
REPORT 3
(1215/52/IM)

PARKING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: REVIEW OF SUNDAY TIME LIMITS IN THE CENTRAL AREA

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval from the Committee to consult on a proposal to introduce parking time limits in the pay and display/metered parking areas on Sundays.

2. Executive Summary

As part of the Council's approval of the current Parking Policy adopted in 2007, it was agreed that officers would investigate and report back on the feasibility of introducing on-street parking time restrictions on Sundays similar to the restrictions that currently apply on Saturdays.

Within the central area as defined in the District Plan, Sunday parking is currently free of fees and there is limited enforcement of existing restrictions. Unlike weekdays and Saturdays, there are no time limits in place on the streets covered by pay and display/metered parking.

The objective of the recommended change is to reduce the incidence of long stay kerbside parking in the central area on Sundays, where these spaces should more appropriately be available to shoppers and visitors requiring shorter stay parking. Parking surveys show that on average, Sunday parking space vacancy is around 8% which is comparatively low when compared to other days in the week. As an illustration, the Parking Policy 2007 uses the international best practice figure of 15% vacancy as an indicator of the effectiveness of parking management.

This report recommends introducing parking time limits from 8:00am to 6:00pm, on Sundays, in the pay and display/metered parking areas, and to consult with the public on this proposal. Parking fees will continue to apply from Monday to Friday only.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*

2. *Agree to consult on introducing parking time limits from 8:00am to 6:00pm, on Sundays in the pay and display/metered parking areas within the central area, where currently no time limits apply.*
3. *Note that the consultation process with the public and specific stakeholders is part of the Traffic Resolution process prescribed in the Bylaw.*

4. Background

The Council introduced free weekend parking in the city in 1996 as a means of supporting retail activity. In order to increase the turnover of on-street car parking and maximise the amount of kerbside parking available to shoppers and visitors, a two hour time limit was introduced on Saturdays. Initially the time limit applied from 8:00 am - 1:00 pm, and this was extended in 2002 to 6:00 pm to recognise increasing retail activity. No time limits were placed on Sunday kerbside parking as historically there was less demand for turnover of spaces on Sundays.

During consultation on the draft Parking Policy in 2007, the issue of weekend parking was discussed with key stakeholders (Retailers Association, Chamber of Commerce, Positively Wellington Tourism (PWT), Federation of Wellington Progressive and Residents Associations Inc). A key message from these discussions was that the Council should continue its policy of free weekend parking, but apply time restrictions on Saturdays and Sundays to encourage shoppers and visitors to come into the central city at weekends. As a consequence, the approved Parking Policy included in its Implementation Plan under Activity 4, an investigation into the feasibility of applying the 2 hour time limit on Sundays.

In the pay and display/metered areas, most spaces have a time limit of 2 hours during weekdays and Saturdays, with a small number of P30, P60, P90 & P10 hour parks.

The 2007 Parking Policy states that on-street parking in the central area is primarily to support retail and entertainment facilities, servicing for commercial and professional activities, community recreational facilities and events. In the main retail and commercial core, the majority of on-street car parks have been set at a 2 hour maximum and charged by either parking meters or pay and display on weekdays. There are around 3,400 of these parks which can be seen as the premium spaces in the city.

The 2 hour maximum has been in place for a considerable period as providing a reasonable time for shopping or business and previous reviews have reconfirmed the 2 hour limit as appropriate. Outside this core area there are various other parking restrictions in place tailored to the needs of the locality. Examples include the P 90 parking area along Thorndon Quay which was introduced to protect the businesses and residents from parking pressures due to events at Westpac Stadium.

It is the pay and display/metered parks which are the subject of this review as these serve the main weekend shopping activity. For those shoppers and visitors who need to park for more than two hours during the weekend there are now eight publicly available off street car parks which provide low cost (\$3 a day) parking via the “*in the know*” scheme.

5. Discussion

Information and discussion relating to introducing Sunday time limits in the pay and display/metered spaces is provided below under specific headings, and supports the introduction of Sunday time limits.

