

GOBERKELEY SMARTSPACE: VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING FOR THE ELMWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

Notes from 11-16-2021 Community Meeting 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Team: Dana Rubin, Gordon Hansen, Dianne Yee, Ezra Pincus-Roth, Alejo Alvarado

Number of Attendees: 93 people in full group

Break-out Group, Session 1 (Dana and Alejo's Group)

Resident: Most of the time, you can find a place to park near or on the block I live on, but that is only some of the time. I have concerns about allowing more people to be able to park in the neighborhood will induce traffic. This is a concern. We will induce people to park all day because it would be cheaper than a parking lot.

Resident: Live on Stewart Street – far enough from College Street that resident is not impacted and can find parking easily. The biggest problem has been the college games. Now that the parking fine is changed for Football games, parking seems to be fine on those game days. Disappointed that Saturdays must be included because of these games. I appreciate that RPP is electronic, and stickers are no longer required.

Resident: Concerned that hospital workers are using the neighborhood to park their vehicles throughout the day.

Resident: Focused on solving problems for the businesses. While there is interest in having a vibrant business/commercial district, it should not come at the expense of our residential areas. There should be more efforts to get employees out of their cars and onto the buses to get to their place of work, rather than having employees park in the neighborhoods all day in the residential areas.

Resident: Concerned about home healthcare employees having to pay to park in the residential neighborhoods.

Dana: City is committed to continuing day pass program to ensure that residents have access to essential services.

Resident: Concerned about employees receiving permits. Unless it is enforced, you will have 3X the number of people having the permits as are entitled to have them. The City of Berkeley, if they have employee permits to monitor and enforce – only currently active employees should receive permits.

Resident: Parking in the Elmwood is working fine, no complaints. As I understand the proposal, I don't see anything good with it. I don't have a driveway, and this is going to be an incredibly bad thing for me.

Resident: Parking on Elmwood Avenue is never a problem. We have one parking space and when workers or our children visit, at the very most, I must move the car to the street less than a block. I have lived here for 40 years, there is always a place to park. We are not saving our pollution problems; nobody is circling for very long. People want

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to park in the Elmwood because there is trees, and it is pretty. If we break up the nice feeling, people won't want to come here and shop.

Resident: I can think of a whole lot of bad things about this proposal. UC Students will permanently park in the Elmwood.

Resident: I am in favor of the merchants, but this proposal will make it harder for them.

Resident: There is not a problem, there might be inconveniences in the evening but what the proposal suggests won't solve that. Do not put a pilot in place that will make things worse. This is not how to help employees.

Resident: Biggest concern is the potentially impact of evening parking due to hospital workers. **Recommendation by resident:** facilitate evening parking for hospital workers.

Resident: Doing something that will allow people to park in the neighborhood for the entire day will make constant traffic going in and out of the neighborhood. Particularly bad for people that do not have a driveway.

Resident: Concerned about the proposal. Instead of a two-hour shuttle, you will create a one-hour shuffle. This won't work by how it has been conceived unless enforcement is increased. This will create issues for the merchants. Teachers won't be able to find parking at the Academy.

Resident: If we allow longer-term parking, how will people access the library? Can we have a quick loading area to access the Library on Claremont?

Resident: The only issue are the employees. Residents like the situation.

Recommendation by resident: Provide a parking lot for employees and merchants.

Resident: I do not experience any parking constraints. I walk to the Elmwood. The system is working well.

Resident: Against the parking proposal; there is no problem that needs to be fixed. We want to solve.

Merchant: Merchant in the Elmwood for 40 years and lived for 30 years. The proposal doesn't show any sensitivity to the businesses. I have employees leaving my office every 2 hours to check their cars. It costs me a fortune in lost productivity.

Break-out Group, Session 2

Resident: A lack of consideration of the hardship this would place on residents. Older folks won't visit their grandchildren because they won't be able to walk to the parking kiosks. **Recommendation by resident:** Any alternative would be better than the proposal. Permits to employees and merchants, building a parking lot.

How will visitors figure this out?

Resident: Who wants to have a kiosk in front of their house? **Recommendation by resident** Why couldn't the city buy a van and have employees shuttled in from a distant parking lot?

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Resident: I support the proposal. People should pay to park because parking is not a right and I want to see the City incentivize other mode and this proposal is a great way to explore that.

