
REPORT 2
(1215/52/IM)

DRAFT PARKING POLICY

1. Purpose of Report

To report on the review of parking policies and to present a draft Parking Policy and draft Implementation Plan (attached as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively).

2. Executive Summary

A review of Council's parking policies has been undertaken as part of the Transport Strategy Travel Demand Management initiative. The opportunities to influence commuter parking are limited and because parking supports a range of activities and roles, other strategic outcomes also need to be addressed when developing a parking policy.

Challenges and pressure points in the city's parking system have been identified and need to be addressed. A wholesale change of policy direction is not required, but the draft Parking Policy will:

- enable the Council, as the Road Controlling Authority, to manage the public road space, a limited and very important resource, in an equitable and balanced manner in order to achieve strategic outcomes
- link the operational management of the parking system with the Council's strategic outcomes
- give clear statements of intent that will provide guidance to address parking pressures and challenges in the city
- simplify a complex and multi-layered subject, by using a flexible matrix.
This matrix:
 - unpacks the various components and activities of a parking system; location, time of day, day of week, type of road and use of the road in a manageable way
 - assists with the identification of solutions and where trade-offs need to be made.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note that there are pressures and hotspots within the current system due to the excessive demand for on-street parking.*
3. *Note that because of the competing uses of public road space, there are challenges and opportunities to meet agreed council strategic objectives.*
4. *Note that the draft Parking Policy aims to manage a limited and very important resource, the public road space, in an equitable and balanced manner to ensure that the best outcomes for the city are achieved.*
5. *Agree to the draft Parking Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to this report, for the purposes of undertaking public consultation.*
6. *Agree to the draft Implementation Plan, attached as Appendix 2 to this report, for the purposes of undertaking consultation.*
7. *Agree that officers will report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee with a revised Policy following consultation.*
8. *Agree that officers will report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee with a revised Implementation Plan following consultation.*

4. Background

The review of parking policies originally came from the Council's Transport Strategy and specifically the Travel Demand Management (TDM) initiative, a key priority for Council. The TDM initiative aims to moderate the demand for travel, particularly for the journey to work trip¹. The use of parking pricing mechanisms is a TDM measure that can deter commuters and encourage mode shift. Whilst there is widespread community support for a reduction in congestion, it is not possible, or prudent to address parking in isolation of other strategic objectives, such as those supporting economic development objectives. Therefore, a parking policy needs to consider all council strategy and policy.

The draft Parking Policy has been developed as a result of a review of the Council's parking policies, including; metered parking in the central area; District Plan rules; free weekend parking; the provision of loading zones and

¹ For example, by locating development close to facilities, providing enhanced passenger transport, walking and cycling options and encouraging behaviour change such as the adoption of Organisational Travel Plans.

taxi ranks; Coupon Parking Zones; Resident Parking Zones; Mobility parking; motorcycle and cycle parking; parking at community facilities and sports venues; parking on footpaths; enforcement and pricing.

The last major review of parking policy occurred during the 1990's, and since then, the city has changed. There have been both population increases, particularly in the city centre, and increases in car ownership². This has meant increasing competition for the already limited road space and a general increase in congestion levels. This has in turn put additional pressure on the city's parking system. Another significant move was the sale of three council off-street car parking buildings in November 2003, meaning that the council's 'Provider' and 'Manager' role was reduced, mainly to the on-street parking stock.

Parking is an important use of the public road space, and competes with other uses such as the movement of vehicles and the siting of loading zones and taxi stands. As the Road Controlling Authority, it is important that the Council uses this valuable and limited resource in a balanced, equitable and transparent manner so that it achieves its strategic outcomes and makes the best possible use of the space.

The Council has also recently defined its strategic intent for the period 2006 – 2016. Several of these strategies require parking to support different roles, functions and activities within the city. A full assessment of how parking policy could be supporting each of the council's seven strategies was undertaken (refer to Appendix A of draft Parking Policy, which is attached as Appendix 1).

