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Provision of Accessible Car Parks in Auckland

Background

This report has been compiled by Be. Lab (formerly Be. Accessible) Accessibility Advisor, Peter Rawlings and provides recommendations for the proposed Accessible Parking Provision for the Auckland Unitary Plan. The scope of the guidance provided is:

1. If current minimum accessible parking ratios outlined in Accessible Parking Provision brief Appendix A are sufficient.
2. Accessible car parking provision for multi-unit residential developments, which includes an appropriate number of dwellings for triggering this requirement and, what the ratio of accessible parking to general parking should be.

The recommendations are based on Be. Lab's experience working with commercial Built-to-rent projects over the last 11 years as well as research into other New Zealand residential developments.

Introduction

The National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD) car parking policies that came into effect on 20th February 2022, required the removal of requirements for a minimum number of car parks, excluding accessible car parks from all district plans.

Subpart 8 – Car parking

3.38 Car parking

1. If the district plan of a tier 1, 2, or 3 territorial authority contains objectives, policies, rules, or assessment criteria that have the effect of requiring a minimum number of car parks to be provided for a particular development, land use, or activity, the territorial authority must change its district plan to remove that effect, other than in respect of accessible car parks.





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2. Territorial authorities must make any changes required by subclause (1) without using a process in Schedule 1 of the Act.
3. Nothing in this National Policy Statement prevents a district plan including objectives, policies, rules, or assessment criteria:
 - a. requiring a minimum number of accessible car parks to be provided for any activity; or
 - b. relating to parking dimensions or manoeuvring standards to apply if:
 - i. a developer chooses to supply car parks; or
 - ii. when accessible car parks are required.

With the removal of minimum car parking rates from the district plans of tier 1, 2 and 3 territorial authorities, developers may still choose to provide car parking in many areas, but the number of car parks will be driven by market demand.

District plans can continue to set minimum parking rates for parking designed and marked for use by people with mobility impairments. It is expected that only permit holders would be able to use the car parks, in accordance with New Zealand's official mobility parking permit scheme.

Many district plans refer to the New Zealand Standard Design for Access and Mobility – Buildings and Associated Facilities (currently NZS 4121:2001), which sets the number of accessible car parks as a ratio of the total number of car parks provided. The New Zealand Standard will continue to work in situations when a developer chooses to supply car parks. However, to provide for situations when car parking is not supplied, territorial authorities should consider setting an absolute minimum number of accessible car parks. An accessible car park rate, if necessary, will be dependent on local circumstances, including access to public transport and the use of on-street accessible parking spaces. An accessible parking rate may be based on floor area.





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Overview of a sample of New Zealand District Council's District Plans

Wellington City Council

The Wellington City Council Parking Policy 2020 states that in accordance with the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD), for future new development in the city, including outside of the central city, there will be no minimum off-street parking requirement, except for accessible car parks.

Mobility Parking provision is now covered by Wellington's Parking Policy 2020 and the Mobility Parking Guidelines.

The Mobility Parking Guidelines have the following provisions:

1. Location of mobility parks must coincide with the concept of the "accessible journey" and need to be as close as possible to the intended destination point.
2. When considering the placement of Council mobility parking spaces, whether on-street or off-street, reference will be made to the relevant street space hierarchy in the Parking Policy 2020. The policy states that mobility parking spaces are a priority in the central city, suburban centres, Council parks, sports, recreation and community facilities off-street parking, and Council other off-street parking areas. Mobility parking being a medium priority in the city fringe/inner city suburbs and outer residential areas. The council have indicated a number of guidelines that will be followed, in so far as possible, when considering the placement of mobility parking spaces.
3. Members of the public may request an on-street mobility parking space in residential areas. Specific eligibility criteria must be met before the Council will consider such a request. If granted, the mobility parking space will be a public parking space that anyone with a valid mobility parking permit may use. The need for the mobility parking space will be reviewed at least every three years.

Creating new off-street mobility car parks

The provision of mobility parking spaces in Council off-street parking areas will meet the Building Act and the New Zealand Standard Specification (NZSS)





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4121. This will be enforced through the consent process for new buildings and alterations of existing buildings. NZSS 4121 on its own will be used as a guide for work not requiring consent.

When deciding how many mobility parking spaces should be provided, the Council will refer to [AS/NZS 2890.6:2009 appendix B1](#) which requires the number of parking spaces to be proportionate to the total number of parking spaces:

- 1-20 total parking spaces: one mobility parking space.
- 21-50 total parking spaces: two mobility parking spaces.
- More than 50 total parking spaces: one additional mobility parking space per every 50 parking spaces beyond the original 50.





