
MOBILITY PARKING POLICY



Community Services
March 2005

1. Introduction

The Mobility Parking Policy describes the Wellington City Council's approach to providing mobility parking in Wellington City. It aims to ensure Wellington is a liveable place for people with limited mobility by enhancing their ability to participate in employment, social, cultural and political life and their access to services and resources.

Inclusion is a process where the varying needs of a community and the groups, which constitute it, are recognized, prioritised and met. Inclusion is critical to building strong communities and promoting all residents ability to participate in their community. A major constraint to inclusiveness for people with limited mobility is the availability of suitable parking.

This Policy is part of the Accessible Wellington Programme which, through a series of targeted projects, is ensuring Wellington is an inclusive accessible city. It promotes equity in parking for people with limited mobility in the public domain through design and placement, number of parks and enforcement. It also promotes provision of accessible car parks through the Building Code and New Zealand Standard Specification (NZSS) 4121.

Mobility parking in Wellington City is an issue, which potentially affects up to 11% of the population.

This policy responds to the "Creative Wellington - Innovation Capital" vision by strengthening the social infrastructure of the city and is underpinned by the Council's Social Strategy which has an overarching theme of building strong communities and goals associated with accessibility and participation.

1.1 Links to Council Strategy and Vision

The policy supports the following outcomes:

- 1.1 Liveable City – Wellington is a great place to live and offers a variety of places to live, work and play within a high quality public environment
- 1.2 Network City- Wellington is easy to get around, pedestrian friendly and has an interconnected street system
- 1.2 Developing Potential – People are encouraged to develop their full potential as individuals and members of the community
- 2.4 Participation- People are encouraged to participate in community networks
- 2.6 Access to resources- All residents are able to access community resources and public services
- 7.1 Recreation Opportunities- Wellington offers a diverse range and abundance of quality recreation and leisure activities that are easily accessed and are affordable
- 8.3 Transport Effectiveness- A well-planned and comprehensive network supports a compact and highly liveable city where people move about easily and safely.

This policy contributes to 7 of the 11 objectives in the New Zealand Disability Strategy and is in line with the Human Rights Action Plan (2005)

1.2 Mobility card holders

The provision of mobility parking assists those persons who have limited mobility and are mobility card holders. Mobility card holders report a shortage of parks.

Users of mobility car parks are

- unable to walk and are reliant on a wheelchair for mobility, or
- rely on mobility devices (e.g. crutches, walking sticks, walking frames),
- unable to walk more than 200 metres unassisted because of the nature/severity of their condition, or
- individuals with a temporary disability

In addition Wellington City Council recognises valid permits used by international visitors to this city.

This policy will ensure provision of mobility car parks in off street parking through the Building Act (section 119 in conjunction with Schedule 2) and the New Zealand Standard Specification (NZSS) 4121. This will be enforced through the consent process for new buildings and alterations of existing buildings. NZSS 4121 on its own will be used as a guide for work not requiring a consent.

When considering parking in the public domain (this includes metered parking) this policy will cover all aspects through implementation of best practice.

2. This policy will ensure best practice in:

- Design and signage
- Placement of mobility car parks
- Future planning
- Payment
- Enforcement

2.1 Design and Signage

Design consists of the following components:

- Street position
- Dimensions
- Type (parallel vs. angle)
- Gradient
- Surface
- Kerb ramp

Mobility parks are up to 33% larger than standard car parks. In determining the size of the car parks characteristics of mobility must be taken into account (for example overhead hoists and rear entry vehicles).

The following measurements are a minimum requirement for safety and ease of use. These reflect the need to encompass both the passengers and drivers requirements and the type of car park.

Width = 3500mm

Height = 2500mm

Length = 5000mm

(For parallel parks an extra length of 1300mm will provided for rear mounted hoists.)

The type of car park is concerned with the position of the park relative to the footpath that is angle, parallel and right angle. There are examples of all three of these park types in the Wellington CBD. The placement of parallel parks on main thoroughfares is a dangerous situation for drivers in wheelchairs and for passing traffic. Some drivers, who exit by the side where traffic flows fast, avoid these parks. This is not a workable solution without the extra space (the above standard of 3.5 metres) noted above.

Drivers and passengers agree that a near flat 180-degree surface while transferring in and out of a car seat is a preference, and where possible new mobility parks will be on flat ground or designed in such a way that flat access is achieved.

