

17. REVIEW OF INNER CITY TRANSPORT SERVICES INCLUDING ACCESS OF PARKING FOR THE CULTURAL PRECINCT

Officer responsible City Streets Manager	Author Stephen Matheson, City Streets Manager Maurice Smith, Parking Operations Manager
Corporate Plan Output: Roading 9.5.0.	

The purpose of this report is to present the outcome of the review of inner city transport services, undertaken by the Tram/Shuttle Subcommittee. Normally the Subcommittee would have reported to the City Services Committee. However, as an early decision was required on a number of the recommendations and it was too late to report to the September meeting of the City Services Committee the report is being submitted to this Committee.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 28 October 1999 the Council appointed a subcommittee comprising Councillor Close (Chairman) and Councillors Evans, O'Rourke and Wright to consider a range of issues relating to inner city transport.

Worley Consultants Ltd were engaged by the Council to investigate a number of transport issues in the inner city, with particular reference to the Cultural Precinct area. The over-riding goal of the study was *"to ensure that the transport needs of users within the inner city can be better met so that a vibrant city centre is maintained and enhanced"*.

Mark Gordon, from Worleys presented his report to a meeting of the Subcommittee on 21 August 2000. The report is 96 pages long plus appendices. It made a number of recommendations ranging from high to low priority and the subcommittee asked staff to report back on implementation of the high priority recommendations.

CAR PARKING CHANGES

A description of the high priority measures identified and recommended for implementation by Worley's, together with an overview of how the Parking Unit is implementing, or proposes to implement them follows:

1. **Worley Recommendation:** *"Replace lost commuter parking (\$4.00 day) with similarly priced service at Farmers building – currently 60 sites utilised at Sheraton site"*.

Comment:

This recommendation related primarily to reserved parkers, as opposed to 'casual' commuters using the coupon parking area, and implementation of this measure is underway. Letters have been sent to the individuals/companies affected explaining the pending closure of the Sheraton car park and offering them a 'special' monthly rate at the Farmers car park in recognition of their previous loyal custom.

This is proving to be a popular initiative from the point of view of public relations, with the added spin-off of increasing the customer base of the Farmers car park. As at the date of writing 30 people had taken up this offer, with 10 others having indicated they are likely to do so.

The Parking Unit is also in the process of informing 'casual' commuters who use the coupon parking area of the Sheraton of the pending closure of the site and suggesting alternative parking arrangements. At this stage it is not intended to offer a discounted daily rate as this could result in the Farmers being clogged with commuters during weekdays, which would be counter-productive and contrary to the conditions of our body corporate agreement.

Recommendation:

That the information be received.

2. **Worley Recommendation:** *"Introduce low cost short term parking in weekends in Farmers, Hospital and perhaps Rydges (Sat only) parking buildings – say \$2.00 for first three hours".*

Comment:

- (a) The Parking Unit agrees with this measure insofar as the Farmers car park is concerned, given the desirability of increasing utilisation of this facility. However, the Unit would strongly recommend against extending it initially to the other two facilities named, pending determination of its viability in light of experience gained at the Farmers.

The fee structure recommended by the Parking Unit is a flat rate of a maximum of \$2.00 for the first three hours, increasing to \$2.00 per hour after the first three hours to a maximum of \$6.00 per day.

It is considered essential to ramp-up the charges after the first three hours to discourage commuters from taking advantage of the low cost parking and taking up a disproportionate amount of space in the facility. As the average length of stay on Sundays is in the range of 1-2 hours this should have minimal, if any, impact upon shoppers and people visiting the Cultural Precinct. However, it is likely to have a financial downside in terms of reduced revenue.

It is further recommended that the outcomes of this initiative be reviewed after six months, or earlier should demand indicate it would be desirable to extend it to Rydges and/or the Hospital car parks.

- (b) The introduction of a low cost rate for parking at Farmers car park raises the question of charges on Sundays at the new "Crossing" car park, and also by extension the Lichfield Street car park.

Currently, the Lichfield Street car park is open free of charge on Sundays. Historically, this was linked with other central city marketing initiatives aimed at encouraging more retailers to open for business on Sundays. There has, however, been no intention to extend this to Sundays at the “Crossing” when it opens in early October. Given this, it is considered it would be prudent for the Council to decide what it wishes to do in terms of charging, or otherwise, for Sunday parking at the new facility, and for that matter whether the Council wishes to continue offering free parking at Lichfield Street.

From the Parking Unit’s perspective applying the same Sunday charges at the “Crossing” and also Lichfield Street as those proposed for the Farmers would remove any inconsistency among these three central city parking buildings and thus eliminate any possible confusion to the public.

Recommendation:

- (i) That a low cost rate for short term parking on Saturday and Sunday at the Farmers car park be introduced; the rate to be set at a maximum of \$2.00 for the first three hours parking, increasing to \$2.00 per hour thereafter to a maximum of \$6.00 per day.
- (ii) That the outcomes of this initiative be reviewed by the City Services Committee six months after implementation, or earlier should demand within that period be such as to justify extending it to Rydges and/or the Hospital car parks.
- (iii) (a) That the Council apply the same low cost charges on Sundays at the “Crossing” and Lichfield street car parks as those proposed for the Farmers car park.

