

THE DEVELOPMENT OF WAITAKERE'S COMPREHENSIVE PARKING MANAGEMENT PLANS – SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE INTENSIVE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Charlie Inggs

Strategic Adviser Transport, Waitakere City Council, Auckland, New Zealand

ABSTRACT

This paper outlines the process of development of the first comprehensive parking management plans for a local authority in New Zealand. The plans represent the new paradigm in parking policy, using parking as a travel demand management tool to support growth and urban design objectives, with the underlying objective of supporting transport oriented growth by freeing up land for intensive mixed use development. The methodology used was to engage consultants to provide comprehensive strategic and management advice, reviewing past research and internationally best practice, followed by stakeholder consultation on options to limit parking in new developments, and incorporating this feedback into draft plans. The paper concludes with an analysis of the public consultation process on the draft plans, leading to their formal adoption.

Charlie Inggs led the development of the plans, including project managing the work of consultants. With over 25 years experience in local authorities in New Zealand and in Zimbabwe, Charlie, as a national local authority association roads advisor, served on the interim board of the Zimbabwe Road Fund. He holds a Masters in International Policy and is to deliver a presentation on implementation aspects of the plans to the ACNU conference in Adelaide, Australia in March 2010.

1. INTRODUCTION

Waitakere City Council (Council) is one of seven territorial local authorities, which together with the Auckland Regional Council (ARC), currently comprise local government in the metropolitan region of Auckland, New Zealand. All existing local authorities in this region are scheduled to be incorporated into a new Auckland Council in October 2010. Waitakere City (Waitakere) comprises most of west Auckland and was created by the New Zealand local government reorganisation of 1989. Waitakere prides itself as an Eco City and in pursuing sustainable development strategies. The greatest obstacle that it has been struggling to overcome is the fact that around 56% of all Waitakere residents in employment travel out of the City daily to their place of work (Statistics New Zealand 2009).

To support the creation of appropriate job opportunities Waitakere is striving to make “the transition to a more sustainable urban form which maximises the benefits of the rail line and the three main town centres.” Accordingly, Council’s Transport Strategy focuses on supporting improved urban design and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport. This calls for a “range of measures...to respond to

demand for parking, particularly in the main town centres” (Waitakere 2006). Concurrently the Auckland Regional Land Transport Strategy called for the development of a Regional Parking Strategy which in turn would require implementation by territorial local authorities (ARC 2005).

This paper will explore, with emphasis on the research component, the journey taken to develop a citywide parking plan together with comprehensive parking management plans for the three major town centres of Henderson, New Lynn and Westgate (draft plans). It will also explore the relationship between the development of these plans and the development of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy. The paper will examine the various types of research and how these provided input to the final plans.

Research inputs to the parking plans comprised three distinct components:

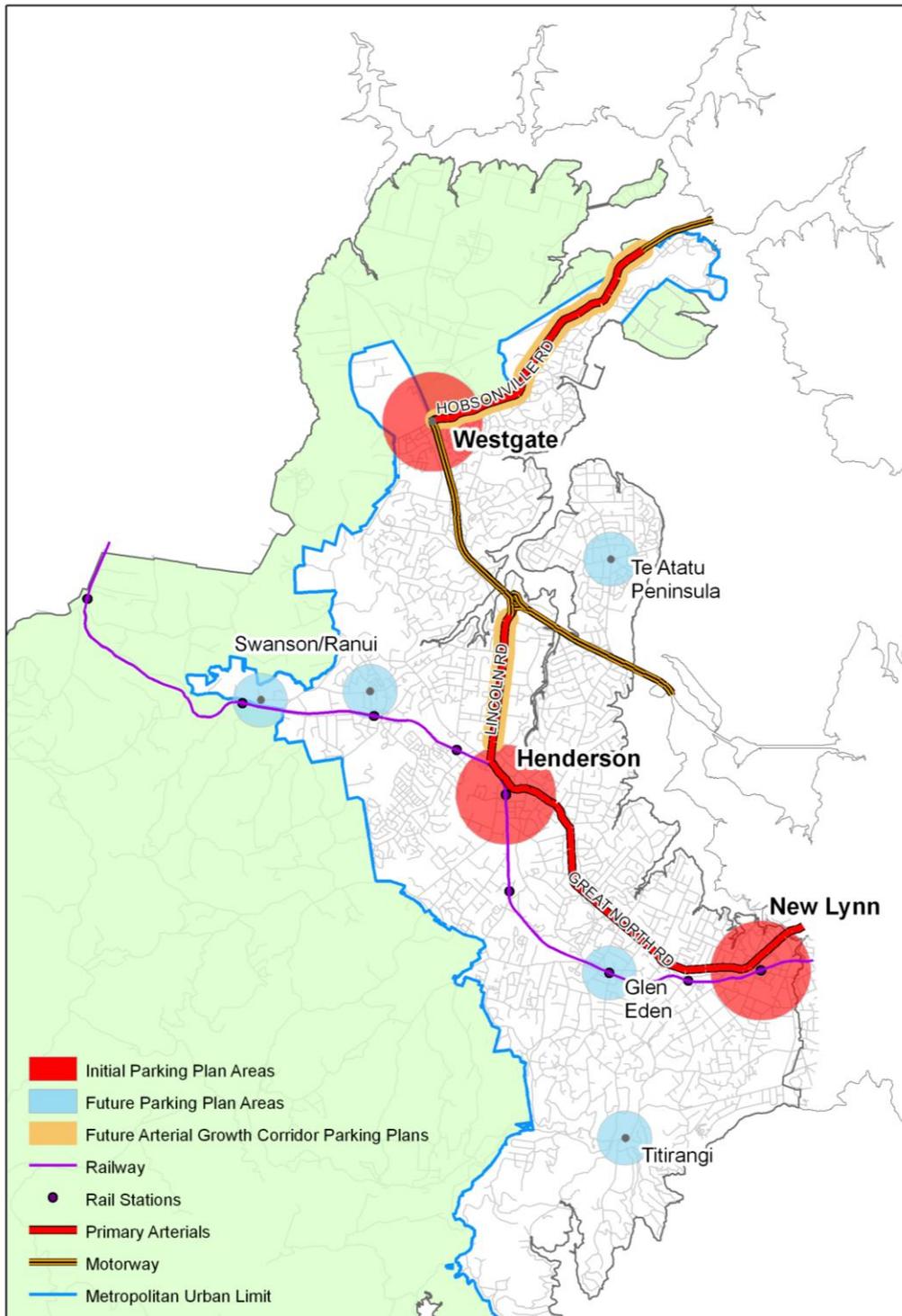
- i) Parking surveys identifying supply and demand, including projected demand, in particular centres.
- ii) Parking advice, identifying options relating to the regulatory approach to parking and to parking management drawn for New Zealand and international experience. *(Note: Both parking surveys and parking advice are routinely referred to as parking studies)*
- iii) Stakeholder feedback was gathered through consultation and supported by officer interaction and active participation in regional consultation, during the development of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy. As parking affects everyone in some way, a concerted effort was made to ensure the plans were written in plain English, with minimal use of technical jargon, to encourage feedback from as broad a spectrum of the community as possible.

These parking plans, along with the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy represent a new paradigm by adopting strategic and holistic approach to parking as a travel demand management tool which can support land use planning and urban design. In the past the approach to parking has been one of ‘predict and provide’ supported by regulation through the District Plan. The draft plans articulate a new paradigm which sees parking as a travel demand management tool, supporting land use planning and urban design objectives. The draft plans therefore represent innovation and the understanding that parking can be ‘the glue’ connecting good urban design, economic development and the delivery of an effective multi-modal transport system.

2. STARTING POINT

The decision to undertake the development of these plans was taken in the context of the strategic direction of Council and supported by previous research undertaken by the Council.

Figure 1 Waitakere City Parking Plan



Note: Titirangi is not a growth area
 Area in green, west of Metropolitan Urban Limit is rural

2.1 The Strategic Context

The Waitakere City Transport Strategy 2006 -2016 (WCTS) identified four areas of parking management which required the development, over the 10 year life of the WCTS, of strategies to:

- Limit supply – through changes to the District Plan;

- Manage on-street parking – through regulatory measures and on-street paid parking;
- Charging for off-street parking – specifically to upgrade security; and
- Provision of park and ride facilities.