Resident: The L section would start to have enforcement on Saturdays. The ripple effect: Instead of running over to Pine Street, employees will be running up to Magnolia because the street won't be included in the Pilot. **Recommendation by resident** Build a city parking lot, use your capital budget and eminent domain.

Resident: This is creating a penalty for employees: \$280 a month to park if you are an employee. This is not a solution for employees, it is a regressive tax for them to hold their jobs. **Recommendation by resident** Elmwood merchants get two visitor passes per day for employees, it is not a yearlong guarantee. Every day someone gets it. That way, there won't be the two-hour shuffle, the exorbitant fees, and the same the number of cars will park in the neighborhood.

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Break-out Group, Session 1 (Ezra's Group)

Resident: We must pay for our parking permits; we do not have free parking. Most of the time I can park somewhere near my house, but sometimes I can't, and I have to park on the street. About one or twice a month I must drive around to find parking about two blocks away. I don't want it to change to allow people to pay to park here because then I won't be able to park near my house. Tenants might want to move out.

Resident: I live on one of the busiest streets. It took years to develop the current RPP program. I want to understand why the current program is not working. I suspect that it isn't being monitored; we do not see Meter Maids. Can we look carefully at the existing program and evaluate what isn't working? This is a residential area; it is not a commercial area. It has a commercial area nearby. Why are you trying to introduce a commercial solution to a residential area? The solution being proposed is not the correct one. Don't change something that has been crafted so carefully. Why did you pick two neighborhoods to make a radical change?

Ezra: The goal is to create parking availability in the neighborhood. This is a target that originated from the goBerkeley program.

Employee: I get it, residents want their parking and I know it is hard. But more than residential, it is a mixed area. I don't know what the proposal is specifically, and I don't know the answer. I am thinking how do I take the bus there? I think this is beyond parking. How can we get a shuttle or bus to the area?

Resident: It is a sharp concern for employees to find parking, but residential streets are not the answer. I am a resident, and I am a renter. I will be motivated to move if I can't find parking. There is not enough parking to accommodate residents and employees that come into the neighborhood. The solution is not to throw everything back on the neighborhoods. **Recommendation by resident:** add more affordable parking. The parking structures charge NYC prices. Hospital should provide parking for their employees and not expect their employees to shuffle every 2-hours.

Resident and Employer: We need data. How many RPPs are issued? If everyone with a permit park on the street, they would not be able to. I let my guests use my driveway when they come. I have a small business and walk to my office on College Avenue and at my expense, I pay for one parking permit to my employee that must be there all the time and I pay for off-street parking for my other employees. Merchants must make accommodations. I manage residential housing and I get calls all the time for people

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asking to rent spaces. The changes that are being considered we will be overflowed with students. The purpose of the permit program was to encourage people to use AC Transit.

Resident: We have impacts from hospital and enforcement has helped that has been implemented in the last year. This plan will induce demand. Hospital employees and visitors will realize it is cheaper to park on the street then the garage. This will not remove the two-hour shuttle.

Resident: My guests coming to my home can't park without walking around the block to pay the parking meter? My mother drives up from Los Angeles and can't park on the street and now she will have to pay \$18.00. How can you hoist that on a residential street? It seems like a big change for a residential street, a huge imposition.

Resident: No residents were polled, red flag. Proposal would lock up more parking. This proposal would make it harder to park. This would make our day-to-day life harder. For people coming into the neighborhood people should take buses and BART. This is a huge burden and imposition on residents.

Break-out Group, Session 2 (Ezra's Group)

Resident: No trouble parking on Webster Street, there are always spaces. I am always seeing employees in the neighborhood having to move their cars during the day. Many are paying \$15.00 per day to park, and they are working for minimum wage. If you don't support the employees, you aren't supporting the Elmwood businesses on College Ave.

Recommendation by Resident: City could help to pay workers to pay in neighborhood. I am concerned about the workers and their ability to pay.

Resident: **Recommendation by Resident:** Allow employees at Alta Bates to park in their parking structure for free. This will be the best change you can make. Rather than spending money on the proposal, get tough with the hospital.

Resident: Concerned that parking kiosks won't be removed after pilot ends. Concerned about household employees – gardeners, nannies, cleaners. How would those people pay to park when they are making minimum wage?

