

1 BROOKLYN CAR PARKING MANAGEMENT - FEEDBACK FROM PUBLIC EXHIBITION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Community consultation on proposed parking restrictions in Brooklyn was undertaken during September and October 2022. Feedback received was understandably split – with a small majority of survey respondents indicating a preference for some type of parking restrictions across the various precincts and the parking needs of stakeholders varying significantly.
- The location and design of a leased car parking area has been the subject of much community feedback. The proposed leased car park in Upper McKell Park received mixed feedback from the community and is not recommended to proceed at this time.
- To resolve an approach to managing car parking in Brooklyn, Council needs to determine if, how and where to allow water only access residents to park their cars on public land. This is particularly challenging given much of the land in Brooklyn village is Crown Reserve set aside for public recreation and there is high demand for car parking. This is not a simple process that can be determined through this exhibition period and though short term actions are recommended in this report more work is required to continually refine the approach and implement long term solutions.
- Together with the implementation plan in this report is a recommendation to undertake further consultation with the community during Stage 1 of the roll out plan to determine how to address parking needs for residents who are not eligible for a Disability Parking Permit yet but may require special consideration.
- Further consultation is also recommended on paid parking in additional locations to address the flexibility requirements raised during the exhibition period.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Acknowledge the efforts and contribution of community and stakeholders to this process, particularly in trying to seek a common understanding and way forward on a long-standing issue for the Brooklyn and River community.
2. Adopt the proposed car parking management staged, roll out schedule attached to General Manager's Report No. GM1/23 implementing the roll out as part of future Delivery Programs.
3. Not proceed with the proposed leased car park in Upper McKell Park overflow area but continue to operate the car park as a free to use parking area in the short to medium term.
4. Note the proposed alternate leased parking locations nominated by the community and further address this matter in the place planning process.
5. Undertake further consultation with the community to determine the extent of need for residents who are not eligible for a Disability Parking Permit but may still require special parking arrangements.
6. Undertake further consultation on the introduction of paid parking in McKell Park and Parsley Bay to respond to community demand for flexible parking.

ITEM 1

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with feedback from the Brooklyn Car Parking Management exhibition period and seek endorsement of a staged, roll out schedule for changes to car parking management within the Brooklyn village centre.

BACKGROUND

At the August 2022 General Meeting, Council considered General Manager's Report No. GM28/22 and resolved that:

1. Council exhibit the draft Brooklyn Carparking Management Plan as outlined in General Manager's Report No. GM24/22.
2. Council undertake consultation with the community, including businesses, in respect of the draft Brooklyn Carparking Management Plan outlined in General Manager's Report No. GM24/22, for a period of eight weeks.
3. Council accept submissions already received associated with General Manager's Report No. GM24/22 and General Manager's Report No. GM28/22 and consider them along with all other submissions received during the exhibition period.
4. Council seek feedback from the community on a preferred potential location for a leased car parking area within Brooklyn.
5. Following the eight week exhibition period, and prior to reporting back to Council, an Informal Councillor Workshop be held to review and consider community and stakeholder feedback including any proposed changes and next steps.
6. The Informal Councillor Workshop is to also consider how Council can support community efforts to access other State Government owned land around Brooklyn to accommodate car parking, including for essential services to the river communities.

DISCUSSION**Engagement**

Prior to Council resolving to put the proposed changes to car parking management in Brooklyn on exhibition at the August 2022 General Meeting, 201 written submissions were received by Council from the community. These submissions have been reviewed and considered in the preparation of this Report. It is noted that many of these pre-exhibition submissions sought to not have the exhibition period commence until such time as the community had been consulted on the contents of the proposed changes to car parking management in Brooklyn. At the time, the community contended that the proposed changes, especially in relation to a leased car park in Upper McKell Park, were unsuitable.

