

COMMUTER CAR PARKING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation:

Name: PeopleTrans

Position:

Date Received: 4 August 2017

Our Ref: 18S130

04 August 2017

Committee on Transport and Infrastructure
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: The Chair

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Parliamentary Inquiry into Commuter Car Parking in NSW – PeopleTrans Submission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to this inquiry.

This is an area of particular interest to PeopleTrans due to our extensive work in parking policy, planning & design across both Local and State Government sectors in New South Wales (NSW).

Although this inquiry specifically calls for advice around commuter car parking policy and process, PeopleTrans has, for a long time, been of the view that Sydney needs a **metropolitan wide parking plan** which provides an overall framework, principles and guidance on parking policy and processes for all practitioners.

Although there are good examples of parking plans in Sydney (i.e. Willoughby City Council & City of Sydney¹) these are LGA specific and have been guided by internal expertise which is not always consistent with wider NSW parking policy and its intent.

A metropolitan wide parking plan, we believe, should be the starting point with areas like "Commuter Car Parking" policy defined within this plan.

However, with respect to the direct terms of reference our responses are provided further within this letter noting that we have attempted, where possible, to provide constructive feedback in order to assist with developing a more clearly defined policy position in this area.

¹ Links to Willoughby City Council & City of Sydney parking strategies are as follows:

<http://edocs.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/DocumentViewer.ashx?dsi=4437369>

http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/155730/Central-Sydney-On-Street-Parking-Policy.PDF

1.1 NSW Parliamentary Inquiry Terms of Reference – PeopleTrans Response

1.1.1 The effectiveness of current state government policies and programs covering commuter car parking.

Policy

As a very first comment and as we understand it, there does not appear to be one single source of reference for defining what the current NSW commuter car parking or even general parking policy is.

We were not able to easily locate this on NSW government websites or elsewhere on-line which in itself is not helpful. It also appears that the parking policy has a "one policy fits all" approach which is not always realistic or easy to apply.

Our understanding of the current NSW commuter car parking policy is therefore based primarily on our practical experience in this field as follows:

♦ **Commuter Car Park Funding**

Currently, commuter car parking is funded through the parking space levy (PSL), a tax on private off-street commercial and office parking spaces in specific CBD locations. The PSL was introduced with an aim to discouraging car use or encouraging public transport & active transport for journey to work trips within commercial centres. This policy seems to provide appropriate levels of funding for commuter car parking facilities across NSW which is a positive outcome.

♦ **Provided at "No Charge" to the user.**

The aims of the PSL seem to be contradictory when viewed in the context of commuter car parking which is provided free of charge and more often than not is still located within other commercial centres thus encouraging people to drive to these locations.

If the policy aim was consistent there would also be a charge applied to commuter car parking with a possible subsidy or exemption if you were genuinely using public transport to travel to work².

Funds received from this parking could also be used to provide public transport or active travel links within the 10-15-minute walking catchment of the transport node.

♦ **Restrictions on local government changing parking restrictions within 1km radius of a train station.**

This ancillary policy restricts local government from converting existing on-street unrestricted car parking within 1km of all transport nodes (Including railway stations & major bus stops) to short term

² Often commuter car parking is used by staff working within the commercial centre.

shopper parking which would diminish the total available commuter parking spaces provided. In the context of the viability of a town centre short term on-street car parking is far more valuable than long term on-street car parking which provides limited value to the town centre. (i.e. drive in, park all day, drive out).

Programs

The Transport Access Program (TAP) in more recent years has been highly effective in delivering commuter car parking across NSW. The level of in-house engineering & project management expertise and delivery models and processes developed for this type of work were thorough and effective. This program was diminished slightly during a recent TfNSW restructure with a much higher focus placed on the more major NSW infrastructure projects like Light Rail, West/North Connex, Metro North West and City & South West Metro, etc.) and delivery models which transfer asset risk to external contractors.

Commuter car parking does still have an important role to play in Transport Planning, particularly in locations where there is limited public transport to access the Transport node (station or bus stop) and as such this program should be given an opportunity to grow.

