

# PARK Smart- Park Slope Pilot



## Purpose

- Increase turnover and availability of on-street parking spaces
- Reduce congestion, emissions and double-parking from motorists looking for available parking
- Implement associated curbside management strategies including installation of Muni-Meters, additional meters and delivery windows

## Outreach

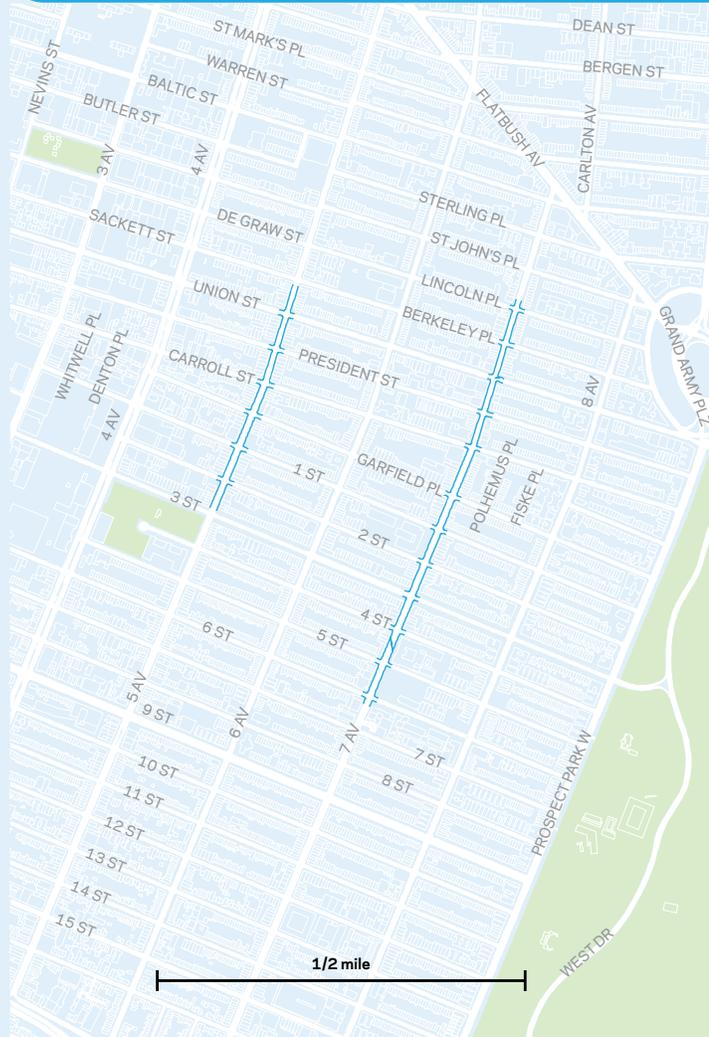
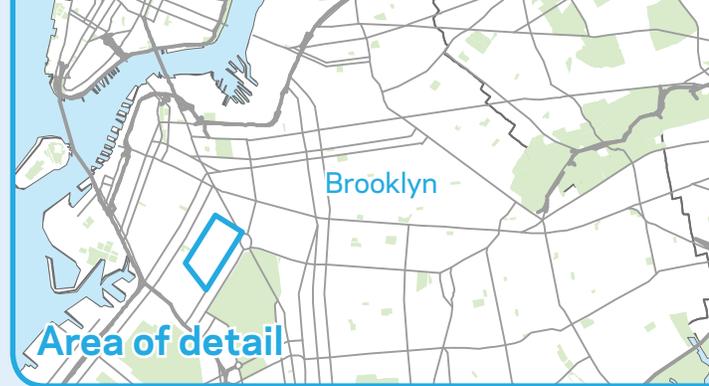
- Engaged the Brooklyn Community Board 6 Transportation Committee (CB6) and stakeholder groups in meetings during planning stages of the pilot
- Presented to merchant and civic groups in March-April 2009
- Discussed delivery needs with local merchants in May 2009
- Presented 1-month “snapshot” review of results with stakeholders in July 2009
- Presented 6-month evaluation in March 2010 and year-over-year results in June 2010 to CB6 and stakeholder groups
- In October 2010, CB6 voted to support making the program permanent including an expansion of PARK Smart area that doubles the size of original pilot area and expansion in the hours the peak rate applies

