
Council

OPEN MINUTES (Annual Plan Hearings)

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held in Council Chamber, Municipal Building, Garden Place, Hamilton on Thursday 18 May 2017 at 9.35am.

PRESENT

Chairperson	Cr A O'Leary
Deputy Chairperson	Deputy Mayor M Gallagher
Members	Mayor A King Cr M Bunting Cr J R Casson Cr S Henry Cr G Mallett Cr P Southgate Cr G Taylor Cr L Tooman
In Attendance	Richard Briggs, Chief Executive Sean Hickey, General Manager Strategy Kelvyn Eglinton, General Manager Growth Julie Clausen, Programme Manager, Strategy Jason Harrison, Transportation Manager
Committee Advisers	Becca Brooke, Governance Team Leader Claire Guthrie, Committee Advisor Amy Viggers, Committee Advisor

Mayor King opened the meeting and advised that he felt it was appropriate that Cr O'Leary, as Chair of the Regulatory & Hearings Committee, to chair this meeting as the purpose of the meeting was Annual Plan hearings.

Resolved: Mayor King/Cr Gallagher

The Council approves Councillor O'Leary assuming the Chair for the 18 May 2017 Council meeting, noting that the purpose of today's meeting is Annual Plan Hearings.

1. Apologies

Resolved: Crs O'Leary/Bunting

That the apologies from Councillors Pascoe, Yeung and Macpherson be received and accepted.

It was noted that Cr Macpherson was attending a Ministry of Health Suicide Prevention meeting which was important for family reasons.

2. Confirmation of Agenda

Resolved: (Crs O'Leary/Tooman)

That the agenda is confirmed.

3. Declarations of Interest

No members of the Council declared a Conflict of Interest.

Prior to the hearings starting Cr O'Leary outlined that the purpose of the meeting was to hear the views of the public concerning the Annual Plan

- It was their time to speak to Elected Members
- The list of speakers had been circulated electronically to Elected Members
- All submissions were online and available to view by the public
- After the submitters had spoken, staff would be available for Elected Members to highlight issues to be considered from the submissions for their future report; deliberations and debate would take place at a later Council meeting.

The following people spoke to, and responded to questions on, their submissions:

Rob Bowman - Submission 43

Mr Bowman opposed ratepayers funding the free parking proposal because there was already a viable user pay system. He made the following points: if it was not a targeted rate it would continue to increase each year and would cause problems for those on fixed incomes; that the Central Business District (CBD) would only pay 10% of the cost shortfall, but they have already had substantial assistance from Council; free parking had been tried in four New Zealand cities and failed in all of them; external visitors would have free parking at ratepayers expense; many residents wanted to shop closer to their homes and not come into the central city; and that online shopping was increasingly popular.

Nancy Caiger - Submission 33

Ms Caiger opposed rate-payer funding for free parking and supported the user pay method. She submitted that if this initiative would benefit CBD retailers then the cost should go to the CBD retailers but that free parking would not make the CBD a shopping destination. She suggested the following initiatives to revitalise the CBD: attract more businesses especially bigger companies and government departments; enable cafes to stay open later; encourage shops that were attractive for inner-city dwellers; remove parking charges on Saturday; increase the number of angle parks; and provide Park'n Ride facilities which connected to public bus shuttles for CBD workers to get to work.

Russelle Knapp - Submission 248

Ms Knapp noted that the 10 Year Plan had a strategy for sustainability and a plan for a compact city centre with high rise apartments but that this had not been successful as retailers were increasingly closing, access for motorists into the city centre was very difficult with carparks disappearing, bollards appearing, angle parking at acute angles that were difficult to use, and shared spaces with pedestrians crossing in front of cars. She stated the Council could not override or operate against the District Plan to encourage cars back into the city and read out the District Plan Objective 7.2.5 which stated Hamilton CBD would be a pedestrian and bike friendly city and encouraged the removal of unnecessary traffic from the city.

