



MEMORANDUM

To: PABC Board of Directors

From: Francis Burnszynski, Parking Planning Manager

Date: November 22, 2021

RE: Fells Point Demand-Based Parking Meter Rate Setting Recommendation

Approval Request

PABC staff request PABC Board of Directors' approval of the following recommendation:

1. The authority to adjust on-street parking meter rates in the Fells Point area (defined here as the area bounded by Eastern Avenue and Pratt Street on the north; Thames Street on the south; to South Caroline Street on the west and South Wolfe Street/Fell Street on the east) within a range of 50¢/hour to \$5.00/hour based on parking demand as determined by the following criteria:
 - Parking meter rates on any block may be adjusted up or down only in 25¢/hour increments and no more than once every 6 months.
 - If occupancy is higher than 85% in a particular block, then the parking meter rate may be adjusted upward incrementally and slowly until occupancy hits 85%.
 - If occupancy is lower than 75% in a particular block, then the parking meter rate may be adjusted downward incrementally and slowly until occupancy hits 75%.
 - If occupancy is between 75% and 85%, then the parking meter rate will not be adjusted.
 - Each parking meter rate adjustment within Fells Point will be reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors of the Parking Authority prior to implementation.
 - Notice of each parking meter rate adjustment within Fells Point will be sent to the District 1 Council Member at least one month prior to implementation.
2. Initial adjustments of on-street parking meter rates in Fells Point as outlined in this memo.
3. Adjustment of parking meter in-effect times and the introduction of a tiered pricing approach in Fells Point as outlined in this memo.

If this recommendation is approved by this Board, then item #1 above would also need the City's Board of Estimate's approval prior to implementation. The primary members of the Board of Estimates (the Mayor; City Council President; City Comptroller) and District 1 City Councilman Zeke Cohen would be briefed on this recommendation prior to its formal presentation to the Board of Estimates.

Background

The goal of parking meters is to create on-street parking availability, so that customers of stores, restaurants, and attractions can easily find a parking space near their destination. This goal is achieved through setting parking meters rates that result in one or two available parking spaces on each blockface (about **15% - 25%** availability, or about **75% - 85%** utilization). When meter rates are too low, demand for parking goes up and a block may be overparked. When meter rates are too high, fewer drivers are willing to pay the rate and a block may be underutilized. Effective metering that results in one or two available spaces per block reduces the number of cars circling to find parking. That means drivers benefit from greater convenience, but the whole City benefits from reduced congestion, lower emissions, and unnecessary fossil fuel usage. Outside of the Central Business District (CBD)/Central Downtown, Harbor East, Mount Vernon and Federal Hill, this is the first finalized parking study using the demand-based pricing model in Fells Point.

Determining meter rates that result in one or two available spaces is an iterative process based on collecting and analyzing data and altering rates incrementally. If demand-based parking in Fells Point is approved as indicated, rates will be adjusted in **\$0.25** increments after each parking demand study. The Parking Authority of Baltimore City (PABC) will conduct these studies at least once per year. If on-street parking occupancy is higher than **85%** on a blockface, the rate generally increases. If on-street parking occupancy is lower than **75%** on a blockface, the rate generally decreases. If on-street parking occupancy is between **75%** and **85%** on a blockface, the rate generally is maintained.

Data from Round 1 of the PABC's Fells Point demand-based parking meter rate adjustments study was collected in October 2021. PABC first determined the parking capacity of each blockface included in the study area. Then the number of cars parked was counted at different times of the day and evening, for both weekdays and Saturdays. The data was compiled and analyzed to determine a utilization rate (average percentage of the block's capacity that is parked).

Parking behaviors have likely been impacted because of COVID-19 and the slow recovery period. Utilization of the curb has been changed such as seeing an increase of parklets and outdoor seating arrangements in the Fells Point area. The PABC will continue to observe changes in parking utilization during future data collection rounds.