## Approach

- Increased parking rate during peak period (12 p.m. – 4 p.m.) to \$1.50/hour (was previously \$0.50/hour)
- Collected before and after data on parking duration, turnover, availability, as well as double-parking and illegal parking to assess pilot’s impact
- Collected feedback and parking use data from surveys of merchants, parkers and passersby
- Conducted public outreach with community stakeholders before, during and after the pilot
- Peak rate extended to 7 p.m. based on analysis indicating high parking demand into early evening and community support

## Results

- 20% reduction in average parking duration during peak hours
- 18% increase in number of unique vehicles, reflecting the higher turnover
- Occupancy of metered spaces showed little change due to already saturated levels of demand and few off-street parking options



Park Slope is a neighborhood in Brooklyn known for its historic brownstones and top-rated restaurants, bars and shops. The two main commercial corridors are located on Fifth Avenue and Seventh Avenue while the side streets are mostly residential. Park Slope has excellent public transportation with access to six bus routes and 11 different subway lines. Park Slope is adjacent to Prospect Park. The Brooklyn Museum, the Botanic Garden and Zoo are all within walking distance.

Curbside lanes in retail and commercial districts have myriad uses, including parking, commercial deliveries, bus lanes, bus stops, and bike lanes, as well as sometimes being used for traffic flow. In many retail districts, the potential uses of curb space far exceed the actual amount of space available. It is thus important to carefully manage the use of curb space so as to maximize its value to the community. Inefficient use of curb space can lead to unnecessary traffic and congestion as drivers search for an available space; double-parking by drivers and commercial vehicles; and potentially economic losses to local businesses as customers choose to patronize businesses in more accessible areas.

DOT has developed a toolbox of strategies for making the best use of curbside space. Key among these strategies is peak rate parking pricing. Peak rate pricing has proven to be an effective strategy in areas with an intense demand for on-street parking that exceeds the physical number of spaces. A peak rate encourages drivers to park no longer than necessary, and thus frees up space for other drivers. Increasing the overall availability of spaces can produce less double-parking and cruising for spots, improving the safety and overall flow of traffic on the street.

DOT began its PARK Smart peak rate parking pilot program in 2008 with Greenwich Village, Manhattan, as the first pilot area. (Results were reported in the 2009 Sustainable Streets Index report.) DOT began planning for the second pilot, in the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn in January 2009. DOT worked closely with community residents and businesses to plan, implement and evaluate the Park Slope PARK Smart pilot. Key stakeholders in this process were CB6, the Park Slope Civic Council, the Fifth Avenue BID, Park Slope Merchants Association and Park Slope Neighbors (a group of residents).



PARK Smart enables more drivers to find metered spaces by raising parking meter rates during the peak period.

The Park Slope pilot focused on Fifth Avenue and Seventh Avenue, the two main commercial corridors in the neighborhood. Community outreach and education has been a priority in DOT's approach, given that parking pricing tends to be controversial and is often met with public skepticism. DOT also undertook a comprehensive evaluation program that included parking and traffic data collection and surveyed drivers, merchants, and shoppers to fully document program impacts. (The monitoring program is funded by a grant from the Federal Highway Administration's Value Pricing Pilot Program.)

The pilot area included all metered parking spaces on Fifth Avenue from Sackett Street to 3rd Street, and on Seventh Avenue from Lincoln Place to 6th Street. Within the pilot area, the parking rate was increased to \$1.50/hour during the peak time period (noon to 4 p.m.), while remaining at \$0.75/hour (the standard rate for outerborough areas) at all other times that meters were in effect. (Note that rates at non-Manhattan meters were increased from \$0.50 to \$0.75/hour as part of a city-wide parking adjustment at the same time that the pilot began.) The pilot ran for six months from May 2009 through November 2009.

