

Te Rautaki Tūnga Waka o Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika Right Space, Right Place

Far North District Strategic Parking Policy – Supporting Document

August 2026

Introduction

Effective parking management is crucial for supporting economic vitality, social inclusion, and accessibility in the Far North District, particularly considering population growth, aging demographics, and evolving transport technologies.

Parking plays a vital role in the Far North District by enabling residents and visitors to access commercial centres, retail precincts, and essential social and recreational services. Parking supports local businesses, encourages participation in community life, and contributes to economic vitality and social inclusion.

This document is written to support Te Rautaki Tūnga Waka o Te Kaunihera o Te Hiku o te Ika – Right Space, Right Place – Far North District Strategic Parking Policy.

Within this document is supplementary information and data that supports the Policy Statements within the Strategic Parking Policy.

Application – further detail

Demand trends: Population growth, an ageing community, and seasonal tourism create increased and variable parking demand, particularly for mobility parking and areas under peak pressure.

Parking hierarchy and allocation: The Policy sets a clear hierarchy for allocating parking in town centres and residential, rural, and industrial areas, prioritising pedestrian amenity, property access, mobility needs, and alternative transport modes.

Supply management and investment: Council will optimise existing parking before considering new infrastructure. Investment decisions will be informed by demand data, funding availability, and climate considerations. Time limits or priced parking may be used to manage turnover and maintain availability, with pricing adjusted according to occupancy.

Competing uses of road space: The Policy guides how roadside space is allocated, how user groups are prioritised, and how restrictions align with wider streetscape and mode-shift objectives.

Responding to change: The Policy anticipates shifts in transport behaviour, including uptake of electric vehicles, micro-mobility, and cycling, while ensuring mobility access is maintained as demographic pressures grow.

Technology and enforcement: Smart technologies, such as CCTV, payment kiosks, smartphone apps, and number-plate recognition, are encouraged to improve monitoring, enforcement, and data collection.

Context-specific parking needs: Guidance is provided for non-town-centre employment areas, event venues, potential park-and-ride sites, and residential zones, with an emphasis on short-stay visitor access and alternative transport options.

Urban design and placemaking: Streetscape improvements, including potential parklets in low-demand areas, may be implemented as consistent with safety and accessibility, particularly for mobility users.

Monitoring and review: Regular occupancy surveys and triennial policy reviews will ensure parking management remains responsive, equitable, and aligned with transport and urban development outcomes.

Legislative context – further detail

National Context

National guidelines released by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi in 2020 encourage councils to adopt parking policies that support sound decision-making. These guidelines, alongside regional and national transport strategies, provide a clear rationale for Council to establish a dedicated Parking Policy tailored to the needs of the Far North.

There are several key national strategic documents as follows:

- ***National Policy Statement for Urban Development***
- ***New Zealand Urban Design Protocol***
- ***Keeping Cities Moving released by Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency in September 2019***
- ***Government Policy Statement on Land Transport 2021/22–2030/31***
- ***The Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019.***

Regional Context

The relevant key regional strategies are as follows:

- ***The Northland Regional Land Transport Plan (2015-2021)***
This plan reflects the directions and outcomes established in the 30 Year Transport Strategy for Northland adopted in 2010:
 - A sustainable transport system that supports the growth and existing economic development of Northland and New Zealand
 - All road users are safe on Northland's roads
 - Our people have transport choices to access jobs, recreation, and community facilities.The relevant regional priorities and actions in the Northland Regional Land Transport Plan (2015-2021) for the Parking Policy are:
 - Regional Priority 5: Future proofing and long-term planning.
 - Regional Priority 9: Increasing transport choice.
- ***Te Tai Tokerau Regional Accessibility Strategy***
This strategy sets out the intentions and direction to make our region more accessible and responsive to residents and visitors with access needs. It is a high-level document that provides guidance across all councils within the region.

Council's Role

Section 10 of the **Local Government Act 2002** outlines the purpose of local government - "to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities in the present and for the future."