Demand-Based Pricing

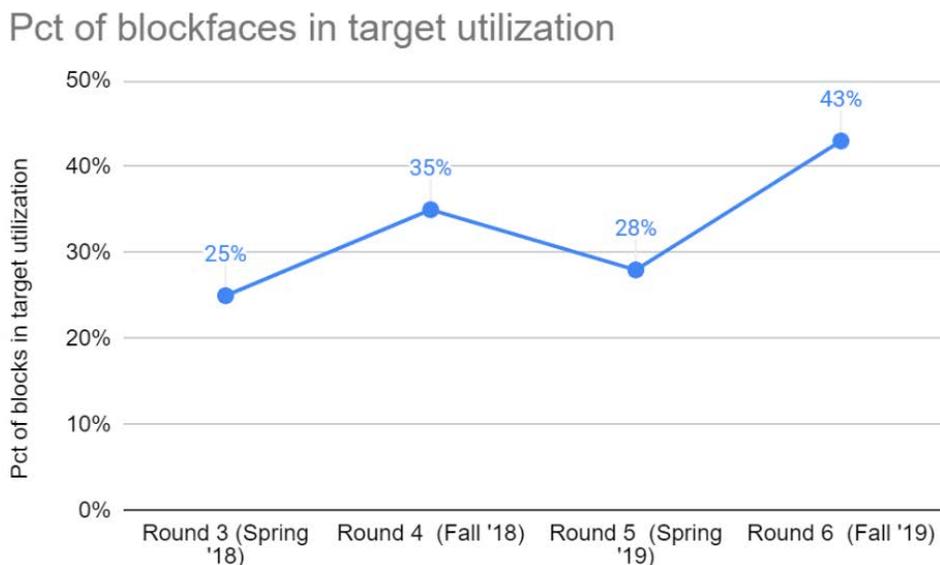
According to the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, changing pricing for meters is a best practice for curbside management because it helps optimize the use of on-street parking availability in City areas. It creates parking availability for businesses and residents, and also regional commuters¹. PABC has been conducting the demand-based pricing study in the CBD for several years, and it continues to show beneficial results creating parking availability after meter rates are adjusted. To better understand its success,

¹ US Parking Policies: An Overview of Management Strategies, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

we will examine parking utilization data from rounds 3-6 of study within the CBD. Our reasoning for excluding the first two rounds is it likely took parkers some time to become aware and react to the changing parking meter rates. Additionally, we are excluding data from Rounds 7 and 8 of the study because they were conducted in Fall 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The on-street parking utilization data may have been partially skewed because of changes in driving and parking behavior brought about by the pandemic.

CBD Target parking utilization

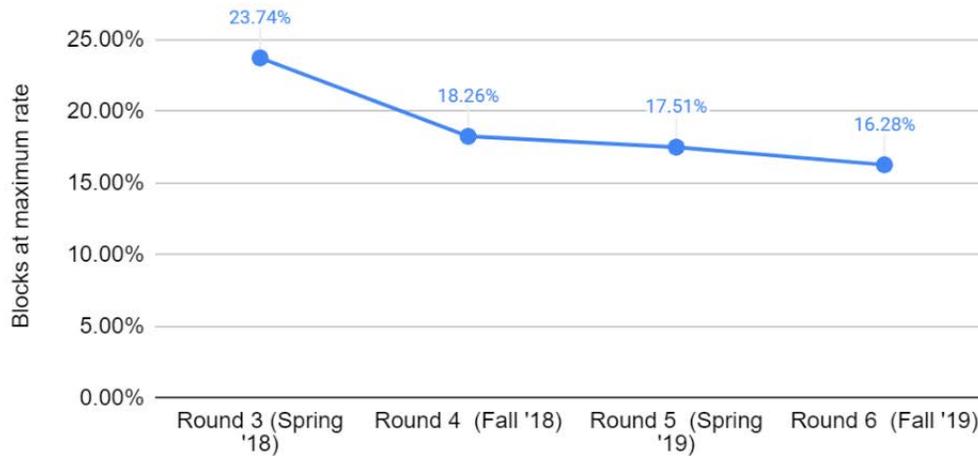
As mentioned above, the PABC targets a **75-85%** parking utilization rate on blockfaces to foster parking availability. The percentage of blockfaces that are entering the target parking utilization range is one indicator that demand-based pricing is achieving its objective. In the third round of study, **25%** of blockfaces were within the target parking utilization range. In the 6th round, **43%** of blockfaces were performing within that target parking utilization range. Additionally, in Round 3, **41%** of blockfaces had rate increases. In Round 6, only **35%** increased. This indicates that blocks are moving toward an equilibrium within the target parking utilization range.



