

Environment and Climate Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR
July 30, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Environment and Climate Commission (ECC)
 Submitted by: Cecilia Lunaparra, Chair, ECC
 Subject: Referral to Develop Curb Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to fund and develop a Curb Management Plan.

POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

On July 3, 2024, the Facilities, Infrastructure, Transportation, Environment & Sustainability Policy Committee adopted the following action: M/S/C (Lunaparra/Taplin) to send the item to Council with a positive recommendation, and that the item be taken up when additional funding for streets and infrastructure is approved and/or during the next budget process.

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. Refer to the City Manager for budgetary projecting; a long-term funding plan is necessary.

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, and achieving an 80% reduction in GHG emissions by 2050. However, GHG 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
- 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 more than 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 of these loading zones (59%) 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 five 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.

Transportation is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Berkeley, 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 consider:

- 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 in coordination with and under the guidance of the Disability Commission.
- 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.

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, and City staff expressed 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 takes no position on the content and recommendations of the Commission's Report and recommends that it be referred to the budget process.

CONTACT PERSON

Sarah Moore, Commission Secretary, Environment and Climate Commission, (510) 981-7494

Attachments:

- 1: Parking and Loading Zone Pilot Presentation
- 2: Loading Zone Interactive Map

Parking and loading zone pilot analysis

ECC Transportation and Public Space subcommittee
Prepared by Commissioner Brianna McGuire, D3



Agenda

- Background, context, and methodology
- General maps
- Housing mini-analysis
- Telegraph restaurant mini-analysis
- Next steps

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xVruoBWclIIB-fLBYYD7hXJ0sDi6QJO3YNYcla1Zsh0/e/dit?pli=1#slide=id.p>

Background, context, and methodology

Background - why do this?

- To make recommendations for the locations of new loading zones
- To start building the infrastructure needed for a cargo-bike powered delivery structure in the city
- To identify win-win opportunities to reduce demand for private personal automobile trips while simultaneously improving traffic congestion and safety

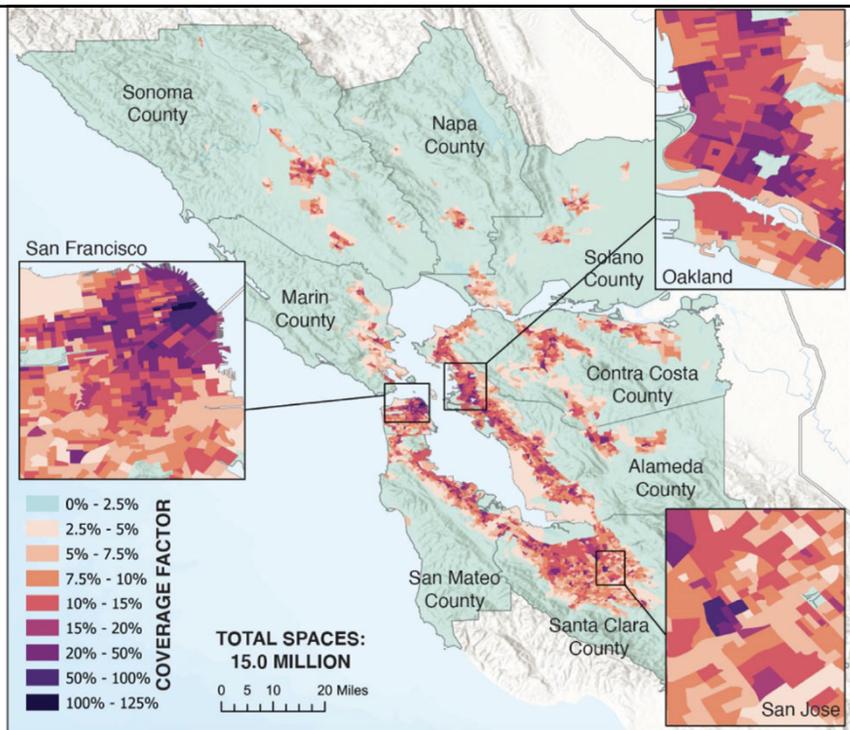
Berkeley has a lower-to-similar ratio of loading zones to metered parking compared to San Francisco and New York

City	Total parking	Metered parking	Total loading zones	Total planned by 2024	Ratio metered: loading	Total green zones
Berkeley	>15,000	3,800*	330-360	?	0.086	220-240
San Francisco	442,000	27,550	9,324 (717)	?	0.338 (0.026)	625
New York	5,375,612	81,875	7,902	9,402 (+500/yr)	0.097	?

*Metered parking includes city-owned garage space. This is not the case for the other cities.

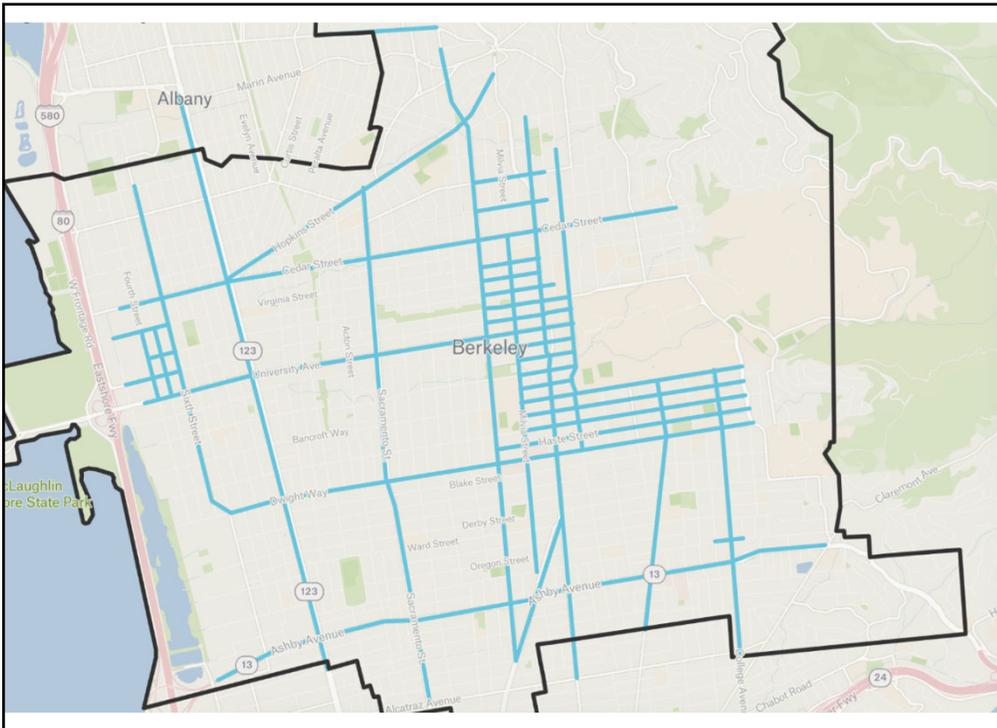
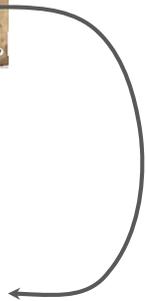
“The Bay Area has 2.6x more parking than it needs.”

