City of Melville
Car Parking Strategy

Version:	Final
Issue Date:	Adopted by Council 17 June 2014

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1 INTRODUCTION

Car parking is an important land use as most cars are parked for most of the day often across various locations. Car parking affects many aspects of urban life. Parking issues are becoming more evident and are likely to grow in the future unless the City proactively plans for and better manages car parking. This Strategy is based on research, best practice principles and recommendations made in a Car Parking Technical Report provided to the City by consultants at Luxmoore Parking and Safety.

Purpose

The purpose of this Car Parking Strategy (the Strategy) is to provide a strategic framework to guide decision-making on and the management of car parking in the City of Melville (the City).

Strategic Intent

It is more effective, easier and cheaper to better manage parking rather than attempting to satisfy demand for parking facilities.

The bottom line is that the current approach to managing parking can and should be improved.

1.1 Objectives of the Car Parking Strategy

The objectives of this Strategy are to:

1. Recognise that car parking is an integral part of the transportation system rather than a separate issue;
2. Focus on people access not private vehicle access;
3. Understand that it is more effective, easier and cheaper to better manage car parking rather than attempting to satisfy parking demand;
4. Promote shared or publicly available parking in preference to single user parking;
5. Acknowledge that car parking is never “free” and is actually very expensive to provide;
6. Update car parking standards to align with town planning and transport strategies and objectives;
7. Determine an appropriate cash in lieu of car parking contribution and allow flexibility in how the resulting funds are best spent
8. Improve walking, cycling and public transport access to high activity centres and areas

1.2 Current Car Parking Issues

The traditional approach to car parking has been that motorists should nearly always be able to easily find convenient, free parking at every destination. Under this ‘predict and provide’ approach, parking planning has been based on the premise that a ‘parking problem’ means ‘inadequate supply’.

However, this approach drives new demands for more convenient, free parking at every destination. The City will not be able to provide “enough” free parking to satisfy insatiable demand, particularly given how expensive it is to provide car parking areas (further discussed below).

Current car parking issues can broadly be categorised in terms of supply or management:

- **Parking supply issues** are centred on the perception that too few parking spaces are available and the expectation that a public or private organisation must provide more parking spaces to meet maximum demand.
- **Parking management issues** relate to the existing parking facilities not being used efficiently nor effectively.

Research and data indicates that parking issues and complaints in City are predominantly management rather than supply related.

Parking is an essential element of the overall transportation system and not a stand-alone service. Parking issues therefore cannot be dealt with in isolation from the broader issues of car use and sustainable transport.

This Strategy recognises that if no action is taken to better manage parking resources and issues, drivers will continue to expect they have a right to unlimited free parking and consequently, more and more parking will be demanded. This approach cannot be sustained economically or environmentally and will constrain the development potential of major activity centres in the City.

1.3 Car Parking is Expensive to Provide

Car parking is commonly perceived to be "free" as motorists don't usually need to pay a direct cost to park their car. However, car parking is never free as governments or businesses must pay for the cost of providing and maintaining car parks as well as absorbing the opportunity costs for the land required to provide parking.

The direct costs of parking are included in everyday expenses such as higher development costs, higher consumer prices and/or high taxes and rates. These higher prices subsidise car parking and encourage higher parking demand. They also mean that people who don't drive subsidise people who do drive.

Table 1: Estimated Costs to Provide Car Parking in City of Melville Activity Centres

Type of parking	Land per bay	Land cost per m^2 - $2,000	Floor area per bay	Construction cost per bay	Estimated total cost per bay
On-street surface	15m²	$0	N/A	$3,500	**$3,500**
Off-street surface	35 m^2	$70,000	35 m^2	$3,500	**$73,500**
Deck – 2 level	16 m^2	$32,000	32 m^2	$31,000	**$63,000**
Deck – 4 level	8 m^2	$16,000	32 m^2	$34,000	**$50,000**
Basement – 2 level	8 m^2	$16,000	32 m^2	$44,000	**$60,000**

Source: Luxmoore Parking and Safety 2013

It is more effective, easier and cheaper to better manage use of car parking facilities rather than attempting to satisfy parking demand by providing more car parking.

1.4 Key Issues Driving Change and Guiding Principles

There are a broad range of issues driving the need to improve the approach to how car parking is thought about and managed by local governments. These issues include economic, amenity, transport, environmental, social and community feedback.

