

Living Streets Aotearoa



www.livingstreets.org.nz

Submission from Wellington Living Streets on Wellington Parking Policy

Contact person: **Ellen Blake**
Email: **wellington@livingstreets.org.nz**
Phone: **021 106 7139**
Date: **8 June 2020**

General

Thank you for this opportunity to submit on the Parking Policy. Our comments should be read in conjunction with submissions we have previously supplied on parking in October 2018 and August 2019.

We support the review of the parking policy as a mechanism to progress issues around the allocation of public space; like many cities most, 70%, of accessible public space is the road.

We commend staff on providing an informative discussion of the issues scoped. This is important to support an evidence-based approach to transport issues.

Issues to address

Scope

There are significant omissions from the scope of the parking policy. The scope of the policy only covers a narrow range of parking availability similar to the current Parking Policy.

1 Footpath parking is not covered at all. There is a significant amount of on-footpath parking provided by WCC around the city for bicycles and now also micro-mobility. Using footpath for vehicle parking directly reduces the level of service and amenity provided to pedestrians. Clearly this reduces footpath space for pedestrians and encourages these vehicle users to ride on footpaths also. For example, bicycle parking has even been sited in the kerb build-outs for pedestrian crossings at schools, clearly a safety issue. Car parks and other on-road space should be used for all vehicle parking including bicycles and the new micromobility vehicles. This should extend to not 'parking' vehicle accessories on footpaths like parking meters, EV charging stations and traffic signs. This clutter makes many footpaths inaccessible to some people.

2 There is a significant issue with illegal parking on footpaths and the discussion on enforcement does not address this. This means that footpaths are often blocked or too narrow for ordinary pedestrian movements, and this has been exacerbated with Covid19 distancing. Motorbike parking on footpaths is common and there is no enforcement outside the central area (and often within the central area too). Some streets in Wellington have footpaths that are always used for car parking such as Ohiro Road in Brooklyn (there is footpath on only one side of this busy road and it is a walk route to school), and Adelaide Road in Newtown. Clearly the actual enforcement priority for pedestrians needs to match the policy.

A simple change in this enforcement policy should be that any observation or complaint of illegal parking should be enforced, that is ticketed. The policy needs to be clear on the consequences of non-compliance. This can be enhanced by warranting more WCC staff to undertake parking enforcement when they see it – such as City Hosts.

3 Only 14% of inner-city parking is covered by this policy. The other 86% of parking is outside the scope and this makes any effort to manage inner city parking as a means to reduce climate emissions or meet placemaking and liveability objectives difficult to achieve. Covering the council managed on-street parking only addresses a small number of the issues and is a more operational type policy than the strategic overview required.

4 For the rest of Wellington all on-street parking is included but not off-street parking. The link to District Plan requirements is weak and the strategic direction for off-street parking is missing. For instance, use of land for parking leads to less affordable housing in residential areas, and lost opportunity near public transport stops.

To advance parking management in Wellington the policy needs to provide a strategic direction and should cover all parking in Wellington: footpath parking; both on-street and off-street; public and private; and how the WCC managed portion fits into the overall strategy.

Principles required are

- Allocation of land to parking – no minimum parking requirements anywhere so valuable residential land is not taken by parking, an approach to parking at public transport stops so that this most valuable space is not used for free parking
- Allocation of public space to parking so that there is equitable use of our valuable public road space
- Reasonable expectation of how people can access their properties and use of the neighbourhood that is consistent across all of Wellington.

This policy needs to include all parking and provide a clear direction of how it will be managed overall. This proposal clearly is a high level approach and should include this high level overview of all parking in Wellington.

Transport hierarchy

Living Streets has concerns with the redefinition of the transport hierarchy used in the Parking Policy to include electric scooters and other motorised vehicles in the same

category as (human powered) bicycles. They are not active transport and should not take precedence over public transport. Electric motorised vehicles are similar to car-share and hire-vehicle users or motorbikes and should be included in one of those categories (page 10 Discussion document).

Requirement for more area-specific plans to be developed

Detailed plans for different areas will be required but we find it hard to see how this will be accomplished as it is a very time consuming approach both for staff, residents and NGO groups too. This could result in different approaches to parking in different parts of the city. Road users both in vehicles and on foot will benefit from certainty about how parking works overall.

Good design required

Removing parking space seems appealing at first glance but has well recognised downsides. Removing parked cars allows those driving through to speed up and removes the buffer pedestrians have between us and moving vehicles which decreases walking amenity. This phenomenon was noted with the reduction in traffic during level 4 lockdown that vehicle speeds increased. Parked cars provide an important barrier for pedestrians between moving vehicles and safe walking space on the footpath. This does not mean parking space should remain but that if parking space is removed safety for pedestrians on footpaths must be considered and alternative designs used to provide this – stormwater gardens, and other plantings can achieve this, as can siting all vehicle infrastructure on the road – like EV chargers, parking meters, road signs etc. Permeable car park spaces can also be used not only to improve stormwater management but to provide a slower speed safety zone before the footpath.