Frankie Letford - Submission 78

Mrs Letford submitted that the CBD no longer had leisure shopping or shops attractive to foot traffic. She suggested that Hamilton City Council (HCC) needed planners with imagination to work with developers to improve the streetscape. She suggested that walls in CBD streets should be removed to make the streets welcoming, seating provided for sunny places, provide flower plantings, install proper verandahs for weather protection, and to cluster shops in Bryce Street and Barton Street and then open into Ward Street and Worley Place with small affordable art and boutique shopping spaces, excellent cafes, and no chain stores.

Pat Gregory - Submission 307

Mrs Gregory supported the retention of parking meters because of the income they provided and opposed any rate payer funding as unfair and undemocratic. She stated \$26 a year for free parking was unaffordable for many rate-payers. She said there was adequate provision of carpark buildings which allowed parking for longer periods and a free shuttle bus was also provided. If the Council did go ahead with free parking that it should be limited to 30 minutes. She supported the improved parking technology if there was no cost to rate-payers.

**Bill McMaster - Submission 441
(Waikato Regional Council)**

Mr McMaster represented the Waikato Regional Council (WRC) and introduced himself as the Team Leader of Transport Planning at WRC. He asked for apologies to be noted from Crs Russ Rimmington and Bob Simcock who were unable to attend the hearing.

He noted that the WRC Transport Policy and Strategy Committee had approved the staff submission. Mr McMaster outlined the following key points: WRC support Option 1 for free parking for two hours between 8am-8pm and that if there any impacts from the free parking on public transport that should be addressed through Access Hamilton Strategy review, the review of the Regional Public Transport Plan and the Regional Land Transport Plan. It was important that any changes from the introduction of the free parking, such as less patronage of public transport, were monitored and evaluated.

The meeting adjourned from 10.50am- 11.05am.

Samantha Rose - Submission 105

Ms Rose opposed the free parking proposal. She said the issue of free parking had raised awareness of how to support economic development – in all parts of Hamilton. Free parking involved costs for monitoring and so on and she supported other options such as public transport and decentralised business development. She raised concerns about the level of traffic congestion in the city centre and supported public transport. She asked for bike racks on buses so people could cycle to their bus stops if they were some distance from their homes and for Park'n Ride sites close to the Transport Centre to encourage use of buses to Auckland.

Roger Stratford - Submission 132

Mr Stratford opposed the free parking proposal. He asked for the buses to be subsidised to allow inner-city dwellers to access the Base and Chartwell. He explained that buskers and beggars would benefit from increased foot traffic in the CBD but would not contribute to any of the costs.

**Aaron Wong - Submission 404
(Generation Zero (GZ))**

Mr Wong spoke about the Generation Zero online survey (173 respondents) and stated that 95% of respondents opposed the free parking proposal. Mr Wong said they would prefer the proposal to be considered as part of the 10 Year Plan. He said it was preferred that investment went into walking, biking and buses. One of the findings from the survey were concerns that free car parking would increase traffic congestion and would not create a city destination. There was strong support for better parking technology and for demand dependent pricing. Concern was expressed that the proposal would not be easily reversed if actioned.

Mr Wong said that feedback was also received on the Annual Plan and there was support to revitalise the inner city through increasing housing density. People of his generation would want to live in the CBD where they were close to work, education and social amenities. The suggestion of a Garden Place carpark was strongly opposed and there was support for the River Plan and the Central City Transformation Plan (CCTP).

Mr Wong suggested it would be useful to have a comprehensive conversation around the issues of free parking, more parking and how to we use that parking - for instance, how much demand existed for short term or long term parking? He suggested that the Parking Taskforce needed to be the "city centre access taskforce" and that proposed actions needed to be well coordinated and considered.