5.1. Parking turnover rates

The Parking Policy 2007 states that a vacancy rate of 15% will be used as an indicator to measure the effectiveness of the Council’s management of the parking system, using a combination of pricing, time limits and enforcement.

The 15% vacancy rate is international best practice for managing parking to ensure adequate availability of parking spaces. Recent studies in San Francisco labelled as ‘path breaking’ by parking experts used a target 15% rate. (See section 5.4)

5.2. Parking statistics

Annual parking surveys have been carried out in the central area, since 2000. Table 1 shows that turnover is consistent over the week, however it slightly decreases on Saturdays and further decreases on Sundays illustrating the effect of not applying time limits. The lower turnover on Saturdays compared to the week day is due to a number of factors including the greater difficulty of enforcement, lower enforcement activity, and no pricing deterrent.

Table 1 shows the number of times the average car park turns over per day between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm on the weekday and Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm.

Table 1. Comparison of Turnover Rates 2009 (metered areas)

Area	Weekday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Lambton Quay	6.3	6.8	5.7	2.7
Civic Area	7.8	6.6	5.1	3.5
The Terrace	7.4	8.4	5	3.2
Courtenay Place	7.9	8.1	6.1	4.3
Cuba Street	7.1	7.8	5.7	4.4
Tory Street	6.7	7.3	5.9	4
Aitken Street	5.9	5.9	4.1	3.1
Cable Street	3.2	4	4.1	3.6
Average	6.5	6.9	5.2	3.6

Table 2 shows the number of vehicles that parked for longer than 4 hours in one car park. The numbers clearly show the impact that price, time restrictions and enforcement have on parking behaviour and duration of stay, with Sunday long term parking much more frequent than on other days of the week.

Table 2. Comparison of Long Term Parking 2009 (metered areas)

Area	Weekday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Lambton Quay	1%	0%	1%	22%
Civic Area	0%	1%	1%	15%
The Terrace	2%	1%	3%	13%
Courtenay Place	0%	1%	1%	9%
Cuba Street	0%	0%	0%	7%
Tory Street	0%	0%	1%	9%
Aitken Street	1%	3%	7%	9%
Cable Street	1%	2%	3%	7%
Average	0.6%	1.0%	2.1%	11.4%

Graph 1 illustrates the parking trends over the last 10 years, which shows an increase in the percentage of vehicles parking longer than 4 hours on a Sunday, while Saturdays and weekdays are decreasing. The effect of time restrictions is clearly evident, as Sunday with no restriction has more long term parking than weekdays which have low levels of long term parking.

Graph 1. Long Term Parking Trend (>4hrs)