Once on exhibition, a further 504 submissions were received - 38 written submissions were received on the proposed changes and 466 online surveys were completed on Council's Your Say Hornsby webpage. Staff also met with nine individuals at their request during the exhibition period and attended fortnightly meetings with the Brooklyn Hawkesbury Parking Collaboration – a newly formed group who represent the various community organisations in the Lower Hawkesbury area. The group formed itself to find common ground on which to progress an approach to car parking management. This was not achieved by the end of the exhibition period and the group's submission on the proposed parking changes and alternate solutions did not receive the support of the Brooklyn Community Association.

The exhibition period lasted nine weeks throughout September and October 2022. It should be noted that the community dedicated significant time, effort and resources into preparing their submissions and in some cases conducted their own surveys and undertook consultation with their stakeholders. Council acknowledges this extensive body of work and thanks the community members involved and for sharing their results.

Council survey

The Your Say Hornsby survey sought to elicit feedback from the community on the proposed car parking management changes. Essentially, Council proposed to time restrict parking in all off street car parking areas in Brooklyn, east of the railway bridge and also in on street car parking spaces servicing Upper McKell Park.

Additionally, the survey sought feedback on the management of trailers in the village centre and a proposed leased car park for offshore residents in Upper McKell Park. Alternate locations for leased car parking were also consulted upon as were the options for car share and active transport.

It is noted that changes to car parking management in a precinct are typically dealt with at an officer level under delegation. Consultation of this magnitude and breadth has been undertaken in this circumstance due to the identified need to fundamentally alter the way that car parking is managed in Brooklyn.

The summary of Your Say Hornsby survey results is attached to this Report – Attachment 1.

Survey response – other

It is noted that a large percentage of survey respondents chose to respond to questions using the “other” option when being asked about what length of time restriction should be implemented in a precinct. These responses have been coded, generally into three groups 1. unrestricted parking 2. time restricted parking limits other than those proposed, or 3. an answer unrelated to the question asked.

Competing uses

The feedback received by Council suggests that Brooklyn village, as a local village centre, recreational destination, port and river hub has a large number of stakeholders with a significant diversity of parking needs. Stakeholders have used car parking in Brooklyn for many years - generally without parking restrictions in place - and this has led to low turnover of car parking and difficulty finding a car park close to desired destinations – especially for those arriving during peak periods. The majority of the “in demand” car parking spaces tend to be unrestricted and provide a flexible and desirable outcome for the parker – if they can secure a vacant car parking spot.

The challenge in managing car parking, especially in a complex, high demand destination like Brooklyn, is to be able to turn over car parking spaces to provide greater access to parking opportunities and also provide a length of stay that matches the requirements of users. Best practice in managing the turnover of existing car parking spaces is achieved through time restrictions and then instituting paid parking. These steps are typically taken before additional car parking is provided.

Permits

There was strong feedback during the exhibition period for Council to implement timed parking for visitors but to issue parking permits for residents of Brooklyn, the river community, sporting groups or clubs who use these precincts – thereby removing the requirement for these users to abide by sign posted time restrictions. Practically, taking this approach would do very little to change current parking turn over rates given the residential and long stay nature of parking users, nor would it remove long

stay parking from the river front and other park areas – a key goal associated with the vision for Brooklyn. As such, a resident permit scheme is not recommended. Similarly, a resident permit is unlikely to meet Council's land management requirements with regards to facilitating access to the reserves located in the village which are Crown land reserved for the people of NSW for the purposes of public recreation.

Survey summary

There was a small majority of respondents supportive of the implementation of some form of timed parking in all precincts consulted upon – noting that there was significant diversity in terms of the preferred length of parking stay – generally from three hours to three days.

Council's legislated responsibility is to manage the land and parking in McKell Park to facilitate access by visitors wishing to use the land for the purposes of public recreation. Parking controls should service and prioritise visitor access to the Crown Reserve – rather than those not using the reserve for recreation. In Parsley Bay, where a permissive occupancy is also in place, parking should be managed in a way that facilitates public recreation and launching/access to the water. This approach is consistent with the *State Strategic Plan – A Vision for Crown land 2020* which seeks to strengthen community connections with Crown land to ensure the assets are accessed, activated and sustained.

