



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

November 19, 2019

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 – Fall 2019

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.

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 fall 2019, goBerkeley activities include continuing to evaluate the need for adjustments in current Program areas, expanding the demand-responsive parking program to other commercial districts, and evaluating evening and special event pricing to address high parking demand after 6 p.m.

Managing goBerkeley in Existing Areas

goBerkeley currently manages public parking resources in the Downtown Berkeley, Southside/Telegraph, Northside (Euclid/Hearst), 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 program's inception in 2013.

Staff collected parking occupancy data in the four existing goBerkeley areas in fall 2019 and have developed recommendations for price and time limit adjustments for the December 10, 2019 Council Meeting. These adjustments would go into effect February 1, 2020.

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

Expanding Demand-Responsive Parking Management

As of September 2019, staff are working on two expansions of goBerkeley. The first is to the North Shattuck area, planned for December 1, 2019. A pair of Council Reports to authorize this expansion is scheduled for the October 29, 2019 meeting. The second, to Fourth Street and the University/San Pablo commercial areas, is planned for spring 2020. 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.

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 football games, parking in localized areas near the stadium 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 continue to 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

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

