

Tabled
4/12

BEFORE THE WHANGAREI DISTRICT COUNCIL HEARING PANEL

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act
1991

AND

IN THE MATTER Plan Change PC8888

STATEMENT BY GEOFFREY STEVENS GIBSON

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Geoffrey Stevens Gibson. I am a Director of Northern Civil Consulting Engineers Ltd. I hold the degree of Bachelor of Engineering. I am a member of Engineering New Zealand and I am a Chartered Professional Engineer.

1.2 I have worked in the fields of civil road and traffic engineering for 40 years and have a wide experience of road design and traffic engineering. I have undertaken road and traffic engineering design together with risk and economic analysis for New Zealand Transport Agency (**NZTA**) (or its predecessors) and all Northland Local Authorities over the past 30 years.

1.3 This statement is in support of submissions 17 and 21. This statement relates to the Transport provisions and specifically TRA Appendix 1B - the maximum on site car parking in the parking exemption area shown in Appendix 1F.

2. SUMMARY OF STATEMENT

2.1 The purpose of the statement is to address the following matters:

- (a) Overview/description of the provision
- (b) Effect of the provision
- (c) How the provision relates to the objectives and policies of the Plan Change
- (d) How the provision relates to Part 2 of the RMA
- (e) Officers response
- (f) Conclusion

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVISION

3.1 TRA Appendix 1A sets out the Minimum On-site Car and Bicycle Parking Requirements for sites outside of the car parking exemption area detailed in Appendix 1F (Provisions for residential shown below).

Appendix 1A. Minimum On-site Car and Bicycle Parking Requirements

Car parking and bicycle parking spaces shall be provided on-site in accordance with Table TRA 1 for sites outside of the car parking exemption area detailed in Appendix 1F.

Table TRA 1. Minimum on-site car and bicycle parking requirements

Residential Activities

Activity	Required Car Parking Spaces	Required Bicycle Parking Spaces
Principal Residential Unit	1 per unit within the High-density Residential Zone 1 per 1 – 2 bedroom unit in all other Zones 2 per 3+ bedroom unit in all other Zones	Nil
Minor Residential Unit	1 per unit	Nil
Multi-unit development	1 per unit within the High-density Residential Zone 1 per studio or single bedroom unit in all other zones 2 per two or more bedroom residential units in all other zones, Plus 1 visitor car parking space for every 4 residential units provided.	Long stay: 1 per unit without a dedicated garage
Supported Residential Care Home	0.3 spaces per bed	Long stay: 1 per employee

Table truncated for brevity

3.2 TRA Appendix 1F shows the area in Figure TRA 2 that is exempt from providing the minimum car parking and loading spaces required in Appendix 1A and 1C and is subject to the maximum on-site car parking stated in Appendix 1B. The area includes City Centre, Waterfront and Mixed Use zones.

3.3 TRA Appendix 1B shows the Maximum On-site Car Parking in the Parking Exemption Area.

Appendix 1B. Maximum On-site Car Parking in Parking Exemption Area

Any activity located in the Car Parking Exemption Area identified in Appendix 1F shall provide no more on-site car parking spaces than those specified in Table TRA 2.

Table TRA 2. Maximum on-site car parking in parking exemption area

Activity	Maximum Car Parking Spaces
Residential Unit	Maximum: 1 per unit
Visitor Accommodation	Maximum: 1 per 2 units
Commercial Service	Maximum: 1 per 50m2 GFA

4. EFFECT OF THE PROVISION

- 4.1 Under the Proposed Plan as notified any proposal that provides more parking than the maximum stated in Table TRA2 becomes a discretionary activity (or restricted discretionary if the Planning Officers recommendation is adopted).
- 4.2 Discretionary activities (and even restricted discretionary activities) represent a risk to any development because of the uncertainty that a proposal will gain consent. This is the opposite of encouragement of development. To make an activity discretionary needs a sound planning basis that is directed at clear objectives.
- 4.3 Take for example a multi-unit residential development in the Mixed Use Zone within the Car Parking and Loading Space Exemption Area. A development comprising 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units may only provide 1 parking space per unit to avoid being a discretionary activity.
- 4.4 It is my submission that this level of parking is insufficient to provide the level of parking amenity that is desired by most occupiers of 2 and 3 bedroom inner city apartments.
- 4.5 Glen Jonas will provide evidence from a real estate practitioners perspective on the demand for parking spaces for apartments.
- 4.6 There does not appear to be any Sustainable Management objective that will be achieved by restricting the provision of parking in any given development.
- 4.7 Making provision for adequate parking amenity in a development is essential for the financial viability of any project. Financial viability is a prerequisite for any development to proceed.

