

Downtown Demand- Responsive Parking Program: February 2024 Rate Proposal

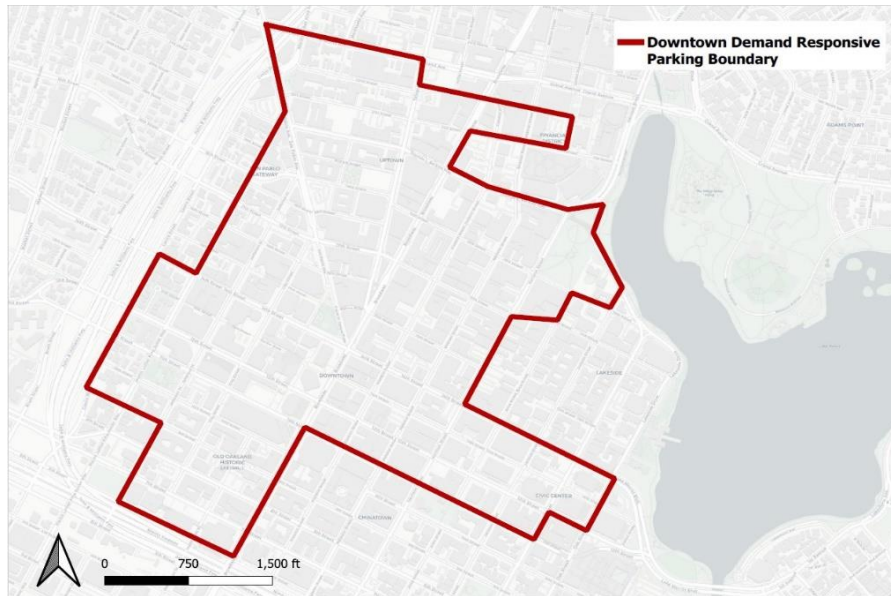
Background

OakPark+ is the City of Oakland’s demand-responsive parking program, committed to making parking easier and actively managing the parking system to support vibrant, sustainable commercial districts. Consistent with the City’s guiding parking policy (“Parking Principles,” [Resolution 84664 C.M.S.](#)), this program improves parking availability by using “flexible pricing”. Flexible pricing encourages some drivers to park in lower demand areas to achieve 65 to 85% occupancy or about one to two parking spaces available per block face.

The Department of Transportation (OakDOT) has already begun flexing parking rates in the [Montclair Village](#) neighborhood in 2021 and the [Chinatown](#) neighborhood in 2023. After implementing flexible rates, parking occupancy should be measured and adjusted periodically. An updated parking occupancy survey was done in January 2024 to measure the effectiveness of demand-based pricing on parking availability in the Montclair Village neighborhood. That analysis (available [here](#)) found that variable pricing has helped shift some parking demand away from the core to the lower priced areas, with further price adjustments recommended. An analysis on the effects of demand-based parking meter rates in the Chinatown neighborhood will be conducted in mid 2024 once the program has been implemented for a full year.

This report makes data-informed recommendations to extend flexible parking pricing into the rest of Downtown. Figure 1 shows the outline of the area that will have demand responsive meters. The area is bordered by the 880 freeway and Chinatown on the south, by the 980 freeway on the west, Grand Avenue on the north, and Lake Merritt or the unmetred Lakeside neighborhood to the east.

Figure 1: Map of Downtown Demand Responsive Rate Program



Pricing and Zone Methodology

The Oakland Municipal Code ([O.M.C. 10.36.142](#)) states “Within designated flexible parking zones fees may be established within a fee range to be established annually in the City Master Fee Schedule. Fees may be adjusted up or down within the designated fee range by the City Administrator to encourage maximum use and availability of parking with a goal of 85% parking occupancy during peak demand.” Additionally, the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Master Fee Schedule allows for parking rates between \$0.50 and \$4.00 per hour, based on parking occupancy, with the goal of achieving a 65 to 85% occupancy, ensuring one or two spaces to always be available per block face: if occupancy is 85% or greater, then the price should be increased and if occupancy is 65% or less, then the price should be maintained or decreased to the point where desired occupancy results are reached. Demand-responsive rates and meter duration may be set administratively through the action of the City Administrator.

Parking rates will vary by both zone and time of day. Blocks with metered parking are grouped into two zones: Premium and Value (see Figure 3). These zones have been determined using occupancy data at the block level and land use. In creating the zones, OakDOT has attempted to create zones that are contiguous, intuitive, and logical. Meter screens will display the current hourly rate and rate information for the full day. Staff aim to evaluate and, if called for, change meter rates up to two times per year.