The key issues driving changes and proposed guiding principles for action are summarised below.

Table 2: Key Issues Driving Changes to Management of Car Parking and Guiding Principles

Key Issues Driving Changes	Guiding Principles
1. Traffic congestion is a rising concern 2. Physical health issues are increasing 3. Environmental issues need to be better addressed 4. The availability of car parking is a frequently mentioned problem for the community 5. Providing more car parking is seen as the answer to car parking problems (demand satisfaction) 6. Parking areas are not currently being appropriately managed 7. Car parking issues are most commonly identified in activity centres, where the City is encouraging more development 8. Car parking is very expensive to provide, but perceived to be "free" 9. The current car parking ratios treat activity centres and suburban areas the same way, even though they are very different environments 10. The City's current cash in lieu of car parking approach can be improved 11. There is a lack of accurate information and data on the supply and use of existing parking areas	1. Car parking is an integral part of the transportation system. Parking needs to be addressed in conjunction with other transport and access issues. 2. Focus on people access not vehicle access. 3. Car parking is never free. In fact, it is expensive to provide parking. 4. It is more effective, easier and cheaper to better manage car parking rather than attempting to satisfy parking demand. 5. A 'User Pays' approach to car parking is fairer, less expensive and will help encourage more sustainable transport choices. 6. The "right" amount of car parking for a particular area depends on many factors, such as the local context, the vision for an area, the density of development and surrounding land uses, accessibility for pedestrians and alternative transport options available (such as public transport or cycling). 7. An appropriate balance needs to be found. Too much car parking can be as detrimental as too little car parking 8. Shared public car parking is more efficient and cost-effective compared with small exclusive car parking areas provided on each lot. 9. Car parking standards should reflect where and how car parking is provided: a. Less on-site car parking is required: i. In activity centres or close to high frequency public transport routes; ii. Where car parking areas are shared (i.e. available to all users). b. A higher level of on-site car parking provision is required: i. Outside activity centres or away from high frequency public transport routes; ii. Where the use of the bays is exclusive or reserved for particular parking users.

Key Issues Driving Changes	Guiding Principles
	10. On-street car parking is much cheaper to provide than off-street parking, helps slows traffic speeds and better protects pedestrians from passing vehicles. 11. Accurate information and data on car parking can help inform car parking management and decision-making 12. Car parking management can and should be improved in the City of Melville

The proposed guiding principles noted above will help inform and guide future decision-making on car parking issues and future detailed parking management plans.

2 BETTER MANAGEMENT OF CAR PARKING

It is evident that there are many issues with the current approach to managing car parking. The current situation satisfies no parties (Council, City staff, residents, businesses, visitors nor developers).

Taking no action will exacerbate existing issues and cause the following problems:

- Discourage investment and redevelopment in activity centres and where land values are high. This would contradict the strategic direction provided by the City's Local Planning Strategy and the various activity centre structure plans
- Encourage commercial development in suburban locations, where land values are lower and development sites are often larger
- Cause more frustration and complaints from residents, motorists and local businesses
- Not address one of the main causes of traffic congestion (the provision of subsidised car parking)
- Result in a potential oversupply of car parking in some areas. This would affect streetscapes, character, pedestrian safety and amenity and encourage unacceptable levels of traffic
- Discourage the use of alternative modes of transport
- Restrict investment in areas where accessibility is poor
- Not address existing and likely future issues

The increasing use of public transport services may generate more park and ride and spillover parking, particularly around Canning Bridge, Bull Creek and Murdoch train stations and potentially along Canning Highway.

If no action is taken to better manage parking resources, this will reinforce the expectation by drivers that they have a right to unlimited free parking and consequently, more and more parking will demanded from the City, businesses and developers. This is a lose-lose situation for all parties.

2.1 Managing Car Parking in Activity Centres

Local government parking regulations usually specify minimum parking standards for particular land uses. But minimum on-site parking standards can:

- Significantly increase development costs
- Result in fragmented parking supplies (small, disconnected, hard to find parking areas);
- Ignore the high land costs. They were devised when land was much cheaper
- Subsidise driving, creating additional demand for more parking

The net effect of free or subsidised parking is reduced urban density, increased urban sprawl, high rates of vehicle ownership and use, more expensive goods and services as well as increased traffic congestion, air pollution and noise.