Project 2022 | February 2022
 SJSU SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
 MTI
 Inventing San Francisco Bay Area Parking Spaces: Technical Report Describing Objectives, Methods, and Results
 Mikhail Chester, PhD
 Alysha Helmrich, PhD
 Rui Li



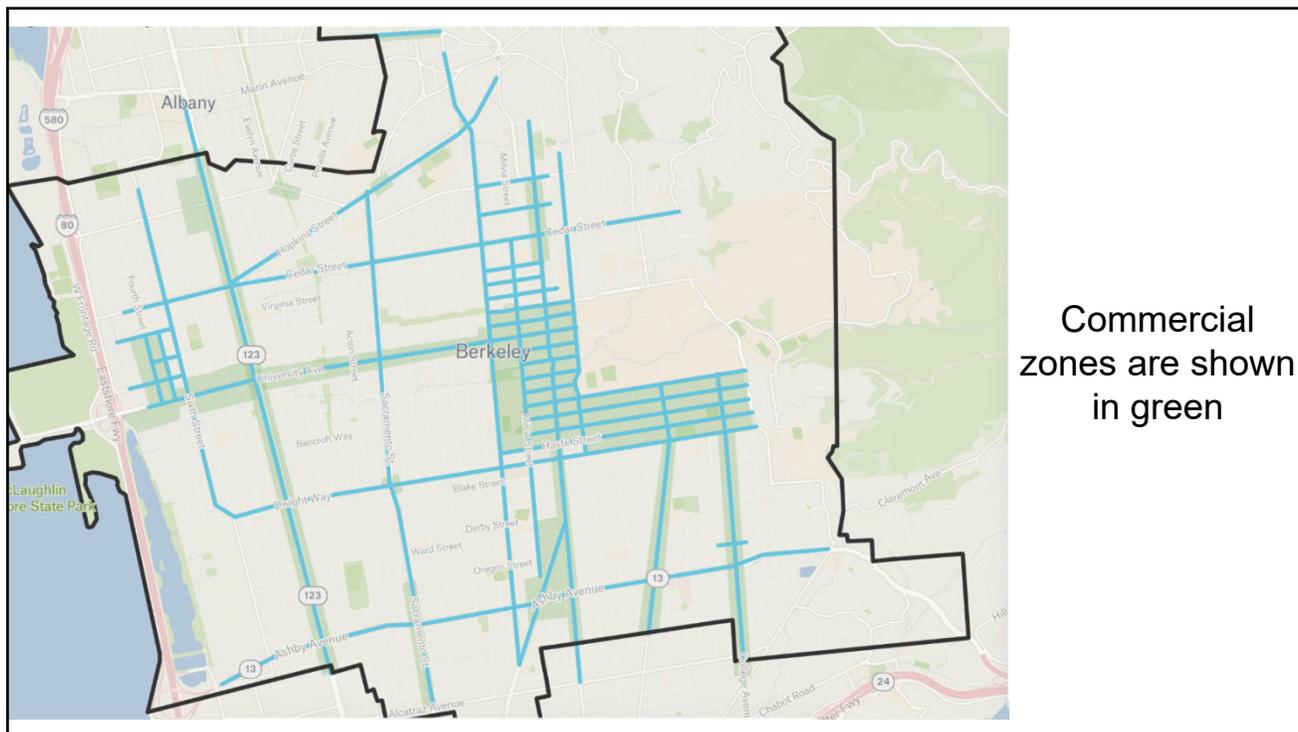
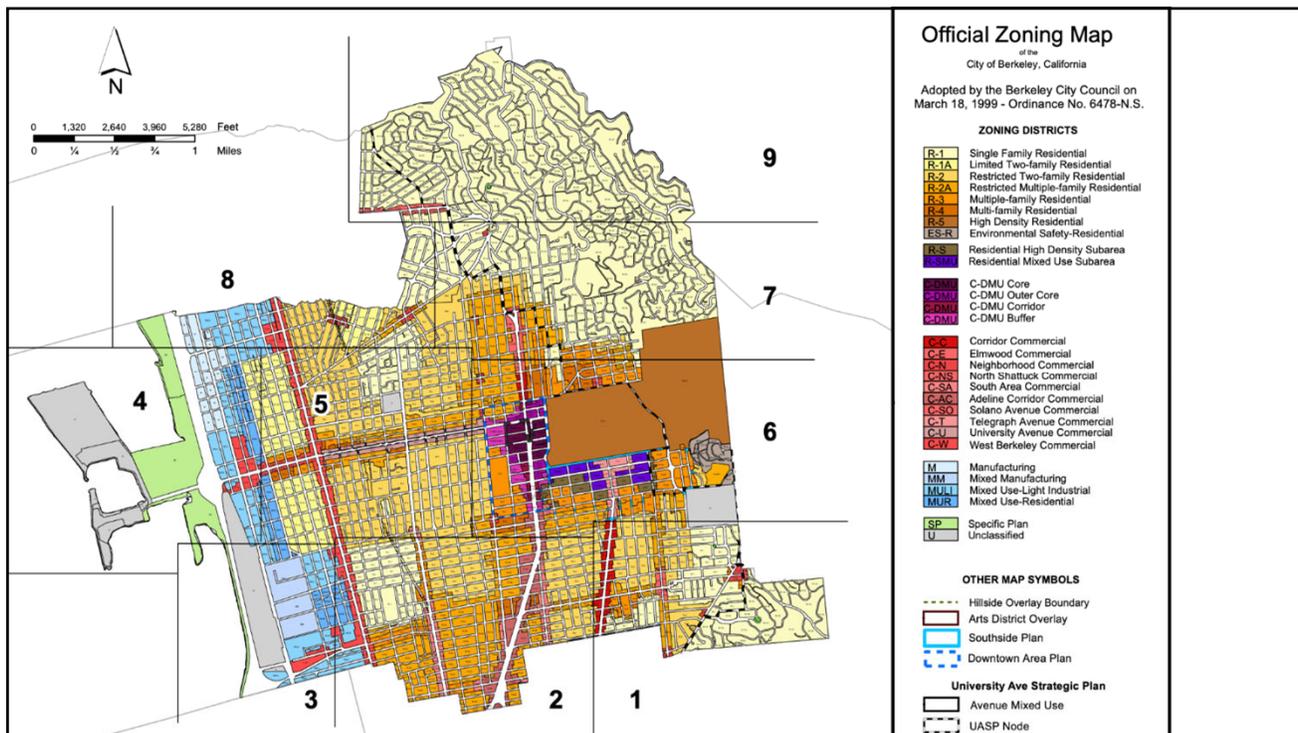
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Methodology



