



Generation Zero



Generation Zero's Submission to Smarter Ways to Manage Parking

Reclaiming space on the streets for climate friendly travel modes is critical to a zero carbon Wellington

Summary of submission:

Generation Zero supports the overall intent and direction of the Parking Policy proposal (policy). In particular, we support the use of a transport hierarchy that prioritises active and sustainable transport, which is in line with international urban planning best practice. However, Generation Zero would like to see some amendments made. These include:

- The objective of “supporting safe movement” needs revising to cover keeping a broader range of people safe.
- The objective of “supporting business well-being” is important, but should not decentralise the interests of other features of Wellington that make it so special such as activities that don't necessarily create revenue, like community building and the creative arts, which should be accounted for too.
- The principle of good urban design should be included in the objective of “supporting city amenity and safety.”
- The principle of equity should be included in the objective of “supporting access for all”.
- In line with efforts to decrease the city’s emissions to zero by 2050, the Council should be seeking to curb carbon emissions by reducing car parking space, not simply maintaining current levels.
- Community consultation should remain an important aspect of implementing new area-based parking plans, however objections not grounded in evidence should not carry sufficient weight as to allow for situations where due diligence is neglected and changes where needed are indefinitely deferred.
- We would like to see a stronger implementation plan, with timelines, set goals for parking reduction, and a plan to manage expectations of future parking supply.

Submission:

Generation Zero is supportive of this proposal to manage the reduction of on-street parking in order to reclaim space on our streets for climate-friendly travel modes. This policy aligns with international best practice and will make Wellington a more livable city. We are happy to see this policy set in the context of the carbon reduction commitment made under Te Atakura - First to Zero, and the commitment to reducing dependency on private cars made under Let’s Get Wellington Moving (LGWM)

The focus on applying a transport hierarchy to the management of our street space is excellent as it prioritises active and public transport modes, and will enable decision makers to justify the difficult choices they will have to make if we are to achieve the intents of Te Atakura and LGWM.

This policy is a more modern and forward thinking approach and we support the overall intent. However, we would like to see the following amendments made.

to the objectives of the policy

1. “Support safe movement”

We support the intent of this objective, however we think it should be rephrased to include safety of people in proximity to transport who aren't necessarily moving - kids playing on quiet streets, cafe-goers on the pavement etc. The way we move around has an effect on other people in the city as well, for instance through air pollution and traffic fumes, and needs to be included.

2. “Support business wellbeing”

We support this policy and agree that converting street space to create space for public transport, cycle lanes and pedestrianised walk-ways will be beneficial to business. There is potential for these proposals to aid the recovery of our local economy coming out of the COVID-19 restrictions. NZTA has found that generally, pedestrians and cyclists contribute a higher economic spend proportionately to other transport users and are important to the economic viability of local shopping areas ([see here](#)). In Auckland, spending was found to be 47% higher on Fort Street after it was converted into shared space in 2012 ([see here](#)).

However, business is not the only thing that makes Wellington a vibrant city. We would like to see an objective included around supporting activities that don't necessarily create revenue, like community building and the creative arts.

3. “Support city amenity and safety”

The previous parking policy proposed had the objective “Support place-making, amenity and good urban design”. This re-drafted objective is not as strong, and we would like to see it amended to include place-making again. Perhaps this is where explicit mention of supporting community building could be included.

4. “Support access for all”

We strongly support the intent of this objective and agree that providing car parking for disabled people, older people, people who are pregnant, and people with babies is an important part of making a just transition to reduced car dependency.

However, we believe that there should also be consideration for the equity of the proposal, particularly in regards to people who live on lower incomes farther from the centre of the city, in places not well supported by public transport. The proposal at present will reduce their access to what the inner city has to offer and there needs to be a transition plan while WCC works to better serve the outskirts with alternative transport options.

Perhaps initiatives like discounted parking cards for those with community services cards, or incentivising rideshare could be implemented?

To the principles of the policy

1. “Primarily focus the Council’s role on prioritising existing space, not on increasing parking supply”

This should refer to actually decreasing parking supply, as opposed to merely not increasing it.

2. “Support local area-based parking plans where there is a need and community support.”

This needs to be rephrased to allow for local area-based parking plans in some cases regardless of the community support. Parking affects land-use, other modes of transport and future generations. While we agree community engagement and buy-in is very important, it should not be a veto power over the city’s parking policy; rather, it should shape its general implementation.

Implementation Plan

We would like to see a stronger implementation plan, with timelines, set goals for parking reduction, and a plan to manage expectations.

While we support this policy, we are concerned that it does not do enough to manage expectations around parking availability in the future. It does not set a clear enough trajectory around reductions in on-street parking.

For instance, the proposal still conveys that residents can expect to have on street parking set aside for them close to their homes in future. The council needs to be working to challenge this expectation. In this proposal, residents are marked high priority in city fringe and inner city suburbs. This approach to residents parking is not equitable and favours those who own cars (and can afford to live close to the city!) above others by effectively renting public land to them well below what the market rate should be.

Residents parking permits are too freely available and are priced far too low - this needs to be addressed. A system where the price and availability of residents' parking is gradually reduced each year in line with the objectives of this policy would be able to address this issue. Residents' parking should especially be given low priority around walking and public transport routes. ***The streets should be for all of us.***

We would also like to know how the council plans to engage with stakeholders and local businesses on specific projects under this policy. There needs to be a proactive approach to ensuring business owners buy-in to any proposals to repurpose street space. In the event of opposition, the council must make decisions based on fact and research rather than anecdotal evidence about the importance of on-street parking for business as has often been the case in the past.

NZTA found that retailers tend to overestimate the importance of on-street parking outside shops whereas shoppers value high-quality pedestrian and urban design features in shopping areas more than they value parking ([see here](#)). A study in Wellington on Tory Street found that about 60% of non-cyclists supported converting on-street car parks into a cycle route. A separate survey of Tory Street shoppers found only 6% percent used on-street parking on Tory St ([see here](#)).

Council car parks are an important source of revenue for the city and there needs to be a plan that ensures revenue loss cannot be used to justify weak implementation. The "parking management tools" are great to see but this proposal contains very little information on pricing and enforcement. It needs to include a plan for how the council will balance lost revenue from repurposing car parks with other sources. For instance, the council could be making plans to increase revenue by raising residential permits and parking fines to the point where they are actually effective. Having a plan for this is especially important as the city deals with the economic implications of COVID-19.

We like the approach of a mix of demand-responsive parking and exponential parking charges to encourage shorter stay. Short stay parks are better because they increase turn over and reduce congestion on the streets as fewer people are cruising around looking for a park all the time. However, we do note that there needs to be a minimum charge on car parks at all times as demand-responsive parking may well set the parking charge to near-zero at times.

Thank you for the opportunity to feedback on this proposal. This policy will be an important part of Wellington's transition to a zero-carbon future, and we look forward to seeing it enacted.

Ngā mihi nui,

Generation Zero Wellington