Geoff Kreegher - Submission 276

Mr Kreegher spoke in opposition to the free parking proposal because this limited freedom of choice. The free parking proposal meant those who chose not to shop in CBD, or who could not access CBD or did not drive had no choice about paying the rates funding. He said the proposal conflicted with the District Plan, the 10 Year Plan and the CCTP, undermined the spirit of these plans, and opposed the Parking Management Plan and the Active Travel Action Plan which focus on walking, biking and using public transport. Mr Kreegher stated the parking proposal conflicted with the rates certainty statements in the 10 Year Plan. He supported user-pays for parking. He stated that if free parking was the answer to revitalising the city centre then CBD businesses would have already implemented it and they should fund it, rather than ratepayers. He said that the cities of Lower Hutt, New Plymouth, Rotorua and Porirua have tried free parking and it was a failure.

John Lawson - Submission 163

Mr Lawson would support this proposal going to the 10 Year Plan with a comprehensive look at options such as what the CBD offered. He stated only 2% of Hamilton residents used bus services to travel to work and these services could be extended to attract more users. He noted, as mentioned in a New Zealand Transport Agency report which outlined the benefits of investing in cycling, that the number and travel time of cyclists was usually overestimated. In addition, businesses overestimated the contribution of carparks to their business, and that travel by bicycle can be faster than by car in some areas. Mr Lawson suggested there were initiatives that could be considered such as road charging and the pedestrianisation of the CBD at weekends.

Mike McFall - Submission 389

Mr McFall spoke to the Annual Plan and suggested there could be a change for calculating rates when a house was sold so that the dollar difference between the purchase price and the sale price was included in the rateable value of the property. This rates extension mechanism could dampen the housing market and provide more revenue for Council for growth. He said that city amenity was maintained through many regulations but nothing was in place to manage housing prices. He said he did not support the parking proposal in the current form.

The meeting adjourned from 12.18pm- 12.25pm.

Allen Young - Submission 129

Mr Young opposed the parking proposal because it was unfair and it did not benefit the majority of ratepayers. He asked why it was Council's responsibility to subsidise CBD businesses when businesses at Chartwell and the Base had to pay for the customers' free parking. He said the Council was responsible for essential services and to serve the interests of all constituents. He supported the number plate recognition technology.

**Malcolm Barrett - Submission 440
(GBG Management Trust)**

Mr Barrett said he worked for GBG Management Trust which was responsible for four office towers in Hamilton CBD of around 33,000 square metres and included the Farmers Building and the KPMG tower. He said he did not support the parking proposal if funded by businesses but did not oppose two hour free parking otherwise. Mr Barrett outlined the costs of building or replacing carpark buildings such as those in the CBD and said that it was no longer economical as the costs of construction could not be covered by rentals. He also said that with the increasing number of office workers in the CBD renting carpark spaces in the Farmers and Knox carparking buildings, it could be possible there would no longer be carparks available for public use.

**Roger Hennebry - Submission 339
(Grey Power)**

Mr Hennebry explained that this submission was collated by Grey Power's committee with input from members collected over several meetings. Grey Power did not support free parking but may support a free trial with different hours and paid for by the businesses. Grey Power supported a trial for shops to open later to cater for inner-city workers as this could provide additional business for the CBD. With reference to other issues in Annual Plan, Grey Power believed community leases were an issue; agreed with targeted rates; and wanted a hold put on other projects that cost ratepayers money. Grey Power supported the concept of an Age-Friendly city but stated there was nothing in the policy for older persons' housing. Mr Hennebry noted that many of the Grey Power members were very stressed over rate increases as they were on fixed incomes.

The meeting adjourned for lunch from 13.23-2.00pm.

Deborah Fisher - Submission 350

Mrs Fisher said the two hour free parking proposal did not compare to free parking at the Base and Chartwell which had free parking 24/7. She made the following points: that office workers found it expensive to pay for off-street parking and the proposal penalised them as they would be paying rates for free parking which they were unable to use during the work week; the limit of two hours per car penalised families with one car but had family members who needed to go into the city at different times; that people who needed more than two hours parking would not come into the CBD; and that fines and penalties would still occur and should not be factored into costs of the proposal. She pointed out there were four other targeted rates and would prefer a choice in which ones to pay.