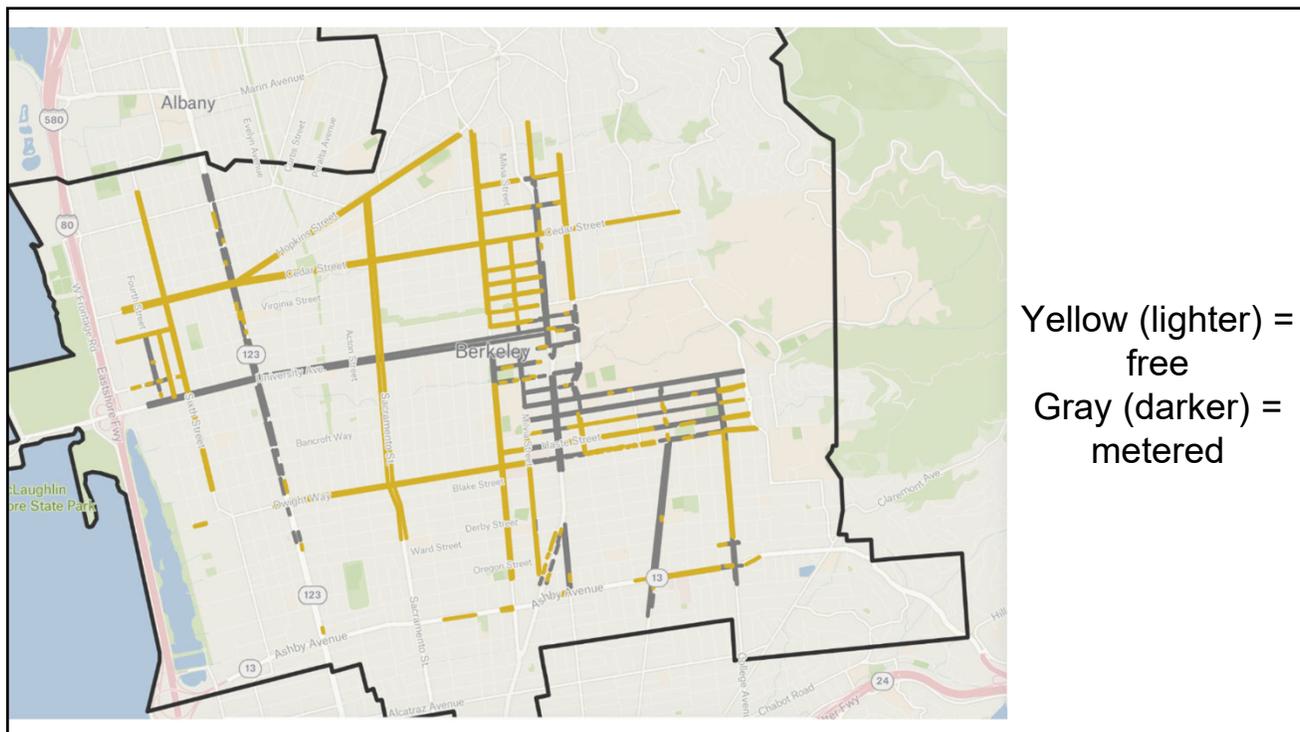
Streets of interest are shown in blue

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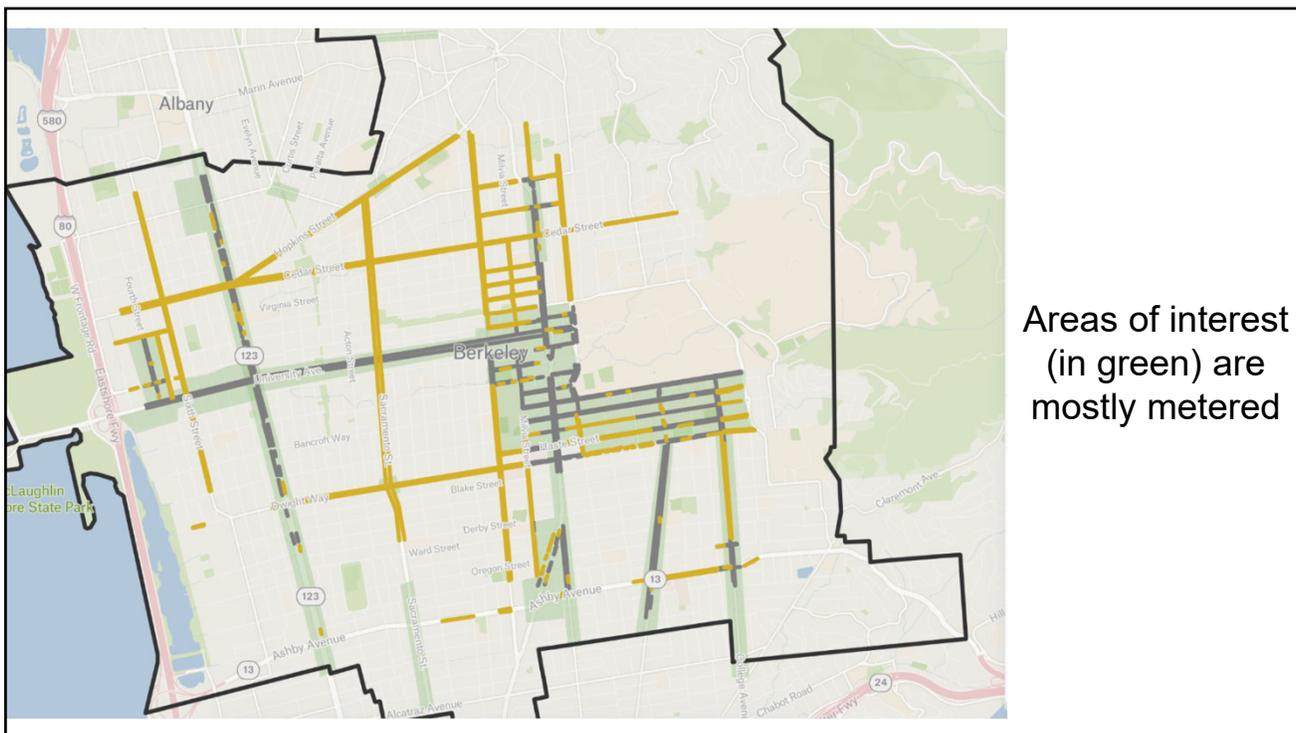