The purpose of the parking review was to:

- assess the effectiveness of the existing parking policies and identify significant issues with the parking system
- develop a framework, including a draft set of principles and directions for parking in Wellington City that are aligned with council strategic direction
- identify areas of future work.

5. Discussion

5.1 Issues identified in the review of parking policies

Research undertaken suggests that the existing parking regime in Wellington City is being driven almost exclusively by market forces with only minimal intervention by the Council (Bullen³). Bullen also concludes that the existing market driven operation, particularly of the central area parking stock, on and

² Population in 1991 was 148,440 with 80.2% having access to at least one vehicle (Census 1991). In 2006, population was 179,446 with 82.6% population having access to at least one vehicle (Census 2006).

³ Derek Bullen Review of Parking Policies, Wellington City Council, 2006

off street, public and private, appears to be operating more efficiently and effectively when compared with similar regimes overseas. An Executive Summary of the Bullen report is attached as Appendix 3.

Whilst a wholesale change of policy direction is not recommended, issues have been identified and will need to be addressed. These can be summarised as:

- **Competing demand** – the competing demand for the limited on-street space comes from the Council's agreed strategic goals and priorities. Examples include the need for the efficient movement of vehicles to reduce congestion, the proposed introduction of further bus priority measures, the need to have adequate parking to support economic development, and the pressure for parking spaces to be permanently removed from the system for security reasons and to provide urban amenity.
- **Excess demand** - the demand for on-street parking exceeds supply. There is increasing demand for the on-street parking spaces from the various users of the parking system, for example between residents, commuters, shoppers and those accessing facilities.

A full list of the challenges and pressure points identified in the review is attached as Appendix 4 of this report. The proposed Implementation Plan for the draft policy is attached as Appendix 2.

5.2 Key factors of the draft Parking Policy

The key factors of the draft Parking Policy are that it:

- provides a framework for managing the public road space, a limited and very important resource, in an equitable and balanced manner in order to achieve strategic outcomes
- directly links the operational management of the parking system with the Council's strategic outcomes. The policy gives clear statements of intent that will provide guidance to parking activity in the city
- will enable a series of technical and operational reviews of various aspects of the parking management system including boundaries, coupon and resident parking zones to go ahead. This work is dependent upon having a politically agreed set of objectives, as provided by the draft Parking Policy
- simplifies a complex, multi-layered subject. The policy provides a simple matrix that unpacks the various components and activities of a parking system; location, time of day, day of week, type of road and use of the road in a manageable way. The matrix supports identification of possible solutions and where trade-offs and a balanced approach need to be made

- is flexible. The matrix is intended to be adaptable, allowing a tailored approach to different circumstances and situations, both now and in the future. For the purposes of developing a series of policy directions, the matrix has been applied to generic locations – ‘central area’, ‘inner residential’ and ‘suburban centres’. However, it could also be completed for specific locations, such as Newtown, Thorndon, or even individual streets, in order to take a more targeted approach. The matrix can also be revisited and revised as strategic intentions evolve and develop
- gives a transparency and clarity to decision making, both to the Council and to the community
- will assist the Council in responding to parking challenges and opportunities for both the present and future situations. With increasing population and car ownership trends, the pressure on the on-street resource will increase. The challenges of climate change and peak oil may also influence travel behaviour and the demand for parking in the future and either way, a flexible response is essential.

5.3 Risks and limitations of the draft Parking Policy

The following risks and limitations of the draft Parking Policy are that it:

- is not being used as a Travel Demand Management (TDM) pricing mechanism as the opportunities to influence the amount of commuter parking are limited. However, the draft Policy does assist with the development of other TDM measures, such as increasing bus priority
- takes a position of managing better what we have, and facilitating the provision of additional spaces from the private sector to support a variety of Council’s strategic outcomes. The draft Policy does not aim to reduce the demand for parking by systematically reducing the number of available spaces
- will need to be monitored to ensure that the balance of priorities is correct, both currently and in the future.