Maximum meter rates

We can also measure how well demand-based pricing is changing parking behaviors by looking at the number of blockfaces that are at the maximum rate for that round of study. We would expect that with each round of study, fewer and fewer blockfaces would reach the maximum rate, as each blockface reaches its equilibrium point within the target parking utilization range. In Round 3, **23.7%** of blockfaces had seen their rates increase in each of the three rounds of study and were at the maximum rate of **\$2.75**. As of Round 6, **16.3%** of blockfaces had seen their rates increase in each of the six rounds of study and were at the maximum rate of **\$3.50**. That represents a **31%** decrease in the number of blocks at the maximum rate between rounds 3 and 6.

Blockfaces at maximum rate

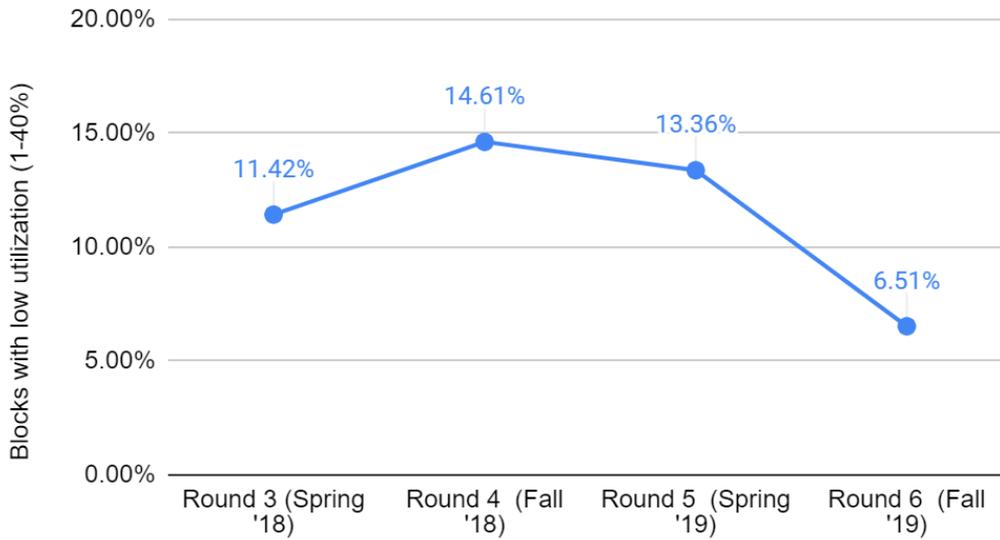


Lowest-utilization blocks

In addition to looking at how popular, highly utilized blockfaces are responding to price increases, we can also measure the effectiveness of demand-based pricing by looking at what happens on blocks with very low parking utilization, which we have defined as between **1%** and **40%** utilization. These blockfaces see their rates decrease which could incentivize drivers to park in underutilized areas.

In Round 3, **11.4%** of blocks were within the lowest utilization range. By Round 6, only **6.5%** of blocks were within the lowest parking utilization range. That represents a **43%** decrease in the number of blockfaces with very low parking utilization. The combination of fewer blockfaces with very low utilization and fewer blockfaces reaching the maximum rate indicates drivers are likely responding to demand-based pricing, shying away from more costly, high parking utilization blockfaces in favor of less costly, less trafficked blocks.

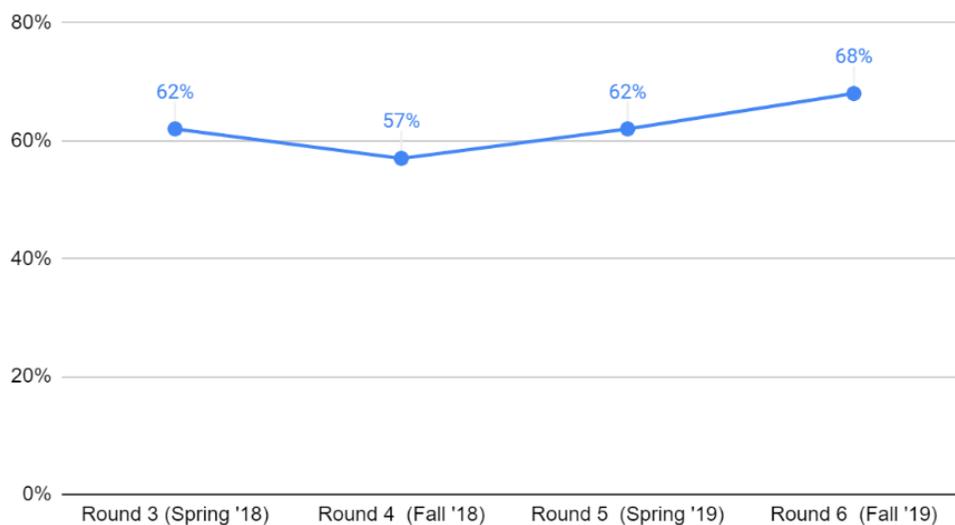
Pct of blockfaces with low utilization (1-40%)



