Submission of Christchurch LTCCP

Group	Combined Inner City Residents' Groups
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We wish to talk to our main points at the hearings.

The six inner city residents groups have considered issues common to all groups. The six groups are: **ALPA** (Avon Loop Planning Association), **Chester Street Residents' Association**, **ICENG** (Inner City East Neighbourhood Group), **ICON** (Inner City West Neighbourhood Association), **Moa Neighbourhood Committee**, and **Victoria Neighbourhood Committee**. The six groups represent some 7,400 residents within the four avenues (2001 census)[1].

Please find attached two proposals. These were first presented to the Hagley / Ferrymead Community Board on 26 April 2004.

The first proposal is concerned with under-grounding of overhead services in narrow streets. We understand that under-grounding is financed by the City Development Group (Vol 2, page 35 ff) and Streets and Transport (Vol 2, page 120), although we could not find any reference to the City Development Group carrying out this activity.

The second proposal is concerned with parking management, which is the responsibility of Streets and Transport (Vol 2, page 120).

Regards,

(Axel Wilke)

Chair of Moa Neighbourhood Committee

On behalf of the Combined Inner City Residents' Groups

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[1] ALPA = 372; Chester = 531; ICENG = 2,358; ICON = 1,338; Moa = 1,596; Victoria = 1,242; total = 7,437

Inner City Residents' Groups
c/o Axel Wilke
18 Melrose St

Under-grounding of narrow streets
Presentation to the Hagley / Ferrymead Community Board
26 April 2004

Dear H/F Community Board Member,

Under-grounding of narrow streets

The purpose of this report is to present a proposal by the six inner city residents' groups to the H/F Community Board, seeking the support of the Board for the development of a council policy for under-grounding of overhead services in narrow streets.

Background

The H/F Community Board has invited residents' groups to present issues facing their groups to the board. The six inner city residents groups[1] have considered issues common to all groups. The six groups represent some 7,400 residents within the four avenues (2001 census)[2]. We have decided to make a combined approach to the Board concerning under-grounding of overhead services in narrow streets.

Existing Council Policies

Council passed a formal policy on under-grounding on 14 December 1993:

1. *That a strong statement is included in the City Plan and Strategic Plan that all services be under-grounded within 40 years.*

2. *That the Council have discussion with the Board of Southpower on how this may be achieved.*

3. *That the Council set policy that all Cable TV cables with the city be under-grounded.*

Further, Council passed a formal policy on cost sharing under-grounding of services on 23 November 2000:

That where residents request to have their overhead services under-grounded in association with kerb and channel / street reconstruction work (outside the existing programme) on the basis that they will collectively meet part of the costs, then the Council will do so only on a 50% cost sharing basis provided that:

a) *The Council's share is budgeted in the financial year following the request and the work be programmed / reprogrammed for the same year; and*

b) *Full payment of the residents' share is paid and received before the work commences.*

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Discussion on Existing Council Policy

In 2001, it was estimated that it would take 145 years to under-ground the remaining overhead services[3]. Telstra-Clear had gained a resource consent to install new telecommunications and cable TV services on many existing power poles (although most of their network was installed under-ground in the inner city). It would appear that the existing 1993 under-grounding policy is no longer reflected by Council's actions.

The cost-sharing policy may work for the 'richer' suburbs where residences are owner-occupied. The policy would in practice not be available to most residential inner city streets due to the comparable lower socio-economic status of those areas, and the fact that many buildings are rentals. We suspect that this policy would take up a portion of the available under-grounding budget to the sole benefit of 'richer' suburbs and for this reason, we recommend this policy to be reviewed.

Existing Council Practice

The majority of Council's under-grounding work is carried out by the City Streets unit, which has an allocation for under-grounding which focuses on under-grounding the main traffic routes in conjunction with major road works projects[4]. There is also a focus on main tourist routes[5].

A small amount of under-grounding is carried out as part of the urban renewal programme[6]. However, the Urban Renewal Team does only fund under-grounding in identified 'Neighbourhood Improvement Areas', and only in conjunction with kerb and channel replacement. The Urban Renewal Team has recently reduced their expenditure on under-grounding. Another method of improving the street environment's visual 'pollution' is to plant trees, as over time, the overhead services become less obvious as trees mature. This latter approach is much more cost effective for the Urban Renewal Team.

In summary, under-grounding is done <u>as part of other road reconstruction work only</u>, and only on major traffic routes, or on tourist routes, or in identified Neighbourhood Improvement Plan areas. Planting trees is another method of improving the visual appearance of streets that have overhead services.

Discussion on Existing Council Practice

The inner city residents' groups accept that there is not a bottomless pool of money available to under-ground all services within the foreseeable future. The method of planting trees that over time improve the visual appearance of streets that have overhead services (see Figure 1) is a prudent use of rates and gets our full support.

