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Parking Strategy Review Team  
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Auckland Transport

### **Heart of the City – Feedback to Auckland Transport’s Draft Parking Strategy**

Heart of the City (HOTC) is the business association for Auckland’s city centre and we represent the interests of businesses and property owners. We are committed to the growth and success of the city centre as a vibrant, accessible, safe and welcoming urban community.

Our feedback below focuses on elements of the Draft Parking Strategy most relevant to the city centre. It covers:

1. Tiered Approach to Parking Management
2. Parking Management Plans and Kerbside Management Plans
3. Strategic Transport Network
4. Parking Policies including Off-Street Parking Management, Park n Ride management, Parking Diversity, Coach Parking

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### **City Centre Context**

COVID-19 has presented a significant shock to the city centre, with more than \$1.2B loss of consumer spending since the start of the pandemic. The city centre has been seriously impacted by sustained working from home and the loss of international visitors and students, much more so than other parts of the region.

Recovery will take time and changes made in the city centre over the coming period must support recovery – including by improving access and addressing significant operational access issues. The ongoing public and private sector investment in the city centre does confirm confidence in the role and future of the city centre, and the aspiration set out in the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) is well supported.

Despite transformation projects underway that will improve access into the city centre such as the CRL and growth in public transport over time, we repeatedly hear feedback from businesses both within the city centre and from those that service the city centre, as well from customers, that

access is difficult and a barrier to visitation.

For example, we hear of companies that will no longer service the city centre because of the difficulty accessing space for loading and servicing and the associated cost impacts. There are also inadequate services for public transport to some parts of the region. Operational issues are frequently raised through project consultations as well as Auckland Transport's commissioned research in relation to Loading and Servicing.

HOTC has for many years supported the vision for the city centre as described in the City Centre Masterplan, recognising the value of well-designed places - increasing the appeal as a place to live, work, study and visit. Underpinning the development of a successful, high-quality place is a well-functioning place that is highly accessible. How parking (and the kerbside) is managed is a critical element in supporting this.

### Overall Points to Our Submission

- Parking and kerbside changes in the **city centre must support or improve access and address significant pain points** (for example operational challenges for loading and servicing, better and more efficient transport access, more legible places for drop off and pick-ups for customers, and address perceptions that access (cost/availability) is a barrier to visitation).
- **We recognise the value of and have been supportive of Active Parking Management** in the city centre since it was first put in place through demand-based pricing back in 2012, which focused on encouraging turnover to support business. Active Parking Management in the city centre is particularly necessary to ensure there is a more strategic approach to determining the best use of the kerbside given the ongoing public space and transport changes underway and planned for the city centre under the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) programme.
- **We acknowledge that the kerbside is a finite resource and must be used in way that will best serve our city centre's future (economically and socially) to ensure that the city centre functions well and is a positive place to visit.**
- **Ad hoc, non-strategic changes (e.g. street by street/project by project) to parking and use of the kerbside cannot continue to occur without an agreed strategic plan guiding these changes.**
- Our expectation is that through the development of a Parking Management Plan (PMP) for the city centre along with an associated Loading and Servicing Plan (which will be developed given the identification of the City Centre as a Tier 3 priority under the Draft Strategy) this will be addressed. However, this approach will only be successful if there is early input from businesses and stakeholders. It must assess all user needs, along with current and future land use as well as Public Transport changes. Innovation and flexibility will also be key.
- Heart of the City supports prioritising short stay carparking over commuter parking in Auckland Transport parking building assets to encourage turnover and customer visitation, and support use of public transport at peak times. We also support in principle giving greater priority for the kerbside to be used for more active uses **such as goods and people drop off and pick up, mobility parking, rideshare** (as well active modes in agreed places). Given this, affordable access to off-street parking must remain.
- We note that there are still areas of Auckland that are not well serviced by public transport. The need to access parking, including for low-income workers, who do not have access to safe, accessible and affordable public transport, is required.
- The city centre should not be unnecessarily disadvantaged through implementation of this Draft Parking Strategy compared with other areas in Auckland.

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**1. Tiered Approach to Parking Management - City Centre – Tier 3** *“which is considered most ready for change with best access to public transport and rapid transit and includes proactive management of parking (kerbside use)”*.