(b) That this charge be implemented in all three car parks (Farmers, Lichfield Street and the “Crossing”) at the time the “Crossing” car park is opened for business in the first half of October 2000.

- 3. Worley Recommendation:** *“Change existing coupon parking on Worcester Boulevard and Montreal Street to seven day meters, with time restricted to say 120-180 minutes to increase on-street utilisation (Alternatively, time restrictions without meters)”*

Comment:

During the Annual Plan process the Annual Plan Working Party endorsed the implementation of extensions to current metered areas, this being subsequently approved by full Council. The areas approved for metering include the coupon parking areas located on the west side of Montreal Street. It is intended that these areas be completed prior to the start of the New Year, thus this component of Worley’s recommendation is already under action.

To further increase the parking supply in the area of the Cultural Precinct, via generating parking turnover, the Council may also wish to consider extending the operating hours of meters on those streets west of the Avon river that where meters do not currently operate on Saturday and Sunday. The streets concerned are Cambridge Terrace between Gloucester and Montreal Streets, Gloucester Street between Cambridge Terrace and Montreal Street, Hereford Street between Cambridge Terrace and Montreal Street, Cashel Street between Cambridge Terrace and Montreal Street.

Recommendation:

- (i) That the current coupon parking areas on the north side of Worcester Boulevard between Cambridge Terrace and Montreal Street and between Montreal Street and Rolleston Avenue be revoked and be replaced by P120 multi-bay parking meters applying between 9am and 6pm Monday to Sunday.
- (ii) That the Council extend the operating hours of meters on those streets west of the Avon river that do not currently operate at weekends to include Saturday and Sunday operation, between 9am and 6pm. The streets concerned are: Cambridge Terrace between Gloucester and Montreal Streets, plus Gloucester - Hereford – Cashel Streets between Cambridge Terrace and Montreal Street.

4. Worley Recommendation: *“Convert unrestricted on-street parking on Gloucester and Armagh Streets into time restricted areas, possibly with some metering”.*

Comment:

The Parking Unit supports the Worley recommendation. However, it is considered that it should be extended to include Cashel Street between Montreal Street and Rolleston Avenue.

To minimise the impact on residents of implementing restrictions it is recommended that only one side of Gloucester, Armagh and Cashel Streets, between Montreal Street and Rolleston Avenue be restricted, as follows:

- Gloucester Street:

Create a P120 time limit parking restriction on the south side of the street, operative between 9am and 6pm Monday to Sunday. This will result in approximately 21 new time limited parking spaces.

- Armagh Street:

Create a P120 time limit parking restriction on the north side (tramline side) of the street, operative between 9am and 6pm Monday to Sunday. This will result in approximately 13 new time limited parking spaces.

- **Cashel Street:**

Implement metered parking on the south side of the street. This will not only assist with supporting the Cultural Precinct, but has the added benefit of freeing up space on weekdays for hospital visitors. To ensure alignment with meters already installed in the area, the hours of operation of the new meters should be 9am to 6pm Monday to Sunday.

In total the above measures will create an additional 50-60 (approx) controlled spaces, positioned on the side of each street that on the face of it seems to result in the least impact on residents.

Meters have not been proposed for either Gloucester or Armagh Street primarily on the basis that the Parking Unit does not consider the normal weekday demand (hence return on the investment) would justify the cost of installing them.

Recommendation:

- (i) That a P120 time limit parking restriction be created on the south side of Gloucester Street between Montreal Street and Rolleston Avenue, operative between 9am and 6pm Monday to Sunday.
- (ii) That a P120 time limit parking restriction be created on the north side of Armagh Street between Cranmer Square and Rolleston Avenue, operative between 9am and 6pm Monday to Sunday.
- (iii) That parking meters be installed on the south side of Cashel Street between Montreal Street and Rolleston Avenue; the hours of operation of these meters being 9am to 6pm Monday to Sunday.

5. Worley Recommendation: *“Review the function and layout of the streets in the Cultural Precinct. For example, consider establishing a “precinct” area, with a reduced speed environment, more angle parking, and more emphasis on pedestrians. This could apply on Gloucester and Hereford Street between Rolleston Avenue and Montreal Street, and include Rolleston Avenue to Cashel Street”.*

Comment:

The Subcommittee requested that staff look at Hereford Street (Rolleston-Montreal) with a view to introducing angle parking and creating a slower street environment. A change to angle parking on the northern (Arts Centre) side of the street would create an additional 21 car parking spaces (25 at present increasing to 46).

Hereford Street is a standard 14m wide street, is classified as a local distributor road and carries some 4000 vpd. It is possible to introduce angle parking but given the length of angle parking and the function of the road there needs to be a detailed consideration of road safety issues. There may also be the opportunity to introduce some street tree planting although this would be at the expense of car parking spaces. The change would require a resource consent application due to the road classification. There is no funding in the Financial Plan and Programme for this work.