Parking standards in Western Australia are based on interstate and overseas benchmarks or studies, such as the New South Wales (NSW) Road Traffic Authority's '*Guide to Traffic Generating Developments'*, as no detailed local studies have been completed. The NSW parking guidelines advise that parking:

"rates are based on surveys conducted in areas where new residential subdivisions are being built. Public transport accessibility in such areas is often limited".

The NSW standards are based on a particular context and style of development which may not be appropriate for other contexts – such as activity centres. The City's current car parking ratios treat activity centres and suburban areas the same way, even though they are very different environments.

Less on-site car parking is generally required for developments within activity centres or close to high frequency public transport routes. These areas usually have better public transport, cycling or walking options available and have a greater mix of land uses so that a number of tasks can be combined into one trip (reducing the need for multiple vehicle trips). Activity centres have a different character to suburban commercial areas, based on shops built up to the street, a greater focus on pedestrians and car parking positioned at the rear of a site.

It is therefore recommended that the City review its current car parking standards to ensure they reflect the desired character and amenity of an area, available transport options and current and future mix of land uses.

2.2 On-Street Versus Off-Street Car Parking

It is significantly cheaper to provide on-street car parking compared with off-street car parking as there are no land costs and construction costs are minimal. These respective estimated costs are shown in Table 1.

Each on-street car bay is estimated to be between $46,500 and $70,000 cheaper per car bay compared with providing a new off-street car bay. So the City could provide between 14 and 21 on-street car bays for the same price as one off-street car bay.

On-street car parking also provides other benefits, such as:

- More efficient use of land
- Reduces development costs, particularly where land values are high such as in activity centres
- Reducing vehicle speeds through so-called 'edge friction'. Safety for vehicles can actually be increased when motorists perceive the driving risks to be higher than what the risks actually are (such as in busy town centres where there is a lot of activity)
- Provides a solid barrier between pedestrians and passing traffic

It may not be possible to provide on-street parking in every context, but where it is possible, on-street parking should be prioritised.

2.3 Cash in Lieu of Providing Off-Street Car Parking

Cash in lieu of car parking refers to a payment made “in lieu” of providing the minimum number of on-site car parking spaces specified in a parking policy. Local governments can use the funds generated from cash in lieu payments to construct additional shared public parking for a particular area or fund Travelsmart initiatives, new footpaths, cycling infrastructure, improved public transport or other appropriate community benefits.

The City’s current cash in lieu of car parking approach is often not financially viable nor realistic for applicants. It requires the full cost recovery of providing land for a new car bay plus construction costs. It is also calculated based on high, inappropriate parking ratios to begin with. This means that it is often not economically feasible for applicants to pay the required amounts. Cash in lieu of parking is consequently not being applied appropriately through the development application process.

For example, the upfront cash in lieu of parking payment required may be well in excess of the total cost of the whole development in some cases (particularly for change of use applications). This highlights again that car parking is never free. Someone has to pay the high costs of providing parking, which is inevitably passed on to end users (the community) whether they use the parking or not. The people who don’t drive, but pay the same prices as motorists, effectively subsidise people who do drive.

A more effective and efficient cash in lieu of parking approach is required, including a review of the existing on-site parking requirements (discussed in Section 2.1). It is recommended that cash in lieu of car parking contributions be based on three variables:

1. The full cost of providing a new car bay in a multi-deck car park (which is $50,000 as shown in Table 1);
2. The shortfall in the number of on-site car bays proposed in the application; and
3. An applicable percentage as determined by the City, which is recommended to be 20%.

   This approach recognises that the additional parking to be funded from cash in lieu contributions or the other community benefits will be shared by all users rather than just being reserved exclusively for the payer of the cash in lieu contribution. It is therefore fair that the contributor pay a proportion of the total cost rather than the total cost.