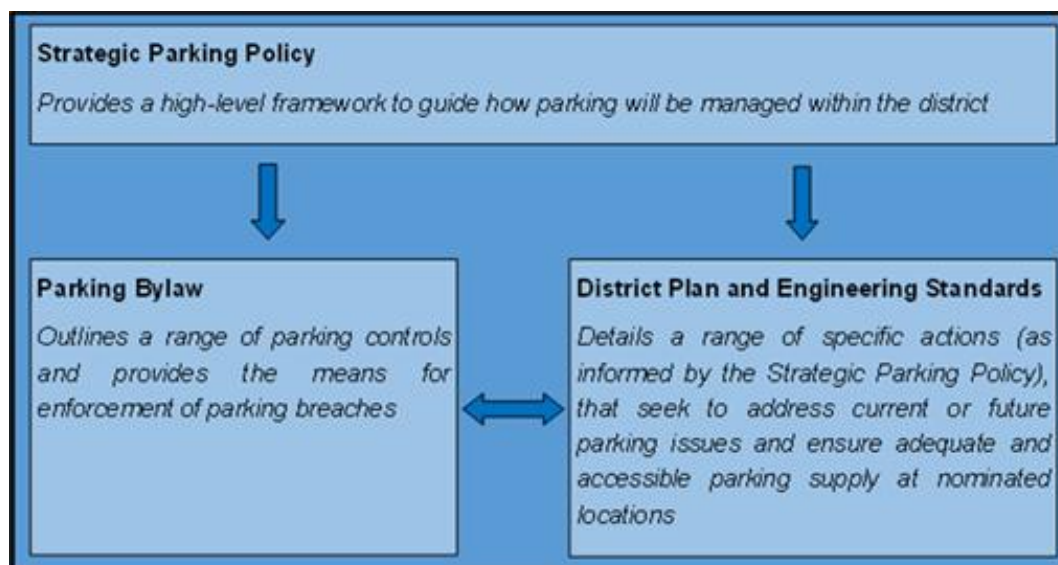
It is Council's role to provide infrastructure for the Far North region. As the population of the Far North grows, parking should be considered as part of any infrastructure development and align with strategies and plans.

Council regulates parking through:

- the **District Plan**
- the **Engineering Standards**
- the **Parking Bylaw.**

While these documents offer legal and technical controls, they are fragmented and not designed to provide a unified or forward-looking framework. This makes it difficult for Council staff and the public to access information and increases the risk of inconsistent decisions over time. This high-level Strategic Parking Policy has been

developed to provide a strategic framework to guide parking management regulation over time. The following diagram shows the relationship between Council's key parking management documents:



Other relevant Council policies include:

- **Far North Integrated Transport Strategy 2021 (ITS)**
Guides district transport improvements and responses to growth, with a 10-year plan focused on safety, accessibility, connectivity, and efficient investment. The ITS identifies a Parking Policy as vital to these aims.
- **Climate Action Policy 2023**
Promotes walking, cycling, and public transport over private vehicles, influencing parking availability and placement.
- **Open Spaces Policy**
In development.
- **Community Facilities Policy**
In development.

Key issues affecting parking in the Far North District

The following table identifies key issues that need to be addressed by Council when public parking is planned or managed.

[Table 1 – Key issues affecting parking in the district](#)

Population Growth	The Far North's population has grown by 18.7% over the past decade, with slower but continued increases projected. This puts ongoing pressure on parking resources.
Aging Population & Mobility Needs	The district has a higher and growing proportion of residents over 65, increasing demand for mobility parking. Current supply and accessibility of mobility parks are insufficient, particularly near essential services.
Tourism Impacts	Seasonal peaks in tourism cause significant parking shortages in key areas. Holiday homes temporarily boost the population, and future tourism growth will further strain parking capacity.
Traffic Congestion	Urban growth and limited alternative transport options contribute to congestion, with parking perceived as tight in town centres and around schools and essential

