

7. CHESTER STREET WEST – ONE-WAY STREET PROPOSAL AND CHANGES TO EXISTING 10 MINUTE PARKING RESTRICTION

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment, DDI 941-8656
Officer responsible:	Manager Transport and Greenspace
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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the findings of the investigation into the possible conversion of part of Chester Street West (Park Terrace to Cranmer Square) to a one-way street and to seek the Board's approval to change the operative days of the existing 10 minute parking restriction in Chester Street West.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. At the request of the Board the Transport and Greenspace Unit commissioned an investigation into the possible conversion of part of Chester Street West between Park Terrace and Cranmer Square to a one-way street. The proposal was aimed at mitigating the current problems of car parking shortages and congestion that occur during peak student arrival and departure periods associated with the Cathedral Grammar School. This investigation was carried out by Streets in Sync Ltd (refer Report "Chester Street West – One Way Street", **Attachment 1**) and examined the advantages, disadvantage and operational issues associated with this concept including the following:
 - The existing traffic environment including current traffic volumes, capacity, safety and parking.
 - The existing travel patterns associated with the main traffic generator in the street being The Cathedral Grammar School.
 - The application of one-way street scenarios including any advantages and/or disadvantages over the current situation.
3. The Streets in Sync Ltd report concludes that creating a short length of one way street in Chester Street together with 45° angle parking will result in a small number of additional car parking spaces, but will not help the congestion. It is likely to create other problems and could reduce safety.
4. However, there is a need to resolve the discrepancies between the 'pedestrian mall' signs and the parking signs so that they both operate on 'school days only'.
5. This report was presented to the 20 December 2006 meeting of the Board. Consideration of the report was delayed to allow the Inner City West Neighbourhood Association the opportunity to consider it and make a deputation to a February meeting of the Board on this matter if it so wished.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Cost

6. Installation of signs, markings and posts is within existing budgets.

Legal

7. The Land Transport Rules provide for the installation of parking restrictions.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board resolve:

- (a) To receive the information in this report and attached documentation and agree not to pursue the option of creating a 'one way' section of Chester Street between Park Terrace and Cranmer Square.
- (b) That the parking of vehicles be limited to 10 minutes maximum, 8.00-9.30 am and 2.00-4.00 pm, Monday to Friday, School Days Only on the north side of Chester Street West from a point 39 metres east of the Park Terrace intersection and extending in an easterly direction for a distance of 88 metres.
- (c) That the parking of vehicles be limited to 10 minutes maximum, 8.00-9.30 am and 2.00-4.00 pm, Monday to Fridays, School Days Only on the south side of Chester Street West from a point 39 metres east of the Park Terrace intersection and extending in an easterly direction for a distance of 66.5 metres.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

For discussion.

BACKGROUND

7. In May 2005 the Council was approached by the Cathedral Grammar School with a request to provide additional short term parking for student drop off/pick up on the western side of Cranmer Square outside the Junior and Preschool. Ultimately this request was not supported by the Board, however, the Board did request that converting the street to function in a “one-way” fashion be investigated to mitigate the current problems of car parking shortages and congestion that occurs during peak arrival and departure periods. This investigation was carried out in April 2006 by Streets in Sync Ltd (Report “Chester Street West – One Way Street”) and examined the advantages, disadvantage and operational issues associated with this concept.
8. Chester Street West is classified as a “local” road in the City Plan. Traffic volumes are modest and generally the street performs its intended function of providing access. For a portion of the school day the majority of the street becomes a “Pedestrian Mall” and is closed to vehicular traffic (between 9.30 am–2.00 pm, Monday to Friday, School Days Only). During peak arrival and departure times, however, there is a much greater vehicle activity resulting in car parking shortages and congestion.
9. A number of possible scenarios regarding the conversion to a one-way street were considered including making the street either one-way east bound or one-way west bound over the entire length of the street or between the existing gates (refer Options, paragraphs 14/15/16).
10. Currently the present situation is resulting in car parking shortages and congestion problems around the peak student arrival and departure periods. Parking and occupancy surveys conducted during the investigation revealed that the general parking capacity of the street (outside the two peaks) was seldom exceeded, however, of note was the occurrence of illegal parking. Observations revealed that parking illegally seemed to be preferred over searching for a legal space once the street reached high occupancy levels. This is attributed to the perception when entering the street that there are no legal spaces available and the inconvenience associated with searching for a space amidst congested traffic conditions. The most common occurrence of illegal parking was “double parking” within the gated area. In operational terms this caused very few problems and enabled more vehicles to congregate in this area. Motorists tended to double park on one or both sides of the road but due to the ample roadway width a single traffic lane was generally available for other vehicles to progress along the street at slow speeds. The threat to the safety of children walking between the parked vehicles was significantly mitigated by the very low operating speeds of traffic caused by the congested conditions and single functioning traffic lane.
11. Advantages of converting Chester Street West to a one-way street include the potential to optimise the number of car parking spaces within the gated area where the roadway width is wide enough to accommodate 45° parking. This would produce an increase of approximately 8 spaces above the existing parallel parking situation. While increasing the number of spaces appears advantageous it is important to consider that the 45° car parking design also relieves the likelihood of double parking. This is because the design confines the useable through traffic lane and stopping in the aisle would effectively block any through traffic movement. From a road safety perspective this is positive, however, there is no evidence from the survey data in the Report that suggest double parking in the present layout poses a significant threat to the current level of road safety. The 45° angle parking does, however, introduce a further safety issue regarding motorist exiting the parking spaces reversing into the traffic flow and threatening the safety of pedestrians crossing the road, particularly small children who may be difficult to see by motorists.
12. No formal consultation was conducted while investigating this proposal, however, informal discussions with parents and staff revealed little support for a one-way street option. While most conceded that the current situation was not “ideal” it was accepted that the periods of intense activity were reasonably short lived and that vehicle speeds were low.
13. The report concludes that any advantages resulting from converting Chester Street West to a one-way street are limited to a minor increase in the capacity of complying car parking spaces. However, this needs to be balanced by the fact that the efficiencies of the parking in general will not increase and that vehicle speeds may well increase. Also a significant number of existing vehicle trips would be disrupted regardless of which direction of flow is favoured, however, a west bound one-way flow would produce greater disadvantages associated with right turns onto Park Terrace. In this situation parents are likely to favour Cranmer Square for dropping off/picking up children resulting in a migration of the illegal parking and general congestion. This will have a greater impact on the wider community. The congestion in Chester Street generally only affects drivers who are dropping off or picking up students at Cathedral Grammar.