5. HOW THE PROVISION RELATES TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN CHANGES

Relevant Transport Objectives

TRA-O4 – Safety and Efficiency

Provide suitable and sufficient vehicle crossings, access, parking, loading and manoeuvring areas that contribute to the safe and efficient functioning of the transport network. (emphasis added)

TRA-O5 – Urban Design

Design and locate transport infrastructure in a manner which contributes to amenity and quality urban design outcomes. (emphasis added)

TRA-O6 – Future Growth

Ensure that future growth can be supported by appropriate transport infrastructure.

- 5.1 The above three objectives are supportive of providing adequate parking.

Relevant Transport Policies

TRA-P9 – Car Parking to allow for reduced on-site parking spaces where appropriate based on:

1. Surrounding transport infrastructure.
2. Proximity to the City Centre, Local Commercial or Neighbourhood Commercial Zones.
3. The provision of additional amenities on-site.
4. The ability to mitigate car parking spillover effects.

- 5.2 There is a huge difference between allowing for reduced parking as in our suggested changes to the proposed rule versus promoting reduced parking as the current proposed rule directs. The current proposed rule provides no mitigation of car parking spillover effects.

The Section 32 analysis states (S149)

“In addition, PC109 proposes to implement maximum on-site car parking figures in this parking exemption area. The maximums only relate to residential units, visitor accommodation and commercial services. The intention of the maximums is to limit the amount of on-site car parking provided in Whangarei City to place more priority on pedestrians and cyclists.”

- 5.3 PC109 in this instance, by placing maximum on-site parking restrictions on residential, visitor and commercial services, will be counter-productive. People will only be in the central city area if they either live there, work there or visit. To work or visit they will need parking convenient enough to walk within the city centre. To live there, they will need sufficiently attractive residential accommodation with parking. Walking will be promoted by providing convenient parking within walking distance of the city centre and waterfront amenities.
- 5.4 An analogy of the logic of the parking maximums is to consider a shopping centre development where only half the parking demand is provided to place priority on pedestrians and cyclists. The result will be congested and difficult parking, customers go elsewhere, tenants leave and the centre dies.
- 5.5 The City Centre is like a big shopping centre. It competes with Okara, Tikipunga, Kamo, and Kensington shopping centres. The other shopping centres offer free unlimited parking. The City Centre has time restricted and metered (pay) parking.

The evidence that the City Centre is not competing well is in the number of empty retail stores.

Relevant Mixed Use Zone Objectives

MU-O1 – Appropriate Activities

Accommodate a range of activities that do not undermine the strength, vibrancy and viability of the City Centre or Waterfront Zones.

MU-O2 – Residential Activities

Promote residential activities and avoid activities which would materially detract from residential amenity.

- 5.6 Both of these objectives would be supported by removing the maximum parking requirement.

Relevant Mixed Use Zone Policies

MU-P2 – Economic Growth

To enable economic growth and employment opportunities while protecting walkability within the MU and the vitality and viability of the City Centre, Waterfront and Local Commercial Zones by:

1. Enabling residential activities and compatible activities in terms of the nature, scale, design and hours of operation of the activity.
2. Managing and limiting cumulative effects associated with commercial sprawl outside of the City Centre, Waterfront and Local Commercial Zones and the Hihīaua Precinct where activities may detract from or compete with these areas.
3. Managing the scale, design and nature of activities to ensure that:
 - a. Active frontage is maintained and enhanced at ground floor.
 - b. The activity and building design are complementary to the MU context and retain narrow activity and site frontages.
 - c. Standalone car parking facilities and other large single use buildings at ground floor are sleeved by smaller scale commercial activities.
 - d. Activities which cater to private motorists, such as large-scale retail activities, drive through facilities and service stations, do not compromise the walkability, streetscape or amenity of the MU.

MU-P3 – Residential Activities and Amenity

To encourage residential uses and protect residential amenity by:

1. Avoiding industrial activities and rural production activities where external adverse effects cannot be mitigated.
2. Managing non-residential activities which generate high levels of noise and/or motor vehicle traffic, or operate outside normal business hours.
3. Requiring residential units to provide sufficient internal space and outdoor living spaces.