Parking occupancy data was analyzed to understand current parking demand. Occupancy data were collected over two weekdays, June 29 and July 16 in 2022. Commonly accepted “best practices” were utilized while conducting this survey. For instance, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s handbook¹ states an occupancy survey determines, on a block-by block basis, the number of cars

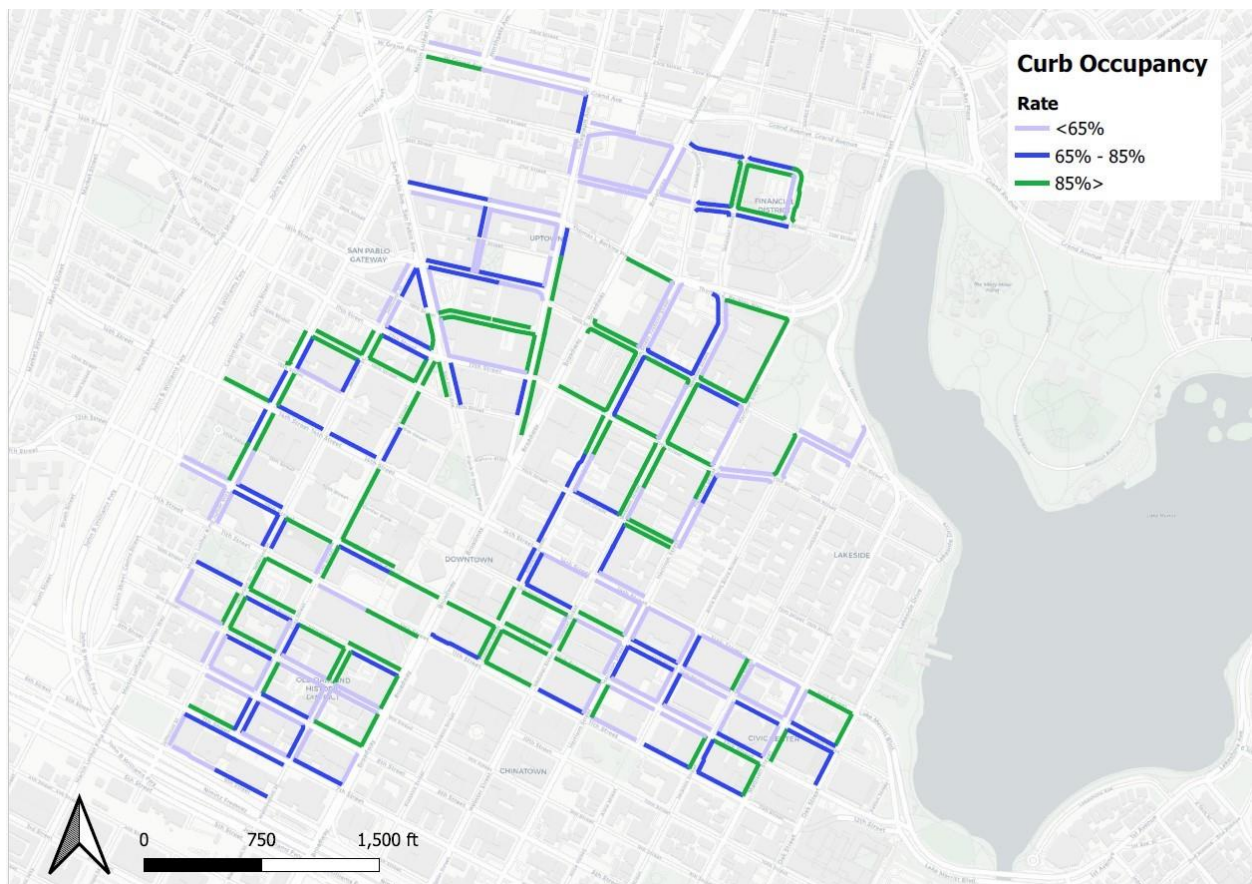
¹ <https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/Toolbox-Handbook.pdf>

parked at a given time of day. This is done by systematically counting the number of cars parked along each block-face. The counts would be performed once each hour throughout the day, taking care to assure that the survey covers the period(s) of peak parking activity during the day. Additionally, the Metropolitan Planning Council website² states surveys are typically done on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday during which there are no special events and the weather is fair. Observations were made every hour from 8am to 6pm. Average parking occupancy was calculated for three different time bands: 8am to 10am (morning), 10am to 4pm (midday), and 4pm to 6pm (evening).