Resident: Household workers are affected by the two-hour shuttle. **Recommendation by Resident:** I would like to see exemptions for retailers and employers.

This feels exclusionary. If you can afford to park all day but if you can't afford the meters, you must take the buses.

Resident: My street won't have meters, so everyone is going to park on my street now. Don't mess with the quality of life. Don't push this on the community.

Resident via chat box: **Recommendation by Resident:** The point made was that the residential parking program would work better if it were more regularly enforced by traffic control

Resident via chat box: **Recommendation by Resident:** I hope the project will do whatever possible to lower the need to drive to work or shop here. Public transit, cycling,

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and micromobility could all be improved here. I bike down the Russell St. bike boulevard with my kids all the time and cycling facilities here could be much improved. Lower the need to park! Thanks for your time and help.

Resident via chat box: Who is this proposal benefiting. Those of us who live in the neighborhood have never had problems parking, free or paid. We don't want meters on our streets. This situation will just put the overflow onto other streets in our neighborhood. What's it solving for who?

Resident via chat box: Hoping this chat goes into the record. Too many hands raised. At least with the 2-hour limit in my neighborhood (prince at Claremont) everyone who comes to shop moves so even if I can't park near my house.

Resident via chat box: In referencing the fact that other states are using the proposed pilot program, the city seems to be failing to consider the particular Berkeley community history that developed the residential parking system. Because you did not poll the residents individually, today's meeting has been devoted to characterizing that history and explaining the reasons for its development.

Resident via chat box: **Recommendation by Resident:** My point was that you could add paid/metered parking on top of the existing system for those that need to park for longer than 2 hours.

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Break-out Group, Session 1 (Gordon and Dianne's Group)

Resident: Main beneficiary would be for employees who work in stores on College Ave and at Alta Bates. Pilot could be a detriment to shoppers.

Resident: We should make it easier for people to visit. **Recommendation by resident:** Make bike corrals like the bikeshare docks so there is more bike parking.

Resident: I am not aware of any studies that suggests that 2-hour shuffle contributes to pollution compared to other things. Is there a conflict of issues to get this grant for the goal of addressing pollution?

Gordon: We don't know the impacts yet.

Resident: Does revenue from this go into General Fund, what is the financial benefit?

Gordon: Funding would go into Parking Meter funds for enforcement and into the General Fund.

Resident: - My house does not have a driveway, I run a childcare. My employee would have to pay a significant amount of salary to pay for parking. Currently they are doing the 2-hour shuffle, and I am concerned that it would cost less to park longer on street than at Alta Bates. The proposal would put a burden on visitors in the neighborhood. Kiosks on College Ave would be hard to access. Why can't there be a better parking permitting system for employees instead of making it harder for visitors and neighbors?

Resident: In the past few years there has been better availability of parking spaces. Concerned about the degree of the problem. **Recommendation by resident:** Recommend distributing more merchant visitors permits. How were project boundaries were determined?

Resident: Questions about the MTC grant. **Recommendation by resident:** Why can't more merchants be issued more permits? Sutter Hospitals subsidizes parking. Concern about students parking in the neighborhood.

Resident: In some localized areas, it's a concern about congestion. MTC goals are same as this program. Merchants can get passes for certain addresses. Expanding merchant and employees is a good idea but we have limited street parking. Monthly passes would be like an all-you-can-eat buffet, and we don't want that.

Resident: I am concerned that people will park outside project boundaries.

Gordon: Will look into effect on spillover streets.

Resident: Problem of Alta Bates is different from Elmwood merchants. I am concerned about Alta Bates employees inundating her neighborhood. **Recommendation by**

resident: I propose a 4 hour time limit.

Resident: What are the markers of success for this pilot program and what is the process moving forward? Concern about safety and likes that she can park close to where she lives.

Resident: I like have having RPP, and I don't want to go back before there was an Residential Parking Program.

Break-out Group, Session 2

Resident: How many employees are we talking about who are impacted by the 2h shuffle?

Gordon: The main issue if the 2-hour shuffle. Parking search time is a proxy for vehicle-miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. One big piece t is how to leverage the technology we have.

Resident: I am concerned about attracting more people who want to park in the neighborhood. I am wondering how many merchants' permits are needed.

Resident: Would like to see a copy of the grant and the grant proposal.