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Hamilton

The Hamilton City District Plan contains the following guidelines:

Non-Residential Uses

Under Rule 25.14.4.2 Parking, Loading and Manoeuvring Areas for non-residential uses, car parking spaces for people with a disability are to be allocated and provided according to the following criteria:

- In all city zones, for non-residential use, the number of accessible car park spaces must be in accordance with the requirements of NZS 4121:2001 Section 5.4 Car parks – Number required, Table 1 – Number of car parks.

Exception to above: For businesses in 1 to 7 zones, where 10 or more on-site car parking spaces are provided, the total number of spaces shall not exceed the maximum car parking levels identified in Table 15-1a of Volume 2, appendix 15-1: This table identifies the criteria for accessible parking, the criteria being either gross floor area, number of employees or people the activity is designed to incorporate. Where the requirements of Hamilton City's Rule 25.14.4.2, Table 15-1a, are higher than the number of accessible car parks specified in NZS 4121:2001 Section 5.4 Car Parks, Table 1, the requirements of Table 15-1a must be met.

Residential Development

From Hamilton's District Plan it appears that there are no requirements for accessible parking provision for residential development.

Tauranga City Plan

The Tauranga City Plan has the following references to parking:

4-General Rules, 4B.2.1 Parking in the Port Industry Zone: On-site parking requirements shall not apply to any activity within the Port Industry Zone provided that all parking, manoeuvring and loading areas provided to meet the demand or operational requirement for that activity are contained wholly within the Port Industry Zone.

4B.2.2 On-site parking requirements – City Centre Zone: No on-site car parking minimums apply to activities within the City Centre Zone.





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From our search of Tauranga Cities Plan there does not appear to be any reference to requirements for accessible parking.

Dunedin

The Dunedin District Plan has the following guidelines:

Stipulate that land use activities must provide on-site mobility parking spaces according to the requirements of NZS 4121:2001 Section 5.4 Car parks – Number required, Table 1 – Number of car parks.

Parking spaces may be shared between land use activities (i.e. the same parking spaces may be used to fulfil the minimum mobility car parking requirement for more than one land use activity), as long as the hours of operation of the land use activities do not overlap.



Residential and office activities (excluding registered health practitioners) undertaken entirely within a scheduled heritage building do not need to provide any additional mobility car parking other than what is already on-site and may remove any car parking that does not meet the performance standards for location of car parking.

Kapiti Coast District Council

Kapiti Coast District Council have proposed a plan change to ensure adequate provision continues to be made for accessible car parking, called Plan Change 1A: Accessible car parking provisions. Submissions for the plan closed on 17 March 2022.



This plan change specifies requirements for new development to provide for accessible car parking.

Proposed amendment to policy TR-PARK-P8 Parking being:

All new subdivision and development shall provide for safe vehicular and pedestrian access and appropriate accessible carparks by:

1. providing accessible carpark numbers, layouts and dimensions consistent with standards that meet the needs of users;





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2. supplying adequate off street accessible carparks to meet the demand of the land use while having regard to the following factors:
 - a. the intensity, duration location and management of the activity.
 - b. the adequacy of accessible carparks in the location and adjacent areas.
 - c. the classification and use of the road (as per transport network hierarchy in TR-Table 7), and the speed restrictions that apply.
 - d. the nature of the subject site, in particular its capacity to accommodate accessible carparks.
 - e. the characteristics of the previous activity undertaken on the subject site;
3. taking effects on neighbouring areas into account when designing the location, layout and number of cycle parks and accessible carparks;
4. ensuring the location, layout and number of cycle parks and accessible carparks is safe, user-friendly and appropriate.



Rule TR-PARK-R18 Accessible car parks:

Standards: Accessible car parks must be provided at the rate shown in Table TR-Table 6A.

Activity	Gross floor area or bar area where stated	Staff/employee numbers	No. of units	Other requirement
Medium Density Housing				
Multi-unit residential			4-5 units: 1 space 6-25 units: 2 spaces Plus 1 additional	





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			space for every additional 25 units, or part thereof	
Temporary Accommodation				
Hostels/Hotel/ Motels and Visitor Accommodation	12m ² - 43m ² of bar area: 1 space	4-20 staff: 1 space	2-5 units: 1 space	3-10 bedrooms/ guestroom/ campsite or motorhome site: 1 space
Minor residential units are exempt from this standard.	44m ² – 400m ² of bar area: 2 spaces Plus 1 additional space for every additional 200m ² of bar area, or part thereof	21-200 staff: 2 spaces Plus 1 additional space for every additional 100 staff, or part thereof	6-25 units: 2 spaces Plus 1 additional space for every additional 25 units, or part thereof	11-100 bedrooms/ guestroom/ campsite or motorhome site: 2 spaces Plus 1 additional space for every additional 50 bedrooms/ guestroom/





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				campsite or motorhome site, or part thereof
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Timaru District Council

Timaru District Council's District Plan states:

1. Requirements for mobility parking to be provided in accordance with the New Zealand Building Code have not changed.
2. Removed all objectives, policies, rules and standards from the District Plan that require minimum on-site parking to be provided for new or existing development anywhere in the District.

