

CHURCH POINT

This is the second article in a series over the next few weeks, as indicated in Article 1, prior to the SIRA AGM on January 22, 2012 about Church Point issues:

1. Carparking
2. Fees
3. Commuter Wharf
4. Community Consultation Process

ARTICLE 2 of 4 – FEES:

Summary: The *Church Point Plan of Management* proposes various fee options (see below). These could vary up and down depending upon several factors. The historical reasons and the rationale behind the proposed introduction of these fees are also briefly outlined.

FEES PROPOSED IN THE CHURCH POINT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT (CPPOM)

The annual CP Parking Permit Fees were introduced in September, 2010 at \$275 with a 2.9% per annum CPI increase. Thus, in 2011, the fees increased to \$283. The fees are for works in the existing carpark and a contribution towards the construction of additional parking opposite the Commuter Wharf. This carpark design has the capacity for ground level parking or ground and upper level parking (“decked carpark”).

In the tables below are the fees proposed in the CPPOM¹ (using 2010 figures). There are two major Options for parking at the Commuter Wharf that have an effect on future fees.

	OPTION A With Decked Carpark (120 spaces)	OPTION B Without Decked Carpark (67 spaces)
Church Point Parking Permit	\$275	\$515
Commuter Wharf Parking Permit – Stage 1 only	\$285	\$285
Total	\$560	\$800

	OPTION C With Decked Carpark (120 spaces)	OPTION D Without Decked Carpark (67 spaces)
Church Point Parking Permit	\$275	\$515
Commuter Wharf Parking Permit – Stage 1 & 2	\$717	\$717
Total	\$992	\$1,232

The reason the fees are lower for “decked carpark” Option A (i.e. ground and upper level parking) is that the 60 ground level spaces would be leased at a premium rate for a dedicated space (approx. \$4,800 per annum). A clear commitment for these spaces would be required prior to proceeding with this Option. These funds would then allow the CP Parking Permit Fees to be maintained at their current level.

The second option, not detailed in the CPPOM, is only to complete Stage 1 of the Commuter Wharf (see next Article 3) and not carry out Stage 2 which includes additional “arms and fingers” to allow sideways entry and exit plus tie-up front and rear.

¹ See CPPOM “Chapter 6 - Management Strategies” on Pittwater Council’s website: [Church Point Plan of Management](#)

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS IN PROPOSED CPPOM FEES

A management plan is a work in progress and at several points it may be possible for the fees in the CPPOM to vary from what is outlined above. Some of these are:

1. *Actual Cost Differences:* The fees in the CPPOM are based upon “Quantity Surveyor” estimates of costs with a 15% contingency factor. The CPPOM states that “*Annual fee charges are indicative only and will need to be confirmed at completion of works*” (Chapter 6 – Management Strategies – page 73). We do not want Council to have a blank cheque and they have clearly said that before final quotes (tenders) are approved the Community will have the opportunity to accept or reject fee implications.
2. *More Grants:* With a clear Plan of Management (POM) Council can apply for various grants to implement works. For example, Council was successful in obtaining two grants (totalling \$195,000) for Stage 1 of the Commuter Wharf. Further applications for grant funding will be available. In addition, if Council is convinced that aspects of the CPPOM will also benefit the greater Pittwater Community they will be more willing to consider a direct financial contribution.
3. *Wait and Accrue:* After two annual cycles of CP Parking Permits, Pay and Display Fees and Parking Fines collected over 16 months, less cost of works carried out in the carpark, the CP Fund has accrued approximately \$300,000. Financial year figures show that about \$240,000 is accrued per annum. To keep fees at current levels “without the decked carpark”, one strategy would be to delay the construction of the additional carpark opposite Commuter Wharf until sufficient fees have been accrued. The accrued amount would need to be the minimum “deposit” for a loan to fund the project that could be serviced by the annual fees. This option may delay implementation of this phase of the plan by several years. Funding required would also be affected by 1 and 2 above (i.e. final cost estimates and successful applications for additional funding)
4. *Lesser Scale of Works:* It may be that only Stage 1 of the Commuter Wharf is implemented (see more details next Article 3). As the details of the additional parking area opposite the Commuter Wharf are unveiled, community preferences and possible economies of scale may become clearer.