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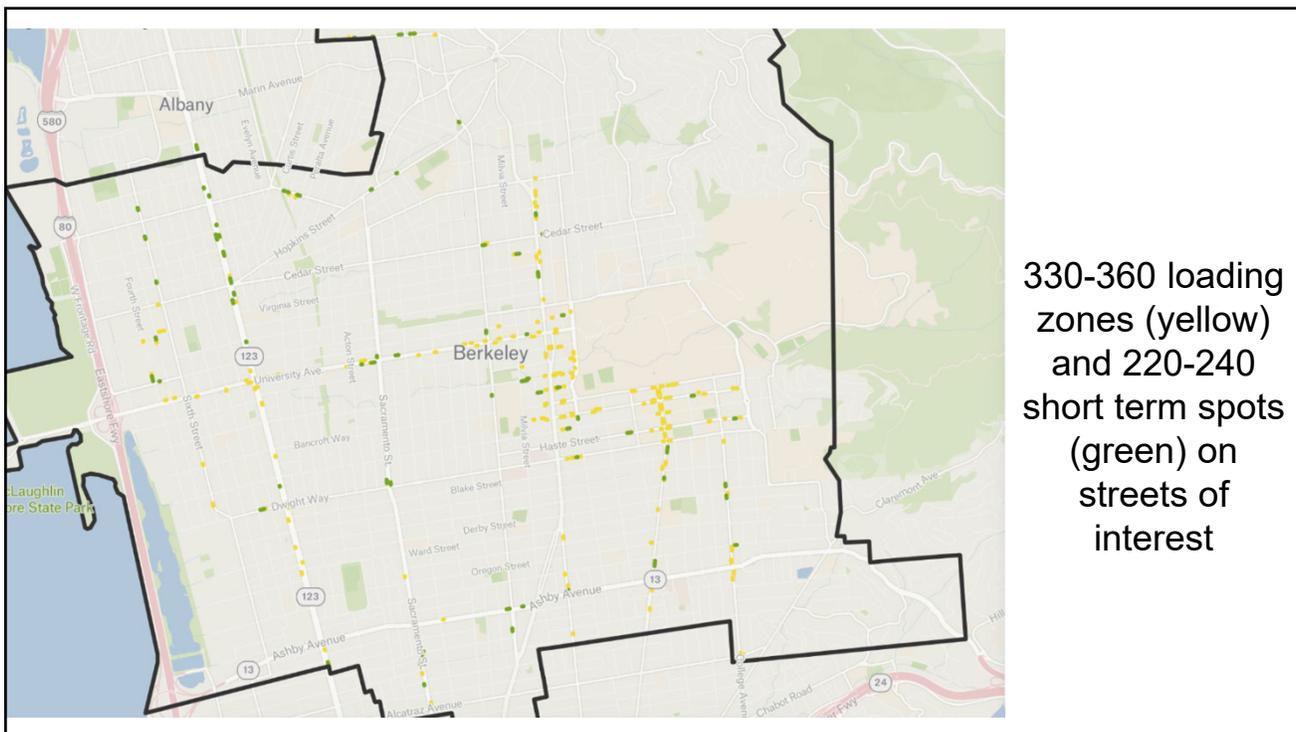
General maps