The Timaru District Council's accessible facilities project assessment information sheet, version 6, June 2021, code IS-115 states that accessible car parks will be provided at the ratio of 1 for up to 20, 2 for up to 50 plus 1 more for every additional 50 parks (or part thereof) (NZS 4121).

Ministry of Health report: Living with Disability in New Zealand

This report, published in 2005, was based on the post-census disability surveys undertaken in 1996 and 2001, and outlined the status of people with a disability. In relation to private motor vehicles in New Zealand the report documented the following.

- Seventy percent of adults with disability (an estimated 404,200 adults) were motor vehicle drivers.

Parking private motor vehicles

An estimated 155,800 adults and 10,500 children who drove or travelled as passengers in private motor vehicles needed to park close to their destination because of disability.





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The need to park close to their destination was comparatively high (21 percent) for children aged 0–4 with disability but lower for children aged 10–14 (10 percent). In the adult age groups, the need to park close increased with age, with 13 percent of adults aged 15–24 and 50 percent of adults aged 75 and over with disability indicating they needed to park close to their destination.

Adults with mobility disability as their main disability were most likely to say they needed to park close to their destination (43 percent).

Similarly, children with disability who used technical aids (60 percent) were the most likely to need to park close to their destination.

Forty-nine percent of the adults and the parents or caregivers of 63 percent of the children with disability who needed to park close to their destination indicated they had difficulty finding parking in the previous six months.

The most common problem was being unable to find parking close enough to their destination, identified by an estimated 62,100 adults and the parents and caregivers of 5700 children with disability. Other common problems were the parking close to a destination being too awkward to use and people without disability using parking spaces set aside for people with disability.

New Zealand Disability Survey: 2013

The Disability Survey showed that the percentage of total population living in private households in Auckland with a mobility impairment to be 10% and with an agility impairment to be 5%.

Whilst these two impairments do not preclude the need for accessible parking by people with other impairment types, both mobility and agility impairments are likely to be the highest need groups requiring access to mobility parking at each end of a journey outside of their home.

These results therefore indicate that up to 15% of Auckland households have a requirement for accessible parking at or close to their home.





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International Provision of Accessible Parking

United Kingdom

In the UK parking standards are not regulated nationally but are set by local authorities. At a national level, the following guidelines are given, but these are not legally binding.

Reference 1

The UK Department for Transport in December 2021 published, "Inclusive Mobility A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure"

The following is an excerpt from Chapter 8 of the report on car parking.

8. Car Parking

8.2 The recommended number of designated accessible spaces in different contexts

The recommended proportion of designated accessible parking spaces for Blue Badge holders is as follows:

1. For car parks associated with existing employment premises: 2% of the total car park capacity, with a minimum of one space.
Spaces for disabled employees must be additional to those recommended above; reservations could be ensured, for example, by marking a space with a registration number.
2. For car parks associated with newly built employment premises: 5% of the total parking capacity should be designated (to include both employees and visitors).
3. For car parks associated with shopping areas, leisure or recreational facilities, and places open to the general public: a minimum of one space for each employee who is a disabled motorist, plus 6% of the total capacity for visiting disabled motorists.

The numbers of designated accessible spaces may need to be greater at hotels and sports stadia that specialise in accommodating groups of disabled people.





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Reference 2

The BSI Standard Publication: BS 8300-1:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment, Part 1: External environment – Code of practice, details the following provision of accessible car parks.

7.2 Provision of designated accessible parking spaces

Designated accessible parking spaces should be provided as a minimum in accordance with Table 2. Where there is evidenced local need that a higher percentage is required, this should be provided accordingly.

Table 2 — Provision of designated accessible parking spaces

	One space for each employee who requires one	Designated spaces % of total parking spaces	Enlarged spaces (see 7.4.1) % of total parking spaces
Workplace	Yes	5	5
Educational buildings	Yes	5	5
Shopping, recreation and leisure	Yes	6	4
Transport car parks	Yes	5	5
Medical and health facilities	Yes	6	4
Religious buildings and crematoria	Yes	Min. two spaces or 6%, whichever is the greater	4
Sports facilities	Refer to Sports England guidance.		