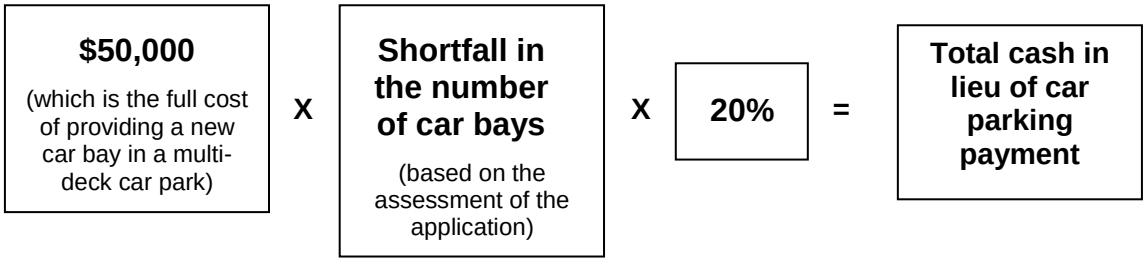
   This approach also recognises that the most appropriate community benefits may not be a new multi-deck car park (which would cost $50,000 per car bay as per Table 1). The greatest benefits may be providing new on-street car parking bays (14 on-street car bays would cost the same as one off-street car bay), improved footpaths or a Travelsmart program, which are all considerably cheaper to provide and potentially more effective.

   Requiring full cost recovery would constrain development in activity centres, require expensive investments by the City in large new car parks to justify the contributions required and may not provide the most appropriate benefits for the place or the community.

   It is considered appropriate, fair and realistic to require 20% of the parking shortfall to apply given the shared community benefits to be provided from the cash in lieu contribution. For example, one new shared car bay funded by a cash in lieu contribution may be used by customers of five or more different businesses throughout the course of a day. If customers of five or more businesses used the particular bay, it would imply that a contribution of up to 20% of the cost of the bay would be fair and appropriate.

   The 20% figure provides a balance between raising sufficient funding to provide community benefits and what may be considered realistic and fair from an applicant’s perspective.

The total cash in lieu of car parking contribution for a particular application is recommended to be determined using the following formula:



This would effectively mean that the following requirement would apply:

$50,000 per car bay x 20% of the on-site car parking shortfall = $10,000 per car bay

The recommended formula and method makes it clear that applicants are receiving a dispensation on the full cost of providing additional parking or community benefit, and also allows the City to vary contribution levels if required. Once properly implemented, the City should consistently apply the recommended cash in lieu of parking approach.

Revenue raised through cash in lieu should be paid in to separate geographic accounts, so that the money raised in a particular area is spent on providing community benefits in that area. This is consistent with the Western Australian Planning Commission's Developer Contribution Policy and the principles of "need" and "nexus" for levying of developer contributions. It would not be appropriate to levy cash in lieu of parking funds in one area and spend it in a distant location.

2.4 Parking as a Revenue Source Rather than a Cost Centre

Introducing direct costs for car parking users is one of the most effective ways of influencing parking demand, alternative transport choices and traffic congestion. There is clear evidence that pay parking reduces demand for parking by single-user vehicles and increases cycling, walking and public transport use.

As pay parking generally results in reductions in car use and traffic congestion among other environmental benefits, it is one of the essential transport measures necessary to ensure the long-term viability of the City's activity centres.

Pay parking increases social equity by charging users (user pays) for their parking costs and by reducing the parking costs imposed on non-drivers. At public workshops undertaken in the Perth metropolitan area in the past 2 years, most attendees indicated expansion of pay parking areas as an acceptable method of management of scarce parking facilities.

A 'user pays' approach to car parking is fairer, less expensive and will help encourage more sustainable transport choices. The City's ratepayers are predominantly paying for any free parking provided, regardless of whether they utilise it. A 'user pays' system is considered a more equitable arrangement, similar to the user pays system for public transport.

The introduction of pay parking is a large potential future revenue source for the City, as demonstrated in other local government areas. Rather than being a cost, effective parking management can provide an ongoing revenue source for the City.

The introduction of pay parking in particular locations should be investigated as part of detailed Parking Management Plans. It is important that pay parking be introduced strategically as simply imposing parking fees may shift problems elsewhere and cause unintended parking pressures on suburban residential streets for example.

The implementation of parking fees and restrictions should not be perceived primarily as a revenue raiser for the City. The principal benefit provided is better control and management of car parking. Money raised should be given back to the community to improve access with the provision of additional services in the area where the funds were raised, including the implementation of public transport initiatives and improvement of the City's footpaths and cycleways. Parking could become a revenue source rather than being a indirect cost to the City's ratepayers.