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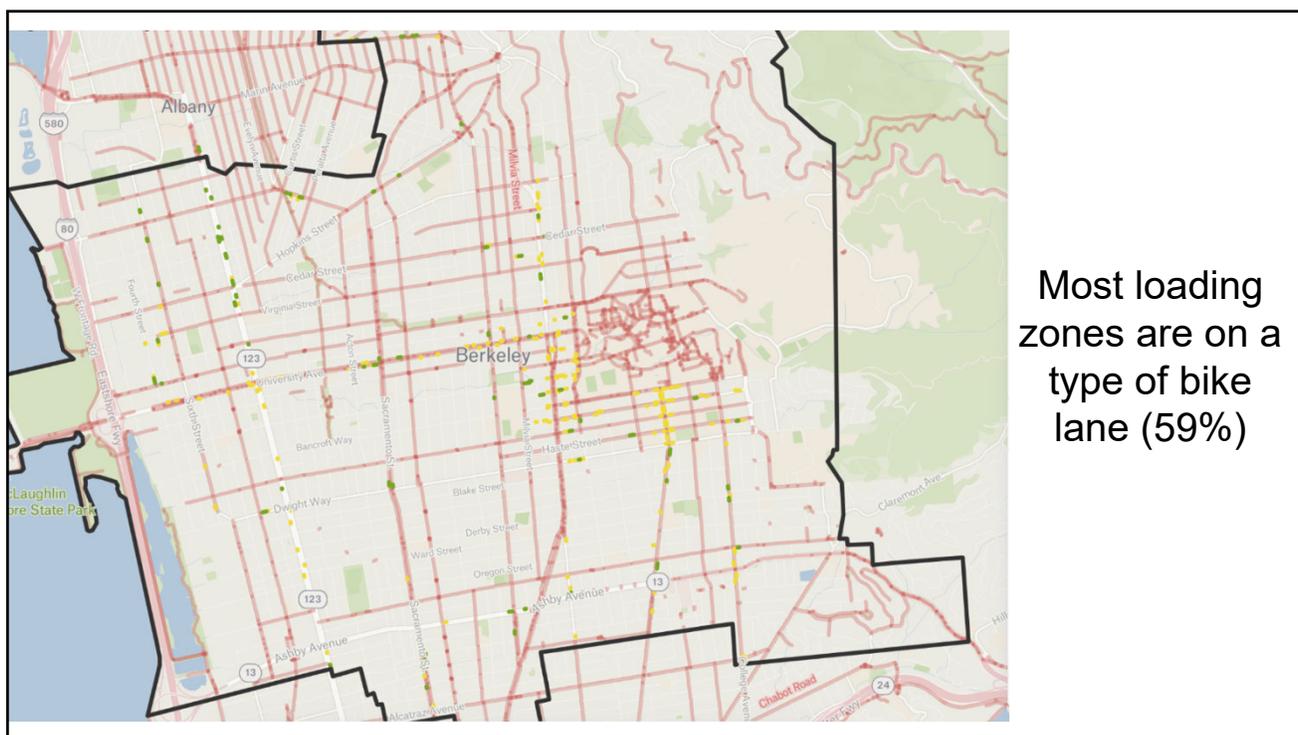
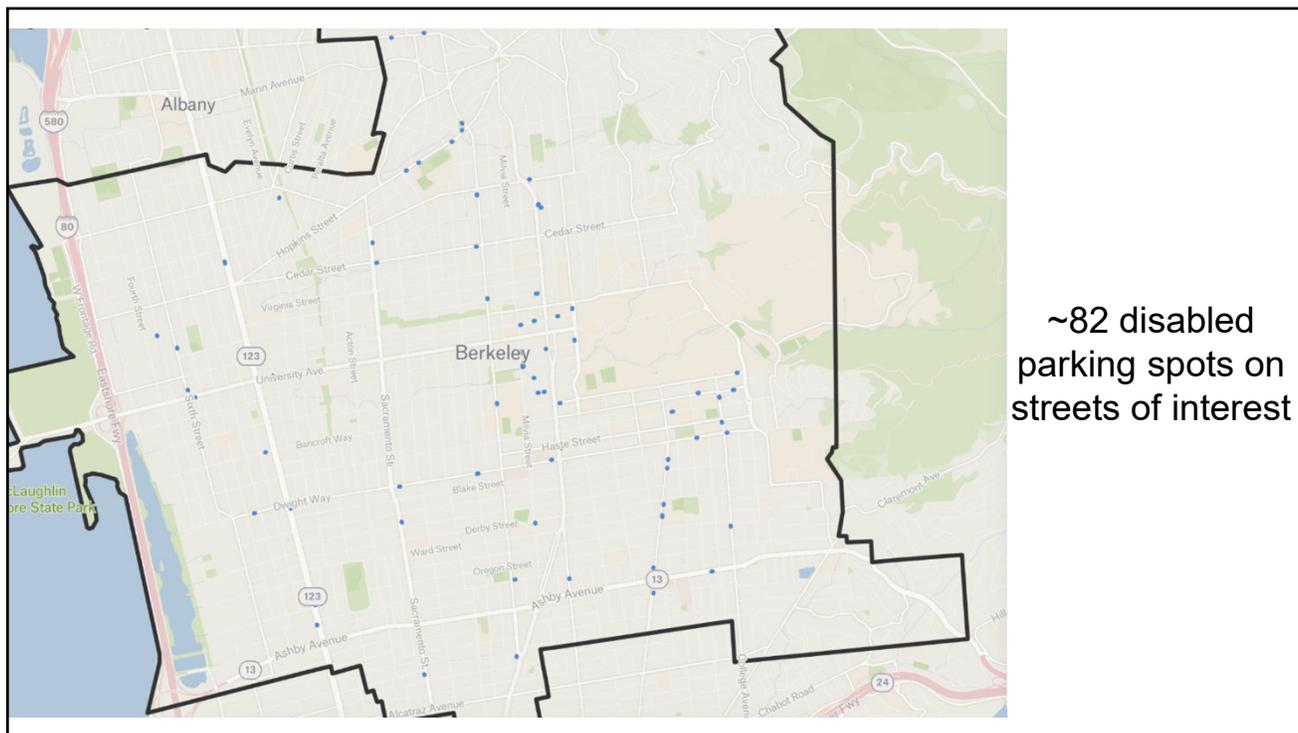


Areas of interest (in green) are mostly metered

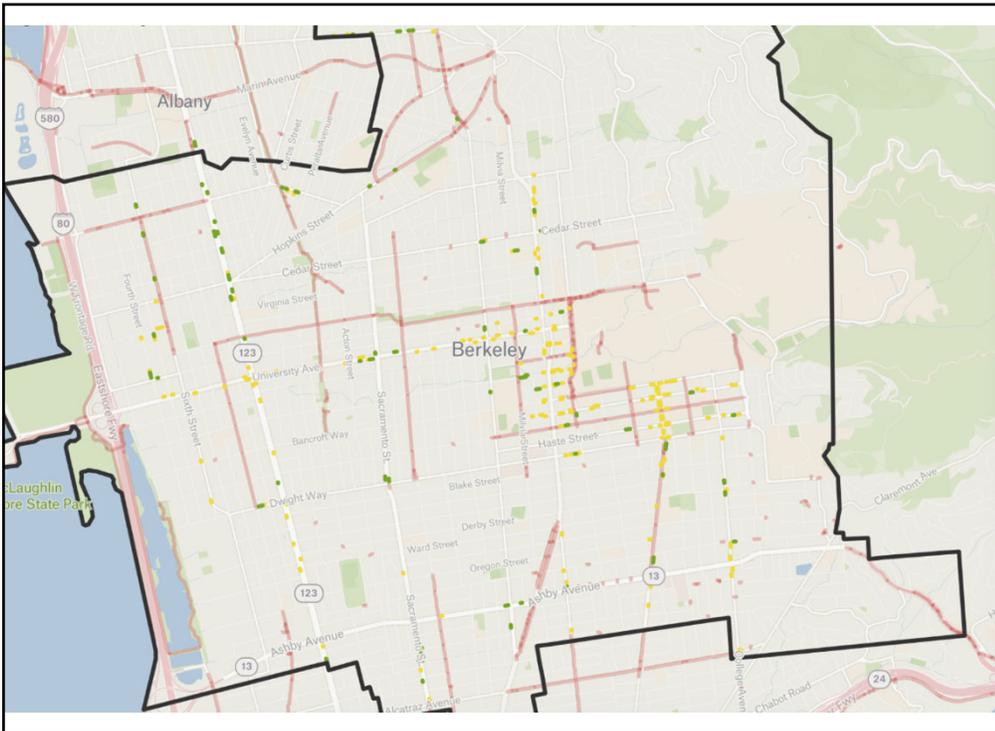


330-360 loading zones (yellow) and 220-240 short term spots (green) on streets of interest