4. Managing building scale and design to limit shading and building dominance.

- 5.7 Both of these policies would be supported by removing the maximum parking requirement. The viability of the Central City is dependant on attracting people to live, work and shop in the area. Limiting off street parking amenity will restrict the ability for people to live work and shop in the Central City.

Relevant City Centre Zone Objectives

CC-O2 – Discouraged Activities

Discourage noxious activities, activities with lower amenity, and activities which cater primarily for customers in private motor vehicles.

CC-O3 – Residential Activities

Promote residential activities in the City Centre.

CC-O4 – Urban Design Require high quality urban design outcomes and incentivise exemplary design.

- 5.8 Two of these objectives (03 and 04) would be supported by removing the maximum parking requirement. CC02 is supported by rules CC-R32 - 47 making such activities either non-conforming or prohibited.

Relevant City Centre Zone Policies

CC-P1 – Character and Amenity

To recognise the character and amenity values of the CC including but not limited to:

1. A vibrant urban environment.
2. Medium to high intensity development.
3. A range of retail, commercial and business activities.
8. On-street parking with limited off-street parking.

CC-P2 – Activities To enhance the vibrancy, economic performance, walkability and amenity of the CC for residents and visitors by:

1. Enabling residential activities, smaller scale retail activities, offices, restaurants, cafes, bars and entertainment facilities.
3. Managing the nature, scale, design and nature of activities to ensure that:
 - c. Buildings are designed to be flexible and adaptable to a range of uses and do not unduly restrict potential future uses of the site.
 - d. Standalone car parking facilities and other large single use buildings at ground floor are sleeved by smaller scale commercial activities.

CC-P4 – Residential Activities

To promote residential activities by encouraging residential units above ground floor while acknowledging that there may be a reduced level of residential amenity within the CC due to a mix of uses and late night activities.

CC-P10 – Incentives To enable higher building densities and varied setbacks where active frontages or pedestrian connectivity are enhanced, residential activities are provided, or where green roofs are provided.

- 5.9** All of these policies except CCP1.8 would be supported by removing the maximum parking requirement. CCP1.8 merely recognises that limited off street parking is a characteristic of the city centre.

Relevant Waterfront Zone Objectives

WZ-O6 – Residential Activities

Promote residential activities in the Waterfront Mixed-use Area.

- 5.10** This objective would be supported by removing the maximum parking requirement.

Relevant Waterfront Zone Policies

WZ-P1 – Character and Amenity

To recognise the character and amenity values of the Waterfront Zone including but not limited to:

6. Limited off-street parking.

- 5.11** WZP1.6 merely recognises that limited off street parking is a characteristic of the waterfront zone.

- 5.12** **In summary**, there are no objectives or policies in either the transport section or any of the underlying proposed plan zones that lend support to restricting the number of parking spaces to be provided by any development let alone require that such a provision be implemented.

6. HOW THE PROVISION RELATES TO PART 2 OF THE RMA

- 6.1** Having such an inadequate maximum number of permitted on-site parking spaces undermines the viability of development within the zones subject to this provision. This is contrary to S5 of the RMA in that it does not enable people and communities to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing.
- 6.2** Conversely removing the provision as our submission requests will promote sustainable management and meet the purpose of the RMA .

7. OFFICERS' RESPONSE

7.1 The officer's proposal to change discretionary status to restricted discretionary status for those proposals that do not meet the permitted criteria is not an acceptable outcome and will not address any of the fundamental issues with this provision.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The provision in Appendix 1B that limits the Maximum On-site Car Parking in Parking Exemption Area:

1. Will have a substantial negative effect on new development viability.
2. Is not directed at any objectives or policies in the proposed plan for either the Transport sections or the underlying zones.
3. Is contrary to many of the objectives and policies in the Transport section and the underlying zones.
4. Is contrary to S5 of the RMA.

8.2 Development of residential, visitor and commercial services will not happen if adequate parking is not able to be provided.

8.3 As stated in our submission, the criteria can be rectified by the following actions:

1. Remove Appendix 1B.
2. In Appendix 1F remove the words after Appendix 1A and 1C.

Geoffrey Stevens Gibson

4 December 2019