2.5 Resourcing Car Parking Management

It is more effective, easier and cheaper to better manage car parking demand rather than attempting to satisfy parking demand.

Research and data indicates that the current car parking issues and complaints in City are predominantly parking management rather than parking supply related. Sufficient resources should be allocated to managing car parking if the issues are to be addressed.

In particular, parking enforcement should be appropriately resourced. Finding a parking space is regarded as an inconvenience, and drivers expect to find a space close to their destination. Human nature is such that users will seek to avoid complying with parking regulations if they believe they have a reasonable chance of getting away with it. The City's Rangers have many responsibilities other than inspecting compliance with parking restrictions.

A growing number of local governments are allocating additional resources to better managing car parking issues. Better management of parking facilities could provide the City with more revenue through fees and/or fines to fund more resources to better manage parking.

Specified Area Rates and/or Differential Rating could also be implemented in some areas to help fund car parking management and implementation. It could also fund upgrades to streetscapes, improving walking and cycling options and potentially enhanced public transport.

2.6 Benefits of Better Managing Car Parking

The goal of efficient and effective parking management in high demand areas is to optimise the use of available parking facilities. Better managing parking will have multiple benefits for the City, motorists, local businesses and the community as summarised below.

Table 3: Community Benefits of Better Managing Car Parking

Area	Benefits of Better Managing Car Parking
Amenity and streetscapes	• The character, amenity and streetscapes of activity centres is improved by carefully managing the location, design and size of car parking areas
Economic	• Recognition that car parking is never "free" will help drive behaviour changes • Redevelopment and investment is encouraged in appropriate locations • The feasibility and affordability of the use and development of land is improved
Economic	• Direct costs of construction in activity centres is reduced • Changes between appropriate land uses in activity centre is made easier • Existing car parking areas are used more efficiently • The need for more small, inefficient car parking areas on each separate lot is reduced. <u>City of Melville-specific economic benefits</u> • The need for the City to purchase additional land and to construct extra car parking facilities is reduced, which saves the City money • Better management of parking facilities could provide income for more resources to better manage parking facilities (through fees and/or fines)

Area	Benefits of Better Managing Car Parking
	• Future potential charges for car parking could provide the City with significant new ongoing revenue streams • A viable and sustainable cash in lieu of car parking policy would generate additional revenue for the City to improve accessibility
Environmental	• A more sustainable urban form is promoted • Better managing car parking will help encourage more sustainable transport choices • Effective subsidies for driving are reduced, which will help lower vehicle pollution and greenhouse gas emissions
Governance	• The underlying causes of the apparent issues begin to be addressed rather than treating the symptoms • A user pays system is more equitable and reduces the subsides paid by people who do not drive to those that do drive • The Car Parking Strategy will align with the City's Local Planning Strategy and draft Local Planning Scheme No. 6 • Car parking policies and requirements will align with broader strategic goals • Accurate information and data on car parking is used to inform car parking policies, management and decision-making • Regulations are focussed on better outcomes rather than abstract numbers
Social	• Better information and wayfinding makes it easier for drivers to find available car parks • The amenity and vibrancy of activity centres is improved
Transport	• Car parking is acknowledged as an integral part of the transportation system leading to a more holistic approach • Traffic congestion is reduced (more parking = more traffic) • Better wayfinding can reduce vehicles driving around to find available car parking • Access for walking, cycling and public transport is prioritised
Health	• Physical activity is encouraged as it is comparatively easier, more pleasant and cheaper to walk and cycle to/from/around activity centres

There are many benefits provided by more effectively managing car parking issues.

3 PRIORITY ACTIONS TO BETTER MANAGE CAR PARKING

There are a wide variety of actions that could be considered to better manage car parking. It is recognised that this Strategy represents a major cultural change (a paradigm shift). Therefore changes should be made incrementally over time rather than in one step. The following list provides very high priority immediate, short-term, medium term and long term actions, which are recommended to better manage car parking.

