

GOBERKELEY SMARTSPACE: VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING FOR THE SOUTHSIDE/TELEGRAPH AREA

Date: April 28th 6:30 PM

Attendance: Gordon Hansen, Dianne Yee, Dana Rubin

Participants: 14 members of the public

Running Notes:

Revisiting the project background goals

- Project Background
- Project Goals

The Pilot development process so far

- Spring 2022: Collected more merchants/employee data from survey

New proposals for the pilot in the Southside/Telegraph Area

- Proposals came directly from the community
- Not all proposals will be implemented due to staff capacity
- Proposal will be finalized in May
- **(1) Encourage local merchants and/or employees to purchase monthly passes at Telegraph Channing Garage.** Some employees already park at the garage hourly or monthly. We want to make it more known that this is a parking option for employees in the area. Local merchants could purchase a pass that could be used/shared among employees.
 - Participant Feedback: “*Do you support encouraging businesses/ employees to get monthly parking at the Telegraph/Channing Garage?*”
 - Responses
 - Yes: 6 out of 9
 - No: 1 out of 9
 - Maybe, I would like to learn more: 2 out of 9
- **(2) Resident suggested. Create permits allowing local business employees to park in RPP areas D and J** (near Telegraph Business District) Maximum number of permits based on supply analysis. Address 2-hour shuffle concerns.
- Area B is at capacity, so we want to create a maximum number of permits. We want to ensure that resident parking is still prioritized, and we don't want to box out visitors by giving out too many permits – need to find a sweet spot.

- We also do not want to encourage people to drive so we will consider a progress permit pricing option. This is an idea that council is interested in the larger RPP.
- This would be complimented by the transit pass program
 - Participant Feedback: “ *Do you support the implementation of an employee parking pass program in RPP Area D and J?*”
 - Responses:
 - Yes: 2 out of 10
 - No: 6 out of 10
 - Maybe, I would like to learn more: 2 out of 10
- **(3) Implement visitor paid parking on 2700 Durant, Channing, and Haste & 2300-2400 Piedmont (Area I, north of Dwight Way)**
- First two (2) hours free then \$2.00/hr. for longer stays
- Duration of stay analysis (2300 block of Piedmont Ave) -- 80% unique vehicles did not have RPP permits during the day (already visitors during the day to the area)
- Many of the streets in proposed pilot are had **occupancy above 85%**
- Pilot proposal is an opportunity to test paid parking which is the best way to alleviate parking demand that is constrained during the day with visitor parking and open spaces for residents
- Heard concerns re: initial proposal and the following changes were made:
 - Boundaries: Pilot no longer includes Area J, B, or D
 - Time-limit: 4-Hour time-limit, instead of 8-hour time limit (longer if warranted)
 - Visitors stay for free up to 2-hours before paying
 - Increase of the number of payment kiosks and clearer information about where and how to pay.

Participant Feedback: “ *Do you support the implementation of a modified visitor paid parking pilot in a smaller area?*”

- *Responses*

- *Yes: 4 out of 10*
- *No: 3 out of 10*
- *Maybe, I would like to learn more: 3 out of 10*
- **(4) Facilitate transit pass benefits for local employees**
- Work with merchants to create an AC Transit EasyPass Program for local employees; city will provide staff time to set up and facilitate program
- 8 businesses in Telegraph with a total of 95 employees have expressed interest.
- Need 100 employees to qualify for deeply discounted transit passes

- Proposal would address the goal of reducing the 2-hour shuffle and increasing the use of non-driving modes.
 - Participant Feedback: *“Do you support the City helping local merchants provide annual transit passes to employees as an employee benefit?”*
 - Responses:
 - Yes: 9 out of 10
 - No: 0 out of 10
 - Maybe, I would like to learn more: 1 out of 10

Questions:

- **Resident:** Parking/driving pattern studies should be done at peak student days/times when the parking is maximally impacted.
 - **Gordon:** Team collected utilization information during October 2021 on a weekday and a weekend day. Data was collected at an optimal time to follow data collection protocols. For example: Data was not collected on a game day or a rainy day.
 - October tends to be a maximal parking month in Berkeley parking garages and on-street.
 - As we collect additional data, we be sure to capture utilization when there are peak students (regular condition.)
- **Resident:** What is the cost of the monthly pass at the City of Berkeley Channing garage?
 - **Gordon:** It is approximately \$170/month to park at the Channing garage. Gordon to check and confirm.
- **Resident:** A study in October 2021 seems unlikely to have long-term validity. Why not four hours free?
 - **Gordon:** Data (duration stay, occupancy, parking search time) was collected in October 2019 and we intended to use that for our baseline but then the world turned upside down. This project was put on a hold for a year. Knowing that we were still committed to this study, we use October 2021 for a new baseline.
 - We are resetting how we are managing parking meters at the City of Berkeley. We are making incremental changes based on demand.
 - Re four hours free: We are trying to find ways to adjust behavior around the shuffle. The shuffle exists because we have free 2-hour parking. If we were to make a 4-hour time limit, we might have a 4-hour shuffle. We want to test the viability of a combination of time strategies -- esp. in a place that is fully parked out at peak hours and full of visitor parking. Can we make a difference with a combination of free parking and paid parking?

