

## Excerpts from the April 28, 2011 meeting of the Traffic and Safety Commission

### **6 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:**

#### **6-1 Permit Parking/Meter Parking—Panel presentation by staff from Cities of El Cerrito and Berkeley.**

Yvette Ortiz, Manager of Engineering with the City of El Cerrito explained the program in the City. It started in the mid 1980s due to high parking demand around El Cerrito del Norte and El Cerrito Plaza BART stations. Currently, El Cerrito has three areas for permit parking: Around the two BART stations and the area next to West Berkeley. The permit program for each area is renewed every three years, but each area expires at different times. The permit parking program is implemented on one side of the street only. The Engineering Division reviews the petitions for parking permit zones, which should obtain the support of 60% of the residents living on the block. El Cerrito is proposing a revision of the fees for the permit parking program in order to reflect the true administrative cost for the program.

Diana Cardona, Assistant Traffic Engineer for the City of Berkeley provided details about the City program. She said that in Berkeley there were 14 permit parking areas designated by alphabet letters from A through M. The areas varied in size. The City of Berkeley has a Residential Permit Parking Boundary that was established through an Environmental Report. Residents of a block that has been approved to have a parking permit program should purchase an annual parking permit for \$34.50. Visitor parking permits can be purchased for \$2.25/permit. There is also a 14-day merchant permit for \$23 and a special permit for In-home care givers. Holders of a disabled placard do not have to purchase a permit. There are also restrictions as to how many parking permits community institutions, such as churches, senior facilities staff could get (only 60% of staff members could purchase parking permits). The City of Berkeley is considering a citywide program because almost everybody is impacted by the University, the commercial districts, or the industrial areas. The programs are successful because of an effective enforcement system. The Police Department enforces the parking restrictions every two hours.

The paid parking program in Berkeley consists of on-street and off-street parking. The City has three (3) garages that hold 950 spaces with hourly rates of \$1.00 and \$15-\$20 per day for parking stall. The administration of the off street program is outsourced and the gross revenue for FY 2010 was \$2.8 million. The administration and maintenance expenses for the same fiscal year were approximately \$1.5 million. The City's on-street parking consists of 3,700 spaces controlled by multi-space meters. This program generates approximately \$5.3 million in revenue and costs \$1.4 million in salaries and \$2.7 million in maintenance. The success of a paid parking program depends on setting the correct pricing. The challenges of this program are: 1) the large overhead, 2) parking spillover into residential neighborhoods, 3) maintenance of the signage (graffiti removal), 4) Work closely with parking enforcement. An ideal parking program starts with a parking study to determine proper regulations and proper pricing.

The discussion was open to the members of the Commission:

Anderson asked if the cities had applied for grants to fund the initial capital costs. Yvette Ortiz said that the initial capital outlay was \$50,000 and the program attempted to recover this cost within 10 years through the program fees. He asked staff from Berkeley if merchants were allowed to park in yellow zones. Staff responded that the yellow permit for vehicle with commercial plates was different from the residential permit, but the restrictions differed from area to area.

Miki asked what the cities did with the revenue from the parking program. Staff responded that the revenues were mainly used to support the programs, but there was interest in using the remaining balance in other programs as well.

Knapp asked if waiving the parking permit fees for the disabled was a policy mandated by Council action or was something mandated by ADA. He also asked if the cost of enforcing the metered parking is included in the expenses. Berkeley staff responded that ADA mandated on-street parking regulations, but the Council adopted policy for the parking garages. The cost of enforcing is included in the on street parking program. The off street parking program is outsourced and its revenues are mainly used to pay the contractor.

McCroskey asked if Berkeley had considered variable pricing. Staff said that it was forthcoming as the City is issuing a RFP to alter equipment to implement value pricing.

Discussion was open to the public. The following people spoke: Preston Jordan, Ed Fields, Caryl O'Keffe, Harry Chomsky, Peter Moss, Ann Chaney. The questions were the following:

- Is Berkeley's residential parking program self sustained?
- What is the articulation between departments to develop policy?
- If there were two-hour meters on a street like San Pablo Avenue, what would be the impact on adjacent residential streets?
- Berkeley has a low parking ratio and the ultimate goal of getting people out of their cars has been accomplished
- Albany zoning code allows 2 parking spaces per unit. What is the regulation in Berkeley? Is there a requirement to use the parking spaces as oppose as to have it and not use it?
- What is the dangerous area to trade as a policy maker in order to implement a paid parking program and how is constituency built?
- Are there special provisions for car sharing parking spaces?
- Free parking impacts a number of things in any city. Because of Measure D Albany allows 2 parking spaces/dwelling unit. It is necessary to take a second look at Measure D if the Traffic and Safety Commission is considering evaluating permit parking and paid parking in Albany.
- How many staff members are used to administer the program?
- Are you tracking tires for the on-street parking? Are you also chalking? For the multi space meters, do you involve vendors for repairs? Are first level appeals handled by staff? What is the fine amount?
- How many permits per resident does Berkeley issue?

Responses: The residential permit program in Berkeley breaks even, but it is stretching thin and they need to hire more police officers for enforcement.

Adjacent to the new Trader Joe's in Berkeley, one side of the street allows parking for people with permits and the other side allows both, residential permit and 2-hour free parking.

Berkeley requires one parking space/dwelling unit.

El Cerrito is looking at the issue of parking in the on-going San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. The City is looking at changing the requirements and using maximums rather than minimums.

Implementing a residential permit parking or paid parking program is tricky and every neighborhood is different. For instance, if a residential building does not have off-street parking, it would not be a good idea to implement paid parking across the street. In every case, make sure that if you reduce the on-street parking availability, the parking needs of nearby residents are met.

Berkeley has preferential fees for car share participants in off street facilities. The City of Berkeley turned in half of its fleet and has dedicated share vehicles for use during business hours Monday through Friday.

Berkeley uses 1.5 FTE for administration of the metered parking. The Transportation Division is comprised of five traffic engineers. About 20% of FTE is used to administer the residential parking. The Finance Department collects the fees, and the Enforcement Department has 9 FTE dedicated to enforcing the parking program.

El Cerrito uses less than 10% FTE when reviewing requests. At the beginning more staff was required to administer the program.

In Berkeley, up to 20-visitor parking permits per year can be issued to one household. There are two types of visitor parking permits: one day permits and the 14-day parking permit. El Cerrito has a visitor parking permit pass. The cost is less than \$20 per year.