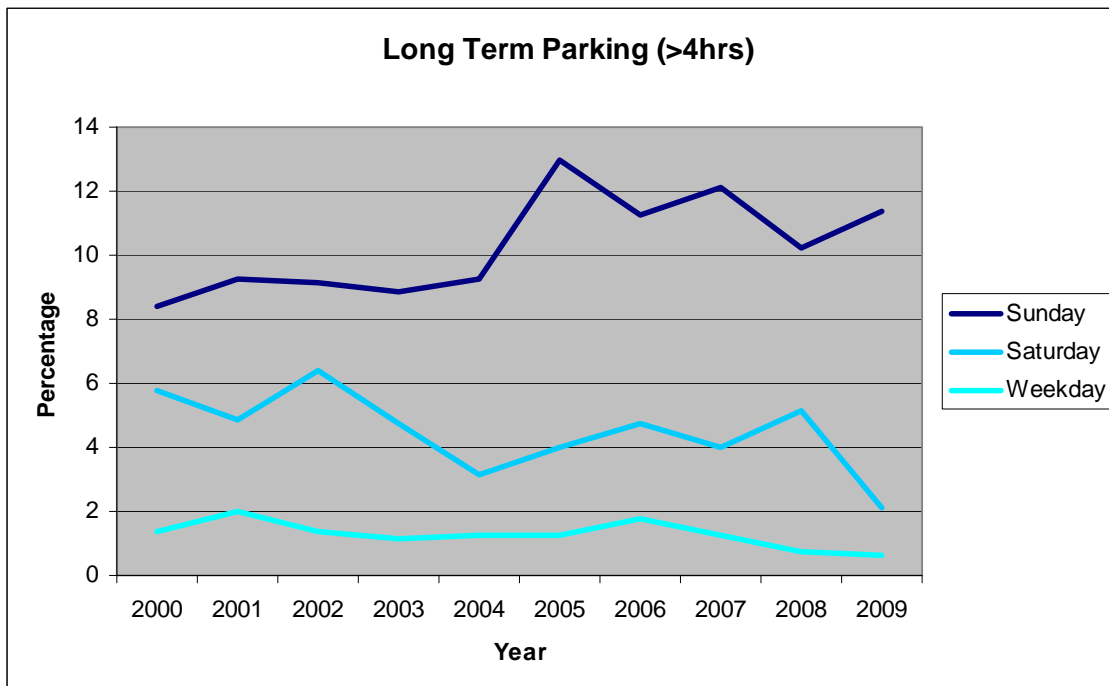


Table 3 contains parking space vacancy rates in 2009. It shows that most streets on Sundays have vacancy rates well below the target 15%, some as low as 2% vacancy. Enforcing a parking time limit is expected to increase vacancy rates on Sundays to a level comparable with Saturdays on the busier shopping streets.

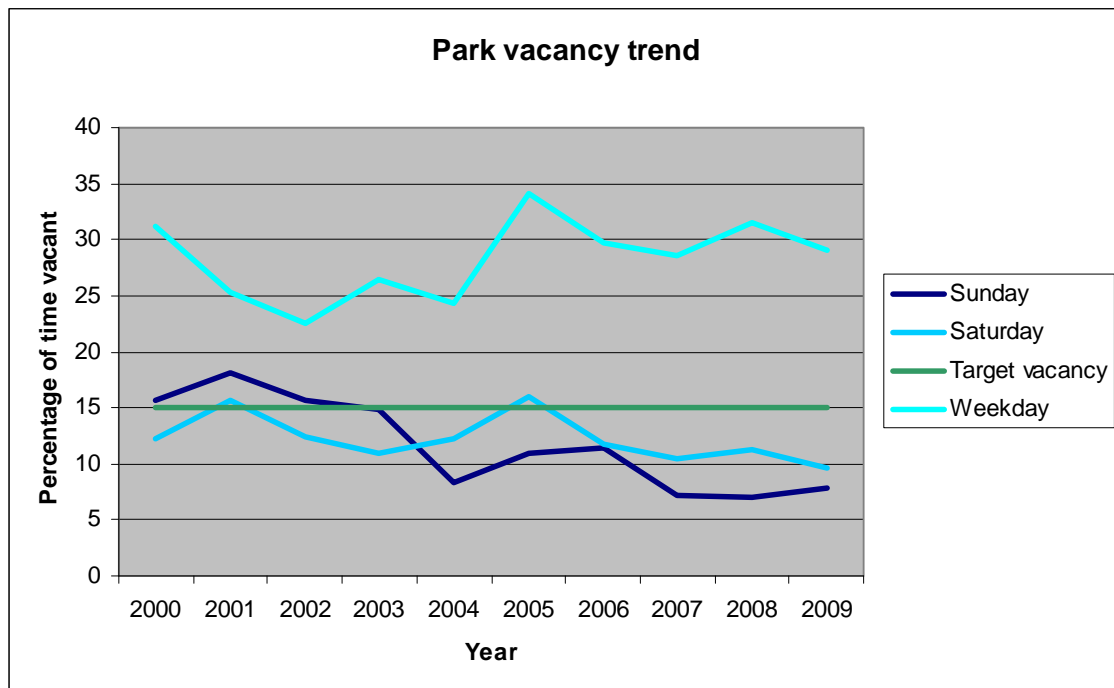
The weekday parking vacancy rates appear to be high compared to the 15% baseline. Further investigation of the data shows that the parking spaces generally start to fill around 11am with low vacancy rates until between 1pm and 3pm when vacancy rates increase again heading towards 5pm. This trend is seen on most streets, and appears to reflect demand levels rather than inappropriate parking management. Therefore the daily averages shown in Table 3 do not show these vacancy fluctuations over the survey period. Sunday parking, however, has a low vacancy rate throughout the day. It should be noted that the surveys do not monitor evening parking, where vacancy rates start to drop again in the restaurant/entertainment areas.