The Auckland Regional Transport Strategy 2005 called for the development of a regional parking strategy. In order to give effect to this and to other regional strategies including meeting regional travel demand management outcomes and the implementation of the land use outcomes of Auckland Regional Growth Strategy 1999, the ARC undertook the development of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy (ARC 2009). At the outset of this process, the ARC invited all the territorial local authorities within the Auckland region to participate in the development of the regional parking strategy through officer participation in a Technical Advisory Committee. The earliest preliminary drafts of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy identified the development of territorial authority parking plans and town centre and corridor comprehensive parking management plans as a policy action to be undertaken by territorial local authorities.

In this context, Council determined that the appropriate vehicle for developing the parking strategies required by the WCTS should be through the development of the following comprehensive parking management plans:

- The Waitakere City Parking Plan - an over-arching citywide plan;
- The Henderson Town Centre Parking Management Plan;
- The New Lynn Town Centre Parking Management Plan;
- The Westgate Town Centre Parking Management Plan; and
- Further parking management plans, to be developed in the future, for the other town centres in Waitakere and for the growth corridors along major arterial roads.

Council takes the Waitakere Eco City vision seriously and with this comes a commitment to innovation and a willingness to be the first off the blocks.

The three major town centres, selected for the initial parking management plans, all have unique characteristics:

- Henderson is seen by the Council as Waitakere City's CBD which was reinforced by moving the Council offices there in 2006, adjacent to an upgraded public transport (rail/bus) interchange;
- New Lynn is undergoing a major Transit Oriented Development (TOD), including the trenching of the rail line running through its centre; and
- Westgate is a greenfield development on previously rural land, adjacent to an existing shopping centre with the same name.

Council has identified its town centres (with one exception) and corridors as core growth areas, through the Waitakere Growth Management Strategy 2009, see Figures 1 and 2. In order to accommodate the desired level of population and employment growth, it is essential that the parking plans create an environment where there is sufficient parking to support core town centre activities including retail growth, while not locking up large amounts of land in at grade car parks.

