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Corporate Plan Output: On-street Operations	

The purpose of this report is to respond to resolution of the Project and Property Committee that the City Streets Manager be requested to report to the City Services Committee on the need for the provision of a taxi or taxi stands in Cathedral Square; a possible review of the present P5 parking areas with a view of restricting the use of such parking to tour buses and service vehicles.

**PRESENT PARKING SITUATION**

There are only five separate on-street parking areas for any vehicles in Cathedral Square. There areas are as follows:

1. A “P10 at any time” parking restriction in front of the Old Post Office building.
2. A “P5 at any time” parking restriction in the north western quadrant.
3. A “P5 at any time” parking restriction in the north eastern quadrant to service the Camelot and Warner Hotel.
4. A “P5 at any time” parking restriction in the north eastern quadrant to service the Warner Building and the Press complex.
5. A “P5 at any time” parking restriction in the southeastern quadrant to service the Heritage complex and Millennium Hotel.

The only other parking for motor vehicles within Cathedral Square is on Cathedral land in front of and along the south sides of the Cathedral.

Buses and taxis are restricted to the north eastern quadrant. These bus stops are generally limited to Canride buses only and taxis are permitted to use these bus stops between the hours of 11 pm and 6 am.

There are four other separate, permanent, taxi stands immediately outside Cathedral Square on each of the approach roads into the Square. These taxi stands are situated as follows:

1. On the southern side of Worcester Street immediately adjacent to Cathedral Square (6 cars).
2. On the western side of Colombo Street immediately north of Gloucester Street (4 cars).
3. On the eastern side of Colombo Street between Hereford Street and City Mall (6 cars).
4. On the eastern side of Oxford Terrace between Worcester Street and Hereford Street (3 cars).

## **CURRENT PRACTICE**

One of the consequences of the construction activity has resulted in limited enforcement of vehicles parking on the pedestrian areas. Generally any vehicles permitted on these areas are limited to maintenance vehicles and those authorised by the Council.

Enforcement of the P5 loading areas has been more active and, provided vehicles or buses are actively loading and unloading, then they have been permitted to park for more than 5 minutes. A number of the Hotels have requested an exemption from the P5 restriction to accommodate the valeting of cars. This is because the off street areas are remote from the site and guests do not always appear on time.

## **CURRENT PARKING CONCERNS**

- Too many vehicles parking on the pedestrian areas.
- The unloading and loading of buses in open areas away from Hotel awnings.
- Lack of definition of parking areas.
- The bollards being of fragile construction.
- A low level of parking enforcement.
- That taxis are not in Cathedral Square.
- Lack of physical barriers to restrict the movement and parking of vehicles.
- Parking in the permitted areas restricting access to adjacent properties.

## **TAXIS**

The splitting up of the original taxi “Grand” stand in Cathedral Square has been a matter that the taxi industry has been reluctant to accept. A result of the partial relocation of taxis from Cathedral Square has led to the development of extra taxi stands in Colombo Street, Worcester Street, Manchester Street and Oxford Terrace. This has been done in a planned manner to enable taxis to provide a better service. Taxis pride themselves in a door to door service and therefore it is better to have a series of smaller taxi stands rather than a large one which acts as a storage area. The planning for Cathedral Square as a predominantly pedestrian area places a low priority on the uses of the Square as a storage area for any motor vehicle.

One problem of the “P5 at any time” loading areas has been that taxis which have been prebooked by a hotel for one of their patrons often arrive 10 minutes prior to the allotted time. This practice has become quite common to ensure that fares are not hijacked.

Complaints have also been received about taxis operating on the “P5 at any time” outside the Tower Building.

## **“P5 AT ANY TIME” AREAS**

The “P5 at any time” parking areas are designed to service both the principal land uses in the Square and the Square itself. These areas are used by a wide range of vehicles, from tourist buses, taxis, service vehicles and private motorists. To control the amount of vehicles there are three measures that could be adopted. The first is to limit the size of the area and the second the type of vehicle and the third is to ensure that the P5 is strictly enforced.

The size of the P5 areas have been to accommodate both large and small vehicles and to provide appropriate access to the adjacent building. Any reduction in size will require further surveys, consultation and expense.

The limitation of the type of vehicle will serious disadvantage both adjacent land occupiers and Square users. While it would be easy to limit numbers by the type of vehicle it will restrict access to a wide range of Square users. It is not practical to limit users by the type of activity and Council's powers in this regard are limited.

The more effective way to reduce the appearance of the number of vehicles is to enforce the time restrictions to ensure there is a high turnover. This both encourages the Square as a destination and does not place an unfair restriction of access to adjacent properties.

The “P10 at any time” in front of the Old Post Office building does not relate to the existing parking restriction in Cathedral Square. This area over the construction period will be disrupted and therefore it would be appropriate to review this restriction on completion of the Square.

## **SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS**

- Cathedral Square has been developed as a pedestrian precinct and vehicles are encouraged to stay only for short periods of time. The construction activity in the Square itself has not assisted in the consistent enforcement and control of vehicles over what would normally be expected. More regular enforcement will ensure better compliance.
- The vehicle barriers have been very successful in meeting the design objectives of the Square but their lack of conspicuousness and light construction has lead to them being vulnerable to damage. The design of the bollards is presently being reviewed by the City Design Manager.
- It is considered necessary that the location of the bollards in the south eastern quadrant be rearranged to provide an access aisle to improve access to adjacent properties and an improved parking layout. To provide better after normal business hours compliance, extra bollards or planting areas will assist with the control of this area.

- The problem of taxis continuing to use the “P5 at any time” area adjacent to the Aotea Centre can be improved by a taxi stand information sign and regular parking enforcement.
- The wide range of vehicles that enter the square to service the adjacent buildings make it difficult to preclude parking within Cathedral Square.
- The construction activity has encouraged extensive use of the land owned by the Cathedral. This parking in front of the Cathedral detracts from the Square. It is desirable that parking be limited and that the Council continue to work with the Cathedral to limit vehicles in this area.

## **CONCLUSION**

The relocation of taxis to each of the far approaches to the Square and the shared use with bus stops gives taxis the ability to provide customers with a better door to door service. A small improvement can be made with an information sign to avoid conflict with the users with users of the “P5 at any time” parking areas.

Increased use of bollards and plant plots can be used to more effectively control the parking in pedestrian areas after normal business hours.

The strict enforcement of the “P5 at any time” restrictions and a better control of vehicles in pedestrian areas will achieve the Council objective of these areas as one of the premium pedestrian spaces.

- Recommendation:**
1. That a new bollard be considered that is more robust and visible and where necessary new bollards be installed.
  2. That the Council consider altering the Traffic and Parking Bylaw to allow vehicles to display an exemption label to park for more than 5 minutes in a “P5 loading zone”.
  3. That a high level of parking enforcement be maintained throughout the day to encourage a high turnover of vehicles in the parking areas provided.
  4. That the existing parking restrictions be reviewed on completion of the reconstruction works of Cathedral Square.

## **Chairman’s**

- Recommendation:**
1. That recommendations 1 to 4 above be adopted.
  2. That discussions be held with the Cathedral Chapter with regard to the removal of the parking area in front of the Cathedral.