MTC-ABAG Parking Policy Technical Assistance

SPUR: A Hand-On Exploration of the Bay Area Parking Census

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James Choe, MTC-ABAG

ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Impact of Parking on Goals

VMT and Emission Reduction

- Parking increases vehicle miles traveled, resulting in more traffic, more emissions, and reduced safety

Focused Growth and Vibrant Communities

- Parking takes up space that could be used for other purposes

Affordable Housing and Transportation

- Parking increases costs and hinders equitable development and access

Regional & Local Policies and Priorities

- *VMT mitigation (SB 743, TDM Ordinances, PDAs and transit-oriented developments)*
- *GHG mitigation (Plan Bay Area 2050, Climate Action Plans)*
- *Health and safety (Vision Zero, AB 617 and air quality improvement)*
- *Mobility and activation improvements (Complete Streets, Slow Streets, multimodal and emerging mobility planning)*
- *Housing planning and development (PDA, RHNA, General Plan and Housing Element)*
- *Equity goals (affordability, transportation accessibility, Environmental Justice)*

Parking Policies

Supplying Parking

- Minimum/maximum parking requirements
- Shared parking
- Affordable housing, transit proximity, TDM, and other parking exemptions
- Parking in-lieu fees
- TDM ordinances

Managing Parking

- Unbundling requirements
- Priced/metered parking
- Parking benefit district
- Residential parking permits
- Coordinated on-/off-street parking management
- Curb management

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES
Reports & Guidance

- Reforming Parking Policies to Support Smart Growth Toolbox/Handbook
- Parking Structure Technical Report: Challenges, Opportunities, and Best Practices
- Parking Code Guidance: Case Studies and Model Provisions
- Value Pricing Pilot Parking Analysis Report
- ***NEW* Parking Policy Playbook**
- ***NEW* Parking Policy Office Hours**

https://abag.ca.gov/technical-assistance/

Parking Policy Playbook

I. Parking Policy Briefs

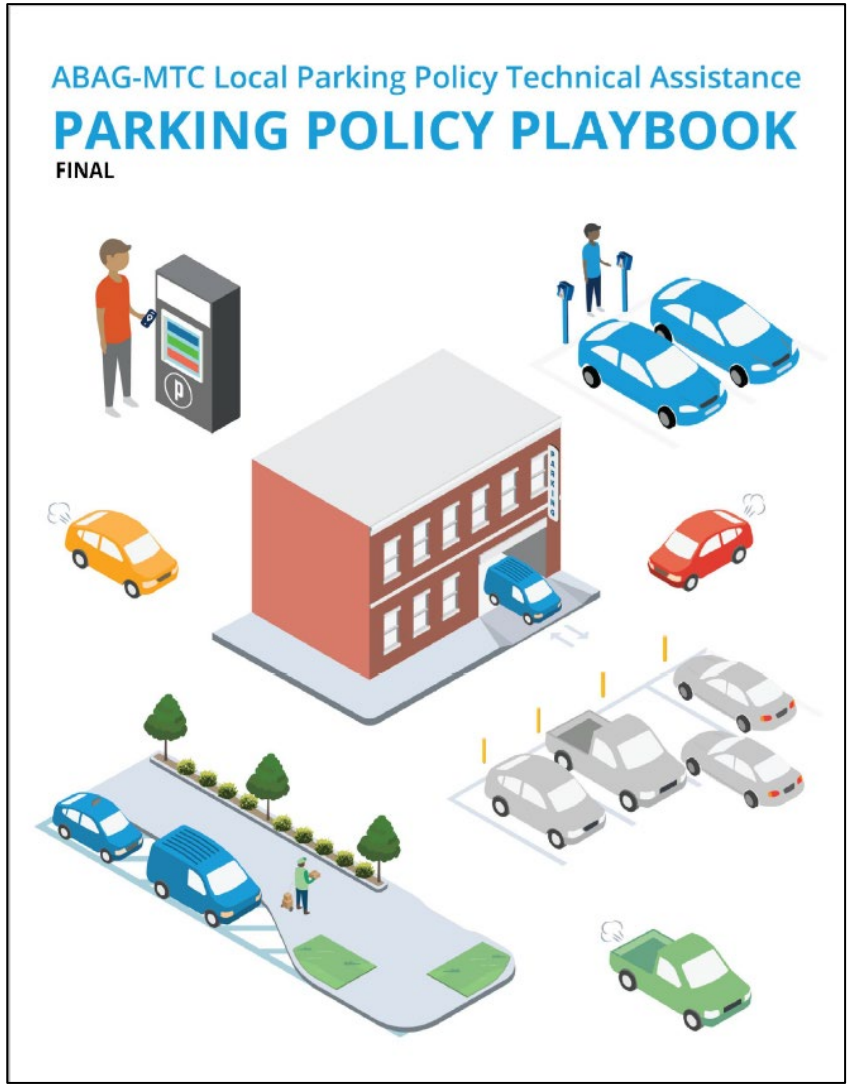
- Implementation guidance on 12 key parking policies