**Sonya Fursden - Submission 362
(Waikato Environment Centre (WEC))**

Ms Fursden said that the Waikato Environment Centre was opposed to the free parking proposal as this would contribute to the use of motor vehicles and the production of greenhouse gases which contribute to climate change. It was thought that people who paid rates for parking would be encouraged to use the car rather than biking or using public transport. WEC stated the proposal contradicted Council's Sustainability Principles which were signed in 2016 to promote walking, biking, buses and low carbon emissions. She pointed out sustainability was also about economic and social impacts, and that while the loss of revenue was negative for council, the proposed targeted rates across whole city would affect all ratepayers. The increased vehicle use would create more air pollution and increase health costs through exposure to this pollution. WEC believed more traffic congestion made the roads less safe for cycling. WEC encouraged Council to follow its own sustainability principles and to drop the plan.

Tina Boyd - Submission 364

Ms Boyd was making a submission in her role as the Chartwell Shopping Mall manager on behalf of the centre owner and was opposed to the parking proposal. She stated Chartwell shopping centre made a significant economic contribution to the community and provided 195 carparks. The centre was also required to provide for staff parking, for security and for maintenance. If the proposal was approved, Chartwell would be required to pay additional rates which will only benefit retailers in the CBD. If this proposal was approved Chartwell asked for an exemption from paying such rates.

Peter H. Bos - Submission 403

Mr Bos spoke about traffic fatalities and how that related to the Annual Plan and the Access Hamilton Strategy. He stated that the Hamilton City Council's Health and Safety Policy was very strong and asked the Council to commit to zero traffic deaths in the Waikato. He stated this target was achievable as it had been achieved in the past. He pointed out that there had been seven traffic deaths in the CBD in the last six years.

Thomas Gibbons - Submission 449

(Property Council New Zealand: Waikato Branch)

Mr Gibbons outlined the six key principles the Property Council had put forward as part of their submission:

- Hamilton City Council being more of an enabler;
- Implementing a CBD master plan;
- an empowered Urban Design Panel;
- provision of better research and data which would tie in with better technologies;
- the establishment of a CBD Board; and
- the establishment of an Economic Development Agency.

Mr Gibbons noted that if there was a CBD Board it would help facilitate flexibility concerning innovation and ideas for improving the CBD in general. It could also help constrain rate increases and could support sustainable development options. He pointed out that the issues were broader than parking. These issues included how Hamilton taxed development, how sustainable this was and how best to manage growth. He considered these issues were important and needed to be looked at in conjunction with parking issues. He agreed that the Parking Taskforce was useful to have but believed Hamilton CBD needed strategic momentum, with the contribution of different voices, a balance in representation and the ability to make decisions rather than revisiting issues.

5. Submission Analysis for Annual Plan and Parking Proposal

The Programme Manager Strategy took the report as read and noted the following points raised by Elected Members in relation to further information needed prior to future deliberations:

- Submission numbers that referred to the CCTP and to the link between the parking proposal and CBD revitalisation;
- Further information regarding the alignment of the parking proposal to the District Plan;
- Further information regarding the outcomes of free parking in other towns (Rotorua, New Plymouth, Porirua and Lower Hutt);
- The New Zealand Transport Agency's report on overestimating carparks and other transport issues to be circulated to Elected Members and issues raised to be considered by staff;
- Examples of potential rate increases for a range of ratepayers across the city, including those paying more or less than \$26;
- A summary of the issues the Taskforce considered;
- Further clarification on the ongoing costs for the proposal;
- Further information on how the parking proposal relates to the Demand Management Plan;
- Further information concerning council investment in the CBD in comparison to other shopping precincts; and
- Further information concerning the link between a capital rates system and its effect on development in the city.

Resolved: (Crs O'Leary/Tooman)

That the report be received.

The meeting was declared closed at 15.25pm.