14. As a result the report recommends that the status quo remain. However, should a one-way operation proceed then it is important that it only applies over the gated section which will allow the balance of road space at either end of the street to be used for manoeuvring including drop off and pick up. Maintaining the status quo with respect to the car parking layout is also recommended as the current situation provides greater flexibility for motorists entering the street and looking for a car parking space. Conversion to 45° parking may create greater congestion as motorists block the central aisle waiting for vehicles to reverse out of spaces and is generally not a very adaptable design for periods of very intense parking.
15. Currently a 10 minute parking restriction (8.00–9.30 am and 2.00–4.00 pm, Monday to Friday) is operative within the gated area and on the north side of Chester Street West between the eastern gates and the Cranmer Square intersection. On street parking on the south side of Chester Street West between the eastern gates and the Cranmer Square intersection is currently unrestricted and is typically full with commuter parking throughout much of the day. On street parking between the western gates and the Park Terrace intersection is restricted to 30 minutes. The “*Pedestrian Mall*” in Chester Street West is operative between 9.30 am–2.00 pm, Monday to Friday, School Days Only. School staff have expressed concern over the ambiguous wording of the 10 minute parking restriction compared with the wording of the “*Pedestrian Mall*”; the Pedestrian Mall is operative Monday to Friday, School Days Only, however, the P10 restriction is operative Monday to Friday and is **not currently restricted to school days**. Visitors to the school on non “*school days*” have assumed the restriction only applied on “*school days*” and have been issued with infringement notices.
16. This situation can be resolved through the existing 10 minute parking restriction being changed so that it is operative on “*School Days Only*” and therefore is consistent with the “*Pedestrian Mall*” restriction eliminating the possibility of confusion.

OPTIONS

17. One-way west bound – this option was not favoured in the report (“Chester Street West – One Way Street) as it would result in disruption to the most number of vehicle movements. Access from the north would become circuitous in that motorists would be required to travel further south along Park Terrace before turning left into Armagh Street, left into Cranmer Square then left into Chester Street. All north bound vehicles departing Chester Street West would either have to turn right onto Park Terrace (already difficult) or travel a circuitous route involving a left turn onto Park Terrace, left onto Armagh, left onto Cranmer Square, left onto Kilmore Street before turning right onto Park Terrace through the traffic signals. This situation is likely to result in parents of school pupils choosing to park and/or drop children in Cranmer Square and Park Terrace rather than enter Chester Street West itself. Also when the gates are shut having the one-way situation apply to the entire length would effectively “trap” motorists from entering from either end.
18. One-way east bound – with reference to the survey results in the Report most trips involved vehicles travelling the entire length of Chester Street West in an east bound direction. This option would therefore disrupt the least number of vehicle movements, with no increase in travel distance for any approach or departure route and would reinforce the “loop” circuit utilising Kilmore Street for departure to the north. However, motorists arriving and departing from the east may choose to travel further along either Armagh or Kilmore Streets before turning into Park Terrace and Chester Street West. The alternative is to turn from either Kilmore Street or Armagh Street into Cranmer Square and then attempt to park in Cranmer Square where there are seldom any vacant spaces due to commuter parking. This may result in higher levels of illegal parking and manoeuvring. In this situation it is more likely that the forecast increase in activity will extend further into Cranmer Square causing congestion over a much broader areas that that which currently occurs. Also when the gates are shut having the one-way situation apply to the entire length would effectively “trap” motorists from entering from either end.
19. One-way within the gated area only – this option would allow motorists to utilise the end sections of Chester Street West (between the gated areas and the Park Terrace and Cranmer Square intersections). These sections between the gates and the intersections are likely to be focal points for vehicle activity under a one-way scenario. Some motorists are likely to choose not to enter the street and will drop off/pick up and attempt to park at either end of the street in preference of being required to enter and exit the street by a particular direction. It follows that the intersections will experience a greater concentration of vehicle activity. The accommodation of this activity would be assisted if motorists were able to utilise the end sections of Chester Street West in both directions thereby assisting turning and manoeuvring.