Findings

Figure 2 displays the average parking occupancy rates for individual block faces in the downtown area.

Figure 2: Block Face Occupancy Rates



² <https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/how-to-do-a-parking-study/>

Figure 3 displays the recommended Premium and Value Zones based on the data from Figure 2. Most blocks in the Premium Zones are in the center of Downtown—adjacent to retail and dining where parking is in greater demand—while blocks in the Value Zone are located on the outskirts of the area, surrounding the Premium Zones. The average occupancy for blocks in the Premium Zone is 89% while the average occupancy for blocks in the Value Zone is 53%.

Figure 3: Premium and Value Zones

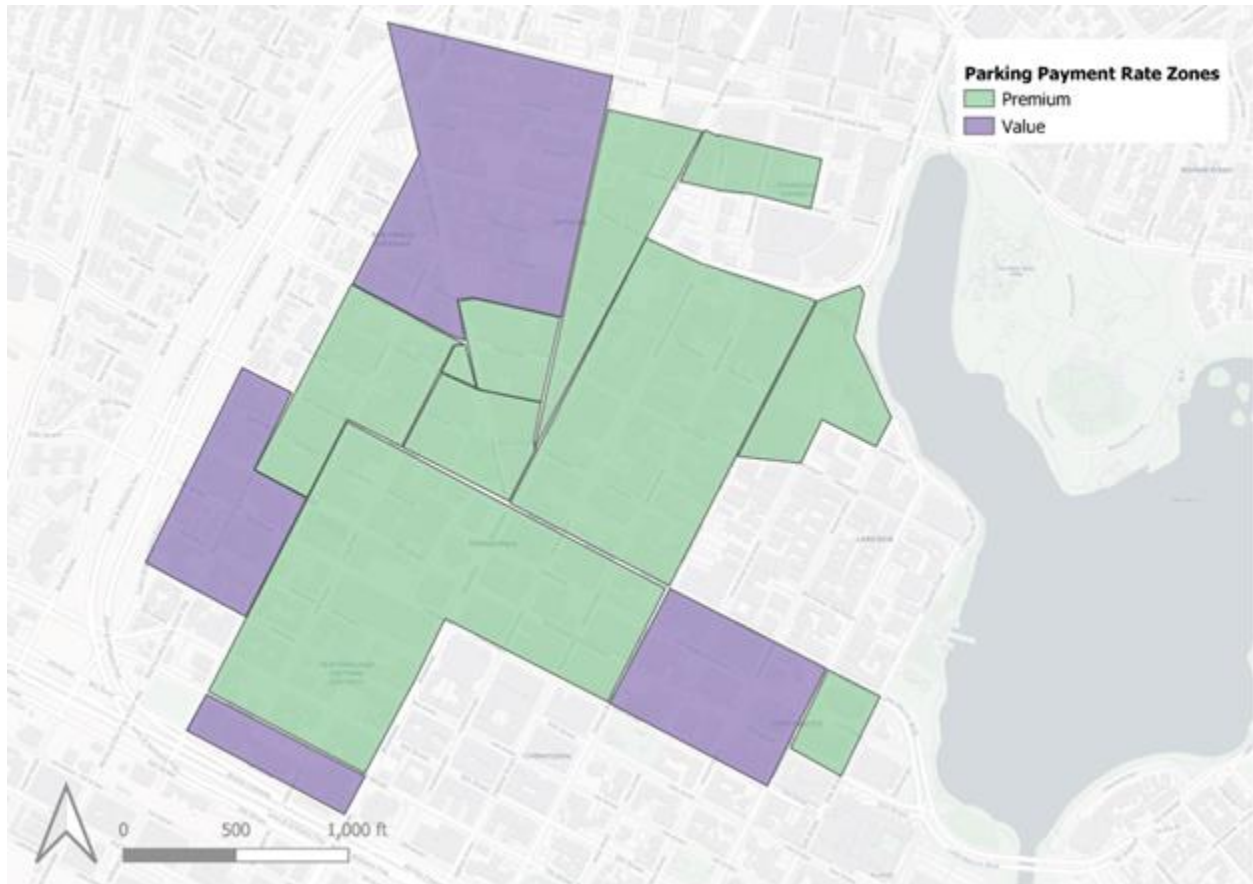


Table 1 displays the occupancy rates during the morning, midday, and evening time bands according to zone. Table 1 also provides a rate recommendation—reduce, maintain, increase—for each zone based on the 65-85% occupancy goal.