A staged roll out plan is attached to this Report (Attachment 2) which makes a number of changes to initial parking control recommendations put on exhibition due to the feedback received from the community. The plan also seeks to provide a gentler transition to a new approach to car parking management in Brooklyn village through a staged roll out of changes on current car parking footprints and to allow time for the place planning process to address the need for additional car parking. It also recommends increasing the flexibility of parking in Parsley Bay and undertaking consultation on additional paid parking in other locations within McKell Park in order to respond to the diversity of user needs articulated in terms of duration of stay. Lastly, the roll out plan recommends additional consultation with the community to determine the extent of needs for those residents without access to a Disability Parking Permit who may require special parking arrangements but whose needs may not fully meet the requirements for a full Disability Parking Permit.

Trailer parking

Trailers, primarily unattached boat trailers, but including other types of trailers, have been informally, but not illegally, parked in public reserves in Brooklyn for a number of years, noticeably increasing over the past decade. As competition for parking has increased, maximising the availability of car parking by removing the long-term storage of trailers in the village centre is seen as a logical first step in improving car parking capacity without building additional parking. Trailers can often sit unused for many months at a time. Council Rangers actively manage trailers where trailer registration has lapsed (or a complaint has been received) but other than this, trailers are currently able to park wherever a car would park – unless sign posted otherwise, as is currently the case in Parsley Bay where unattached trailers are not permitted to be parked.

Council consulted the community on the exclusion (or otherwise) of trailer parking in the area within the Brooklyn village – east of the railway bridge. 70% of survey respondents indicated a desire to exclude all trailer parking on street within the village – except in Parsley Bay. The attached summary of survey results (Attachment 1) indicates where respondents thought that on street trailer parking should be allowed. Council also consulted on whether parking for trailers should be offered elsewhere in Brooklyn – at a cost to trailer owners. Saltpan Reserve was the most highly favoured location for trailer storage nominated by the community.

Using public land and Crown Reserve to store private items is a challenging policy position – given that there is limited public land available and demand for its use is forever increasing. Concerns regarding turning public land over to private car parking under a lease arrangement in Brooklyn have been voiced during the exhibition period. In the circumstances of trailer parking (as with car parking), the cause of this outcome generally appears to be the inability or desire of owners to store this type of item on their own land, or privately elsewhere at a cost. It should be noted that private storage options for trailers is available on a commercial basis.

On balance, the need for Council to facilitate storage of infrequently used trailers on high demand public land is considered to be a low priority and as such it is not recommended that Council make public land available for the long-term storage of trailers. Instead, based on community feedback, it is recommended that Council work with trailer owners to remove trailers from McKell Park. Specifically, the following recommendations are made for trailer parking management –

Council exclude trailer parking from McKell Park using the appropriate signage – including within the overflow parking area.

1. Council work with trailer owners over a 3-6 month period to facilitate this change and to allow trailer owners the opportunity to make long term storage arrangements elsewhere.
2. Council sign post all car parks associated with public reserves outside of Brooklyn village (but within the suburb of Brooklyn) as “car only” parking to prioritise access for visitors to these reserves.
3. Council offer to remove unwanted trailers from Brooklyn, including McKell Park which may no longer be required by the owner. The unwanted trailers would be suitably disposed of by Council via auction, offering them to the community for “rehoming” or a metal recycling facility.
4. Offshore residents be encouraged to progress a trailer share scheme – as per their written submissions.

In the event that trailer parking continues to be an issue for on and off street parking locations within the village centre or elsewhere in Brooklyn, further consideration should be given to restricting parking in these areas – potentially by nominating them as car only parking locations. This matter should be assessed on a site by site basis with the community, using consistent criteria that considers safety, proximity to destinations, impacts on local residents and visitors, alternatives such as timed parking and impacts on surrounding streets of trailer relocation.