Removing on-street car parking usually results in increased off-street provision which requires vehicle accessways across the footpath. The more driveways allowed results in reduced safety for pedestrians on footpaths. Good design and consistent application of policy and rules can go some way to mitigate this. An overall policy outlining this is required.

Pricing as a mechanism to control parking availability

Pricing is shown to be an effective means to manage demand for parking and allow people to make choices about their trips and parking behaviour. However, pricing should not encourage vehicle users to park on the footpath, such as motorbike parking prohibited from paid spaces, or lack of facility for bicycle and micromobility parking. These types of vehicle usually have free parking.

Parking Objectives

Living Streets support the parking objectives but recommends the following objectives are included:

- Support safe movement *and pleasant places*

Our 70% of public space that are roads include footpaths and pedestrian spaces which are used as the social gathering places of Wellington citizens. Roads include footpaths that are places for community as well as pedestrian movement and this needs to be reflected in the objectives. This is a key difference from existing transport policy.

- Support access for all

This should read as though it does include all people while identifying particular groups who have particular access needs. It is not clear whether this is access to car parking or access to spaces with well managed parking, for example footpaths clear of vehicles so children can easily and safely walk to school.

Guiding Principles

Principle A

Iterative changes to move towards the parking objectives identified is supported as a practical way to achieve the outcomes.

Consideration of impact on parking fee revenue needs more guidance on how this is intended to meet parking objectives. What priority is given to revenue compared with meeting other objectives. It is unclear if parking fees are to be full cost including environmental costs.

Principle B

This principle only applies to decreasing Council managed parking and not an overall decrease in car parking provision which should be the goal.

It should include all car parking.

Principle C

Please rephrase this to show that this is for those who require a car for mobility – not all disabled people can use cars, or older people, pregnant women or people with babies will want to use cars. WCC should prioritise support for walking, public transport and other active modes. For instance support for affordable family passes on public transport should be a priority.

Principle D

Pricing is an effective mechanism to manage parking demand in many situations (for instance, mobility parking is an exception). The principle that use of public space for vehicle parking is a priced commodity should apply consistently across the city.

Principle E

Local plans have the disadvantage that they may end up with many different approaches to parking management around the city.

Principle F

Living Streets strongly supports this principle to use what existing space we have well, rather than expanding parking space. This includes not using footpaths as parking space at all.

Principle G

Maintaining good information on parking space availability in the central city is a good idea and providing this information to users to more efficiently plan a trip. This service should be reflected in the price of car parking.

Principle H

Living Streets support good monitoring and alignment of Council business with objectives. This should be alignment in the wider context of transport outcomes not just car parking objectives.

Parking space hierarchy

The safe and efficient movement of people and goods in vehicles along roads (bus lanes etc) is an appropriate highest priority in all areas. However movement is not the only function of footpaths and pedestrian areas – safe and efficient movement yes but also pleasant places for community activities that do not include movement, such as stopping for a chat.

Living Streets seeks that footpaths are removed from consideration for parking of any vehicles including bikes. Priority for motorbikes, bicycles and micromobility are low and lower priority in many areas which encourages use of footpaths. This means valuable pedestrian space is used and causes safety issues and obstacles to be navigated with difficulty by more vulnerable pedestrians. We recommend motorbike, bicycle and micromobility parking has a higher on-road priority in all areas.

Parks and other recreation facilities including off-street parking are not all about safe and efficient movement either. These places should support very low speed movement only which is not always equated with efficient movement.

Living Streets strongly supports flexibility in allowing occasional parking for visitors, service and tradespeople to access places in controlled parking zones. One mechanism to achieve this is presented in the discussion.

Residential streets

EV chargers have been parked on footpaths in addition to the many other infrastructure and vehicle uses. Footpath space should be retained for pedestrians.

Parking management tools

The intervention logic should include as a first step to encourage walking, public transport use and push-cycles. A good database and monitoring of parking impacts and complaints would be required to target these tools. All inner-city suburbs should be targeted for interventions to increase walking and public transport use in the first instance, both of which have high mode share now and show potential to be even higher mode shares with sufficient support in the future. Combined with restricting commuter parking this would meet more climate and transport targets while alleviating parking pressures.

About Living Streets

Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand's national walking and pedestrian organisation, providing a positive voice for people on foot and working to promote walking friendly planning and development around the country. Our vision is "More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places".

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are:

- to promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation

- to promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
- to work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners including walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed and safety
- to advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional and urban land use and transport planning.

For more information, please see: www.livingstreets.org.nz