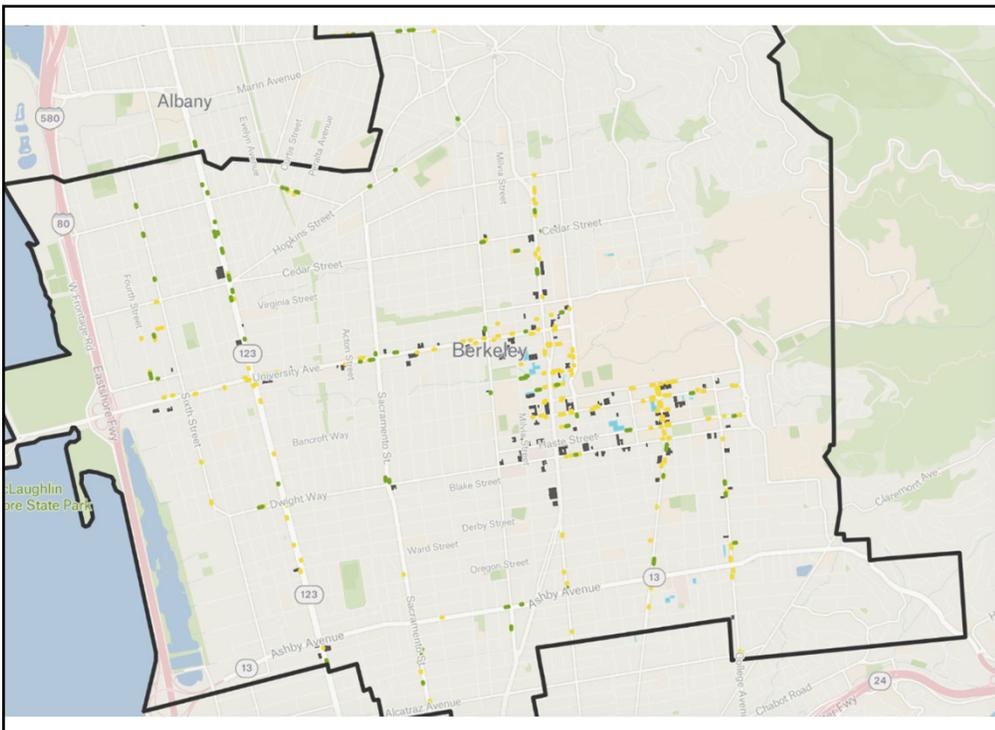
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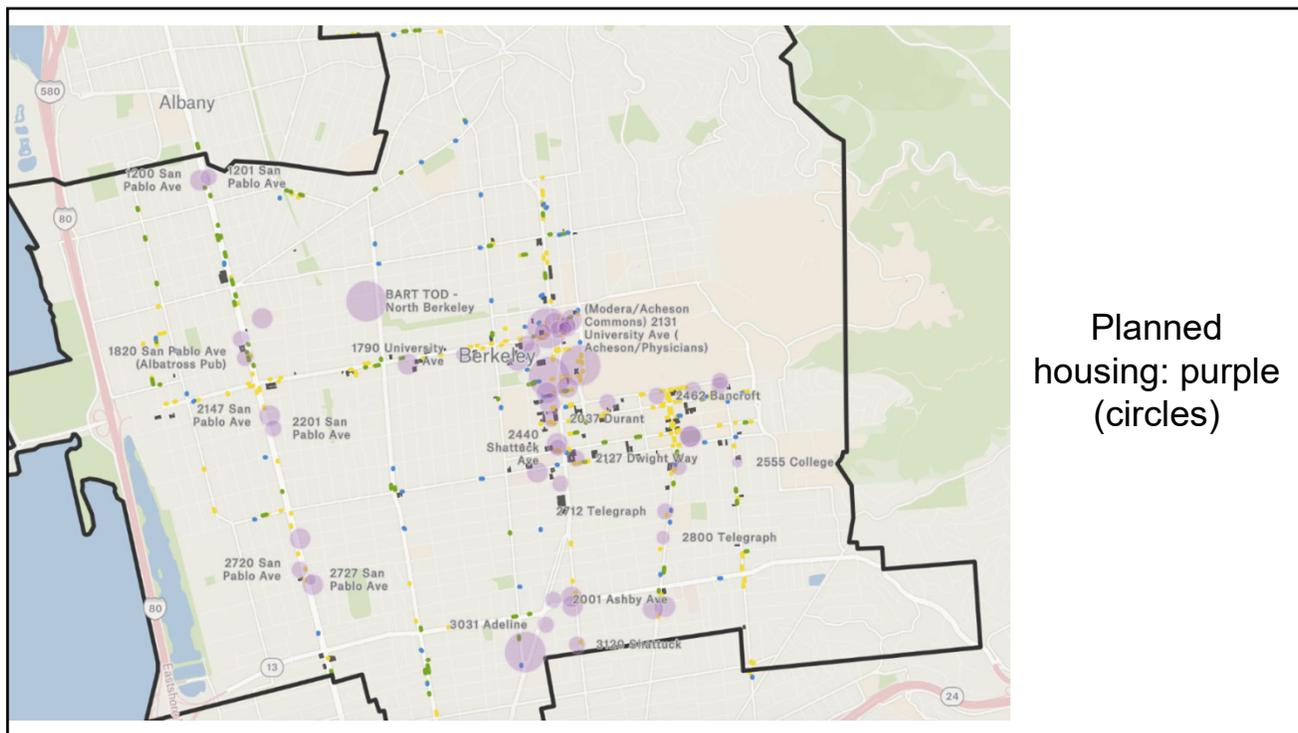


Only 10% of spots (36 loading zones and 22 short term parking spots) are on dedicated or protected bike lanes