II. Additional Implementation Advice

- Ingredients for success
- Communications strategy
- Data approaches & tips

Appendices

- Sample policy code language
- Sample staff reports & council resolutions
- Parking policy cut sheet
- Parking policy database



I. Policy Briefs

POLICY #8

Demand-Responsive Pricing

Used For

- High-demand areas with low parking availability.
- Varying demand across different parking assets, including in places with a large variation in demand during peak and off-peak periods.
- Excessive circling for spaces.
- Maximizing use of existing parking supply.
- Managing parking and transportation at special events.

Policy Overview

Demand-responsive pricing charges the lowest possible rate that achieves availability targets. This involves moving from a static pricing system to a demand-based one in which rates are adjusted over time based on utilization data.

The ideal on-street parking occupancy rate is around 85%, which leaves roughly one to two spaces available per block. For off-street facilities where turnover is less frequent, the ideal rate is approximately 90-95%, which ensures supply is optimally utilized. To achieve these rates, cities decrease hourly rates where utilization is lower than the target and increase hourly rates in areas where utilization is higher than the target.

Benefits

- Better aligns price and demand to ensure there is always an open space.
- Makes it easier to find a parking space.
- Reduces circling for parking.
- Improves parking turnover.
- Creates lower rate parking options.

Level of Difficulty: ●●●

Impact: ●●●

Implementation Steps

1. Determine availability targets and base rates for on- and off-street parking. On-street rates should be higher than off-street to incentivize long-term parking to park off-street and keep the higher demand on-street spaces available.
2. Adopt a policy granting the appropriate staff authority over rate adjustments, time limits, locations, technology, and hours of operation.
3. Determine the most important demand trends to design the policy around (e.g., geographic unit, time of day or day or week, seasonality) depending on your area's parking demand trends and biggest parking challenges.
4. Set up ongoing adjustment procedures based on availability targets. This includes the frequency of rate adjustments (i.e., 1-4 times per year) and minimum and maximum charges per rate adjustment (i.e. $0.25 or $0.50).
5. Monitor and evaluate parking availability on a regular basis. Adjust rates and regulations 1-4 times per year to meet adopted availability targets. For a given block or off-street facility, the "right price" is the lowest price that will achieve this goal.

Key Features

- **Data source.** Demand-responsive pricing requires a consistently collected data source to help assess demand. Typical sources used include manual data collection and modeled occupancy data based on payment data or parking sensors.
- **Data-driven management.** Any parking regulations implemented today will need to be adjusted over time to respond to changes in demand. An ongoing data collection approach based on formally-adopted metrics and goals will enable a city to manage parking and adjust regulations in systematic and transparent way.
- **Data dashboard.** Sharing data directly with the community via a web-based data portal can help build confidence and make it easier to address future parking needs of a neighborhood.
- **Signage and wayfinding.** Effective program operation requires signage, wayfinding, and technology systems prior to rollout. These tools are essential to make searching and paying for parking as easy as possible for the customer.
- **Enforcement.** Public parking enforcement is often a challenge. Some challenges are self-imposed – ad hoc regulations vary by block, making it difficult to enforce – often with limited financial resources for enforcement. Some are inherent – relying on staff covering large geographic areas. Large cities may have specialized units, while many others rely on Police Department assistance – and parking is typically seen as a low priority and gets under addressed. Effective and fair enforcement is key, however, as parking regulations are less effective without it. Ideally, a pricing program works closely with enforcement units to align goals and resources around this priority project. The length of time limits in particular shapes enforcement needs – longer time limits relieve some enforcement pressures. The cost of tickets is a key issue as well – ideally the price is low enough to not be overly punitive but high enough to encourage compliance – when feasible, a tiered model is ideal. Enforcement alone will not fix underlying parking challenges, but it is one ingredient for success.