Table 1: Future population growth by growth area

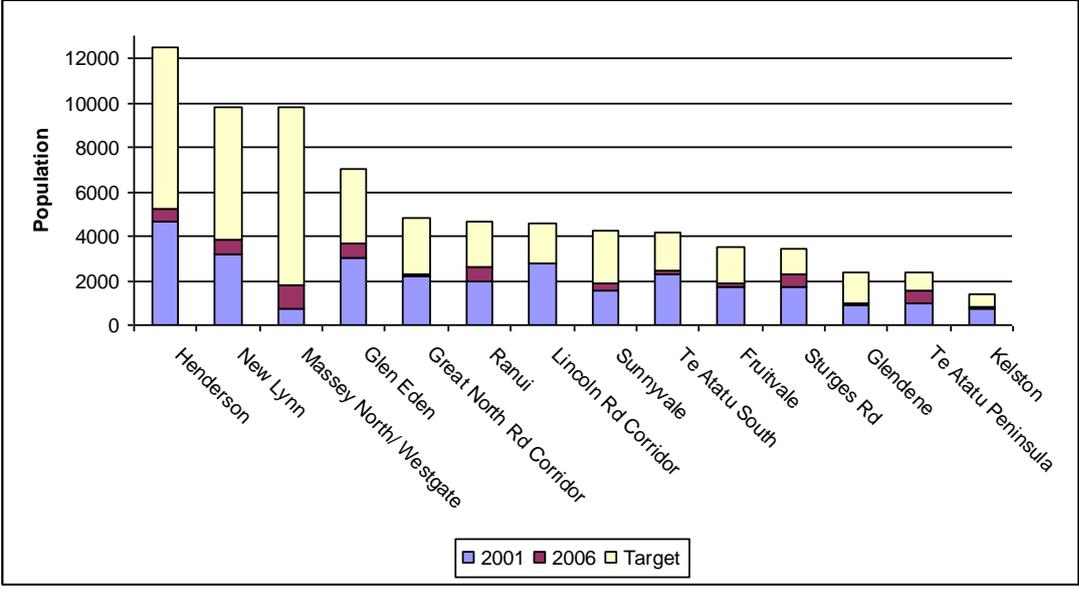
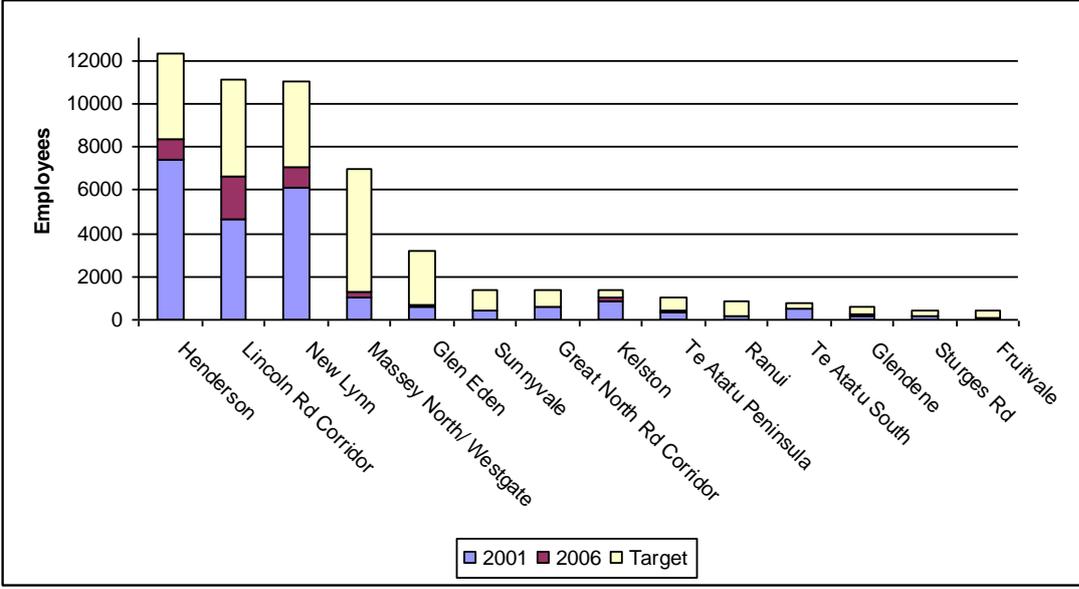


Table 2: Future employment growth by growth area



(Waitakere 2009)

2.2 Previous Research

The commitment to develop parking plans was supported by parking research that explored the relationship between parking and the delivery of Council’s strategic and urban design objectives. A review of this was the starting point for the parking advice, commissioned by Council, from which the draft plans were developed. This research made it clear that a fresh approach to parking supply and management was required if Council was to meet its growth and urban design objectives.

In 2005, Hill Young Cooper was commissioned to undertake the Waitakere Town Centre Parking Study for Council. This research “identified links between the provision of parking in town centres and vehicle mode share. Auckland was found to have a relative over-supply of parking in comparison to Australian cities. It was “recommended that minimum parking requirements are removed for residential developments in the main town centres.” (Donovan, Genter & Litman 2008)

The May 2006 in-house Henderson Town Centre Parking Review undertaken by Janet Hannan) explored the practical implications of implementing the Henderson Town Centre Concept Plan. This report proposed that longer stay/commuter car parking be relocated to the periphery of the town centre, and centrally located car parking to be targeted at shorter stay/shopper parkers. (Schneider, Rutherford, Yapp & Still 2008)

Also in 2006 G.B. Arrington provided Council with an Assessment of Proposed District Plan Changes relating to proposed District Plan changes for New Lynn, and new growth areas in the north west of Waitakere, together with city wide urban design rules. This study made a number of recommendations for parking control and management policies and programmes supportive of intensive land use and urban design objectives including development of comprehensive parking management plans. (Schneider, Rutherford, Yapp & Still 2008)

3. PARKING RESEARCH

Further parking research commissioned by Council to support the development of the plans, under the generic term “parking studies” can be categorised into:

- Parking surveys collecting data on parking supply and demand in specific centres.
- Parking advice collating best practice and applying this to data collected in parking surveys as advice on matters of parking policy.

