally 82 disabled parking spots on the studied streets. Most (59%) of these loading zones are on a street that contains a bike lane. However, few of these loading zones are directly in front of large apartment buildings or restaurants with high traffic; on the whole, the existing loading zones are sub-optimally located. The highest density of loading zones in the studied streets occurs on Telegraph Avenue over 5 blocks in the Southside neighborhood, where roughly 50% of storefronts have direct curb access to a loading zone.

BACKGROUND

On June 12, 2018, Berkeley City Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency, calling "to end citywide greenhouse gas emissions as quickly as possible." Berkeley also set a goal of being a Fossil Fuel Free city, achieving carbon neutrality by 2045.

Citywide, transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, contributing around 60% of the city's total emissions. Unfortunately, this share – and the total level of emissions – is currently expected to grow.

The proposed policy would request that the Transportation Division develop a curb management program to improve the City's understanding of curb usage and help shift city curb infrastructure away from private car parking and towards more dynamic usage.

The ECC encourages Transportation Division staff and the Transportation Commission to strongly consider converting some proportion of loading zones to zero-emission loading zones and/or parking spaces for bikes, e-bikes, and electric vehicles, especially in some of the loading zones located where there is a well-used bike lane.

Transportation Division staff should also consider prioritizing new loading zones on curbs that are near to city-owned parking lots.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

Reducing on street parking to favor loading zones will shift travel away from automobiles, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving environmental sustainability.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

An initial review of loading zone availability done by the ECC ad-hoc subcommittee, as well as staff interest in the development of a curb management plan.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The ECC considered taking no action and waiting for the staffing crisis in the Transportation Division to be addressed before making this referral. However, Transportation Staff conveyed interest in the topic of curb management, prompting the ECC to forward this recommendation.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager [TYPE ONE] concurs with / takes no position on the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report. [OR] Refer to the budget process.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

- 1: [Parking and Loading Zone Pilot Presentation](#)
- 2: [Loading Zone Interactive Map](#)