Table 3. Comparison of Vacancy Rates 2009 (metered areas)

Area	Weekday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Lambton Quay	9%	4%	8%	8%
Civic Area	22%	11%	5%	3%
The Terrace	6%	9%	5%	3%
Courtenay Place	35%	23%	7%	4%
Cuba Street	43%	41%	10%	2%
Tory Street	43%	39%	10%	7%
Aitken Street	30%	20%	12%	30%
Cable Street	45%	39%	20%	5%
Average	29%	23%	10%	8%

Graph 2 illustrates the parking vacancy trends over the last 10 years. The graph clearly shows the trend dipping well below the target 15%, particularly on Sundays. Vacancy rates on Saturdays are below the 15% optimum and may be considered compatible with the more relaxed parking regime associated with the free weekend parking policy

Graph 2. Parking vacancy trend 2000-2009



In summary the results show the parking turnover rates are generally low and demand is high in the central area on the weekend, and particularly on Sundays. Introducing time restrictions on Sundays will improve on the current situation and help address the long term decline in availability of parks.

5.3. Congestion and safety

Low car park vacancy rates increase circulating traffic and lead to congestion on the roads, this impacts on the efficiency and effectiveness of the transport network and generates increased vehicle emissions.

Additionally, motorists circulating for a car park can be distracted, and present a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and other drivers.

The 15% generalised vacancy figure was chosen to represent the optimum target to assist in reducing adverse traffic and safety effects caused by lack of available kerbside parking.

5.4. Parking preferences

As a recent illustration of motorists' parking priorities, a professional study of 3000 motorists in San Francisco (Parking Management Study, 2004 – 2009) researched what characteristic motorists valued most about parking. The results were as follows with 1 being the highest priority characteristic:

1. Availability/ease of finding parking space
2. Adequate time limits to conduct business
3. Safety

4. Convenience (proximity to destination)
5. Cost
6. Condition of the on-street parking spaces
7. Availability of different payment options (e.g., credit cards)
8. Effective enforcement of parking time limits and payment
9. Information about on-street parking

The recommendations in this report address the two most important characteristics listed above: availability of parking and adequate time restrictions to conduct business.

The results show availability is very important to motorists, and the lack of available parking will discourage visitors from shopping in the central area. It is expected that introducing a parking time limit will increase parking availability on Sundays, and this will have a positive effect on the central area by encouraging people to visit and reduce circulating traffic.

5.5. Time restrictions

Officers recommend consulting on the introduction of Sunday parking time limits in the central area in the pay and display/metered areas.

The current parking restrictions are as follows:

- Monday – Thursday 8:00am-6:00pm, Friday 8:00am – 8:00pm, Saturday 8:00am – 6:00pm and no restriction on Sunday

This is proposed to change to:

- Monday – Thursday, Saturday and Sunday 8:00am – 6:00pm.
Friday 8:00am – 8:00pm

Parking fees apply Monday to Friday but not on the weekend, there are no proposed changes to parking fees.

The 2 hour time limit is a long standing central area restriction which is seen as a reasonable period for people to conduct their business and return to their car. There is no proposal to change this time limit which has been validated in previous public consultation processes. There are also P30, P60, P90 and P10 hours restrictions that are proposed to also apply on Sunday in the pay and display/metered areas. The pay and display/metered area is shown in Appendix 3.