3.1 Parking Surveys

Once the commitment to prepare the parking plans had been made, previous parking surveys for the New Lynn and Henderson Town Centre were updated. These quantified the inadequacies of the parking status quo.

The November 2004, SKM New Lynn Town Centre Parking Study was updated in March 2008, it assessed the actual number of car parks available in New Lynn and concluded that although existing parking provision was below that required by the Council's Parking and Driveway Guideline there was a significant overprovision of parking in New Lynn Town Centre. The updated survey also found that peak demand was lower and parking occupancy slightly lower than in 2004. (Schneider, Rutherford, Yapp & Still 2008)

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The July 2008 Henderson Parking Study Update was based on surveys in April and October 2007 of both on-street and off-street parking occupancy. Some areas of high occupancy were identified, but the study found that overall existing parking

supply adequately met the demands placed on it although the total parking supply was only 84% of the parking theoretically required by Council's current Parking & Driveway Guideline. (Schneider & Rutherford (1) 2008)

Significant input to the format of the final reports arose from contributions made by local Community Board Members seeking to highlight relevant information, and from consequent discussions with the consultants.

A separate study of the Corban Estate area by SKM addressed the parking supply and management for the proposed Corban Estate Creative Quarter (CECQ). It provided useful additional data on parking availability in the Henderson Town Centre.

3.2 Parking Advice

As a step towards developing the policies and plans outlined in the WCTS and draft Auckland Regional Parking Strategy, the Council commissioned consultants to prepare two interrelated studies to provide advice on a new approach to parking policy. These were:

- The Waitakere Strategic Parking Advice – provided by McCormickRankinCagney in association with Todd Litman of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute; and
- The Waitakere Parking Study - provided by the ARRB Group of Perth in association with Transport Planning Solutions of Auckland. Draft Town Centre Parking Management Plans for Westgate - Massey North, Henderson and New Lynn were also developed as part of this study.

The Waitakere Strategic Parking Advice drew on international best practice in identifying strategies which would support intensive growth in town centres and growth corridors. The Waitakere Parking Study drew on Australasian best practice to identify appropriate parking management techniques to implement the strategies identified. Both studies incorporated data gathered by the parking surveys and recognised that the current approach to parking resulted in: inefficient use of land; insufficient density in town centres and growth corridors; and too high a reliance on single occupant motor vehicle travel within and to town centres and growth corridors (Schneider, Rutherford, Yapp & Still 2008). Significant input to the final reports was made by Council officers in consequential discussions with the consultants. The most significant of these contributions was the identification of the requirement for parking minimum standards for mobility parking where parking maximum standards apply, as the provisions of the New Zealand Building Act relating to mobility parking will not be triggered if parking supply is reduced.

The Waitakere Strategic Parking Advice recommended that Council:

- Revise its regulatory framework to introduce a flexible approach to reducing parking provision for new developments;
- Introduce charges for on-street and off-street parking where peak occupancies regularly exceeds approximately 85 per cent; and
- Initiate a number of other parking management techniques including the establishment of a parking management division of Council (Donovan, Genter & Litman 2008).

The Waitakere Parking Study and the initial drafts of the town centre parking management plans provided detailed recommendations as to how to implement the strategic parking advice through:

- Improved pro-active management of parking including the introduction of a parking hierarchy for town centres and other growth areas. This novel approach has become an integral component of the plans and has also been included in the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy;
- The gradual implementation of on street paid parking and the extension of charging in Council owned off–street carparks;
- Denser parking facilities within or very close to the town centres in carparking buildings;
- The progressive introduction of regulatory changes;
- Improving the provision for bicycle parking; and
- Controlling the provision of park-and-ride needs so that it is only by bona fide public transport passengers' use these facilities and that where these are located in the cores of major town centres, provision should be on a temporary basis only (Schneider, Rutherford, Yapp & Still 2008).

The Draft Town Centre Parking Management Plans for Henderson and New Lynn provided a detailed comparison in parking availability and usage between these two centres, which demonstrated that Henderson has a relatively small amount of on-street parking, compared with New Lynn. However, Henderson has a large amount of off-street parking available compared with New Lynn (Schneider and Rutherford 2008). This comparison has been incorporated into the final town centre parking management plans.

