

6. SYDENHAM PARKING

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The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the outcome of enquiries made in response to questions raised by Board members and the Sydenham Working Group in relation to parking in Sydenham.

BACKGROUND

As the Board will be aware, for some time there has been a group working on various projects to enhance the Sydenham business area, with a plan entitled "Sydenham Town Enhancement Strategy 2001" having been developed. The Board and Parks Unit have provided funding to enable some of the enhancements identified in this plan to be implemented and, in addition, the local business community is interested in undertaking various enhancements to individual properties.

However, one issue raised by businesses that has not to date been addressed is the availability/supply of customer parking. Board members and the Sydenham Working Group have asked the Community Advocate to follow up on this matter and, in turn, the Community Advocate has raised a number of questions with the Parking and City Streets Units, as follows:

- (a) *Could the Council lease the whole, or part of, the car park situated to the rear of the Blockbuster Video premises, separately or jointly with other interested parties?*
- (b) *The cost of the above? (Possibly shared with the Board)*
- (c) *What are the benefits to both the businesses and the Council?*
- (d) *How does this fit with the draft parking strategy; when is the draft to be finalised; and what impact will the strategy have on Sydenham?*
- (e) *If it is possible for the Council to lease the parking area as set out above, could this be for a fixed term until the strategy is finalised, if this is to have an impact?*
- (f) *Could the blue P parking signs be erected in Sydenham to indicate the parking available behind the Spotlight Plaza shopping centre and Blockbuster Video?*

DISCUSSION

Outcome of discussion with representatives of Blockbuster Video and Spotlight Plaza

While all of the above questions are linked to one extent or another, the most immediate of them were considered to be (a) and (f), given the answers to these would determine whether or not most of the others were redundant. As such, discussion with representatives of both Blockbuster Video and Spotlight Plaza was undertaken in order to determine their position in relation to allowing the general public to use their car parks. The outcome of these discussions is summarised below.

Blockbuster Video car park

This car park is located at the rear of Blockbuster Video. It is included on the same title (DP 21550) as the video shop premises and is owned by Woolworths (New Zealand) Ltd. It contains approximately 90 parking spaces and previously served the Woolworths supermarket that used to trade in this location (refer attachment).

Blockbuster Video leases the car park from Woolworths and manages it to provide a mix of customer and reserved parking. Currently around 60 of the parks are marked as reserved, whilst some 28 parks are retained for customers of the video shop and some adjacent businesses that have sub-leasing arrangements that allow them to use the car park.

The possibility of allowing the car park to be used for general public parking, inclusive of the possibility of the Council leasing it to enable this, was discussed with management of the video shop, who indicated the company would prefer to retain the current arrangement.

From the company's perspective this is understandable, given the current situation enables them to exercise management control over the asset thus ensuring their business needs are met. A further reason expressed for wishing to maintain the status quo is a concern that if the car park was freely available for use by the general public then it is likely their premises would become a thoroughfare from the car park to Colombo Street.

Spotlight Plaza car park – Blue P directional parking signs

The question of whether the owner of Spotlight Plaza would support the erection of directional blue “P” parking signs to indicate the availability of parking behind this shopping centre was discussed with the centre manager, who advised that they would not support this.

Centre management’s view is that the centre car park is provided for centre customers only, and that it is not a public car park as such. They apparently already have problems with non-customers parking for extended periods, necessitating centre staff (primarily the custodian) spending a significant amount of time monitoring the car park. The point was also made that if they had surplus capacity then they would look at leasing this to neighbouring businesses on a commercial basis.

In addition, the centre was recently purchased by a new owner. Renovation plans are in the pipeline and centre management is confident this will result in more customers being attracted to the centre which, in turn, will increase demand on the centre’s car park.

Other questions

With the exception of the parts of question (d) that relate to the timing of the finalisation of the draft Parking Strategy and what impact the strategy will have on Sydenham, the responses to questions (a) and (f) effectively meant the remaining questions were redundant.

In relation to the draft Parking Strategy, the draft is nearing finalisation. The Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee is holding a seminar on the Strategy on 29 May 2003, and from there what is likely to be the final draft is expected to go to either the June or July 2003 round of Committee meetings and then to full Council. It should, however, be noted that this timeline is provisional, and subject to change.

Assuming the strategy in its final form does not change significantly from the current draft, then in the short- to medium-term it should not have a significant impact on Sydenham, apart perhaps from encouraging greater use of time restricted parking to increase/free-up parking for customers of businesses.

Indeed, in the absence of support for private off-street car parks to be used by the general public it is suggested the most viable immediate option for increasing the supply of customer parking would be to increase the amount of time restricted parking on streets adjoining Colombo Street, for example Battersea, Wordsworth and Elgin streets, most of which currently have only a limited amount of time restricted parking.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the owners of the two off-street parking areas identified by the working party for possible use by the general public are not supportive of this concept. This is also likely to be the stance of the owners of other, albeit smaller, car parks located within the Sydenham retail area and, as such, it would appear there is little immediate opportunity to significantly increase the parking supply in the area.

In the interim the supply could be increased to some extent through greater use of time-restricted parking on a number of the streets that adjoin Colombo Street, examples being Battersea, Wordsworth and Elgin Streets, and it is suggested the Board might wish to further consider this measure.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Board request the City Streets Unit to investigate increasing and extending time-restricted parking on streets adjoining Colombo Street in the Sydenham commercial area, in order to increase the supply of public parking in the area.

Chairperson’s

Recommendation: For discussion.