Table 4: Recommended Actions to Better Manage Car Parking in the City of Melville

No.	Action	Rationale
Immediate Actions Within Next 12 Months		
1	**Prepare a detailed Parking Management Plan for the Riseley Activity Centre** *Suggested Project Lead:* Strategic Urban Planning	• Parking was identified as a major issue to be addressed by local businesses and the community • The Riseley Centre Structure Plan recommends that a Parking Management Plan be prepared as a high priority to address existing and future parking issues in the centre.
2	**Review Policy No. CP-079 - Car Parking (Non-Residential) and update the required car parking ratios** *Suggested Project Lead:* Urban Planning	• The Car Parking Technical Report identified issues with the existing policy and car parking ratios and recommend this be reviewed • Car parking ratios should encourage shared, publicly available parking, with different standards for exclusive or parking reserved for particular users in activity centres
3	**Review the existing approach to cash in lieu of car parking and update the amounts to be paid to be viable and effective** *Suggested Project Lead:* Urban Planning	• The Car Parking Technical Report identified issues with the existing approach to cash in lieu of providing car parking • A new formula for determining cash in lieu payments is recommended by this Strategy, which is considered to be more viable and effective than the existing approach
4	**Establish separate cash in lieu of car parking accounts for each activity centre** *Suggested Project Lead:* Financial Accounting	• The cash in lieu of car parking amounts raised in a particular centre or area should be spent to improve accessibility or provide community benefits within the vicinity. This provides some tangible benefit to the area subject to the development
5	**Prepare and Implement a Communications and Engagement Plan for the Car Parking Strategy** *Suggested Project Lead:* Strategic Urban Planning	• Once the Strategy has been adopted, it will be important to communicate effectively with stakeholders on what it is, why it is required and the benefits of better managing parking • This may also involve Travelsmart information and initiatives

Short Term Actions Within Next 3 Years		
6	**Provide an accurate count of all private and public car parking bays within each activity centre** *Suggested Project Lead:* Technical Services	• It is difficult to make informed decisions when there is no accurate data on the existing situation. Car parking is fragmented in most activity centres and is not being managed properly • An accurate count of all existing bays would provide important data to help inform decision making and management of parking issues
7	**Survey the use of all private and public car parking bays within each activity centre** *Suggested Project Lead:* Technical Services	• Car bays are used by different users at different times of the day. It is important that accurate information is collected to help inform decision making and management of parking issues • The surveys should be updated every two or three years
8	**Prepare detailed Parking Management Plans for other major activity centres** *Suggested Project Lead:* Internal Project Working Group(s)	• Structure Plans for these centres recommend that a Parking Management Plan be prepared to address existing and future parking issues • The activity centres would include: Canning Bridge, Melville City Centre, Murdoch and around Bull Creek train station
9	**Prepare detailed Parking Management Plans for other high parking demand sites** *Suggested Project Lead:* Technical Services / Neighbourhood Amenity	• Parking Management Plans should be prepared to address existing and future parking issues • The high parking demand sites could include: Deepwater Point, Heathcote and Point Walter
10	**Consider Specified Area Rates and/or Differential Rating in particular areas** *Suggested Project Lead:* Financial Services	• Specified Area Rates and/or Differential Rating could be investigated for some areas to help fund car parking management and implementation. It could also fund upgrades to streetscapes, improving walking and cycling options and potentially enhanced public transport.
11	**Better information provided to public on car parking** *Suggested Project Lead:* Technical Services / Neighbourhood Amenity / Marketing and Communications	• Provide easy to use, detailed information about public car parking facilities, hours of operation, fees, time restrictions and alternatives

12	**Research and Consider Alternative Approaches to Managing Car Parking** *Suggested Project Lead:* Internal Project Working Group(s)	• Management of car parking issues is the best way to address car parking issues as highlighted in this Strategy. • There are various ways that parking could be managed, including in house or even outsourced. This should be further investigated to consider which option is best for the City • If the City would prefer to manage parking internally, sufficient resources need to be allocated to ensure that car parking issues are appropriately managed
Medium Term Actions Within Next 5 Years		
13	**Prepare detailed Parking Management Plans for other activity centres** *Suggested Project Lead:* Internal Project Working Group(s)	• Parking Management Plans should be prepared to address existing and future parking issues in other activity centres, including Melville District Centre (Canning Highway), Petra Street District Centre, Kardinya District Centre and Bull Creek District Centre

There are other actions for the City to consider in the future in the Car Parking Technical Report provided by Luxmoore Parking and Safety.