4. INPUTS TO THE AUCKLAND REGIONAL PARKING STRATEGY

Although Council officers contributed to the development of the consultation draft of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy, Council had a number of major issues with the document. In particular:

- Support in principle, as the draft strategy was consistent with regional transport objectives and policies;
- Parking maximum standards for town centres that are well served by passenger transport should be flexible to minimise the risk of business transference and not linked to assessment of public transport accessibility;
- Parking minimum standards are required for mobility parking where parking maximum standards;
- Scope of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy should include motor cycle parking, truck parking and parking outside town centres and corridors;
- Park and ride Facilities - a more comprehensive approach was called for;
- Parking on Regional Arterial Roads – the approach should be consistent with the Draft Regional Arterial Roads Plan and allow on-street parking on a regional arterial where this is regarded as particularly important to the vitality and economy of adjacent land uses; and
- Submissions from the New Lynn, Waitakere, Massey and Henderson Community Boards were attached to Council's submission - for the information of the ARC. The Boards have deep reservations as to the current provision of

public transport, particularly in Massey Ward, which has the least access to the rail of all four Waitakere wards, together with scepticism that bus services will improve.

It was a significant achievement that the adopted Auckland Regional Parking Strategy incorporated all the changes suggested by Waitakere. In particular an earlier proposal to base parking maximum standards on a public transport accessibility index was dropped in favour of an approach of basing maximum standards on current minimum standards, except where lower maximum standards can be justified, as proposed by Waitakere. Likewise the need to provide for minimum standards for mobility parking where parking maximum standards apply, were incorporated. The only issues raised in the Waitakere submission not addressed in the final Strategy were those relating to park and ride, due to a separate Park and Ride Strategy being developed by the Auckland Regional Transport Authority (a subsidiary entity of the ARC).

Of equal significance is the amount of content from the strategic parking research studies undertaken for Council incorporated into the final text of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy, particularly from Schneider & Rutherford's Parking Management Plan for New Lynn. The most notable of these, quoted in the final Strategy, was the adoption of the requirement to provide for parking hierarchies in town centres and corridors.

5. INITIAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

There were three distinct stages of external stakeholder engagement through public consultation. These were:

- i) Informal consultation on the strategic approach to the provision of parking in new developments, prior to the writing of the draft plans.
- ii) Consultation on paid parking alongside the Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-2019, during the editorial re-writing of the draft plans.
- iii) Consultation on the draft plans.

At all stages of the development of the plans, a cross Council organisational approach was taken in order to obtain the professional input of all officers with an interest in parking. These areas of interest included: parking enforcement and carpark management; asset management and engineering; urban design and development; economic development and urban growth strategy; strategic project implementation; policy planning and consent services. The process was led by officers from Council's Transport Strategy section. In respect of elected members of both Council and Community Boards, briefing workshops were arranged at appropriate intervals.

5.1 Informal consultation

Informal consultation on the strategic direction for the regulatory approach to parking was undertaken in November and December 2008 to identify whether there was support for a change in the regulatory approach to parking provision in new developments in growth areas. Three options were put forward:

- i) Retention of parking minimum standards – basically the status quo with greater flexibility.
- ii) Council's preferred option – parking maximum standards with flexibility.
- iii) The approach taken by the ARC in the consultation draft of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy - basically parking maximum standards based on public transport accessibility.

The consultation comprised the preparation of a discussion paper, presentations to Community Boards, Te Taumata Runanga (Council's Maori standing committee) and partner organisations including the Waitakere Pacific Board, the Waitakere Youth Council and Disability Waitakere Information Network, business groups and to public meetings of town centre residents and businesses.

Key learnings included:

- Public confusion over the meaning of parking minimum standards (more parking) and parking maximum standards (less parking). Despite this, opinion was more or less equally divided between those who believed that more parking should be provided in future developments and those who believed that less parking in future developments was in the public interest;
- The need to incorporate measures to address immediate concerns as well as long term measures;
- A reluctance to accept that there will be meaningful improvements to public transport services in the near future; and
- Reservations concerning introduction of paid on-street parking.