Pro Tips

- Can be linked to the implementation of a Parking Benefit District (Policy #9).
- Couple with relaxed time limit – focus on creating available spaces rather than worrying too much about exact turnover rate.
- There are many correct ways to design a pricing program. Can be implemented by zone (e.g., Santa Rosa, Redwood City, Berkeley) or block-by-block (e.g., San Francisco).
- Incentivize private lots and garages to participate.
- Rate adjustments do no need to occur frequently to be effective.
- Many possible demand dynamics exist when designing adjustment policies (i.e. time of day, day of week, etc.). Analyze utilization trends and choose the most important one to design around – policies should not be overly complex.
- Publish the adjustment policy for transparency. Similarly, post adjustment analysis and rates.
- Communicate the program prior to implementation with effective outreach and messaging, including a program brand, marketing materials, workshops, and stakeholder meetings. Confident, frequent, and clear communication is key – both internally and externally – discussed in more detail later in this document.
- Continuing the principles of demand-responsive pricing, charge for parking where and when open spaces are most needed.
- Prioritize general pricing first – while demand-responsive is ideal to tailor a parking program, charging any fee, even if low, is most critical for managing demand.

I. Policy Briefs

Case Study: Santa Rosa

The City hired a consultant in 2016 to complete a citywide parking study, which recommended a package of parking strategies aimed at improving access to parking in the core downtown. In June 2017, the City Council approved a number of these strategies, including zone-based demand-responsive pricing. Key changes included:

- **Establishment of two metered parking rate areas**. The Premium Rate Area includes the core of downtown where demand for on-street parking exceeded 85% at peak demand. Hourly rates for parking increased to $1.50/hour in the Premium Rate Area. The Value Rate Area remained at the existing rate of $1.00/hour.
- **Rate adjustments.** Metered parking rates may be adjusted (up or down) over time to achieve the desired goal of 85% occupancy. Metered rates may be adjusted no more frequently than once every six months, by not more than $0.25/hour, and with rates limitations in place that parking rates can be no lower than $0.25/hour and no higher than $3.00/hour.
- **Time Limits.** Time limits in the Premium Rate Area increased from 1 or 2 hours to 3 hours. Time limits in the Value Rate Area were set between 4 and 8 hours.
- **Hours of enforcement.** The hours of enforcement changed from 8 am to 6 pm Monday – Saturday to 10 am – 8 pm in the Premium Rate Area, and 10 am – 6 pm in the Value Rate Area, Monday - Saturday. The hours of operation reflect the times when businesses are open and parking is in highest demand. The hours of operation were later reduced to 9 am to 6 pm in December 2019 due to concerns from local businesses that charging for parking past 6 pm negatively impacted business.
- **Garage hourly rate changes.** The first hour of parking is free at two underutilized garages to make them a more attractive option among city parking assets. Rates were also reduced from $0.75/hour to $0.50/hour, after the first hour free. The rate at a high-demand garage increased to $1.00/hour.

The City benefited from a strong municipal champion that oversaw the study from start to implementation, provided rigorous information that garnered political support, and conducted extensive outreach that included stakeholder interviews, online and intercept surveys, public outreach meetings, and flyering.

For more info:

https://srcity.org/245/Parking-Management-Study

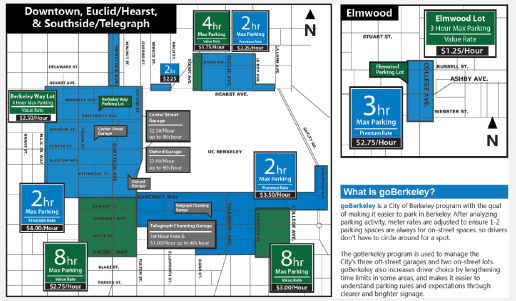
Case Study: Berkeley (goBerkeley)

The goBerkeley program began as a three-year pilot program designed by the city to improve traffic congestion and parking options, and to promote alternatives to private automobiles within the core areas of the City. In the summer of 2013, the City Council authorized adjusting parking rates and time limits at meters, surface lots, and garages in three zones to achieve occupancy rates of 65-85%. An ordinance revising the City's Municipal Code was passed and included the following changes based on existing utilization:

- **Utilization Under 65%:** Lower rates and extend time limits to incentivize use of parking.
- **Utilization 65-85%:** No adjustments required.
- **Utilization over 85%:** Raise rates to increase turnover and/or shift demand.

The pilot program tested a variety of automated data collection and enforcement technologies, including smart meters and License Plate Recognition (LPR) surveys. The program is now reverting to manually-collected data.

The goBerkeley program has proven to be effective in managing parking demand, successful in gaining acceptance and approval from local merchants, and has a lean administrative framework relative to other successful programs. The program has since expanded from three zones (during the pilot) to five.