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[3] Information supplied by Council's Urban Renewal Team.

[4] Information as per Council's "Quick Answers" section on the internet.

[5] As per draft LTCCP – volume 2 (page 120)

[6] Information as per Council's "Quick Answers" section on the internet.

The latter approach does not work, however, in some of the very narrow streets common in some parts of the inner city. Where the legal road width is between 10 m and 12 m, there is generally no room for any berm area suitable for planting trees, as the footpaths and the carriageway form a continuous seal from boundary to boundary (see Figure 2).

Compounding the problem is the fact that the residential density in the inner city is increasing. As a consequence, more and more trees on private properties, which may have been obscuring the services, are now disappearing for making room for townhouses.

Figure 1: Overhead services virtually invisible in a tree-lined street

Figure 2: Narrow street with overhead services – no room for trees

The following table identifies the nine narrow residential streets in the inner city that have overhead services:

Street	Section	Legal width	Notes
Willow St	All	10m	Dish channel
Hurley St	All	12m	Flat channel
Bangor St	Central section	10m	Flat channel
Nova Pl	All	12m	Dish channel
Otley St	All	10m	Flat channel
Melrose St	All	10m	Flat channel
Moa Pl	All	10m	Flat channel
Ely St	All	10m	Flat channel
Gracefield Ave	South end	10m	Flat channel

Proposals

The inner city residents' groups are thus proposing that Council review its under-grounding policy, and develop a supporting Council practice that considers narrow streets as one of the priorities for under-grounding, explicitly to be carried out independent of street reconstruction work.

In addition, Council may want to consider encouraging developers to plant trees along their street-facing property boundary. This would of course have wider benefits than just obscuring overhead services. Perhaps this could be achieved by a variation of the proposed district plan.

Furthermore, the new Local Government Act widens the opportunities for councils for the use of development contributions. Consideration could be given to an investigation on whether development contributions could be used for under-grounding of existing overhead services.

Conclusions

Christchurch City Council should review its under-grounding policy, develop supporting Council practice, and implement district plan changes that will see the narrow inner city streets under-grounded in the foreseeable future. With current practice, those streets would not be under-grounded any time soon.

This is undesirable, as the alternative method of planting trees in those streets cannot be applied, and more and more trees on private land are being removed due to increasing housing density in the inner city.

Axel Wilke

(chair Moa Neighbourhood Committee)

on behalf of the six inner city residents' groups

Dear H/F Community Board Member,

Commuter Parking in Residential Streets

The purpose of this report is to present a proposal by the six inner city residents' groups to the H/F Community Board, seeking the support of the Board for the development of a policy that prevents commuters taking up all the available kerbside spaces in residential streets.

Background

The H/F Community Board has invited residents' groups to present issues facing their groups to the board. The six inner city residents groups[1] have considered issues common to all groups. The six groups represent some 7,400 residents within the four avenues (2001 census)[2]. We have decided to make a combined approach to the Board concerning commuter parking in residential streets.

Existing Parking Policies

Christchurch City Council has had a parking policy since 2003. It provides guidance in the following areas:

- It defines that safety measures, traffic flow, landscaping, and pedestrian and/or cycle facilities have a higher priority than other kerbside uses.

- Where kerbside space is available for parking, the allocation will be determined for parking types in general accordance with the orders listed.

For example, to allocate kerb space where demand exceeds supply in residential areas, the priorities are as shown in the table below:

	Residential Parking Priority
1	Bus Stops
2	Residents parking
3	Parking for people with disabilities
4	Short-stay vehicle parking
5	Taxi, Limousine and Shuttle services
6	Commuter parking

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Another policy exists for 'residents only' parking. This is only available on request for properties that have no off-street parking whatsoever (i.e. generally old cottages).

There is no policy available reserving kerbside space to residents over say commuters (unlike for example in Wellington).

Discussion

One of the issues of most concern for inner city residents is the daily influx of commuters who, depending on the location of the residential street, might take up some or all of the available kerb side parking spaces. In some streets, there is absolutely no space left during weekdays for visitors, trades people, or residents who may require to park on the street. With an ongoing increase of density in inner city residential areas, it is likely that the parking demand by residents will increase, i.e. if nothing else changes, the problems for residents will increase over time, as more and more people have to rely on parking on the street.

The Moa Neighbourhood Committee requested an area-wide time parking restriction one year ago[3], with no action by Council. The Victoria Neighbourhood Committee requested that parking ticks be marked in their area, defining how close motorists are allowed to park at driveways[4].

Both these previous proposals may bring some relief, but the root cause of the problem has not been addressed – why should commuters be allowed to take up all the kerbside parking spaces in our residential streets in the first place?

Other cities in NZ (e.g. Wellington) have got policies in place that allow the installation of residents-only parking areas, which effectively keeps commuters out of those areas. No such policy exists for Christchurch.