The recommendations will provide a more consistent parking restriction across the week, while retaining the late night shopping on Friday nights as many shops are still open late on Friday night and there is a high demand for parking related to cafés, restaurants, and bars.

5.6. Enforcement

If parking time restrictions are to be introduced on Sundays, additional enforcement will be necessary.

Sunday enforcement will mirror Saturdays which is generally a reduced level than during the week.

There will be a 1 – 2 month period of advertising the new parking restrictions, which will include period of warnings to non-complying vehicles, with notices placed on windscreens explaining the changes. This period will be used to ease in the new time restriction.

Officers will continue to monitor parking vacancy and turnover rates through ongoing surveys.

5.7. Financial impact

The table below shows that the projected income is expected to exceed the cost of enforcement and related costs of introducing the restriction over time. The benefits to the community (e.g. retailers, private garages) will be immediate.

Table 4. Estimated income and expenditure for Sunday time limits

(Expenditure)/Income \$	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Net Enforcement Income	19000	19000	19000	19000	19000
Labels	(8000)				
Advertising of changes	(50000)				
Net (Expenditure)/Income \$	(39000)	19000	19000	19000	19000

It has been assumed that Sunday enforcement will be the same as Saturdays, with similar income/expenditure profile.

Enforcing the time limits on Sundays will have an upfront cost of \$8,000 to update the labels on all of the parking meters around the city.

A comprehensive advertising campaign will be undertaken to advise the public of the changes. This is expected to cost approximately \$50,000.

5.8. Retailers

A key reason behind the proposed change is to increase turnover on Sundays to assist retail activity in the central area. Low parking availability can be seen as a discouragement to potential visitors when compared with out of town shopping malls with their own generous parking facilities, often undercover.

There has been pressure on the Council from retailers for some time to introduce time limits on Sundays.

The New Zealand Retailers Association position is, “*to support on going free weekend parking in the city, but, at the same time, to support enforcement of the particular time restriction relating to how long a person can park a car in a particular space on a Saturday or a Sunday during the day.*”

Positively Wellington Tourism (PWT) has also confirmed that they support weekend enforcement of parking time restrictions.

5.9. Weekend events

An argument against Sunday time restrictions is that there are often events on the weekends that people wish to attend. These events often run longer than 2 hours. Examples are Homegrown, the Sevens, Travel Expo, and sporting events at the Stadium etc. Even activities such as visiting the beach on Sunday would generally require longer than 2 hours.

As mentioned earlier in the report there are off-street public parking deals available in a number of parking buildings such as ‘*In the know*’ which provides six hours of parking for \$3. This is a cheap and convenient alternative to parking on-street for people who need to park for longer than 2 hours.

5.10. Inner city residents

The Council promotes inner city living as a sustainable choice and residents generally have less need for a vehicle due to the availability of convenient local services, facilities and public transport. There is no requirement in the District Plan for parking to be provided in residential buildings in the central area.

The results of Council’s 2008 survey of inner city apartment dwellers show that, of the 892 respondents that own a car, only 9.9% park on the street during the evening and on weekends. The majority, 79.4%, have parking available in their apartment building. There is a relatively low dependence by inner city residents on on-street parking.

The Parking Policy 2007 makes it clear that parking for residents is not a priority in the central area. Consequently it is not proposed to consult individually with central area residents on the proposed parking changes.

5.11. On-street vs. Off-street parking

It is Council’s policy that on-street parking is provided to satisfy short stay shopper and visitor needs while off-street parking supports the need for longer stays. This is seen during the week as central area workers who choose or need to drive to work park off-street while the on-street parking supports retail and other business activity.

During the weekend there are numerous off street car parks available for the public to use at parking buildings in various streets as shown in Appendix 1. It is

estimated there are in excess of 3000 publicly accessible off-street spaces available at weekends.

Council has around 3400 pay and display/metered spaces in the central area. These are the prime spaces that are proposed to be time limited and enforced on Sundays.