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Europe

In a research paper “Urban parking policy in Europe: A conceptualization of past and possible future trends” published in Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, Volume 74, April 2015, Pages 268-281, Giuliano Mingardo, Bert van Weeb and Tom Rye, made the following observations on parking policies in Europe:

“In most European countries parking policy is a local policy. Each city and town is usually free to set the objectives of the policy and to select the policy instruments to implement it. National governments usually provide guidelines, mostly on parking requirements, but rarely interfere in policy making. The main reason for this is the recognition that parking is a local matter and that local authorities will deal with it better than will regional or national government.”

“The supply of parking – i.e. the key elements – must be adequately inventoried. Currently, most cities lack basic data such as total parking capacity, a clear distinction between private and public parking capacity, and information about the use of parking.”

In European cities there is a general movement away from minimum standards towards maximum standards.

Ireland

The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) in Ireland have developed best practice guidelines based on I.S. EN 17161:2019 'Design for All - Accessibility following a Design for All approach in products, goods and services - Extending the range of users'.

Their best practice guidelines recommend accessible car parking to be provided for shops, leisure and recreational facilities and other buildings to which the public has access: 6% of the total capacity plus one space for each employee with a disability who is a motorist.





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Australia

The requirements of accessible car parking is defined in the Australian Disability (Access to Premises — Buildings) Standards 2010.

Below are the Standards guidelines used to determine the number of accessible car parking spaces required. Note that building classes that don't require parking places are not included:

Class 1b: includes backpackers, hostels, residential parts of motels, etc. Multiply the total number of parking places by the percentage of accessible sole occupancy units or accessible bedrooms to the total number of bedrooms. Round up to the next whole number.

Class 3, 5, 7, 8, 9c: includes boarding houses, accommodation for schools or workers in aged care facilities, offices in commercial buildings, car parks, laboratories, aged care buildings or buildings used for packing, production, and assembly requires 1 space for every 10 spaces.

Class 6: includes shops, retail or other services or markets must have 1 space for every 50 car parking spaces under 1000 total, and 1 extra for every additional 100 spaces over 1000 spaces total

Class 9a: hospital non-outpatient areas must have 1 space per 100 spaces. Outpatient areas with under 1000 total spaces must have 1 disabled car park per 50 spaces, and 1 additional space for every 100 spaces over 1000.

Class 9b: Schools must have 1 disabled car park space per 100 spaces and other assembly buildings with under 1000 spaces total must include 1 space per 50 spaces, and 1 space per 100 spaces when over 1000 total.

Be. Lab's Experience

For eleven years, Be. Lab have been carrying out accessibility assessments and design plan reviews for clients that, include, Councils, corporate business, retail malls and tourist destinations.

The provision of accessible car parking is an integral part of the Be. Lab accessibility assessment since it is a fundamental component of the accessible journey. For many people with access needs, or who have family/whanau with access needs, vehicular transportation is their only feasible means to travel

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outside of their home. Therefore, accessible car parking both close to their home and at their destination is of utmost importance.

At a minimum, Be. Lab recommends that businesses ensure compliance with all the minimum accessibility requirements for car parks, including providing the minimum number of accessible car park spaces that are located as close to the building entrances as possible in accordance with NZS 4121:2001 Section 5.4 Car parks – Number required, Table 1 – Number of car parks.

To meet best practice, Be. Lab recommends provision of some oversized accessible car park spaces to allow space behind a vehicle for operation of a rear mounted hoist or access equipment.

Further, Be. Lab recommends businesses provide a greater number of accessible car park spaces than the minimum requirements of NZS 4121:2001, to reduce the chances of those with access needs discovering no available accessible spaces due to the limited supply on site. We recommend that businesses, particularly public spaces, consider providing double the number of accessible car park spaces specified in NZS 4121:2001 to better meet the needs of the 25% of New Zealanders (and similar international figures) who identify with having an access need.

Below are examples from recent Be. Lab reports for clients (details withheld for confidentiality) that illustrate the level of accessible car parking being provided by a range of businesses.

Client 1

Project: Build to Rent Apartments

Scope of project:

- Development has 295 apartments. 6 apartments will be adaptable (2% of the total).
- Small amount of commercial space on the ground floor level.
- 118 car parks provided exclusively for resident car parking, some of them as tandem spaces. Two of the spaces are marked as accessible car parks (1.7% total), slightly less than the proportion of accessible apartments.