Based on discussions with community stakeholders, several additional strategies were deployed as part of the pilot. DOT also installed multi-space meters, which accept credit and debit cards as well as coins, throughout the pilot area to replace coin-operated meters. DOT also converted several blocks from residential to metered parking along Fifth Avenue and installed additional curb space and time for vehicles making deliveries to local businesses at two locations.

Results showed that turnover increased, resulting in a 20% reduction in parking duration between April 2009 and April 2010. Consistent with the higher turnover, 18% more vehicles were able to find legal metered spaces in April 2010 as compared to the pre-implementation level a year earlier. While some community members were concerned that the higher rates would lead to fewer people patronizing local establishments, in fact, more potential customers were able to park on the affected blocks.

Occupancy rates for metered parking were very high prior to implementation of peak rates: 91% on Seventh Avenue and 82% on Fifth Avenue during the noon to 4 p.m. peak, with occupancies near 100% at many specific times. Occupancy rates measured six months and 12 months after implementation found essentially the same occupancy levels as pre-implementation. This result appears to be due to the saturated level of demand for parking and limited off-street parking options.

## Parking duration fell by 20% in Park Slope due to the PARK Smart peak rate pricing pilot, enabling more drivers to find metered spaces and reducing overall traffic volumes on the neighborhood's main commercial avenues.

Of local merchants surveyed, 66% reported that the PARK Smart program had either a neutral, positive, or no effect on their business. Concerns among other merchants included customers hurrying through the store, and customers asking merchants to make change for the meters (the survey was conducted prior to installation of Muni-Meters, which accept credit and debit cards).

Traffic volumes declined by 7% post-implementation compared with pre-implementation traffic levels. This decline may be at least partly due to drivers finding a parking space somewhat more quickly after vehicle turnover increased.

In October 2010, CB6 voted to support PARK Smart as a permanent program. CB6 also voted to support expanding PARK Smart rates to the rest of Fifth and Seventh Avenues, and to 9th Street, thus more than doubling the geographic area of the program, and to

extend the hours of the peak rate to include the late afternoon and early evening hours, which also show high levels of parking demand. The peak rate will thus cover noon to 7 p.m. These changes will be implemented in spring 2011.

Overall, the Park Slope pilot showed substantial progress toward PARK Smart program goals in the increased turnover at metered spaces, larger number of drivers able to find an available space and reduction in traffic volumes. At the same time, the pilot showed the difficulty of achieving measurable improvements in parking space availability in conditions of high demand for on-street parking combined with high sensitivity among key stakeholders with increased rates.

A third PARK Smart pilot is in progress on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, and other possible areas throughout the city are under consideration for future pilots.

### PARK Smart Park Slope Pilot Program - Results

	April '09	June '09	November '09	April '10	% Change
<b>Occupancy (Vehicles parked in legal spaces / total capacity legal spaces)</b>					
<b>5th Avenue</b>	82%	82%	86%	82%	0%
<b>7th Avenue</b>	91%	89%	90%	92%	1%
<b>Overall</b>	87%	86%	88%	87%	0%
<b>Duration (Peak Period noon to 4 p.m., Weekend and Weekday)</b>					
<b>5th Avenue</b>	1:10	0:58	0:59	0:58	-17%
<b>7th Avenue</b>	1:11	0:58	1:06	0:55	-23%
<b>Overall</b>	1:11	0:58	1:03	0:57	-20%
<b>Daily Unique vehicles (Average, Weekend and Weekday)</b>					
<b>5th Avenue</b>	501	523	543	585	17%
<b>7th Avenue</b>	1,127	1,254	1,254	1,332	18%
<b>Overall</b>	1,628	1,777	1,797	1,917	18%

Base data collected in April 2009. Two-month snapshot collected in June 2009. Seven-month snapshot collected in November 2009. One-year snapshot collected in April 2010.