Table 1: Occupancy by Zone and Time of Day

	Zone	Occupancy	Rate Change Recommendation
Morning 8 am – 10 am	Value	57%	Reduce
	Premium	85%	Increase

Midday 10 am – 4 pm	Value	64%	Maintain
	Premium	93%	Increase
Evening 4 pm – 6 pm	Value	54%	Reduce
	Premium	91%	Increase

Recommendation

Table 2 shows the recommended hourly meter rate for the Value Zone and Premium Zone based on occupancy data analysis. The Value Zone rate is \$1.50 per hour and Premium Zone rate is \$2.50 per hour.

Table 2: Meter Rate by Zone and Time of Day

	Morning 8 am – 10 am			Midday 10 am – 4 pm			Evening 4 pm – 6 pm		
Zone	Occupancy	Current Rate	Proposed Rate	Occupancy	Current Rate	Proposed Rate	Occupancy	Current Rate	Proposed Rate
Premium	85%	\$2.00	\$2.50	93%	\$2.00	\$2.50	91%	\$2.00	\$2.50
Value	57%	\$2.00	\$1.50	64%	\$1.50	\$2.00	54%	\$2.00	\$1.50

Table 3 compares the occupancy rates and meter prices of Downtown, Montclair, and Chinatown. The table shows the average occupancy for each zone, time band, and the recommended hourly rate. The rates in the proposed Downtown Premium and Value Zones are comparable to those in Montclair and Chinatown. Montclair Premium Zone rates vary the most because they have been adjusted twice. The proposed Downtown rates would be similar to the current rates in Chinatown, which have been adjusted once.

Table 3: Average Occupancy by Zone and Time of Day

Premium	Morning 8 am – 10 am		Midday 10 am – 4 pm		Evening 4 pm – 6 pm	
	Occupancy	Price	Occupancy	Price	Occupancy	Price

Downtown	85%	\$2.50	93%	\$2.50	91%	\$3
Montclair	73%	\$2	86%	\$3	84%	\$3
Chinatown	53%	\$2	105%	\$2.50	90%	\$2.50
Value	Morning 8 am – 10 am		Midday 10 am – 4 pm		Evening 4 pm – 6 pm	
Downtown	57%	\$1.50	64%	\$2.00	54%	\$1.50
Montclair	36%	\$1	64%	\$2	65%	\$2
Chinatown	50%	\$1.50	88%	\$2	74%	\$2

OakDOT staff recommend that the City Administrator approve this proposal to apply flexible pricing (also known as “demand-responsive parking meter rates”) throughout Downtown, taking effect in the second quarter of 2024. Doing so would allow staff to charge the lowest possible meter rate to ensure at least one or two parking spaces are available on each block face and enhance the parking and mobility experience in downtown by increasing access to destinations while reducing cruising for parking, vehicle miles traveled, safety hazards caused by distracted drivers, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Signage

Signs will be the primary way of communicating if a space is at the Value Rate or at the Premium Rate. Like the signs installed in the Montclair and Chinatown neighborhoods, the primary sign will be 18 inches by 24 inches and feature the blue parking “P” as illustrated in Figure 3. Parkers will be able to differentiate the Premium Zones from Value Zones based on the color of the signs and the words “Value” or “Premium” on the sign. Premium Zone signs are green while Value Zone signs are purple.

The sign design and plan were created through a highly collaborative process, incorporating input from the Traffic Maintenance Team, Parking Enforcement Unit, City Administrator's Office, DOT Executive Management Team, and others. The Traffic Maintenance Team will install and maintain the signs. The costs of maintaining and printing signs will be covered by the next-generation mobile parking payment system that staff procured and presented to City Council in early 2024.

In addition to signs, parkers will see the exact rates by time of day on the meter screen. Signs are critical to shifting parking demand away from Downtown’s most congested blocks to the more available, less expensive blocks in the Value Zone.

Figure 4: Premium Zone Signage



Figure 5: Value Zone Signage



Curb Zone Painting

Resources permitting, staff will use this opportunity to refresh the curb paint for no parking areas (red), passenger loading zones (white), disabled parking spaces (blue), and limited time parking (green). While gathering parking occupancy data, the staff also took pictures of painted curb zones where the painting had faded.

Communications & Outreach

Staff presented the rate change plan and methodology at the Downtown/ Uptown Central Business District (CBD) meeting in February 2023. In further collaboration with the CBD, staff plan to conduct robust door-to-door outreach about this parking proposal to Downtown businesses in early 2024 and

the CBD has offered to have its ambassador team hand out flyers. Additionally, informational materials about this rate change plan will be delivered to BID constituents.