Lower demand blocks

We can also measure how blockfaces with low to moderate parking demand—those that had at least two, but no more than three rate decreases in the four rounds of the study between rounds 3-6—have been impacted by demand-based pricing. Analyzing these blockfaces shows that from Round 3 to Round 6 there was a 6-percentage point increase in the parking utilization on these blockfaces. This shows demand-based pricing is helping to distribute parking demand to less popular blocks and move these blockfaces toward the target parking utilization range of **75-85%**.

Average utilization of lower demand blockfaces



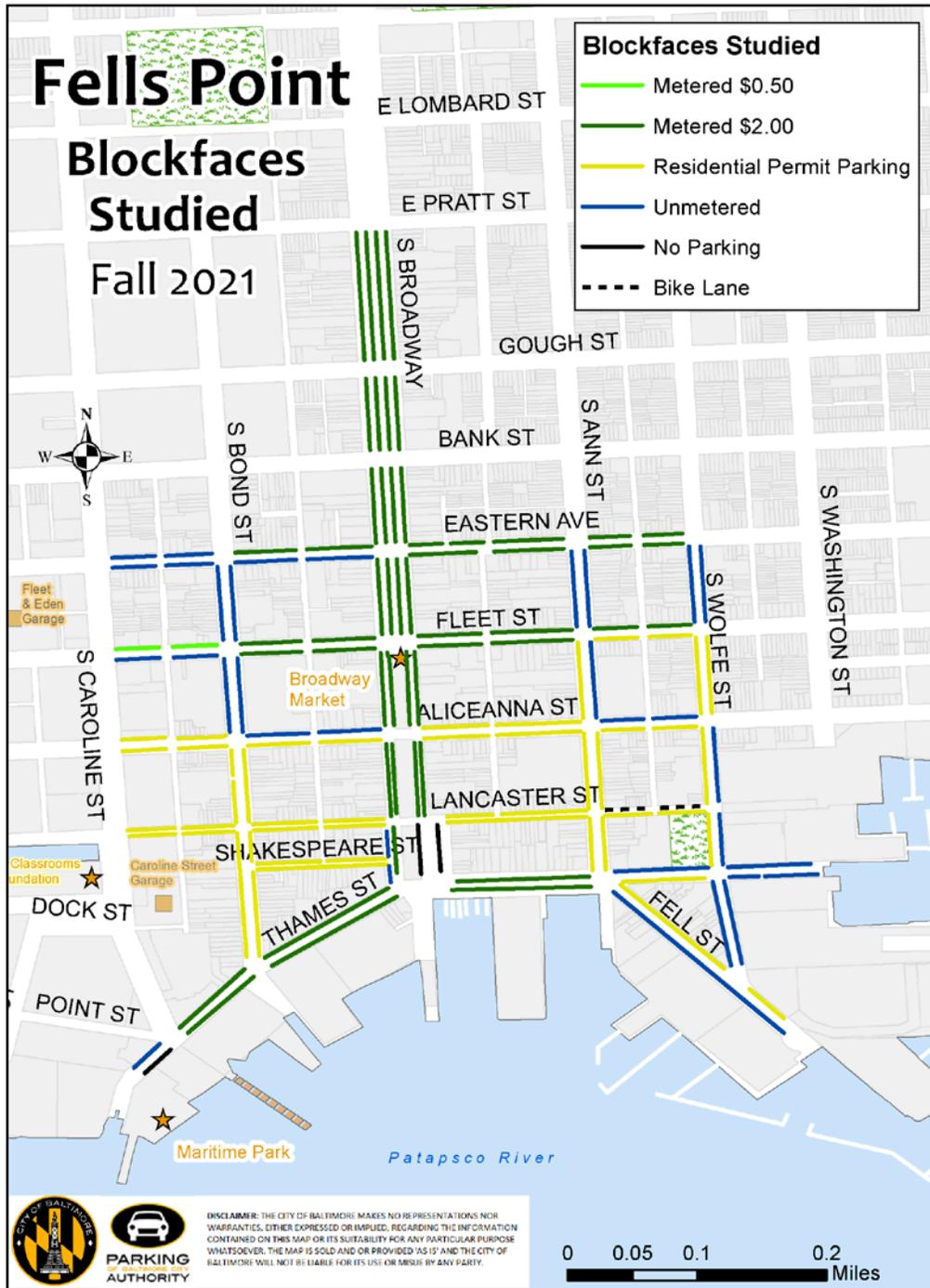
We have identified several beneficial aspects of using the demand-based pricing model for improving parking availability and utilization. We believe, in an area like Fells Point where high-end hotels, retail, popular restaurants and bars are bounded by medium-density residential blocks protected by Residential Permit Parking (RPP), this model of demand-based pricing will be helpful. New development has been occurring in Fells Point as well as changing on-street parking activity. Given the parking pressures of RPP blocks in Fells Point that are mixed into the commercial district, new wayfinding signage has been installed throughout Fells Point and Harbor East to guide visiting drivers to park in our Fleet and Eden and Caroline Street garages and help reduce demand on the on-street parking supply. The demand-based pricing model will be an important addition to helping improve vehicular access for businesses, residents, and visitors.