- 1.1 Heart of the City notes that the majority of the city centre has been subject to a proactive parking management approach with the introduction of demand-based pricing for both on and off-street parking following the implementation of the 2012 Parking Strategy. Given the level of public sector investment in the city planned over the next 10-year period, it is important for a more strategic approach to be taken to managing parking and the use of the kerbside – beyond just pricing to better meet functional requirements.
- 1.2 The definition of the city centre as a “Tier 3” under the Draft Parking Strategy will give priority to the development of Parking Management Plan (PMP) and Kerbside Management Plan and we are supportive of this occurring.
- 1.3 We acknowledge that the city centre is well serviced by public transport and this will continue to improve once the City Rail Link (CRL) is complete along with other planned rapid transit bus routes. We also note that pre-COVID, all of the growth of people accessing the city centre came from public transport. However not all areas of Auckland are well connected to the city centre by public transport. By 2031 (excluding Light Rail if that was to be implemented), 45% of Aucklanders will be within a 45min PT journey of the city centre (off peak), meaning 55% of Aucklanders will be outside of a 45 min PT journey of the city centre<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4 We also note that there is significant private sector parking in the city centre, providing approximately 85% of the total amount of parking capacity, which as of 2019 was approximately 52,000 parking spaces. We acknowledge the role that the private sector can play in accommodating parking requirements, including opportunities for supporting servicing and loading through options such as dock sharing.
- 1.5 Kerbside space in the city centre is finite. Given this, on-street and off-street parking has to be better managed and more strategically allocated to better service business needs in the city centre.
- 1.6 The lack of strategic planning for the use of kerbside is a significant pain point that is regularly raised through project consultations and ongoing feedback from businesses, industry (such as courier and coach companies) as well as from user groups such as the disability community.
- 1.7 We continue to see removal of kerbside space on a street-by-street basis (such as removal of loading space on Wellesley Street and parking through the Project Wave project in the Customs and Market Place area) without adequate assessment of needs and/or taking into account opportunities to relocate into a wider geographical area. This approach often results in significant impact on business operations and cannot continue.
- 1.8 HOTC supports in principle giving greater priority for the kerbside to be used for more active uses **such as goods and people drop off and pick up, mobility parking, rideshare** (as well active

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<sup>1</sup> City Centre Accessibility Report, Auckland Forecasting Centre, June 2021

modes in agreed places) and this is reflected by the Draft Parking Strategy's "Parking Diversity Policy". Given this, access to affordable off-street parking must remain.

- 1.9 This is essential in realising the intent of the Access for Everyone concept and aims of the City Centre Masterplan, which favours access to off-street parking to allow for reallocation of on-street space for use such as servicing and loading. It states that:

*"Signage would direct city-bound drivers along specific motorway and arterial routes to their destination zone and an off-street parking facility. On-street car parking spaces would be reallocated to favour mobility users, servicing, operations and other road users for whom on-street parking has the highest priorities."*

<https://www.aucklandccmp.co.nz/access-for-everyone-a4e/managing-traffic-and-road-use-in-the-city-centre/>

## **2. Parking Management Plan (PMP) and Kerbside Management Framework**

- 2.1 We understand that in the city centre a Parking Management Plan (PMP) will be developed soon and this will be integrated with a Kerbside Management Framework along with a Loading and Servicing Plan. If done well these should mitigate serious ongoing issues that we have for the redevelopment of city centre streets, which often sees adhoc and non-strategic changes to the kerbside. There is a nervousness however that there will not be adequate engagement and assessment of needs, resulting in a poor outcome and ongoing impacts to business.
- 2.2 It is HOTC's expectation that the development of these plans will take a considered strategic approach to identifying kerbside use, taking into account multiple user needs, alongside current and future land use. They must have early input from city centre stakeholders. They must take into account innovation and technology shifts. There also needs to be a view that the kerbside can be flexible and dynamic.
- 2.3 These must influence the scope and design of projects planned to be implemented in the city centre (including those under the CCMP and A4E programme) so the needs of the city centre operations and businesses are met.
- 2.4 The PMP must take a transitioned approach to change, reflecting timeframes for public transport improvements, taking into account origins of customers/workers/students/visitors and their access to safe transport both day and night. Equitable access is also very important to consider. For example, consideration needs to be given to safe and affordable carparking for late night/shift workers who don't have safe and easy access to public transport.
- 2.5 There has been broad acknowledgement of the need for equity through the discussion on Congestion Charging for Auckland to ensure that low-income people and others without public transport access are not unnecessarily disadvantaged through congestion pricing. HOTC wants to ensure equitable access is applied to parking management in the city centre, particularly in relation to off-street parking.
- 2.6 In our submission to the Congestion Question, we noted that *"A significant portion of city centre workers originate from Outer Urban Areas. While almost half of commuting trips to the city centre originate from Inner Urban areas (essentially the isthmus and southern North Shore) over*

*a quarter (26%) come from Outer Urban areas. We are aware that many businesses in the city centre struggle to recruit workers from low-income households due to the high cost of travel (including public transport and parking) and many parts of the Outer Urban area in particular lack alternative modes relative to residents on the isthmus and North Shore. Many tertiary students and occasional visitors from Outer Urban areas are also highly car dependent."*

- 2.7 The city centre should not be unnecessarily disadvantaged through implementation of this Draft Parking Strategy compared with other areas in Auckland.