1.1.2 Processes for selecting the location of commuter car parks.

The current processes and decisions for determining the locations of commuter car parking, in our experience, are often reactive to community demands which are then advanced further by local politicians. This is not how the location of future commuter car parking should be determined in NSW but is sometimes the reality.

The location of future commuter car parking in NSW, in our opinion, should be determined through a transport planning process considering each location and its specific set of circumstances. The size of the transport node, frequency & type of services available, the geographic context and the availability of or opportunity to provide further feeder transport services to and from it are all important factors in determining the need and location of commuter car parking.

A case in point where PeopleTrans had a direct involvement in determining the future need and location for commuter car parking was Gordon Station on the North Shore Railway Line. The location and quantum of future commuter car parking spaces was informed by future development LEP growth estimates, current TPA journey to work mode split data, current & future station patronage data, local car parking supply and demand surveys and local parking interview surveys.

This location is also one that benefits the suburb of St Ives and other nearby suburbs which do not have easy and close access to a railway line and therefore people from these suburbs rely on driving and parking at Gordon Station to catch the train to the Sydney CBD where the trains are frequent and fast.

Unfortunately, in the case of Gordon the land availability has limited the amount of commuter car parking that could be provided to adequately meet future demand should all development in Gordon as per the LEP be realised over the next 20 years. This parking is also not dedicated specifically to public transport users/commuters and the of it by local workers and others diminish its effectiveness.

Although this item relates specifically to the processes for selecting the location of commuter car parking it should be noted that determining the future number of commuter car parking spaces required is equally as important and these two aspects of commuter car parking should be linked as part of any assessment.

1.1.3 The potential for restricted access or user pays commuter car parks.

As noted in 1.1.1 the current free and unrestricted nature of NSW commuter car parking policy doesn't distinguish between genuine commuter parkers who use public transport on their journey to work and other parkers who park there for other purposes (i.e. work).

One simple change to this policy which has merit would be to restrict access to non-commuters by installing car parking infrastructure linked to the current opal cards where parking is provided at a subsidised fee to those with opal cards with other parkers charged at full rates. This wouldn't be a significant undertaking and from our knowledge of the newly built commuter car parks they have already been retrofitted with electrical supply/capability to cater for a physically controlled access.

The current "free commuter car parking" policy in situations where there are adequate alternative transport modes simply encourage a lazy mentality where your first thought when leaving for work is "where are my car keys". It also encourages a mentality that when the commuter car parking is full that there is a clear right to ask that further free commuter car parking be provided by the government. This is not a sustainable policy and is one which reinforces free parking as a right rather than a privilege.

The basis of a free parking policy for commuters is meant to encourage people to drive to the station/transport node and catch the train therefore reducing people driving directly and over longer distances to their end destination. In certain situations, this can work but in the large majority of cases the free nature of commuter car parking creates a range of other issues.

London & Paris provide good examples of commuter and other parking policy initiatives where parking is priced in order to achieve an eventual outcome. In London parking at rail stations is charged at various rates for the whole day or part thereof (i.e. Surbiton Station charges a 24hr day rate equivalent to approximately \$20³) which encourage users/residents to access the railway station either on foot, by bike or by bus.

In Paris, some private car parks charge residents and retailers a monthly fee for permits but then provide a 40% reduction in the monthly fee if the car is driven less than 5 times per month. This encourages people to only drive their car when they really need to⁴.

³ http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations/SUR.aspx

⁴ <http://valgirardin.fr/mon-quartier/dupleix-motte-picquet/inauguration-du-parking-fremicourt/>

1.1.4 Consideration of alternative modes of first mile/last mile travel, including point to point transport, active transport and on demand buses.

Consideration should be given to these initiatives in the context of a paid commuter parking policy where the parking fees collected should be used to improve the sustainable transport links to and from the end to end transport node which should focus on the whole journey approach from door to door.