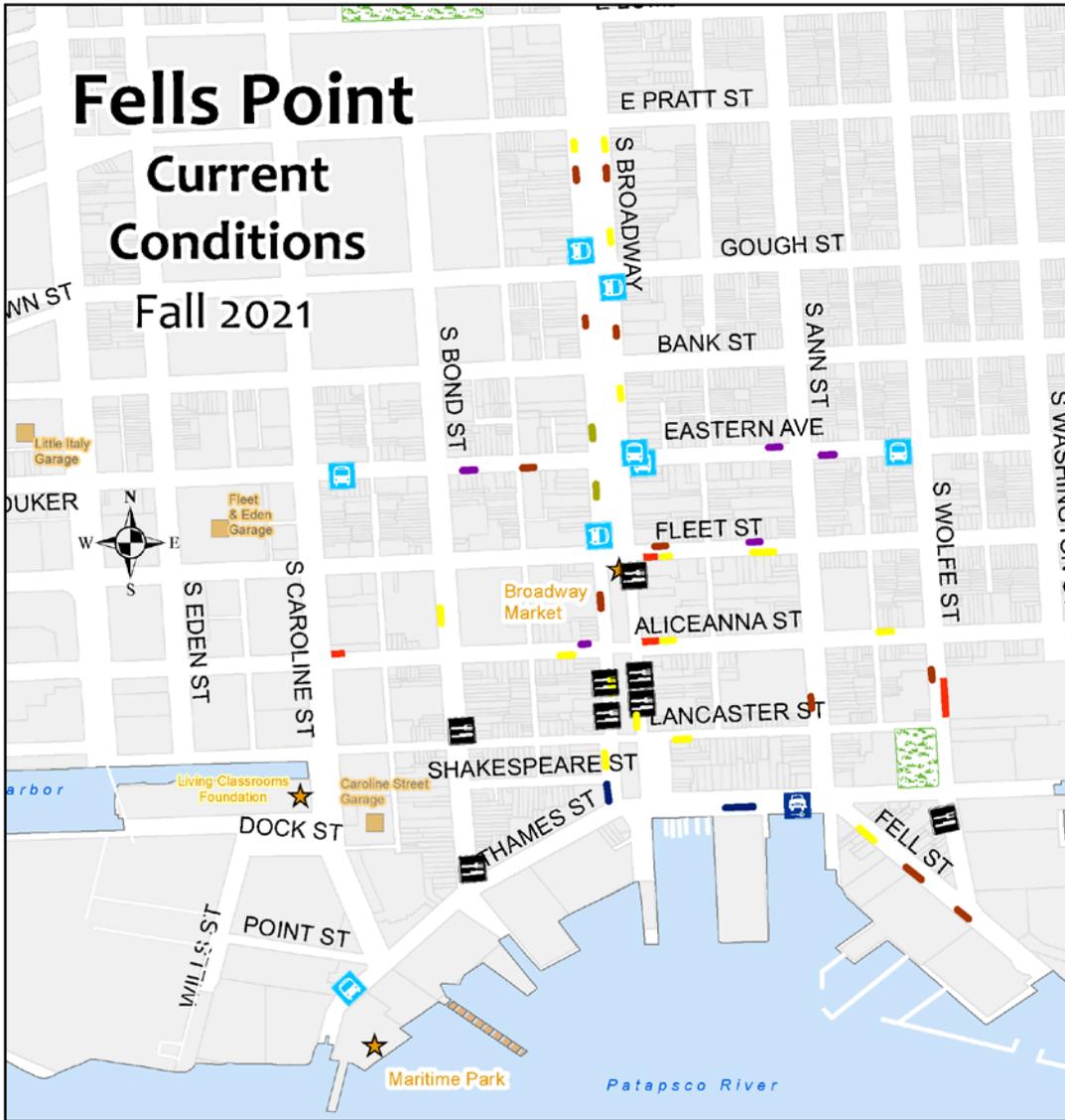
Existing Conditions

The study area of Fells Point includes a total of **42** metered blockfaces. The study area is bounded by Eastern Avenue and Pratt Street on the north; Thames Street on the south; to South Caroline Street on the west and South Wolfe Street/Fell Street on the east. The east-west streets are Eastern Avenue, Fleet Street, Aliceanna Street, Lancaster Street, Thames Street and Fell Street. The north-south streets are South Bond Street, South Broadway Street, South Ann Street, and South Wolfe Street.

The Fells Point study area currently has **29** blockfaces (**28%**) that are not metered due to a different on-street parking regulation, either being unregulated or no parking. **Thirty-one** blockfaces (**30%**) are regulated through RPP.

For current pricing, the vast majority of metered blockfaces (41) are **\$2.00** per hour and the meter-in-effect times on those blockfaces vary from 10AM – 8PM, 8AM – 6PM, 8AM – 8PM, and 9AM – 6PM typically seven days a week or Monday through Saturday. **One** blockface (1500 Fleet Street north side) is **\$0.50** per hour with a MIE from 8AM – 6PM Monday through Saturday. Two maps are attached below with existing conditions showing the pricing, hours, and other regulations in Fells Point.





Legend

TYPE		Outdoor Dining		Truck Loading Zone/Passenger Loading Zone
		Passenger Loading Zone		Temporary Retail Loading Zone
		Truck Loading Zone		Valet
		Zip Car		

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0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



Study Findings

During the analysis process, it became clear that many blockfaces experienced very different utilization rates during weekday daytime hours compared to all evenings. This finding was not surprising, given many of these blockfaces include restaurants, hotel services, and other uses busy into the evening hours. See pages 14 and 17 for maps detailing the utilization rates for all weekdays and evenings.