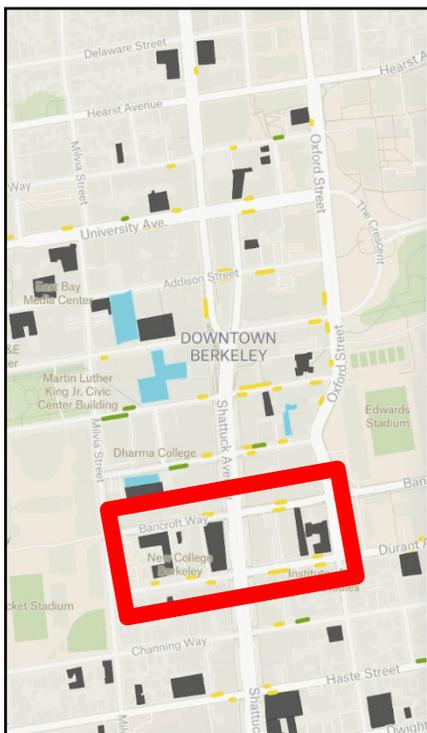
Blue (light) squares = parking
Dark squares = apartment buildings

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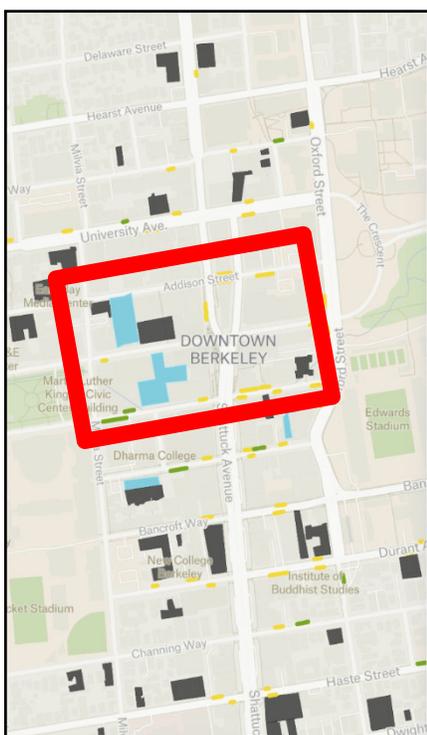


Housing mini-analysis

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xVruoBWclIIB-fLBYYD7hXJ0sDi6QJO3YNYcla1Zsh0/e/dit?pli=1#slide=id.p>



Only 2 loading spots among these five apartment buildings



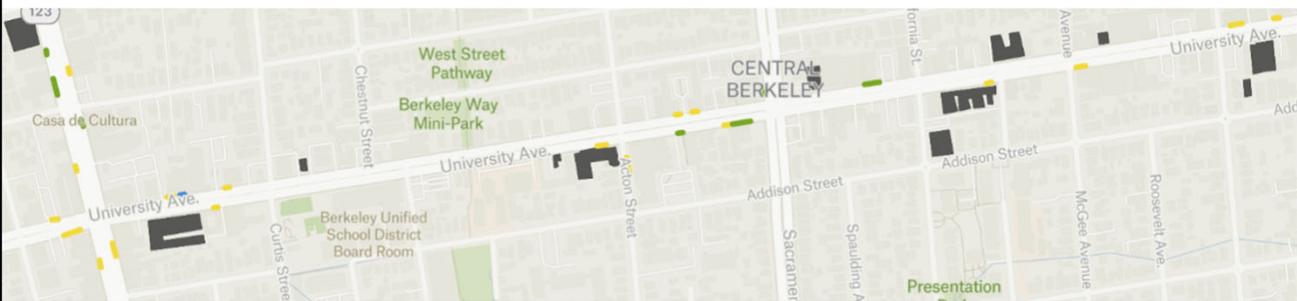
Great candidate area for loading zones - parking lots are very nearby!

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xVruoBWclIIB-fLBYYD7hXJ0sDi6QJO3YNYcla1Zsh0/edit?pli=1#slide=id.p>

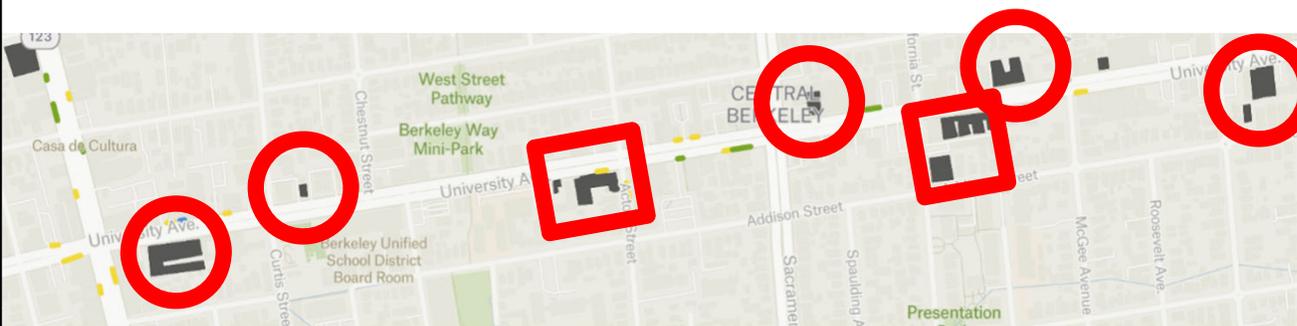


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University is entirely metered parking, medium restaurant density, medium-low housing density, but low loading density



