



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

November 29, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Submitted by: Liam Garland, Director, Public Works

Subject: City Policies for Managing Parking Around BART Stations

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the parking management programs and policies the City of Berkeley will use to manage parking demand around the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations as new housing is built. In residential areas, the City will evaluate new resident and/or Council initiated requests to join the Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) Program. In commercial areas, the City will consider the use of demand-responsive pricing to generate parking availability for local customers and/or accommodate some BART parking demand under the goBerkeley program.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

BART's planned housing at the Ashby and North Berkeley stations is expected to significantly affect parking conditions around the stations. While BART has been conducting a planning process for station access needs—the Berkeley-El Cerrito Corridor Access Plan (BECCAP)¹ with anticipated completion in Winter 2022/23—the City seeks to mitigate future parking demand using existing parking programs, including the Residential Preferential Parking (RPP) Program in residential areas and goBerkeley demand-responsive pricing in commercial areas.

Planned Changes to Parking Supply and Demand

As part of the new housing developments, BART will not provide 100% replacement of existing BART rider parking spaces. After BART presented recommended BART rider parking maximums for the two stations to the BECCAP Advisory Committee and Community in March 2022,² in June 2022, the BART Board approved a maximum of 85 rider parking spaces (16% of the current 535 spaces) for Ashby and 200 rider parking spaces (29% of the current 700 spaces, including 80 spaces in the two auxiliary lots) for North Berkeley.³ Based on the analysis and outreach from the BECCAP, BART expects that those who historically parked at the two stations will: 1) walk, bike, bus or rideshare to access BART, 2) work from home, or 3) park at Downtown Berkeley

¹ BECCAP Project website: <http://bit.ly/3NSm6C1>

² BECCAP Advisory Committee/Community Meeting, March 9, 2022, p. 22: <https://bit.ly/3BTdR2W>

³ BART Board Meeting, June 9, 2022: <https://bit.ly/3DTT8gK>

parking garages or other off-street options.⁴ Yet, there may still be spillover parking into surrounding neighborhoods. Note: BART has not determined the final amount of on-site rider parking at the two stations. The final parking number will be determined after the future development teams advance design together with the community, and BART, the City and the Developer teams have a better understanding of funding opportunities for access/parking improvements, design considerations, and community benefit tradeoffs.

The amount of on-site parking for residents at the new housing developments is still under consideration. Regardless, per City policy, residents of the new developments will not be eligible for RPP permits and could seek parking on nearby residential streets.

Managing Parking in Residential Areas

Residential parking in the immediate vicinity of the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations is within the boundaries of the RPP Program, though the number of streets that have “opted-in” to the Program, i.e., streets that are signed and enforced for RPP time limit restrictions, vary between the two stations.⁵ The City expects resident-initiated opt-in requests around Ashby BART and North Berkeley BART to grow over the next several years, particularly after new housing is built. Residents may choose to petition for RPP to mitigate demand from residents of the new housing developments as well as partially displaced BART patrons.

To accommodate these requests, the City will follow existing guidelines for RPP Opt-Ins, summarized in Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 14.72.050.⁶ The BMC also allows for Council to initiate opt-in requests if so desired. Streets that are outside of the RPP Program boundary are not eligible to opt-in; Council action would be required to allocate additional funding for Parking Enforcement staff and equipment to expand the Program.

Managing Parking in Commercial Areas

Parking on Adeline Street across from the Ashby BART station and along University Avenue south of the North Berkeley BART station is managed under the goBerkeley parking program. Parking on Ashby Avenue and MLK Jr Way fronting Ashby BART is either controlled by RPP, time limits, or unregulated. Adeline Street south of Woolsey Street is time limited, though the City is evaluating whether to install metered parking in this area as part of a parking benefit district. There is no parking on the periphery of the North Berkeley BART site, but this could change with future housing development.