Leased car parking in Upper McKell Park

On advice from Crown Lands, Council proposed a leased resident parking area in Upper McKell Park overflow area and consulted the community about their interest in leasing a parking space in this location. No ongoing lease fee with Crown Lands was mentioned during the consultation period as no quote had been provided by Crown Lands at that stage. Crown Lands have a policy on how land is commercially valued which is understood to guide leasing costs for private uses.

The site in Upper McKell Park was selected as it was likely to be the most cost and time effective to construct and was in keeping with the vision for Brooklyn to remove parking from the river front. It also best addressed Council’s land management responsibilities of providing access to Crown Reserves for the purposes of public recreation.

The 201 submissions received prior to the exhibition period were predominately from water only access residents and it was strongly argued that the Upper McKell Park location for a leased car park was unacceptable and unworkable. However, once on exhibition, survey respondents indicated that

there may be demand for 118 car parking spaces in this location – albeit with no financial commitment attached to providing that indication. Concerns were also raised during the exhibition period with regards to turning over prime public land in the village centre for long term private use.

Given this feedback, on balance, it is recommended that Council not progress a leased car park in Upper McKell Park overflow area. Instead, in the short term, it is recommended that trailers be excluded from parking within the space and that Council continue to operate the site as an informal, overflow car park. In the longer term, it is recommended that the site be formalised and sealed – along with a re-alignment of the car parking towards the picnic areas in Upper McKell Park where angled parking is proposed to maximise the efficiency of the use of the space for parking.

Council consulted the community on where else a leased resident car park might be located. This was an open question in the survey and no guidance was given on the feasibility of the various locations the community suggested. Suggestions included Transport for NSW land (railway land), the slip road/marina, Dangar Road, Bridge Street (behind the pub), Parsley Bay and Lower McKell Park. Most flat areas of land in Brooklyn village were listed as potential car park sites. Staff have met with Transport for NSW officials to advocate for the provision of parking that can meet the needs of commuters, visitors and longer stay parking needs. At the time of writing, Council staff are having ongoing conversations with Transport for NSW with regards to gaining access to their land for the purposes of resident/commuter parking. Whilst engagement has been productive with TfNSW it should be relayed that there is not a clear or straightforward pathway to accessing NSW State Government owned land for the purposes mentioned. The community is encouraged to also pursue discussion with local state members including the member of Hornsby and relevant members of parliament representing Central Coast residents regarding access to state owned lands.

A submission received from the aforementioned Brooklyn Hawkesbury Parking Collaboration short listed a location in Parsley Bay up against the southern side of the McKell Park headland, and also an area to the south of Hawkesbury River Marina on Crown and Council owned land located off the slip road leading to Upper McKell Park. Within the context of the place planning process, either of these two short listed sites may be appropriate to pursue further design development of a leased parking area but further concept development and community consultation is required.

It is recommended that the matter of additional car parking in Brooklyn be addressed within the place planning context – which is recommended to re-commence after initial changes to car parking management are made in Brooklyn village. Whilst the inclusion of such parking can be identified within the place plan for Brooklyn, feasibility, design, approvals and funding will be the remit of those who directly benefit from its provision.

General feedback on proposed car parking restrictions and proposed changes

High level feedback on proposed car parking restrictions per precinct has been included in Attachment 1. It is noted that Council has land management responsibilities under the *Crown Land Management Act 2016* and other responsibilities for how Operational land and Community land is used under the *Local Government Act 1993*. As such, stakeholder feedback assists officers to make recommendations to Council on appropriate parking controls but the survey results do not, in themselves, make the recommendation.

The following key themes were derived from the survey and other written feedback and have driven a change in either a precinct recommendation or the roll out process:

- There is significant demand for both short and long stay parking throughout Brooklyn village in each precinct. Each user group is often seeking a bespoke solution that responds to their

specific needs. Flexibility of parking controls will be key in addressing the majority of needs and managing demand for parking. This flexibility can be provided by smart parking solutions – linked to a user pays system. To achieve this flexibility, it is recommended that Council consult the community further on broadening the scope of paid parking – beyond Parsley Bay. Specifically, in key destinations in McKell Park.