Staff has generally received positive feedback from stakeholders and the Uptown & Downtown CBD supports the change. Staff anticipates that some businesses in the Premium Zone may be against the rate change because their businesses will be near where rates will be raised; however, Staff believes their concerns will be curtailed as Staff emphasizes that the change will increase parking availability near their businesses.

Staff will announce parking meter changes through the city website, media sources, and Nextdoor. The project's webpage will continue to be updated: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/services/oakparkplus>

Next Steps & Timeline

With City Administrator approval, the new parking meter rates could take effect as soon as April 2024. Staff will prepare work orders and work with the Traffic Maintenance Team to install the new signage in Downtown.

Attachments (1)
Oakland Parking Principles (Reso 84664 C.M.S)

FILED
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
OAKLAND

2013 SEP 26 PM 2:47

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION No. 84664 C.M.S.

Introduced by Councilmember _____

Approved as to Form and Legality



City Attorney

**A RESOLUTION ADOPTING PARKING PRINCIPLES FOR CITY OF
OAKLAND COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS**

WHEREAS, these Parking Principles call for the active management of parking; and were first presented to the City Council in December, 2009; and

WHEREAS, these Parking Principles hold that parking should be treated as an asset that helps bolster the economic vitality of neighborhood commercial areas; and

WHEREAS, these Parking Principles hold that parking should be managed to achieve an approximate 85% maximum occupancy per block, so there will always be some available on-street parking for shoppers and visitors; and

WHEREAS, these Parking Principles hold that parking should be priced at market rates, and should be adjusted regularly to reflect current use; and

WHEREAS, these Parking Principles hold that pricing and policies should encourage the use of off-street parking lots where they are available; and

WHEREAS, these Parking Principles state that, whenever possible, a portion of parking revenue should be reinvested directly back to neighborhood commercial district improvements, potentially through a mechanism such as a parking benefit district; and, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the City shall adopt the following Parking Principles as official policy to guide actions dealing with parking in commercial districts city-wide:

- **Parking is part of a multi-modal approach to developing neighborhood transportation infrastructure.**
 - Users of commercial districts (shoppers, employees, visitors) have varied needs for access, via private auto, transit, bicycle and foot.
 - Curbside parking must be balanced with multiple complementary and competing needs, including but not limited to delivery vehicles, taxis, car share vehicles, bus stops, bicycle parking and sidewalk widening.

- **Parking should be actively managed to maximize efficient use of a public resource.**
 - Parking should be treated as an asset that helps bolster the economic vitality of neighborhood commercial areas
 - Parking should be managed to achieve an approximate 85% maximum occupancy per block so that there will always be some parking available to shoppers and visitors
 - Parking should be priced to achieve usage goals ("market pricing"); market prices may vary by area, by time of day and may be adjusted occasionally to reflect current use.
 - Pricing and policies should encourage use of off-street parking lots where they are available.
- **Parking should be easy for customers.**
 - Costs, rules and penalties should be easily comprehensible.
 - Fees should be payable by a variety of fare media (prepaid cards, credit cards, cash and cell phones).
 - If possible, and where appropriate, time limits should be avoided in favor of market pricing.
 - The role of tickets should be minimized in generating parking revenue; it should be easier to pay parking fees, which may lower the incidence of tickets.
- **Parking policy and regulations should help the City meet other transportation, land use and environmental goals.**
 - Pricing policies should encourage a "park once" approach, to minimize driving from store-to-store within a commercial district and adding to congestion and air pollution.
 - Whenever possible, a portion of parking revenue should be reinvested directly back to neighborhood commercial district improvements, potentially through a mechanism such as a parking benefit district.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, OCT 15 2013

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

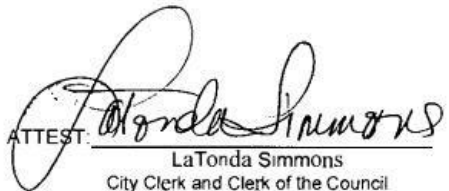
AYES - BROOKS, GALLO, GIBSON MCELHANEY, KALB, KAPLAN, ~~REID~~, SCHAAF ~~ABSTENTION~~ -6
~~MEMBERSHIP~~

NOES - 0

ABSENT - 0

ABSTENTION - 0

Excused - Reid, Kernighan - 2

ATTEST: 
LaTonda Simmons
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
of the City of Oakland, California