

# 1. Report: Whangarei District Council Briefing Tuesday 16 February 2016

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*Report of a Briefing to the Whangarei District Council held in the Council Chamber, Forum North on Tuesday 16 February 2016 at 9.00am*

**Present:**

Her Worship the Mayor S L Mai, Crs S J Bell, S J Bretherton, P A Cutforth, S J Deeming, S M Glen, P R Halse, C M Hermon, G C Innes, G M Martin, B L McLachlan, S L Morgan and J D T Williamson

**Apology/Absent:**

Cr C B Christie

**In Attendance:**

Chief Executive (R Forlong), Group Manager Infrastructure (S Weston), Group Manager District Living (P Dell), Policy and Monitoring Manager (P Waanders), Property Manager (M Hibbert), Roading Manager (J Devine), Senior Roading Asset Engineer (G Monteith), Policy Planner (R Burgoyne), Scholarship Student (V Martinovich) and Senior Meeting Co-ordinator (C Brindle)

## 1 Parking Strategy Review

Facilitators: G Martin  
S Weston

Power Point presentation: 16/13642

Cr Martin and S Weston convened the meeting.

The purpose of the Briefing is to inform Council of how the current parking in the Whangarei CBD area is functioning in relation to the Parking Management Strategy, public perception, what other Councils are doing and possible future works that may have an impact upon parking operations. Options such as free parking and resident parking schemes will also be considered.

G Monteith covered the content of the Briefing as outlined in the presentation and the agenda report including:

- Parking Strategy Update
- Public Phone Survey'
- Current Parking situation
- Occupancy rates
- Future options
  - Free Parking
  - Resident only parking
- Future Plans and Impact
- Discussion/further investigation.

## Discussion/feedback/comment:

- District Plan Change – why is this a ‘high priority recommendation’?  
Puts the onus back on developers to provide parking.
- Should the following reference be included in the list of recommendations - “....also recommended the removal of all minimum parking requirements as a vital component of the strategy,.....” (refer page 2 of agenda report)
- The reference to directional signage, states ‘completed’, should this be ‘not completed’?  
Greg Monteith responded that the focus on signage had been within the CBD and not wider. This can be reviewed.
- Improved public transport such as the NRC Citylink Service – may have an affect on parking
- Priority recommendations  
Consultation with businesses and community when changing parking restrictions - have local business been asked to comment on whether changes to charges has changed their business eg do they get more revenue? Paul D. Not at this stage but can be considered.  
Mpark – not widely known, need to raise public awareness  
Park & Ride and Multi-level parking buildings – consider raising as a ‘priority’
- Difference between numbers shopping at Okara & CBD – does the fact that Okara has a supermarket have an influence on the numbers?  
J Devine stated that the main findings from the survey undertaken indicated the availability of easy parking is more important to people than the price of parking and that the variety of shopping and the look and feel of the CBD is important to people.
- Survey results show general occupancy rates for most parking areas are well below the proposed management targets set out in the parking strategy. This would indicate there is not a shortage of car parks in the CBD however this is not the public perception. Suggest more education and signage may be required to address the public perception of parking in the CBD.
- Free parking – parking doesn’t come free – there is a cost. Costs about \$20k per parking space created.
- Occupancy rates – survey undertaken at 3 times of the day and averaging done. , is this an accurate representation of average occupancy? Would like to see the Peak data.  
Council policy not to invest in parking for ‘peak’ times..  
Occupancy rates - comparison between peak & average occupancy rates can be provided.  
Central City Car Park – occupancy rate 30 – 40 %. Can be difficult to manoeuvre large cars around.
- Permitted parking  
Policy includes the reissuing of over 70’s parking permits every two years. Hopefully the two yearly process will bring about a reduction in the illegal use of over 70’s parking permits.
- Use of technology to monitor time limits etc introduced in Rotorua. Significant costs involved, pay to install and then rent – staff will review and investigate options. One of the issues is that the charge for parking is small compared to the costs of technology
- Future options -
  - Is paying for the first hour and not charging for the second hour a viable option?  
Would be easy to implement and manage.
  - Message from retailers is they would appreciate Council working on providing 2 hours free parking (retailers could ensure staff don’t park in the free parking by including a clause in employment contracts). Parity with the Town Basin has been raised as an issue by the retailers.
  - \$1 per hour across the board an option?  
People are willing to pay a premium in certain areas – to get closer to CBD.  
Introduction of \$1 per hour across the board would also have an affect on overall income.  
Charges high so turnover high on higher use streets. Laurie Hall Car park allows people to stay longer for less money as it is on the fringe.  
Cost of parking wasn’t raised as an issue in the Survey.

- Central City Car park – what else can be done to increase occupancy rates?  
Can be difficult to find (particularly for visitors from outside of the district).  
Suggest WDC staff parking be moved to the top floor.
- Town Basin car parking – critical
- Water Street car park – potential for ‘split purpose’ charges?
- Rust Avenue car park (adjacent to Whangarei Intermediate) – not included in inner city CBD.
- ‘Think smarter’ – consider changing to one way streets with angle parks

## Conclusion

Key topics listed for future discussion:

- Number of car parks/ location of car parks
- Fees for town basin parking
- Ask CBD business has revenue increased
- Inner City loop – CBD/Okara/....
- Park & Ride
- Multi level car parking
- Signage / visibility
- Perception
- Peak usage (occupancy of central CBD car parks) – When: investment / additional car parking
- Free parking – technology & investment
- \$1 per hour across city scenario
- Cost of options- roading budget : Who pays
- Workers parking
- Assess options for increasing angle parking
- Land Use activity.

R Forlong made the following comments:

- consider all information in decision making and accept there will be some compromise for the community
- effect of reduction in car parking revenue on subsidy (council receives 53% subsidy on roading expenditure)
- district growth – in process of transitioning from provincial centre to urban town. Issues (such as parking) will get bigger and more complex.
- CBD issue isn't just about car parking. CBD's all around the country are struggling.

## Conclusion

The feedback provided at today's Briefing will be further investigated and recommendations for parking improvements will be made to council in due course.

**The Briefing closed at 10.38pm**