The analysis indicates that during the weekday daytime hours, an average of **17%** of blockfaces in Fells Point are over-parked (with fewer than one free space available), while **62%** are under-parked (with more than two spaces available). During all evening hours, an average of **39%** of blockfaces are over-parked, while **43%** are under-parked. The findings indicate that on-street parking is not currently optimized in Fells Point and could benefit from demand-based pricing.

Recommendations

Tiered Pricing

The first recommendation of this study is to introduce tiered pricing in the Fells Point study area. The PABC collected and analyzed parking utilization data for weekday daytime, weekday evenings, Saturday daytime, and Saturday evenings throughout this round of the study. As noted, a distinct pattern of higher parking utilization was noticed on evenings compared to daytimes. Fells Point features a variety of sit-down restaurants and bars that operate in the evenings showing higher parking utilization compared to studying the area during the day. Fells Point is a similar neighborhood to Federal Hill which has had tiered meter pricing in effect for years and has benefited from it. In order to tailor the parking meter rates to the parking demand and help ensure parking is available when needed, we suggest a similar tiered pricing approach where different meter rates are in effect before and after 6 PM as the data suggests.

New Meter Rates

The second recommendation of this PABC parking study is the implementation of demand-based pricing. This involves adjusting meter pricing for blockfaces that are not showing an average of **75%-85%** parking utilization.

Of the **42** blockfaces studied with meters, during the day, **seven** blockfaces (**17%**) rates will increase by **\$0.25**, **nine** blockfaces (**21%**) rates will maintain, and **26** blockfaces (**62%**) rates will decrease by **\$0.25**. During the evening, **33** blockfaces will have MIE times that run past 6PM with **11** blockfaces (**33%**) rates to increase, **eight** blockfaces (**24%**) rates to maintain, and **14** blockfaces (**43%**) rates to decrease. There are **35** blockfaces (**83%**) overall that will either maintain or decrease their current rates during the day while **22** blockfaces (**67%**) will either maintain or decrease their current rates during the evening.