Council's response was to incorporate the approach of introducing maximum standards with flexibility in growth areas into the parking plans. Taking into account the various reservations articulated during the consultation, Council decided that these would be timed to coincide with the target date for electrification of the Western rail line by 2013 together with other improvements to public transport, including integrated ticketing and a bus service review designed to provide feeder bus services to rail and express bus interchanges. While no formal decision has yet been made around paid parking, the consensus in discussions among Councillors has been that, if introduced, this should also coincide with rail electrification by 2013. It was also agreed that measures to address immediate concerns of town centre residents and businesses be included in the draft plans.

5.2 Consultation on paid parking alongside the Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-2019

It had been intended that consultation on the draft parking plans be undertaken alongside the consultation on the Long Term Council Community Plan 2009-2019 (LTCCP). However, a decision was made to only consult on the issue within the plans with the greatest financial implication; that is paid parking. The LTCCP public discussion document asked submitters whether they supported on-street paid parking in town centres and corridors. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to provide the public with any explanation of the rationale around paid parking or suggestions around the timing of its introduction.

Thirty three of the 353 submissions to the LTCCP addressed this question. 13 submitters supported paid parking and 20 were opposed to it. Many of those opposed, qualified their opposition by references to the economic recession, the current limitations of public transport, and the need to incorporate any proposal to introduce paid parking into town centre or corridor parking management plans.

6 WRITING THE PLANS

The plans were developed from the two strategic parking studies, incorporating the evidence gathered in the parking surveys and stakeholder inputs both internal and external. The content of the draft plans was aligned with the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy and reviewed by an external communications consultant in order to be in plain readable English with minimal use of technical jargon. Some intricacies proved difficult to articulate clearly. The issue with mobility parking is a key example. It proved difficult to explain why in a parking maximum scenario, minimum mobility parking standards are required.

Key provisions of the plans are:

- Setting parking maximum standards for new developments in growth areas to encourage developers to consider what is an appropriate amount of parking in the light of public transport, walking and cycling alternatives;
- Particular requirements for mobility parking; motorcycle parking; and bicycle parking;
- A parking hierarchy giving preference to short stay parking in the core areas of town centre;
- Parking Buildings in town centres to provide efficient parking that can facilitate reduced or no provision of on site parking for high density development as well as provided adequate availability of short stay parking. The draft plans provide guidance on location and design aspects of parking buildings and allow for Council or private sector ownership/ management;
- Introduction of a variety of parking management techniques including paid on-street parking (at an appropriate time) and Transport Management Associations to ensure efficient use of available parking; and
- Adequate provision for all types of parking, including: park and ride, spillover parking and heavy commercial vehicle (truck) parking.

The draft plans are accessible in the draft policies section of the Council's web site: <http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/AbtCnl/pp/draft-policies/draftparkingplans.asp>

7 CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT PLANS

Parking is a subject which affects everyone, but on which it can be difficult to engage constructively with the general public. Accordingly, important research learning was how to make parking consultation more effective.

Having made a decision to consult separately from consultation on the LTCCP, consultation was rescheduled to commence shortly after the close of the LTCCP consultation. This, however, coincided with the immediate aftermath of the release of the report of the Royal Commission on Auckland Regional Governance and the New

Zealand Government decision on this. As a result, consultation was put back to the period 19 June to 31 July 2009.

A targeted mail out was sent to a composite database of businesses developers and previous submitters, a total of over 220 addresses. Staff also made presentations to scheduled meetings with the business sector, where concerns were raised that more needed to be done to inform businesses, particularly tenant businesses, of the consultation and of the content of the plans. In response, a hand delivered letter drop was undertaken to all businesses in all town centres, not only New Lynn, Henderson and the existing portion of Westgate, but also the smaller centres of Glen Eden, Titirangi and Te Atatu Peninsula. Deliveries were made to a total of around 1500 businesses between 10 and 16 July 2009. It is hoped that this further targeted distribution of material will increase awareness of the plans by members of the business community, which is an important first step toward implementation.