The surface is a straightforward requirement being non-slip and normally being on asphalt.

Kerb ramps bring a safe and convenient passage from the park to the footpath that suits both driver and passenger.

The gradient of the kerb ramp needs to be set at a minimum of 1:12 to enable all drivers and passengers to negotiate them. A smooth entrance with no lip onto the gradient of the ramp is important.

Signage and visibility of parks can be considered in the following way:

- International mobility signs are blue and white with a wheelchair logo.
- Consideration should be given to a larger format signage, clearly stating restrictions and penalties.
- The logo is painted in yellow on the asphalt in the middle of park.
- The logos should be re-marked and painted every 2 years to ensure maximum visibility.
- All signage indicate parking time allowed which, for the nature of the disabilities warranting a mobility card, means an extension of the limit by doubling the time allowed to retrieve vehicles. The signage required needs to be at driver level to attract attention.
- It should include penalties to deter ineligible drivers from using the park.
- Informational signage for parking should be clear and be continuous with the spaces designated by that restriction.

2.2 Placement

The location (placement) of mobility parks must coincide with the concept of the “accessible journey” that is, looking at a journey in its entirety from start to finish. Mobility parks need to be as close as possible to the intended destination point. This would include proximity to shops, services, medical and social service providers and entries to those places.

To minimise the number of lost standard car parks, new mobility parking spaces should be introduced in pairs where possible. This would mean 3 standard car parks are lost to produce 2 mobility parks.

Of equal importance for mobility parking are the suburban areas of Wellington where an increasing number of residents are over 65 and often have access issues. A review of current mobility parks and research into the suburban communities’ present and future mobility parking needs will be undertaken.

All Council buildings and facilities with attached public car parks will make provision for mobility car parks to allow access to these facilities. Where possible these will be designated as roads to allow adequate enforcement.

2.3 Future Planning

The incidence of limited mobility is thought to include 18% of the general population and this percentage will increase due to an increase in the aging population. There are currently 3,000 car parks in the CBD and 23 mobility car parks. International best practice suggests 20% of parks being set aside for mobility parks as this reflects the proportion of people with disabilities. However in practice few cities set aside 20% of parks and some card holders are able to use standard car parks.

To meet the current shortage of mobility parks it is intended to increase the number of mobility car parks in Wellington CBD to 60 car parks over the next three years. This would represent 2% of the CBD car parking. This is in line with Australian and Canadian cities (information about the provision in other New Zealand Cities is unavailable).

Currently, mobility parking spaces are introduced only when there is a formal request for one, and this can lead to an ad hoc distribution of spaces. An integrated approach to placement of parking spaces is essential to ensure reasonable distribution and to take account of destination. Therefore there is a need for an integrated approach to mobility parking between Community Services, Parking Services, Roading Engineers, City Planners and the disability community (through the Disability Reference Group (DRG)) in all current and future planning of parking. CPTED principles must be incorporated and the DRG must be consulted on all planning with parking implications.

Current trends in urban design for the CBD are to encourage increased bus usage, decreased car usage and a decrease in the number of standard car parking spaces. Any decrease in the number of mobility car parks will severely compromise access and inclusion. If there is a decrease in the number of standard car parks there should not be a corresponding decrease in the number of mobility parks because public transport is often not an option for people with limited mobility.

2.4 Payment

- Allow people with mobility cards to park for one hour over any time restriction of 30 minutes or longer or 1 hour over the time they have paid for. This recognises the extra time needed to go to and from destinations.
- The method of payment must be accessible and easy to use
- A coin meter at each mobility car park removes the barrier of having to physically go back and place a ticket on the dashboard.
- Encourage the use of Smart Park (a prepaid electronic meter).

2.5 Towing and Enforcement

This policy recognises that people with limited mobility need access to mobility parking at all times and this should be reflected in a blanket “at all times” restriction so that the spaces are for those cars with mobility permits only. It should be noted that there would be a financial benefit to council if enforcement is strictly applied. It is intended that there will be more proactive enforcement of mobility parking.

Enforcement mechanisms will be strengthened and include.

- Immediate towing of vehicles not displaying a mobility card or issuing a parking infringement notice.
- A phone line be established to initiate towing for cars parked without a permit
- A process to allow any Council employee or contractor to initiate the removal of a car from a mobility parking space.
- Penalties will be kept under review with a view to a possible surcharge if standard enforcement is not a sufficient deterrent.