

Department of Planning and Environment

Major Projects Division

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Shop 1
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RE: University of Newcastle City Campus

Background

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Newcastle Now (Newcastle Business Improvement Association) has a long-standing interest in parking issues in the Newcastle CBD as they significantly impact our stakeholder groups.

To assist our planning, the organisation has recently jointly invested in a parking study with Newcastle City Council. The final report will be available in November but in the interim we wish to lodge our concerns about the potential impact on CBD parking resulting from the University of Newcastle's City Campus.

We are concerned there will be a negative local impact on CBD parking and local residential areas from 2017 and for an ongoing period, and that there is an urgent need for further investigation into realistic demand and alternative options: how parking demand might be met, how it is to be charged for, and whether or not alternative arrangements could be made with the private sector.

Our understanding of the current parking situation in Newcastle CBD is as follows.

- The city centre has some 3,100 parking bays on-street and 3,689 off-street
- Average parking occupancy is 54% and peak-time occupancy >71% with an average duration of stay on-street of 1.9 hours
- There has been a significant increase in parking demand since 2006 which does not appear to have been factored into the University projections.
- Public transport provision in Newcastle is inadequate and inefficient. Current public transport mode share is <15% in Newcastle and patronage of the fare free and other bus services is declining – a trend that shows no sign of reversing. The bus service, calendars and routes have not been revised since 2004 and are recognised as not responsive to emerging demand. It is clear that there will be a significant lag in provision of services to adjust to the projected demand.

Our understanding of the impact of the new campus development on city centre parking is as follows.

- By 2019, the effective full-time student load will be more than 4,000. In addition, some 300 academic and administrative staff will be at the new campus with nearly half of them living within the LGA.
- Approximately 2,500 people will be at the NeW Space at any one time, and there will be demand outside core time and a need for inter-campus transfer by both staff and students. There is no provision for parking demand within a secure, well lit area for use by after hour students, staff and visitors.
- Indications are that nearly half the target student population of over 4,000 will live outside the Newcastle LGA and nearly 3000 will live outside a comfortable walking or cycling distance of 2km with well over 100 staff also expected to live outside the Active Transport Zone.
- There is no indication of any expected timeline for a demand for local residence by students or of an available capacity to fulfil any such demand as it arises. Furthermore, while students or staff may be 'able' to walk the suggested 2 km, it cannot be assumed that all will. Even if only 20% of daily attending students

(470) require their cars because they are travelling from University to work or sport or other activities, they will require some form of parking near the City Campus.

Summary of Expected Impact

With approximately 3,000 staff and students attending the NeW Space campus and living beyond walking/cycling distance, should even if 66% use public transport, or car share, or park at the Callaghan Campus, at least 1,000 will require parking in the vicinity. If as expected, only 55% are on campus at any time, it is still foreseeable that up to 550 students and staff will require parking each day. Furthermore, if their average stay is 4 hours, then more than 200 bays will be required. CBD street parking limits are no more than 2 hours.

It is clear that for many years, there will be a significant demand for parking by students and staff who live beyond 2 km of the campus as public transport is unlikely to be provided or utilised as assumed from 2017, and it may take many years for students to be able to relocate close to the City Campus.

It is also recognised that while University staff are prepared to pay a fee for convenient and secure parking, students are less inclined and able to do so, and will therefore search for inexpensive or free options, even if less convenient.

As a result, from the commencement of the NeW Space facilities in 2017 there will be significant parking demand by students and staff. This will spill over to surrounding areas, especially those where parking is currently free or at very low cost, e.g. Cooks Hill. This will have a negative flow on effect for businesses and residents in these areas.

Request

The Board of Newcastle NOW is very supportive of the University's move to establish a city campus and see it as an essential step to city revitalization.

The Board however wishes to express its concern about parking provision in the current plans for the City Campus and believes that further information on realistic parking demand and alternative options for satisfying that projected demand is urgently needed.

The Board holds the view that assessments of transport and parking requirements for the City Campus are optimistic and that actual demand for parking will exceed the figures provided. The Board does not think that the provision of 5 spaces with an additional 20 to be provided at a later date is adequate.

As our organisation is charged with the task of advocating on behalf of our stakeholders we ask that further investigation be undertaken and that it focus on:

- the realistic demand for parking to be generated by NeW Space in 3x year intervals from 2017 considering the realistic availability, supply and expected patronage of alternative options
- how this parking is to be supplied to staff, students and visitors during or outside business hours
- how the parking is to be charged for, and
- what alternative solutions may be available through partnerships with the private sector.



Michael Neilson