In addition there are numerous other parking spaces in the central area including coupon parking, unmetered time limited spaces, loading zones and motorcycle stands etc. There are also special parking arrangements on Thorndon Quay relating to events at Westpac Stadium. It is proposed that the current restrictions and enforcement practices in these areas do not change.

It should be noted that more off-street parking has become available on the weekend within the last five years. Previously motorists relied more on on-street parking.

There are a large number of off street car parks either publicly accessible or owned by private businesses, over and above the ones now available via the "in the know" scheme, which are used on weekdays but largely vacant at weekends. It is believed some of these spaces could be attractive to the public if they were marketed and available at the right price.

It is therefore planned to further investigate this potential, identified as a future task in the 2007 Parking Policy and where appropriate, negotiate with the owners to use these underutilised spaces so as to provide more choice and availability of short stay parking in the central city at weekends.

5.12. *Parking fees*

Free weekend parking is a long standing Council policy that the public enjoy, and continues to be supported both financially and as a key policy, by retailers.

It is therefore not proposed to reconsider the issue of weekend parking charges as part of this report with the focus being on using time limits and appropriate enforcement to achieve improved parking turnover to assist retailers and weekend business/leisure activity.

5.13. *Consultation Process*

The proposed parking time limits on Sunday will require a resolution by Council as specified under Clause 11 of the Traffic Bylaw. Any resolution made by the Council under the Bylaw must be publicly notified at least 14 days before it is to take effect. Any objections to the proposal will be brought to the Council for consideration, this may include oral hearings.

We intend to meet the consultation requirements of the Bylaw, and also extend the public notification to directly consult with identified interested parties (see below).

Furthermore the period of consultation will be extended to one month to give the public reasonable time to respond. If the proposal is approved, there will be a public education campaign to ensure that the public is made aware of the changes. There will also be a delay before the new time restrictions come into effect to allow the public to be made well aware of the changes.

Identified interested parties:

- New Zealand Retailers Association – who will send a circular email to their members notifying them of the consultation
- The Federation of Wellington Progressive and Residents Associations Inc
- Positively Wellington Tourism
- Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- Wellington Inner-City Residents and Business Association

The proposed consultation document is included as Appendix 2.

6. Conclusion

As part of the Council's approval of the current Parking Policy adopted in 2007, it was agreed that officers would investigate and report back on the feasibility of introducing on-street parking time restrictions on Sundays similar to the restriction applicable on Saturdays. This report addresses the agreed policy task.

An increase in weekend retail activity has resulted in pressure from retailers requesting Sunday time limits and associated enforcement in the pay and display/metered car parks in the core part of the central area, and this has been supported by preliminary discussions with the NZ Retailers' Association and also by PWT.

Parking turnover and duration surveys confirm that Sunday parking turnover is lower than any other day and is deteriorating on a year on year basis. Also the duration of car park occupation is considerably longer on Sundays, depriving other motorists of the opportunity to park. This situation can be improved by introducing time limits on Sundays during business hours in the same way as Saturdays, and this is recommended to the Committee.

As a first stage in implementing the proposal it is recommended that officers consult with the public and specific stakeholders through the Traffic Resolution process prescribed in the Bylaw.

Contact Officers: *Stephen Carruthers, Transport Planner and Steve Spence, Chief Transport Planner.*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The Parking Policy supports Council's strategic direction in that it aims to balance and deliver desired outcomes in the Transport, Urban Development, Economic Development, Environmental, Social and Recreation, Cultural wellbeing Strategies. The Policy supports Council activities as a provider of on-street parking, a manager of public road space, a regulator of off-street parking and a facilitator of arrangements to achieve parking goals.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

Labels and advertising, expected to be \$58,000, will come from SEPE01 C290, these are one off costs incurred in the first year. The revenue from enforcement will go back into the same budget, expected on average to be approximately \$19,000 per year.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

N/A

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

This report seeks approval to consult with the public.

b) Consultation with Maori

No specific consultation.

6) Legal Implications

Any new time restrictions will require a traffic resolution to ensure that they are legal.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is in response to the implementation plan attached to the Parking Policy adopted by Council in 2007.