### **3. Strategic Transport Network**

- 3.1 HOTC recognises the need to prioritise certain key city centre streets to "carry as many people as possible in the space available". The majority of streets identified under the Strategic Transport Network within the 10-year timeframe are already largely prioritised for this use, including Wellesley Street, Nelson Street, Hobson Street and Fanshawe Street.

- 3.2 It is our understanding that Customs Street and Market Place is included in the Strategic Transport Network due to the Project Wave project currently underway. Auckland Transport has informed us that they would not anticipate further reallocation of kerbside space, and consequently any further reduction in parking spaces and space for loading in Customs Street and Market Place beyond what is already identified. Further changes cannot occur without stakeholder input as the reduction of parking spaces has been an issue for some residents and businesses in the area.

- 3.3 Beaumont Street: We note that Beaumont Street is included within the 10-year timeframe due to a bi-directional cycleway proposed for the street to provide connections with other cycling links in the area. We are aware that there are issues raised by stakeholders in relation to potential conflict with the marine industry and impacts on requirements for kerbside parking on the street.

- 3.4 We are concerned about the policy for the Strategic Transport Network if changes are made without thorough needs assessment and appropriate accommodation of vital functional needs. We have seen this occur in the city centre. For example, critical loading space has not been reallocated through changes to Wellesley Street and this sets a poor precedent for future changes on other Strategic Transport Network streets.

- 3.5 We cannot accept street by street removal of kerbside function without the implementation of a strategic plan assessing needs and engagement and adequate replacement in appropriate locations. The development of a city centre wide Parking Management Plan (PMP) must mitigate this from happening in the city centre going forward.

### **4. Parking Policies**

#### Off-Street Parking Management:

- 4.1 HOTC agrees with continuing the policy of prioritising Auckland Transport's off-street parking assets towards short term parking (as opposed to commuter parking) which encourages turnover and supporting activity such as business appointments and visitation to the city centre's retail and hospitality sectors. We note it also supports use of public transport at peak

times. We also support the application of demand-based pricing. This approach has been in place since the 2012 Parking Strategy was implemented and HOTC has supported this approach since its inception to better manage turnover and availability of space.

4.2 We are concerned about a new intention for off-street short stay parking to match the “market price” due to issues around equitable and affordable access for some city centre customers who are not able to access efficient and affordable public transport. Auckland Transport should consider putting in place a mechanism/different pricing structure for low-income people as is being considered for Congestion Charging.

4.3 Retaining access to affordable off-street short stay parking is also an important key strategy to assist with the reprioritisation of on-street kerbside space to support more active use such as loading and servicing and people pick up and drop off (PUDOS), rideshare and mobility parking.

#### Park and Ride Management:

4.4 Rapid Transit access into the city centre is critical to support the growth and economic success of the city centre. We acknowledge the need to manage demand at Park and Rides, particularly when it is not possible to build more capacity.

4.5 It is vital to encourage public transport use and there are a number of levers to do this – through pricing as well as service levels. We do have reservations that a proposed charge for Park and Ride could act as a deterrent for public transport use.

4.6 Key to this is that there needs to be safe and available connections to Park and Ride (such as shuttles, rideshare initiatives). We believe these must be available before any proposed pricing is introduced. We also believe that there should be provision for people on low incomes to be exempt from charges.

#### Parking Diversity:

4.7 We agree with the policy as it is laid out in the Draft Parking Strategy which states that “diversified on-street parking allocation should support the shift to short-stay parking by providing more loading zone space for passengers and goods, as well as more flexible space which is allocated to different uses/users at different times and maximises the number of users.”

4.8 This is consistent with what is likely to be needed to support key city centre functions. We’ve yet to see a good application of dynamic and flexible use of the kerbside, but this approach is consistent with recent changes to Queen Street which has recognised the importance of kerbside access for both people and goods as well as mobility access.

#### Bus/Coach Parking:

- 4.9 Given the kerbside space is at a premium in the city centre we do not support the provision for prime space for bus layovers.
- 4.10 We are concerned that Auckland Transport is not willing to provide certainty for coach drop offs and pick ups, as the Draft Strategy states that “Auckland Transport may provide coach companies kerbside space for their short stay/pick up/drop off purposes (with no exclusivity of use and no certainty of continued use should other needs arise.”
- 4.11 The City Centre is a key tourism destination, pre-COVID generating approximately 20% of consumer spending. There are many start of trip/end of trip/pick up/drop offs connecting passengers to accommodation providers in the city centre. Accommodating this activity has recently been acknowledged by Auckland Council and Auckland Transport through the Queen Street project by ensuring adequate length for coach access in loading zones adjacent to two hotels.
- 4.12 Heart of the City is advocating for assurance that there is adequate kerbside space provision for coach drop off and pick up in appropriate locations. This must be assessed and established with adjacent current and future land use needs as part of the city centre wide PMP and Loading and Servicing plan.

-ENDs-

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