Buildings with squares have loading zones, buildings with circles do not



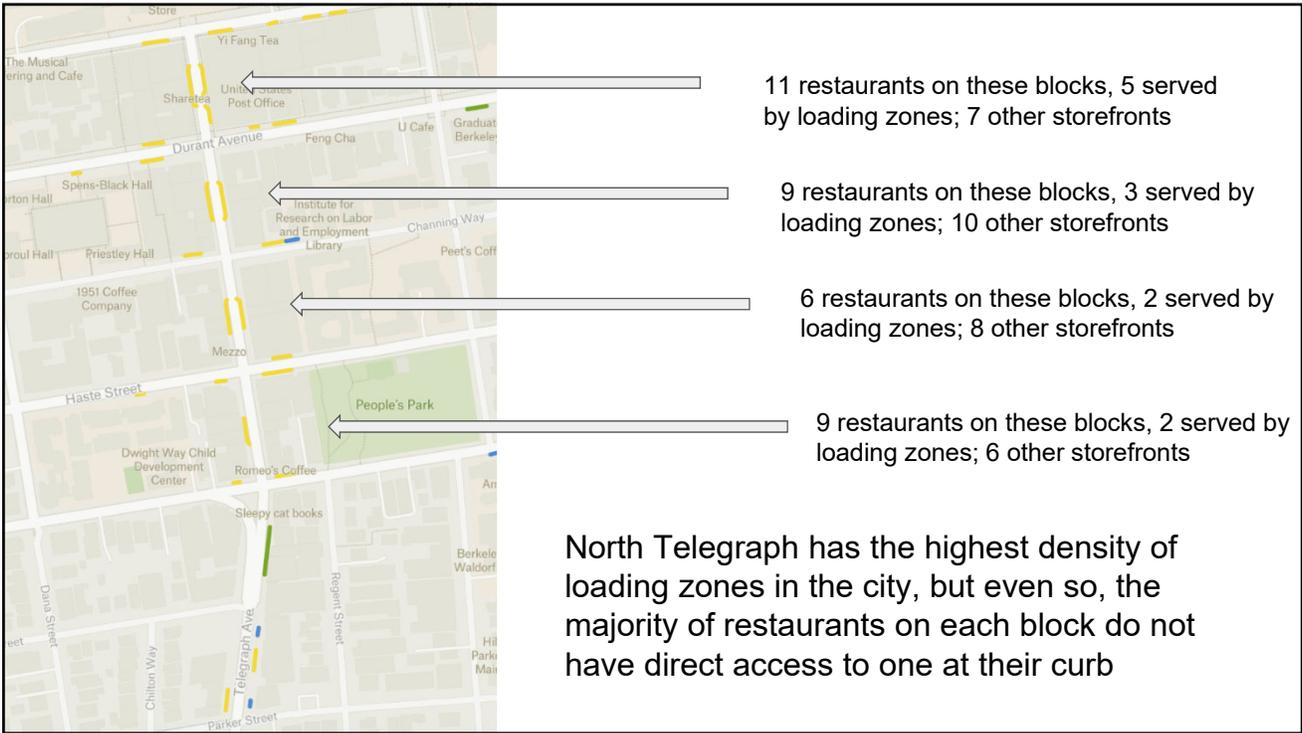
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1 loading zone
among these 6
apartment buildings
on San Pablo

Telegraph restaurant analysis

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1xVruoBWclIIB-fLBYYD7hXJ0sDi6QJO3YNYcla1Zsh0/e/dit?pli=1#slide=id.p>



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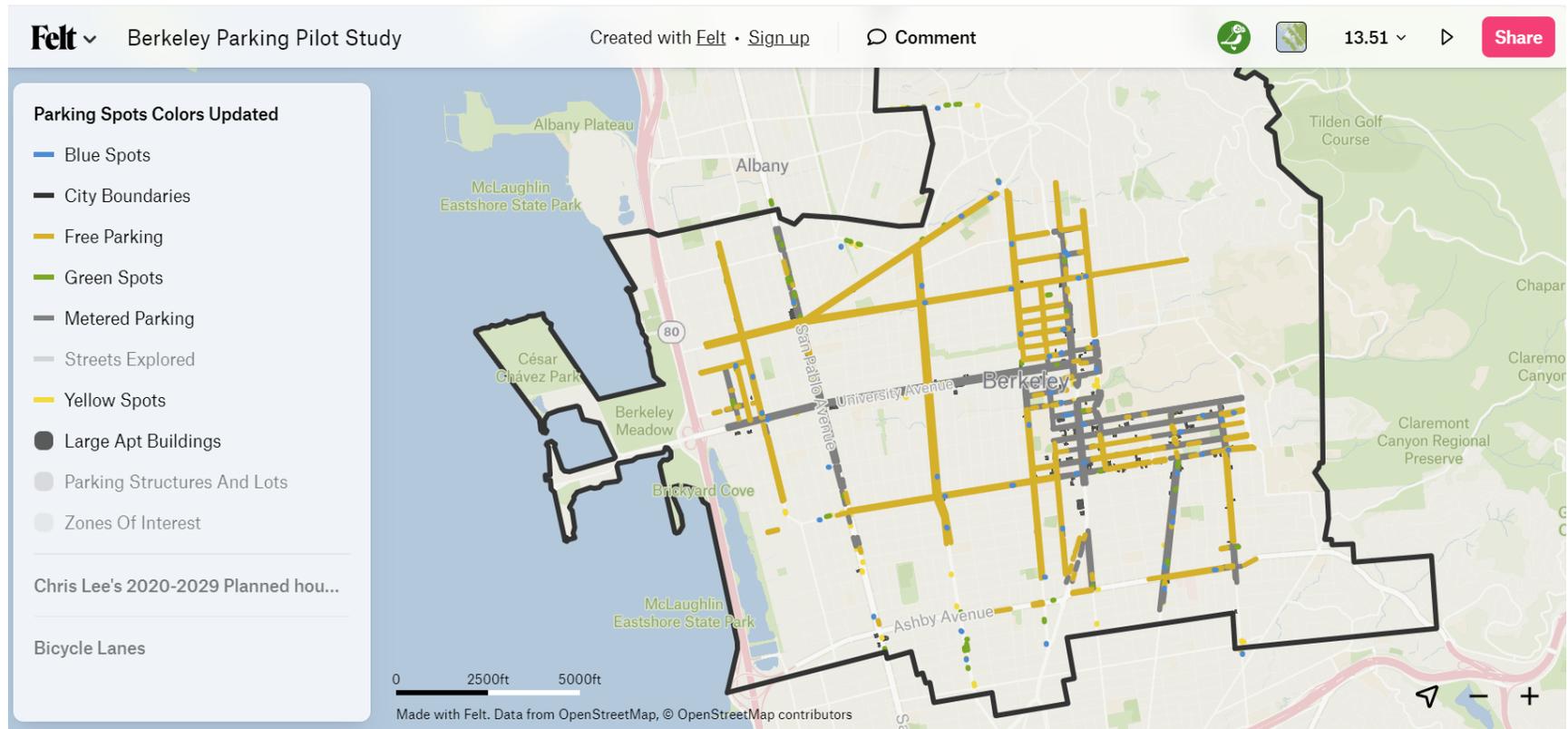
Conclusions and next steps

- While we may have somewhat comparable levels of loading zones to other cities, we (and they) could probably use more
- Apartments and restaurants are mostly poorly served by loading zone locations

- Determine highest priority intervention space
 - Compare Telegraph to other restaurant corridors
 - Evaluate loading zone density more completely on blocks with planned housing
- Study “completeness” of loading zone transition and best practices
- When to refer to Council to refer to Transportation and Infrastructure?

What other work is needed at this time?

ATTACHMENT 2



Available at:

<https://felt.com/map/Berkeley-Parking-Pilot-Study-Asymc9AjmTk6TemDtxhWZB?loc=37.866123,-122.264268,16.22z&share=1>