Based on outreach with merchants and/or other stakeholders, the City could convert existing time limited or unregulated parking in commercial areas or on the periphery of station areas to goBerkeley metered parking. Consistent with on-street parking

⁴ BECCAP Advisory Committee/Community Meeting, March 9, 2022, p. 23-24: <https://bit.ly/3BTdR2W>

⁵ City of Berkeley RPP Web Map: <https://bit.ly/3LLDpDY>

⁶ Berkeley Municipal Code 14.72.050: “Designation of a residential permit parking area”
<https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/14.72.050>

elsewhere in the City, the goals will be to ensure customer parking availability and turnover by periodically observing parking behavior and adjusting prices for optimum availability – 65-85% occupied, or 1-2 open spaces. goBerkeley features “Premium” zones with prices driven by customer demand and shorter time limits that encourage turnover, and in the vicinity of Ashby and North Berkeley, could exclude BART patrons. If there is surplus capacity, some areas may be designated as Value zones with longer time limits that could be used by BART patrons, but priced to maintain adequate turnover.

goBerkeley allows the City to be flexible in the face of changing conditions. Pending further discussion, the City could implement an escalating price scale that starts at low prices for short stays, but scales up to higher prices for all-day parking, potentially providing parking for local customers while accommodating some BART patrons. In the vicinity of Ashby BART, this could provide a new source of revenue supporting a Lorin parking benefit district.

BACKGROUND

In September 2018, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2923,⁷ state legislation that affects zoning requirements on existing BART-owned property within one-half mile of stations in Alameda, Contra Costa and San Francisco Counties.

The City of Berkeley has been working closely with BART to develop the zoning and site planning parameters that meet the requirements of AB 2923, the goals of the City and the community, and the goals of BART as the property owner. The City and BART executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in March 2020 that established a framework for development of the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations, including a community advisory process and other community engagement; milestones and a timeline to develop zoning that complies with AB 2923; solicitation of developer(s); and further studies/planning for the two station areas.⁸

In June 2022, the City Council adopted zoning at the North Berkeley and Ashby BART stations that complies with AB 2923. As outlined in the original City-BART Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and the new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), the planning effort moving forward will build upon separate community engagement efforts that have been underway for several years relating to the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations, and other adopted plans and policies of the City and of BART. The MOA establishes a timeline for milestones regarding the addressing of potential spillover impacts to parking around the North Berkeley and Ashby BART stations that includes this City Council update regarding use of existing tools for on-street parking strategy in November 2022.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

⁷ AB 2923: <https://bit.ly/3DYji3m>

⁸ Current City of Berkeley/BART Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): <https://bit.ly/3CfJFR8>

Incremental expansion of the RPP Program to include additional blocks may have a minor beneficial environmental effect, and may make alternative transportation options more attractive. A modal shift by commuters to walking, bicycling, public transportation, or carpooling may also lead to a decrease in greenhouse gasses. However, based on expansion of RPP to other areas, the “two-hour shuffle” (i.e., moving a vehicle every two hours to avoid a ticket) may also begin to occur in new RPP areas among commuters who continue to drive. This behavior would have an adverse impact on traffic congestion, air quality, and excess fuel consumption.

Parking management in commercial areas using demand-responsive pricing under the goBerkeley parking program should improve parking management and lessen traffic congestion and vehicle emissions, as drivers are anticipated to spend less time searching for available parking spaces. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions produced by vehicular traffic is one of the City’s 2009 Climate Action Plan goals.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

The City will continue to monitor parking demand in the vicinity of the Ashby and North Berkeley BART stations, processing RPP opt-in requests and/or discussing parking options in commercial areas with merchants and business groups as warranted.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

There are no immediate fiscal impacts. The parking management policies discussed in this report are baseline programs and the housing projects are still being planned.

Moving forward, each incremental expansion of RPP within the Program’s current boundaries will incur costs for the procurement and installation of new signage. Depending on the geographic scope of new opt-in petitions, discussions with the Police Department’s Parking Enforcement may be needed to verify that existing staffing and equipment levels are sufficient to absorb the new areas. Expansion beyond the existing boundaries of the RPP Program will require new staff and equipment.

Fiscal impacts of potential new goBerkeley parking meters in commercial areas near or fronting the BART stations are difficult to forecast as parking behaviors resulting from demand-responsive price adjustments may vary. However, as in other areas of the City, incremental parking revenue should be sufficient to cover expected expenditures of the program, including the purchase of new meter equipment.

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