For more info:
https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Public_Works/Transportation/Parking_Meters.aspx#_goBerkeley

Other Cities

- Redwood City
- San Francisco (SFpark)
- San Mateo
- Walnut Creek

II. Additional Implementation Advice

Ingredients for Success

- Leadership support
- Dedicated champion
- Confidence in vision and execution
- The right amount of data
- When in doubt, simplify
- Pair policy changes with user enhancements
- Transparency and credibility

Communications Strategy

- Purpose
- Strategy recap
- Key messages
- Brand identity
- Partners and personas
- Communications channels
- Steps and schedule
- FAQs

Data Approaches & Tips

- Inventory
- Utilization (on-street vs. off-street)
- Data platforms, storage, and pilots
- Data standards
- Performance monitoring (on-street vs. off-street)

Appendices

- Sample Policy Code Language — **A**
- Sample Staff Reports & Council Resolutions — **B**
- Parking Policy Cut Sheet — **C**
- Parking Policy Database — **D**

How Would Demand-Responsive Pricing Work in [Insert City]?

LEARN MORE BY VISITING:
[insert website]

OR CONTACT:
[insert email]

Demand-responsive pricing charges the lowest possible rate to achieve availability targets — matching price and demand to ensure there is always an open parking space nearby to someone searching for parking.

- *Static parking prices are replaced with demand-based prices that are adjusted over time based on parking demand – more convenient or "in demand" spaces cost more than less convenient parking spaces.*
- *The ideal on-street parking occupancy rate is around 85%, which leaves roughly one to two spaces available per block. For off-street facilities where turnover is less frequent, the ideal rate is approximately 90-95%, which ensures supply is optimally utilized. To achieve these rates, cities decrease hourly rates where utilization is lower than the target and increase hourly rates in areas where utilization is higher than the target.*
- *With demand-responsive pricing in place, there can be less emphasis on time limits to create turnover. Extending parking time limits makes parking more convenient for drivers. For example, a 4-hour limit gives ample time for visitors to visit multiple businesses without rushing back to their vehicle or risking a parking ticket. Some cities with demand-responsive pricing have found they can remove time limits altogether.*

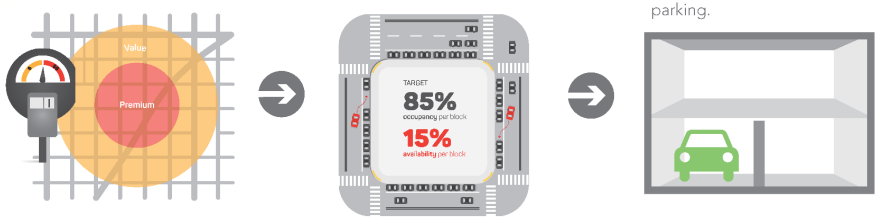
Which Bay Area cities have implemented this?

- Berkeley
- Santa Rosa
- Redwood City
- San Francisco
- San Mateo
- Walnut Creek

1 Eligible parking zones or blocks are identified based on existing demand for parking.

2 On-street pricing is set to achieve a goal of 85% occupancy with 15% availability on every block, at any given time.

3 Off-street facilities have an occupancy goal of 90-95%, and should be priced lower than higher demand on-street parking.



Why is it Recommended?

- Researchers have determined that the ideal parking availability rate is about 15%, which means there will be roughly 1-2 spaces available per block at all times.
- Other cities have seen increases in parking availability and decreases in meter rates
- Demand-responsive parking pricing reduces the reliance on time limits, which results in fewer citations and a more positive parking experience for drivers.

Benefits Summary

- Aligns price and demand to ensure there is always an open space.
- Makes it easier to find a parking space.
- Reduces circling for parking.
- Reduces congestion and improves traffic flow and air quality.
- Creates lower rate parking options.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES
Workshops & Webinars

- Parking 101: General Parking Management Sessions
- Parking 201: Parking Implementation Labs
- Parking policy and technology workshops
- ***NEW* Local Parking Policy Webinars: Reconsidering Parking Development Requirements**
- ***NEW* Local Parking Policy Webinars: Pricing Parking to Achieve Local Goals**
- ***NEW* Local Parking Policy Webinars: Developing a Curb Management Strategy**

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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES
Grants

- Priority Development Area (PDA) Technical Assistance Grants
- Climate Initiatives Program Grants
- Parking Management Grants

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PORTAL

MTC-ABAG Regional Planning Program
Local Parking Policy Technical Assistance

James Choe // jchoe@bayareametro.gov