Sixty responses were received in relation to the draft plans. In many instances the feedback reflected views that that the proposals in the draft plans were either far too innovative to be of any practical value or alternatively that the draft plans were too conservative in approach. This has been interpreted to indicate that the draft plans take a moderate, middle of the road approach to changes in parking management. Accordingly, relatively few amendments are proposed to the draft plans, and most of those changes are to clarify matters of detail.

Slightly more responses were opposed to than in support of the proposed regulatory approach of introducing parking maximum standards and site caps on parking numbers in growth areas, through District Plan changes. However, Council’s urban design team advised that limited parking provision essential to meet growth and design objectives. The proposed parking maximums are intended as a back stop. The incentive to reduce parking should come from developers recognising that cost savings can be achieved from reduced parking supported by better parking management and changes to travel behaviour. It has been recommended to Council’s Policy and Strategy Committee that the draft plans be amended to indicate that if further voluntary reduction in parking provision is not forthcoming, the level of parking maximum standards will need to be reviewed to levels that will meet these growth objectives.

There was support for the proposals to introduce mobility parking minimum standards and cash in lieu for mobility parking as well as to reserve two per cent of all parking spaces be reserved for motorcycles. Feedback regarding bicycle parking was equally divided with three in support of the proposals and three opposed to what they saw as “the provision of infrastructure for outdated technology

Figure 3 New Lynn Town Centre Parking Management 2013



The proposal for the phased introduction of paid parking as an effective measure to encourage transport mode shift, to replace long stay parking and to manage available parking attracted the most feedback, with nine respondents in support and 28 opposed. Support focussed on paid parking being one component of a comprehensive approach to parking management. Most opponents of paid parking considered that the introduction of paid parking was the sole or at least the major purpose of the draft plans. Almost all town centre business respondents were opposed, with the qualified exception of one town centre shopping mall. Opponents of paid parking also raised concerns as to the comprehensive nature of the plans, with a preference expressed for specific consultation on specific issues such as paid parking and regulatory changes. In fact, specifically targeted consultation will be required to give effect to many of the proposed actions in the draft plans, often through processes prescribed by statute, such as for Plan Changes and adoption of by-laws.

A key component of the Draft Town Centre Plans is the provision of car parking buildings or deck parking as an efficient use of land for parking. Eleven of the responses received were in support of parking buildings with six opposed. The majority of the feedback on park and ride expressed concern at the gradual phasing out of park and ride facilities in New Lynn. Finally, a number of detailed spill-over measures were proposed for the Henderson and New Lynn Town centres, including support for the continuation of existing measures. Specific proposals were also made in respect of Westgate and Glen Eden, although a parking management plan has yet to be developed for Glen Eden.

8 NEXT STEPS

Consultation closed at 5pm on Friday 31 July. A full analysis of feedback will be reported to the Council's Policy and Strategy Committee with suggested amendments to the plans on Thursday 3 September 2009. An update on the approval of the plans and changes to the final content will be made in the conference presentation to this paper. Publication and printing of the final plans is scheduled for September and October 2009, together with the commencement of implementation. It is hoped that sample copies of the final plans may be available for the Conference.

9 CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated how Waitakere has taken the initiative within Auckland, New Zealand to prepare both a strategic citywide parking plan and comprehensive town centre parking management plan for Waitakere's major centres. This is an exercise that the other major cities in the region are just commencing. These parking plans can be distinguished from previous parking plans by other centres in the region and in Australian local authorities by their comprehensive nature, encompassing the strategic and the practical, including regulatory measures and service provision. The comprehensive nature applies also to the time lines, which include immediate measures as well as medium and long term actions over the plans' 30 year timeframe. These draft plans do indeed embrace the new paradigm in parking, which sees parking as a travel demand management tool and also seeks to maximise the use of available parking.

Although triggered in part by the development of the Auckland Regional Parking Strategy; the development of the draft plans resulted in research which informed Waitakere's submission to the draft regional strategy, as did the studies undertaken for Waitakere. There is evidence that the content of the final Auckland Regional Parking Strategy was informed by both Waitakere's submission and the parking studies prepared for it. The content of the plans is likely to continue to influence parking management in the newly unified metropolitan region after the reorganisation of Auckland local governance takes effect in October 2010.

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