WHY ARE FEES BEING CHARGED?

Individual views on the parking issue at CP affect preferences for the necessity or scale of works and associated fees. Understanding the context of why there are now fees is important (extracts Article 1).

- Several years ago written legal advice was obtained from Pittwater Council’s lawyers, *Mallesons Stephen Jaques*, that neither Council nor any other government body has a legal responsibility for providing parking at Church Point or anywhere for Offshore residents to access our homes. We have such support from Council as a “moral consideration” from positive relations built up over a long period of time.
- In 2004, the Department of Lands who are responsible for all the land at Church Point (minus the Pasadena building footprint) wrote a letter to Pittwater Council stating that in the main carparking area “*currently 80% of the land is used for private carparking by Offshore residents... Government policy is to maximize public access to foreshore land, in particular publicly owned land*”.
- In 2005, the Department of Lands then wrote a follow-up letter to Council stating “*Further, in developing a Plan of Management, cessation of long term carparking in the Church Point Reserve must be effective from June 30, 2007*”.
- In 2006, the Department of Lands proposed that Offshore residents who wished to park their cars at Church Point be charged an annual fee of \$1,200 per vehicle. This was successfully stalled by Offshore community representatives through many meetings on the basis that no fees should be charged until the CPPOM was developed and approved by all parties.

- The approval by the Department of Lands of the current CPPOM in 2009 was significant. A major factor in their acceptance was that, even though the CPPOM proposed a lesser fee, users of Church Point were to contribute through a user pays system.
- Many options with various costs and fees were proposed and investigated during the development of the CPPOM, some of these can be seen in this end noteⁱ.

It is not uncommon to hear statements such as “we” already pay rates and taxes, so “they” should provide infrastructure. In reality, after 30 years close observation, to continue with this line of argument would most likely result in nothing happening. On the other hand, as Sara Henderson said, *“If you can’t see the light at the end of the tunnel, sometimes you have to stride down there and light the bloody thing yourself”*. By contributing through user pays we can attract complimentary funding. Indeed, the Offshore Community’s contribution (not including the dedicated spaces) is less than 25% of the total projected cost required in the CPPOM to complete all proposed works at Church Point.

Stay tuned for “Article 3 – Commuter Wharf” to be released shortly!

Bill Gye

ⁱ Some of the Parking Options Investigated in Developing the CPPOM

1. During the 1990’s, and in more recent years, much work went into investigating various “dispersal options” to shift much of the parking load from Church Point and to several identified alternative areas. For a long while this was Council’s preferred option. Interestingly these investigations revealed that many Offshore residents are already dispersed. The pro and con of dispersal options is a long story covering safety considerations and strong resistance from local residents in those areas about shifting “our problem” to their doorstep. These difficulties pushed these options off the table. It is still a viable future consideration, though not as an alternative (i.e. a reason for decreasing parking options at CP), but as an additional or contingent option.
2. In the mid-2000’s, a partially underground carpark was investigated. Approximately \$30,000 was spent on the feasibility study and the cost worked out at about \$80,000 per carpark space. This option was abandoned.
3. Possibly the cheapest option to create both additional parking and green space, which would have resulted in the lowest fees, was to build a carpark within a portion of the Church Point Reserve and return the remainder at one end into green space. This option was abandoned mainly because of its visual impact on the local residents opposite.
4. Consultants from engineering company GHD were engaged at a significant cost by Pittwater Council and they determined that the only practical area for the creation of additional parking was opposite the Commuter Wharf. Their plan involved keeping the existing road and creating parking spaces on the water side with direct access to Commuter Wharf.
5. During the CPPOM development, three proposed Options remained on the table. These focused on the area opposite the Commuter Wharf. One from The Church Point Reserve Association which included the creation of 40 parallel spaces. One from a Scotland Island resident which proposed 67 perpendicular spaces (or 69 depending upon which version of the plan). The decked carpark option is a variation on a plan that had been circulating for 20 years, more recently revived from recollection, by the Bayview-Church Point Reserve Association. Ultimately, the perpendicular parking took preference, with the decked carpark proposal remaining a possible future option. A factor influencing this decision was safety, with the current road design improving vehicle and pedestrian sight lines around the bend behind the Waterfront Store.