New Meter Rates					
Daytime Rate Per Hour	# of Blockfaces Daytime	% of Total Daytime	Evening Rate Per Hour	# of Blockfaces Evening	% of Total Evening
\$2.25	6	16%	\$2.25	11	33%
\$2.00	9	21%	\$2.00	8	24%
\$1.75	26	62%	\$1.75	14	43%
\$0.75	1	1%	\$0.75	0	0%

Daytime Before 6PM

Increase: 7 blockfaces (17%)
Maintain: 9 blockfaces (21%)
Decrease: 26 blockfaces (62%)

Evening After 6PM

Increase: 11 blockfaces (33%)
Maintain: 8 blockfaces (24%)
Decrease: 14 blockfaces (43%)

There will be **four** meter rates throughout Fells Point between daytime and evening hours: **\$0.75, \$1.75, \$2.00, and \$2.25**. The table above shows the number of blockfaces with each rate. **Twenty-six** blockfaces (**62%**) will have daytime rate decreases while **14** blockfaces (**43%**) will have evening rate decreases in this round of the study. In this round, the hourly rates for the 26 blockfaces from the daytime rates and the 14 blockfaces from the evening rates would fall from **\$2.00** to **\$1.75**.

Extending Meter-In-Effect Times

The third recommendation of the study is to extend the meter-in-effect times of the meters on the 1700 block of Eastern Avenue in Fells Point. The PABC recommends extending the meter-in-effect times until 8PM. The 1700 block of Eastern Avenue has several local restaurants and convenience stores which host activity that extends past **6PM**. It is suggested that the meter-in-effect times run later on those blockfaces to help manage the on-street parking in the evening. The table below is organized by showing the block number, street name, side, and current hours. It was recommended not to extend the hours along the other blocks of Eastern Avenue and Fleet Street (not listed on the table) due to limited business activity surrounding these blocks at night.

Blockfaces To Extend Meter In Effect Time To 8PM			
Block	Street	Side	Current Hours
1700	Eastern	North	9AM-6PM Mon-Sat
1700	Eastern	South	9AM-6PM Mon-Sat

The following pages include a spreadsheet with new daytime and evening meter rates along with maps that depict the data as well as maps that show average utilization percentages.

Block	Street	Side	Initial Rate	First Rate Change Daytime Rate	First Rate Change Evening Rate	
1600	Eastern	NS	\$2.00	\$2.25	NO MIE	Increase
1700	Eastern	NS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	Maintain
1700	Eastern	SS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	Decrease
1800	Eastern	NS	\$2.00	\$1.75	NO MIE	
1800	Eastern	SS	\$2.00	\$1.75	NO MIE	
1500	Fleet	NS	\$0.50	\$0.75	NO MIE	
1600	Fleet	NS	\$2.00	\$2.25	NO MIE	
1600	Fleet	SS	\$2.00	\$2.25	NO MIE	
1700	Fleet	NS	\$2.00	\$2.00	NO MIE	
1700	Fleet	SS	\$2.00	\$2.00	NO MIE	
1800	Fleet	NS	\$2.00	\$2.00	NO MIE	
1500	Thames	NS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	
1500	Thames	SS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	
1600	Thames	NS	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.25	
1600	Thames	SS	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.25	
1700	Thames	NS	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.25	
1700	Thames	SS	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.25	
200	S Broadway	ES	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
200	S Broadway	E-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
200	S Broadway	WS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
200	S Broadway	W-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
300	S Broadway	ES	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
300	S Broadway	E-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
300	S Broadway	WS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
300	S Broadway	W-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
400	S Broadway	ES	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
400	S Broadway	E-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
400	S Broadway	WS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
400	S Broadway	W-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
500	S Broadway	ES	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
500	S Broadway	E-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$1.75	
500	S Broadway	WS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	
500	S Broadway	W-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	
600	S Broadway	ES	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.25	
600	S Broadway	E-Middle	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.25	
600	S Broadway	WS	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.25	
600	S Broadway	W-Middle	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.25	
700	S Broadway	ES	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	
700	S Broadway	E-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.00	
700	S Broadway	WS	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.25	
700	S Broadway	W-Middle	\$2.00	\$1.75	\$2.25	
800	S Broadway	W-Middle	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.25	