- **Resident:** Aren't there that many merchants who are supposed to be offering AC Transit passes already--but no one has enforced it?
 - **Gordon:** Correct. We found that there is a total of 21 business in the southside that have 10 or more employees that under the commute benefits ordinance, could be providing commute benefits. This project provides an opportunity to enforce the existing policy.
 - For example, if this project ends up implementing a merchant transit pass program -- eligibility would be contingent in employers' participating in a commute benefits program.
- **Resident:** Grateful to see that the feedback from the last Zoom meeting input was responded to by making the boundaries for paid parking change to north of Dwight.
- **Resident:** I would like to see the 2-hour time limit extended to 4 hours
- **Resident:** At present, Saturdays in Area B are free of parking time limits. The proposal is to introduce a 3-hour time limit on Saturdays here. Surely this defeats the purpose of reducing emissions by introducing what will be a "three-hour SATURDAY shuffle."
 - **Gordon:** Area B has parking time limits. Areas B,D, and A have Saturday enforcement, the 2-hour time limit is in effect.
 - In Elmwood, there is a proposal to introduce a 3-hour time limit in Areas D and L to see if this would change emissions related to 2-hour shuffle.
- **Resident:** Many residents work during the week and must park on the street in Area B after work. Saturday should remain a day when these residents can park on the street without a time limit and without having to pay the city for just one day's parking per week
 - **Gordon:** Area B does have the time-limit. Residents can park for longer and visitors have to leave after 2 hours.
- **Resident:** I'm against proposal 3, but if you insist, you should have safety and ascetic in mind. Downtown Berkeley became ugly and unsafe due to those new white concrete line and all kinds of kiosk. There is unexpected concrete, space is divided, it's hard for car to drive. Kiosk is put in random, unexpected for passengers. Pls consider safety for the disabled
 - **Gordon:** We will be deliberate about where parking kiosks are installed – balance access for based on accessibility. We will take the aesthetic of new infrastructure into consideration
 Prioritizing accessibility for all.
- **Resident:** What about a Berkeley shuttle. Emeryville has this and they have not b been restrained by any AC Transit objections.

- **Gordon:** Shuttles are beyond the scope of the project, and they are usually formed from a Transportation Management Association (TMA.) Has the TBID considered becoming a TMA? Capital and on-going labor costs to consider. It is a good idea. Interested to see a market analysis to understand demand.
- **Resident:** T-BID or the University of California could do a Berkeley-Go-Round.
- **Participant (Alex Knox from TBID)** If there is genuine interest, it would be helpful to study the Emery Go-Round but there is only so much space and there needs to be non-driving alternatives. Utilize existing transit to its fullest capacity and remove barriers/incentivize transit. Southside already has a strong transit network.
- **Resident:** Rather than allow one more high-rise apartment building, why doesn't the city, with the increased revenues they are and will be receiving from high-rise developments, purchase any land that becomes available and build another down-town parking garage? This will generate revenue for the city too.
 - **Gordon:** Land is scarce in Berkeley and its expensive. There is a lot of competition for how land is use. Complicating factor: cost of structured parking. Center Street Garage is about \$50,000 per parking space. And while other cities have discounted passes at parking garages for employees, because of the bond financing, there are restrictions on the rates that can be charged at Berkeley parking garages.
- **Resident:** Especially since new buildings intentionally lack adequate parking resources
 - **Gordon:** The city now has parking maximums instead of parking minimums. Developers can only build a certain number of parking spaces to encourage residents travel by non-driving modes.
- **Resident:** All these parking proposals, etc. are just Band Aid solutions until traffic in Berkeley is reduced and not further encouraged by more high-rise apartments, which mainly encourage new out-of-town residents.
 - **Gordon:** Yes, one outcome might show that the proposals do not change behavior, but we don't know that right now.
 - Our project is focused on the two-hour shuffle. There is only so much we can test through this effort.
 - Interested in incremental change. What will inspire lasting change? Travel coaching – talking to individual employees to understand where slight changes can be made. Value in using a ground up approach.
- **Resident:** The Emery Go-Round is funded by a tax on business. Free to use because the casinos and big retail want it.