5.4 Implications of the draft Parking Policy

The draft Policy establishes a set of principles and location specific policies. It also sets out a further work programme and will guide the following areas;

- the operational management of the on-street parking system
- District Plan matters relating to parking
- how the Council can influence public off-street parking.

Any financial implications identified as part of the proposed work programme will be addressed where appropriate as part of the Annual Plan process. The proposed work programme is attached as Appendix 2.

5.5 Consultation

Key stakeholders have been engaged during the development of the draft Parking Policy. The stakeholders were:

- Positively Wellington Tourism
- Retailers Association
- Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Federation of Residents Associations

The key messages from these discussions are outlined below and have been reflected in the draft Policy:

- congestion is bad for business - traffic flow and good public transport options are important
- support for market-driven parking regime
- better information on parking availability is supported
- removal of parking spaces needs to be balanced with other uses of the road and the needs of users in the location
- willingness to explore council increasing its 'facilitator' role e.g. by encouraging shared parking arrangements
- continue Free Weekend Parking policy (but enforce on Saturdays and Sundays)⁴
- support for priority for residents in inner-residential and suburban areas for on-street parking

If the Committee agrees, it is now proposed to consult more broadly with stakeholders and residents. That consultation will seek feedback on the draft Policy and the Implementation Plan. Officers will report back to Committee in June 2007.

⁴ Positively Wellington Tourism is currently finalising a marketing campaign to encourage shoppers and visitors to come into the central city at weekends. This initiative could be further supported by enforcement on Sundays and will require further investigation by officers (see 1.7 in Appendix 4).

6. Conclusion

A review of council's parking policies concluded that a wholesale change of policy direction is not required. However, the challenges of competing demand and excess demand for the on-street resource were identified and need to be addressed. Priorities also need to be determined in a balanced and equitable manner.

The draft Parking Policy seeks to achieve the Council's strategic outcomes by addressing the issue of how to best manage a limited resource, the public road space, so as to ensure the best outcomes for the city. A set of overall policy principles, a series of location specific policies and a matrix have been developed to guide the present and future direction of the Council's management and influence over the parking system.

The draft Policy provides direction and guidance for a series of additional reviews and feasibility studies. As well as being a provider of parking, the Council will need to become more pro-active in its role as manager and facilitator in order to ensure that parking continues to support the Council's strategic outcomes.

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Attachments

Appendix 1 – Proposed Draft Parking Policy

Appendix 2 – Proposed Draft Implementation Plan

Appendix 3 – Summary of 'Review of Parking Policies' Bullen 2006

Appendix 4 – Challenges and Pressure points in current system Executive

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The draft policy supports Council's strategic direction in that it aims to balance and deliver desired outcomes in the Transport, Urban Development, Economic Development, Environmental, Social and Recreation, Cultural wellbeing Strategies. The draft policy supports Council activities as a provider of on-street parking, a manager of public road space, a regulator of off-street parking and a facilitator of arrangements to achieve parking goals.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The review of council parking policies was identified as a project as part of the council's Travel Demand Management initiative, although the project cuts across all the council's strategies, not just Transport. In agreeing that the draft policy undergo public consultation, there are no financial implications (apart from those relating to the costs of consultation). Implications arising from the work programme identified as part of the parking policy review will be dealt with by the Annual plan process where appropriate.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

N/A

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision. The report sets out a draft policy and suggested work programme.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Targeted consultation with a selection of key stakeholders has been undertaken. Broader consultation will be undertaken with the Committee's agreement to the draft Policy.

b) Consultation with Maori

Draft policy has not been developed with input from Maori. Maori views will be sought as part of wider public consultation on the draft Policy.

6) Legal Implications

N/A.

7) Consistency with existing policy

The draft parking policy has been developed as part of a review of existing policies and may lead to some of these policies being replaced.