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Be. Lab recommendations to client:

1. Provide a dedicated, compliant accessible car park space for each accessible apartment, with a safe, accessible route to the relevant lift. Residents of the accessible apartments will have access needs and for many (if not all) the availability of an accessible car park space for their apartment is necessary to come and go from their home.
2. Ensure compliance with all minimum requirements for all accessible car parks under NZS 4121:2001 Section 5.4 Car parks.

Client 2

Project: Build to Rent Apartments

Scope of project:

- 23 floor levels incorporating retail, café, office spaces, one- and two-bedroom apartments and car parking. Developer did not indicate whether any apartments would be accessible or adaptable.
- Total of 229 car parks are provided for the building, with 4 (1.8%) of these spaces being accessible.
- Developer would not make clear the intended allocation of car park spaces between retail, office and apartments.

Recommendations made:

1. Ensure compliance with all minimum accessibility requirements for car parks, including providing the minimum number of accessible car park spaces.
2. Provide a dedicated, compliant accessible car park space for each accessible / adaptable apartment, with a safe, accessible route to the apartment lifts.
3. Provide at least one oversized accessible car park space to allow space behind a vehicle for the operation of a rear-mounted hoist or access equipment.

Additional examples of accessible car parking provision:

Client 3

Project: Commercial office space

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Car parking: Total of 23 car parks provided on-site, 2 being accessible (8.7% car parks are accessible).

Client 4

Project: Retail, office and hotel

Car parking: No car parking provided.

Client 5

Auckland shopping mall: Over 1350 car parks, 44 accessible car parks (3.26% car parks are accessible)

Conclusion

Councils around New Zealand currently appear to be at different stages in the planning and implementation of new regulations around the provision of accessible parking. Overall, the situation is somewhat unclear with policies varying between Councils. However, there appears to be a **general consensus of Councils applying the accessible car parking requirements of NZS 4121:2001.**

In terms of accessible parking for residential developments, Wellington City Council allow residents to request an on-street accessible parking space, subject to eligibility criteria.

Kapiti Coast District Council have implemented a rule for accessible car parks for medium density housing and multi-unit residential based on the number of units.

The 2005 Ministry of Health report, Living with Disability in New Zealand, indicated that seventy percent of adults with disability drove a car. The report highlighted the need for accessible parking close to their destination both for adults with a disability and also for parents and caregivers of children with disability.

The New Zealand Disability Survey: 2013, identified that in Auckland, 10% of the total population living in private households have a mobility impairment and a further 5% have an agility impairment. These two groups would have the greatest need for accessible car parking but does not exclude the needs that people with other impairment types may have.

Internationally, in the UK and most European countries, the national governments provide guidelines, but the implementation is governed by each city and town.





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In Europe, there is a general movement away from minimum standards towards maximum standards.

In Australia, the Australian Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010, provides guidelines for the provision of accessible parking for a range of building classes, excluding residential.

Over the past eleven years, Be. Lab's experience has been that businesses and developers tend to comply only with the minimum requirements for accessible car parking spaces in NZS 4121:2001 due to both the economic implications for the larger footprint of accessible car parks and a lack of knowledge of the need for accessible parking by people with access needs.

Considering the results of the Ministry of Health report: Living with Disability in New Zealand that seventy percent of adults with disability have a car and the New Zealand Disability Survey: 2013, indicating the percentage of Auckland population living in private households with a mobility (10%) or agility (5%) impairment. Between 7 – 10% of Auckland households may have a member requiring accessible parking. It would therefore, not be unrealistic for Council to require accessible car parking for residential units to be based at this level.





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Be. Lab Recommendations

From Be. Lab's experience, there is no consistent provision between developers for car parking in general or for the number / proportion of accessible car parks provided.

Be. Lab's recommendation for accessible accommodation:

- **Where accessible or adaptable accommodation is provided in an existing or new build, the number of accessible car parks should equal the number of accessible or adaptable units.** This allows residents of the accessible / adaptable apartments that have access needs and for many (if not all) the availability of an accessible car park space for their apartment will be necessary to come and go from their home.

Be. Labs recommendation for existing or new build, non-residential developments:

- At a minimum, **where car parking is provided, the minimum number of accessible car parks should be in accordance with NZS 4121:2001. Section 5.4 Car parks.** However, best practice is to double the provision of accessible car parks from those of NZS 4121:2001 to better meet the needs of the 25% of New Zealanders (and similar international figures) who identify with having an access need.





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