Recommendation:

That the proposal be approved, subject to resource consent, design and funding.

Other Worley recommendations:

The Worley report makes a number of other recommendations pertaining to parking to some extent. Most of these were categorised as low to medium priority and some had already been actioned, an example being the introduction of a differential between on-street and off-street parking charges.

One, however, that does need to be acted upon is recommendation 17, which relates to developing a marketing and promotion strategy given to promoting the more immediate changes. It is intended that this be developed in conjunction with Arts Centre management ready for implementation prior to the decommissioning of parking on the Sheraton site.

THE SHUTTLE**6. Worley recommendations:**

- *“That the commitment to operating a 4th shuttle be confirmed;*
- *That first priority be given to Option 3/1, namely operating the 4th shuttle on the existing route to increase the level of service, namely headway and reliability, on this route;*
- *That operational improvements needed to achieve better synchronisation of bus headways be identified and discussed with Red Bus Company;*
- *That the shuttle remain as a free service”.*

Comment:

All four recommendations are supported and discussions with the Red Bus Company have commenced with the aim of introducing systems to improve the bus headway.

Red Bus Company have provided two different proposals:

- (i) A cost of \$180,528 per annum for a three year contract for the additional vehicle, so that the new shuttle contract would expire at the same time as the existing shuttle contract.
- (ii) A cost of \$159,928 per annum per shuttle for all four shuttles if the existing 5 year contract is extended out to six years.

These costs compare with the existing costs of \$164,000 per shuttle at present. It should be noted that these costs will be increased on the anniversary of the contract (1 December 2000) in accordance with the escalation provisions in the contract. This could add a further 7-9% to the cost. Funding for the 4th shuttle has been provided in the annual plan and the escalation is also allowed for. The price quoted by Red Bus is firm for 21 days. If the shuttle is ordered then it could be six months before it is in service.

Recommendation:

That the contract with the Red Bus Company be varied to provide for a 4th shuttle and the term of the contract for all four shuttles be extended to 1 December 2004 at a price of \$159,928 per shuttle.

PASSENGER TRANSPORT

7. Worley Recommendation:

- *“That following the opening of the exchange, Option 5/2, namely free transfers for existing users between the exchange and the riverside terminal at Cashel/Rolleston and return, be pursued with Environment Canterbury;*
- *“That the link services between the exchange and riverside be promoted as a convenient means of transportation between the Central City and the Cultural Precinct”.*

Comment:

The situation when the bus exchange opens in November is that bus passengers will be able to use their transfer ticket for a free transfer from the exchange to the Riverside terminus. However, this will mean that if they want to return to their initial departure point e.g. New Brighton in under four hours, they will have to purchase another ticket. There will be no difference for bus passengers staying longer than four hours because they would have to purchase a return ticket anyway.

Environment Canterbury have informed the City Council that they have not initiated any steps to provide free transfers from the bus exchange to the peripheral termini and return, but will commence work on this proposal shortly. Environment Canterbury are aware that this proposal would significantly improve central city accessibility but are concerned about the operational problems with regard to fare avoidance with the return trip to the bus exchange.

Recommendation:

That free transfers between all the peripheral termini be pursued with Environment Canterbury with the aim of implementing the system at the time of the opening of the bus exchange.

8. Worley Recommendation: *“That a free part day Saturday service for a period of three months be further investigated”.*

Comment:

The opening of the exchange has been suggested as a possible start time for this initiative as it would promote both the bus services and the exchange. However, staff at both Environment Canterbury and the Council have a significant workload in the changes required to bus routes and facilities for the opening of the exchange. It is suggested that the recommendation be investigated in detail after the exchange is commissioned. The cost of this is estimated at \$80,000 and there is no budget provision in the annual plan.

Recommendation:

That a free part day Saturday service for a period be negotiated with Environment Canterbury and the bus companies with the aim of commencing when the second stage of the bus exchange is commissioned on 4 April 2001.

9. Worley Recommendation:

- *“That a marketing and promotion strategy be developed, as this will be critical to the success of the above-mentioned recommendations, and that early attention be given to promoting the immediate changes particularly to parking arrangements;*
- *That joint opportunities be pursued, between the Council (e.g. Parking Unit), the Tram operator, passenger transport operators, the Central City Board, Christchurch and Canterbury marketing, and the Cultural Precinct and associated businesses;*
- *That walking as a means of transport linking the Central City with the Cultural precinct be promoted, with more pedestrian facilities such as signage to the Precinct or transport to it (including in parking buildings), seating etc being provided”.*

Comment:

It is intended that the first recommendations be developed in conjunction with the Arts Centre management for implementation prior to the decommissioning of parking on the Sheraton side. Funding can be provided from the Parking Unit budget.

Improvements such as signage and seating and the promotion of walking can also be implemented at relatively modest cost and should follow in the New Year. Some items can possibly be incorporated in the Oxford Terrace improvements that are under construction and due for completion in November.

Recommendation:

That the Worley recommendations be adopted.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the recommendations of the Subcommittee be adopted.