Wayfinding/signed walking routes, bike hire schemes, car share schemes and community bus services all have a role to play around encouraging the first/last 800m to be undertaken by sustainable modes.

At present car share schemes (e.g. Go-Get) are either restricted from the use of commuter car parks are not afforded incentives or general provision to use them. The significance of this is likely to translate into more people driving for the entire length of a trip instead of, for example, taking a train and then hiring a Go-Get car for the remainder of the trip that may be too far to walk or to an area that is not well serviced by public transport.

1.1.5 Any other related matters.

In simple terms the general premise of providing parking, especially free parking, encourages more driving. This in turn increases the need to build more road infrastructure which then increases the pressure for more parking. This applies to both commuter parking as well as parking provided for most general land uses.

Indeed parking areas are costly to build and take up a significant proportions of land area in urban environments, which could otherwise be used for community spaces or the provision of active transport and public transport services or facilities.

Recent research suggests that more liveable cities are those with an equitable amount of on-street parking to allow people to engage with the immediate street environments, and at the same time significantly reduce prominent off-street parking areas.

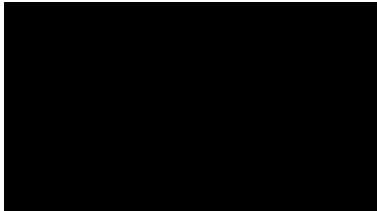
A metropolitan parking plan would be an ideal way to initiate change in large cities such as Sydney. To increase its reach further a set of guiding principles should be developed for other areas such as country regional cities recognising the different needs in those areas.

We hope that the above information is helpful with this inquiry and look forward to seeing what becomes of it.

Should we be able to assist further, please contact us on (02) 8226 8760.

Yours sincerely

PeopleTrans



Alan Stewart
Director

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1. PeopleTrans Corporate Profile



PeopleTrans

“Improving the quality
of people's lives through
excellence in Transport
Planning & Engineering.”

people • passion • perseverance

people**trans**



ABOUT US

PeopleTrans was established in Sydney, Australia in 2012 and is a dynamic, privately owned, next generation professional services consultancy. We specialise in traffic engineering and transport planning and provide transport strategy, policy, planning and engineering advice across the development and government sectors.

Our aim is to improve the quality of people's lives through excellence in transport planning and engineering. We have a strong philosophy of focussing on the end user at the outset of a project and relating that to their transport requirements. This, we think, sets us apart from other traditional traffic engineers and transport planners.

We believe that PeopleTrans employees will become the next generation of respected transport planners and engineers in Australia and in other parts of the world. We look to employ people who are young enough to incorporate the latest technology helping the business to keep pace with future changes in the world, but also people who have enough experience to deliver robust and reliable advice to our clients.

We value people with overseas experience and encourage our people to explore opportunities to learn from and work overseas. Where possible we seek what works best from around the world and apply it to our projects. We are continually looking beyond local examples to provide the best possible outcome for our projects.

Our people are passionate about Transport and will persevere to achieve the best outcome for your next project.



We want our project outcomes to enrich **people's** lives.

We are **passionate** about Transport and this is reflected in the work we produce and the staff who deliver it.

We will **persevere** to achieve the best Transport outcomes required of our many clients.

OUR PEOPLE

- Our people are local and know New South Wales and Victoria
- Our people are experienced specialists. Where we do not have the capability in-house we have well established alliances to bring the skill sets required.
- Our people know who to talk to within the various Government and other stakeholder agencies
- Our people take pride in the quality of their work which is tailored to the needs of our clients.

OUR EXPERTISE

- Land Use Assessment – Transport Impact Assessment/ Development Approvals, Expert Witness, Peer Reviews, Green Travel Plans (Stand-Alone Sites, Sub-Divisions, Town Centre Masterplans, etc.)
- Bus Planning – Bus Priority, Bus Operations, Bus Network Assessments
- Transport Interchange Planning – Scoping and Preliminary Design
- Active Travel Planning – Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning and Design
- Research and Innovation – GIS, Modelling, Pilot Studies, Training
- International approach

CONTACT US

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