- There is a need to align “car only” parking length of stay in Parsley Bay with “car with attached trailer” length of stay – that is, Council should not differentiate between car only and car with attached trailers in length of stay restrictions. Length of stay also needs to be extended beyond what was initially proposed to accommodate potential adverse weather conditions (consistent with community feedback) – or Council should use smart solutions to allow for paid parking to top up meters remotely. In the short term, due to the extended stay requirements of car park users and the difficulties with undertaking compliance over 12-24+ hours without smart technology, it is proposed that no timed parking restrictions are imposed in Parsley Bay until a smart/paid parking solution can be installed. It is also proposed that a greater percentage of the car park be given over to flexible parking whereby either a car or a car with attached trailer may park in a bay.
- There is a need to further investigate the parking requirements of residents with special parking needs who may not be eligible for a Disability Parking Permit and consider a policy position on how to address this situation.
- The need for the community to undertake further concept development work and consultation on alternate leased car parking locations. The need for this additional parking and the location and design should be considered within the place planning process.

Recommended changes to car parking management in Brooklyn village, along with a staged, roll out plan are attached to this Report in Attachment 2.

CONSULTATION

In the preparation of this Report there was consultation with the broader community of stakeholders in Brooklyn via the Your Say Hornsby survey, written submissions and in person meetings with both individuals and groups, including community associations over the last four years. Attachment 3 outlines a summary of feedback received from the various community groups and associations along with a Council response to the issues raised. Consultation has taken place with Crown Lands and Transport for NSW to determine the appropriateness of the recommended changes to car parking management and to advocate on behalf of the community for access to rail land.

Offers were extended to meet with community associations post the exhibition period of the proposed changes in order to unpack the survey results attached to this Report and to gain further feedback.

BUDGET

Stage 1 - Signage updates related to this staged roll out in the various precincts in Brooklyn will be included in recurrent budgets within upcoming Delivery Programs. Budgetary impacts of future implementation stages will be considered following future consultation and evaluation.

POLICY

There are no policy implications associated with this Report. Recommendations in this Report are based on the adopted Car Parking Management Study. Some feedback has suggested that Council has breached its own policy statements and principles of the *Local Government Act 1993*. These matters have been addressed in Attachment 3.

CONCLUSION

Previous reports to Council on this matter have outlined a 30-year history of studies, reports, consultations and surveys seeking to resolve an approach to car parking in Brooklyn resulting in little change on the ground.

Following extensive community consultation on the proposed car parking changes, the staged roll out plan and its recommendations in Attachment 2 have been developed to respond to the survey and other written feedback Council received from the community during the exhibition period. The community have invested significant time, effort and resources into participating in this process. Council seeks to find an appropriate balance between all competing users and their unique requirements in addition to Council's land management responsibilities, parking data, the adopted place planning guiding principles, working vision and the Car Parking Management Study.

This current series of reports has asserted that it is inappropriate for other Shire residents to fund private car parking arrangements for offshore residents (on public land) and so any leased offshore resident parking solution should be funded by those seeking to benefit from its use. The approach taken has been to attempt to locate an appropriate parcel of public land upon which a user funded and developed car park may be built within the village centre. Achieving this outcome is a challenge given the finite nature and purpose of public land. This matter has not been resolved through this exhibition period and should be further dealt with within the context of the place planning process - should the community wish to progress this option. The provision of any additional car parking needs to be underpinned by demand identification and conform to the adopted Brooklyn place planning guiding principles and working vision.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

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Attachments:

1. Attachment 1 - Brooklyn Car Parking Management Survey
2. Attachment 2 - Staged Roll Out Plan
3. Attachment 3 - Response to Community Group Submissions

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