

6. COMMUTER PARKING RESTRAINT SYSTEM

The Committee considered a report from the Parking Operations Manager on the introduction of the proposed Commuter Parking Restraint system within the four avenues as detailed below.

“CONTEXT

During the development and adoption of the 2000/01 Annual Plan the Council resolved to implement a Commuter Parking Restraint System centred within the area bounded by and inclusive of the four avenues, the underlying philosophy and rationale being to put in place a mechanism to act as a disincentive to private vehicle use by commuters, thus supporting Council's public transport and sustainability initiatives, goals and policies.

Initially work on implementing the system was to have begun in January – February 2001, however, on the advice of officers the Council deferred implementation to the beginning of 2002.

Revenue of \$250,000 deriving from the sale of coupons is included within the Parking Unit's current budget, and within the ten-year financial model.

To date no consultation directed specifically toward residents and businesses located within the areas the proposal encompasses has been carried out, the only structured consultation in relation to it being that which formed part of the Annual Plan consultation process

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED SYSTEM

Essentially the concept is based upon establishing parking restrictions on roads within the four avenues in areas that are typically used on weekdays by commuters working within the wider CBD, ie, within the area bounded by and including the four avenues. These restrictions would require anyone parking within them for more than a fixed period of time, for example two hours, to display a parking coupon purchased (@ \$2.50 day) from one of a number of agents set up for the purpose. Failure to display a valid coupon would be a breach of the Christchurch City Traffic and Parking Bylaw, and non-compliance would attract a penalty in the form of an infringement notice.

To cater for visitors, people parking for less than the posted period would not be required to display a coupon. In addition residents' parking areas would be installed in locations where this is deemed necessary.

The areas in which the restrictions are intended to be established are predominantly residential in the Northern, North Western, North Eastern and Eastern quadrants, with a mix of commercial – industrial and education sector predominating in the Southern, South Eastern and South Western quadrants. It is important to note that the great majority of the roads within the areas to which the system is intended to apply currently have few if any time based parking restrictions in place.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Pros and Cons of the proposed system

Officers have identified a number of what they consider to be significant pros and cons associated with the project. These are outlined below:

Pros

- *Supports Council and ECAN public transport policy and initiatives*
- *Fits with Council's sustainability vision and objectives*
- *May result in some reduction in congestion*
- *Will generate revenue that in turn can be used to fund transportation initiatives*

Cons

- *Targeted on the central city only (what about the other 75 –80% of Christchurch?)*
- *May adversely impact on residents lifestyles*
- *Could be viewed as counter productive in terms of central city revitalisation*
- *The business community may not be supportive on the basis it may have an impact on their ability to retain/recruit staff*
- *Council reputation may suffer, eg, may be seen as simply a revenue gathering exercise*
- *May not achieve the desired outcomes (No Council initiated research has been carried out to assess the likely effectiveness, or otherwise, of the concept in the context of Christchurch City)*

- Likely to shift a significant amount of commuter parking on to roads (in mainly residential areas) just outside the four avenues
- There will be a proliferation of signs in areas that have previously been relatively free of this form of visual pollution

Implementation timing, consultation and resources

These three elements of the project are included within the same heading because they are intrinsically linked, ie, the timing of implementation will be dependant upon the time taken to complete effective consultation, which in turn is dependant upon the availability of staff resources to complete pre consultation planning and the subsequent consultation process.

Consultation on the proposal formed a part of the 2000/01 Annual Plan consultation process. However, to date no consultation targeted on residents, businesses and users of the affected areas has been carried out.

Should the Committee and Council support and approve the implementation of a Commuter Parking Restraint system during the February Committee round, then optimistically the earliest implementation could proceed would be May. This timeframe is, however, contingent on their being no delays arising out of the consultation process which, given the potentially contentious nature of the project, is considered to be an unrealistic expectation.

Financial

Currently the Parking Unit's budget contains a revenue figure of \$250,000 to be derived from the sale of Commuter Parking Coupons. To date no portion of this figure has been achieved and it is unlikely that any significant portion of it will be recouped prior to the end of this financial year.

In addition this sum is factored into the Council's long-term financial model and therefore should the project not proceed there will be a 'knock-on' effect out to year 10.

CONCLUSION

There has been no structured research carried out under the auspices of the Council to assess whether in the context of Christchurch City the proposed Commuter Parking Restraint system is likely to achieve the intended outcomes. Consequently, it must be said the proposal as it stands is based upon unresearched and untested assumptions that may well prove to be flawed.

In addition, there has been no targeted consultation with residents and businesses within the areas in which it is proposed to establish the parking restrictions that form the basis of the system.

Moreover, in attempting to assess the benefits of the proposed system the Cons do appear to outweigh the Pros at this point in time, which would seem to mitigate against proceeding without the benefit of more information. The only real counter to this view appears to be the financial implication of not proceeding as soon as possible, however, it is questionable whether this consideration outweighs the possible downside of proceeding with a project that could fail to deliver the expected outcomes.

Therefore on balance officers consider that implementation of the proposed Commuter Parking Restraint System should not proceed until a clearer picture of its probable impact is available via both structured research and consultation."

The Committee **decided**:

1. That it seek appropriate funding for comprehensive research and consultation as part of the development of the city-wide parking policy, during the 2002/03 year, in preparation for possible implementation in the following years.
2. That, if there is a positive outcome from research and consultation, a plan for staged implementation over three to five years be prepared.
3. That appropriate budget provisions be proposed in the 2002/03 Annual Plan.