- **Resident:** If the City can't afford a new garage, why doesn't the city introduce a new proposal, which people can vote on, to prohibit this out-of-control apartment development?
 - **Gordon:** Interesting idea – interesting to see what the results/interest would be across a diverse population.
- **Resident:** The Berkeley School District is proposing a \$50 million parking structure on Milvia (with tennis courts on the roof?).....using a bond measure.
- **Resident:** The apartment owners in Area J just rent their parking spaces to non-
 - **Gordon:** It is someone's prerogative if someone has off-street parking they want to rent.
 - Notion of shared use parking – Bank of America at Claremont and College Ave has paid off-street parking in part because they recognize that their private parking is more than they need, and the bank is only open for certain times of the day so they can rent out their parking spaces to other users at other times of day.
 - Other off-street lots also implement shared parking for Cal Game Days.
- **Resident:** UC should be approached as to contributing to the purchase of land—especially since they've increased their student population by 10,000 over the last 15 years. (And this has been contrary to their earlier 'promise' not to increase to such an extent!)
 - City is renegotiating its fees with UC. City is reimbursed for things that the University does that impacts the city – for example, traffic control and congestion.
- **Resident:** It doesn't add anything, people are storing high end cars, driving their regular cars to town, and then driving out of town. the concern with the apartments is that many of these buildings were required to have spaces for their residents. now the residents are priced out and forced into on street parking
 - **Gordon** (Reference to Area J): This is issue; current cost of RPP is \$66 per year which is less than parking at new market rate housing. Paying to park on-street, while a new cost, will likely be less expensive than other options.
- **Resident:** People pay a lot of money and high property taxes so to have the right to have cheaper parking can't be compared to other items – we have residential neighborhoods that have bene protected. Request a meeting to the Le Conte neighborhood group. What part did UC play in this pilot and how can they help us?
 - **Gordon:** UC so far has played an advisory role. In the meetings, Seamus Wilmot, Head of Parking and Transportation, has played an advisory role - listening and taking in type of role rather than providing a

lot of input. The new proposals informed primarily by residents and merchants.

- **Resident:** Get people out of cars. It would be good if we can commute during the pilot what residents do and do not like. We want to have another meeting and have someone there to know we have the right guidelines and what we can think about long-range.
 - **Gordon:** Our intention is to continue the conversation for the duration of the pilot. We want residents to provide feedback. Should we continue to have visitor paid parking? The city is going to collect qualitative feedback along with the data, as well. *Do we have the right time limits and pricing achieve 1 to 2 open spaces per block?* .
 - As we continue, interested to sit down to discuss RPP and discuss employee and resident parking more generally.
 - We need to consider the RPP and re-evaluate it as a whole – it's 40 years old. The city has changed drastically in that time. There are different ways to get around, there are new modes. *What is the role of RPP and parking in Berkeley neighborhoods?*
- **Resident:** Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Let's have a meeting to see what happens – we need more community input.
 - **Gordon:** We heard that the 2-hour grace period is important, and we don't plan to get rid of it. Even with the pilots, that will be maintained.
- **Resident:** Parking in Area B is already bad. Employee permits would exacerbate the problem on these streets.
 - **Gordon:** That is built into the proposal. We have confirmed that parking in Area B is parked up. We won't put out more employee permits for that area. It's only areas south of Telegraph.
- **TBID:** We don't know if employees who service the area have other options. Employees come from a distance; retail businesses are under a lot of pressure to attract employees.
- **Resident:** UC is the elephant in the room Students and employees have nothing near the amount of parking they need.
 - **Gordon:** We are focused on the needs of local merchants and employees.
- **Resident:** Two-hour free parking is irrelevant if people come in early and plan to stay all day. There are a fixed number of spaces.
 - **Gordon:** We are concerned about that – balance between parking availability and turnover. Sometimes we use time-limits to generate turnover. Other times, we use pricing to generate turnover.

- **Resident:** I was not being irresponsible about 'putting out' that employee permits in Area B would exacerbate the problem. I was merely uninformed. Thank you for clarifying.
- **TBID:** For folks that are concerned about what happens next, unless there is a bolder approach, not much will change. This is an important issue but to move the needle, it is only going to happen if we select the more aggressive ideas. If there is any interest in making change in how we experience parking, the only option is to do something bold and try it for a year.
- Parking demand for our merchants and employees is a top priority. Employees make decisions based on parking availability. Employees must travel from a distance –most people can recognize the pressure that retail businesses are under to attract and retain employees. This is a key issue.
 - **Gordon:** We can confirm based on our conversations with merchants and employees that some people are just getting by – how do we help folks who are experiencing hardship? What can we do as parking planners? Also, we need to consider the complexity of the issue -- how do we meet climate change goals and serve those who need to drive. It is difficult to find a happy medium.
- **Resident:** How would your members be about having a limited number of parking passes that were shared among each business employees?
 - **TBID** – yes, some receptiveness and interest, and willing to test things if it is only for a (less) than a year.
 - **Gordon** – Pilot will likely be about 9 months. Project constraints -> firm end date is June 30, 2024.
 - We understand interest in testing a bold idea for a short duration.
 - Transit passes are administered for one year so transit pass pilot could outlast some of the other pilot concepts.
- **TBID:** More cars and more parking are not our future. Parking isn't going to get easier – we must do something different, and we must use space differently. Our merchants do not expect another garage to be built or parking to be free. We need to make existing resources work for everyone.