The residential parking priority in the Parking Strategy outlines that residents are to have a much higher priority than commuters, but that is not the case in reality. Kerbside space is being taken on a 'first come, first serve' basis. The inner city residents' groups believe that residents should have some rights, and that a balance needs to be found between their own needs, and those of commuters.

Another underlying problem is that whilst new businesses have to provide off-street parking for both their customers and employees as part of their consent conditions, it is known that employees are commonly requested to find a park on a public road. Little enforcement of the breach of these consent conditions is evident. A lesser problem is that other businesses have their car parks behind their premises, but due to missing signposting, on-street parking is taken up first.

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[3] 19 May 2003, as part of last year's H/F Community Board meeting with the Hagley residents' groups.

[4] See H/F agenda of 4 February 2004 (item 16.4).

Depending on the proximity to the inner city (or more precisely, the proximity to the central area where on-street parking is controlled), the extent of the problem varies for the inner city residents. Immediately adjacent to the controlled area, the parking demand is obviously highest, but also the times when kerbside space are in demand are longest. Whilst further away from the inner city, there may always be some parks available, and the commuters are present between 8am and 4.30pm, near the controlled area, the parking occupancy is close to 100% and the demand is from 6am to 10pm.

Figure 1 shows the parking demand in Otley Street. Although the street is only one block south of Bealey Avenue, and is thus quite some distance from the inner city, it can be seen that the parking demand is relatively high.

Figure 1: Parking demand in Otley Street

Description of Wellington Parking Management

In the area surrounding the Wellington central business district, two parking regimes are in place:

1. Residents parking schemes
2. Coupon parking

Other parking management, like short term parking restrictions outside dairies and bus stops, complement the two parking regimes.

Residents parking permits are available on request and for an annual fee to residents of the area only. Such a permit is issued for a vehicle specified by the resident. A permitted vehicle can be parked in any zone marked as available for residents parking. Residents parking zones are not installed on a case-by-case basis outside a dwelling when an application for a permit is issued, but rather some of the kerbside space in the area is set aside for this purpose.

Generally, the balance of the kerbside space is set aside for coupon parking. In the coupon parking areas, parking is free for the first two hours. If the driver intends to park for longer than that, a coupon must be activated and displayed. Coupons are available for a fee to anyone.

Coupon parking exemptions are available and allow a vehicle to be parked in a coupon parking zone, but not in a residents parking zone. Some coupon parking exemptions are given out for free (to some businesses when special circumstances are met, schools, and community services groups), other exemptions are available for an annual fee if certain criteria are met (e.g. to trades people, service authorities, and property owners not residing in the area). Coupon parking exemptions are also available for an annual fee to residents of the area (which is preferable to some residents, as a coupon parking exemption costs one third of the costs of a residents parking permit).

A residents parking permit acts as a coupon parking exemption, hence residents parking permit holders can park in both the residents parking areas as well as the coupon parking areas.

In summary, the areas around the Wellington CBD are regulated by a mix of residents parking schemes and coupon parking. Residents parking is available to residents only. Coupon parking is available to any driver for free for up to two hours, and for a fee for longer periods. Special provisions exist so that the needs of businesses, schools, community groups, service authorities and property owners are met.

A copy of the Wellington City Council traffic bylaw is attached. Residents parking schemes are covered in section 18.7, and coupon parking is dealt with in section 18.8.

Proposal

The inner city residents' groups are thus proposing that Council develop a parking management policy for areas that are subject to heavy commuter parking demand. We suggest that the Wellington regime of a mixture of residents parking and coupon parking may be a suitable model.

A possible downside of such a parking regime is that Council is likely to charge an administrative cost to those residents who request a residents parking permit, and that residents will have to purchase such a permit, or a coupon exemption permit, or a coupon before they can park on the road.

The big advantage is of course that this could save our areas from the daily unlimited influx of commuters.

It needs to be acknowledged, though, that the situation can be considerably more complex than any one model can address, requiring a careful street-by-street analysis of particular parking issues and solutions.

Further considerations

It is often argued that restrictive transport measures like this proposal will disadvantage the inner city compared to suburban malls. We do acknowledge that a healthy and vibrant inner city is absolutely essential. The proposal as put forward could equally be implemented in the vicinity of other major parking demand generators, e.g. suburban malls. Residents living in the vicinity of a major shopping mall experience exactly the same problem as inner city residents when it comes to commuter parking in residential streets. The proposal has the advantage that it can be applied in both the inner city, and around major shopping malls, thus keeping a balance and not disadvantaging one area over another.

Conclusions

Christchurch City Council should develop a parking policy for residential streets as an effective tool for combating the daily influx of commuters.

Axel Wilke

(chair Moa Neighbourhood Committee)

on behalf of the six inner city residents' groups