	services. Side streets are increasingly used as overflow, though recent surveys found occupancy rates below 70%.
Potential Negative Impacts of Expanding Parking	Increasing parking supply can promote further car use, consume valuable land, and reduce opportunities for public transport and streetscape improvements.
Streetscape & Parklets	Poorly placed parking erodes urban character. There is community interest in converting carparks to parklets, and current occupancy rates suggest this could be feasible in some locations.
Parking Prioritisation	Tour operators and long-term parkers monopolise key spaces. Equity and fair access must be considered, especially for vulnerable groups.
Public Transport Investment	Lack of local public transport increases parking demand, especially for commuters. Future services will require integrated parking solutions.
Reducing Emissions & Alternatives	Addressing climate change means reducing car use through alternative transport, car share schemes, and park-and-ride options.
Electric Vehicles	Growing EV use requires more charging infrastructure and dedicated parking spaces.
Event Management	Large events create spikes in demand; effective traffic and parking plans are essential for safety and access.
Costs & Equity	The financial burden of expanding and maintaining parking may outweigh the benefits, especially considering low-income households that may not directly benefit.
Parking Technology	New technologies can improve parking management, data collection, and public perceptions. Some examples of parking technology that may be considered by Council are: • <i>Payment kiosks</i>: Self-service parking machines offering chip and PIN payment, cash, and receipt options provide a simple, all-in-one solution that is easy to manage and helps reduce overheads. • <i>Smartphone parking apps</i>: Smartphone parking apps help users find parking locations, get directions, and manage payments, including extensions. They also track EV charging points and are evolving to combine parking and charging payments into a single, streamlined process. • <i>Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR)</i>: ANPR uses infrared-enabled cameras to capture vehicle number plates at all times of day, even from skewed angles or mirrored surfaces. This technology supports effective parking management, enforces payment, and ensures proper use of facilities. 24/7 monitoring reduces administration and provides reliable data to support enforcement.

	Digital technology can help Council identify parking patterns through data such as length of stay, occupancy rates, and payment trends supporting smarter management and operations. Before investing, Council should clearly define the problems to be solved and prioritise systems that integrate easily with others. For example, on-street parking machines, payment apps, and enforcement tools should work together in real time. A consistent system across Northland could benefit tourism and reduce maintenance costs. Public concerns about new technology should be addressed through clear communication about how it works and why it is being used. Digital technology enables Council to analyse parking patterns using data on stay durations, occupancy, and payments, leading to smarter management. Council should first define key issues and choose systems that integrate seamlessly such as connected parking machines, apps, and enforcement tools. Implementing a consistent system across Northland may lower maintenance costs and support tourism. Clear communication will help address public concerns about new technology.
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Parking implications of Council becoming a Tier 3 local authority

With the adoption of the Te Pātukurea – Kerikeri-Waipapa Spatial Plan, Kerikeri-Waipapa is now classified as an urban environment, and Council has become a Tier 3 local authority under the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD).

Amendment of District Plan requirements

Under section 3.38 of the NPS-UD, if a Tier 1, 2, or 3 territorial authority has objectives, policies, rules, or assessment criteria in its district plan that require a minimum number of car parks for a particular development, land use, or activity, it must amend its district plan to remove those requirements. Except in the case of accessible car parks, there will be no minimum car parking requirements across the district.

The NPS-UD car parking policies have the effect of removing minimum car parking rates from the district plans of tier 1, 2 and 3 territorial authorities. The purpose of this direction is to enable more housing and commercial developments, particularly in higher density areas where people do not necessarily need to own or use a car to access jobs, services, or amenities. It will enable urban space to be used for higher value purposes other than car parking and remove a significant cost for higher density developments. Developers may still choose to provide car parking in many areas, but the number of car parks will be driven by market demand.

The NPS-UD sets out the following direction for car parking.

Tier 1, 2 or 3 territorial authorities must remove district plan rules, assessment criteria, policies, and objectives that have the effect of setting minimum car parking rates.

Territorial authorities must remove the provisions from their district plans without using a public plan change process (Schedule 1 of the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) per section 55 (2A) of the RMA.

Territorial authorities must amend their district plans to remove car parking minimums as soon as practicable, no more than 18 months from the date of commencement of the NPS-UD.

Resource consents

Council can consider the effects of car parking supply and demand in resource consents, if an applicant chooses to provide parking.

Removing car parking minimums from district plans will essentially permit new developments to be built without providing any car parks, allowing developers to determine the amount of parking necessary.

Under section 104(2) of the RMA, when considering an application for a resource consent and forming an opinion on the actual and potential effects on the environment of allowing the activity, a consent authority has a discretion to disregard an adverse effect if a plan permits an activity with that effect.

Council when considering a resource consent may therefore choose to disregard any effects associated with a lack of car parking, given that the district plan would permit development without any car parks being provided. Council will have the ability to consider car parking effects for resource consents with a discretionary or non-complying activity status.

The NPS-UD does not affect engineering standards or the ability of territorial authorities to provide on-street car parking spaces. The ability to consider travel demand effects is not affected by the car parking policy and can continue to be managed by district plans.

Any existing car parking minimum rules in district plans will continue to remain operative, until territorial authorities amend their district plans to remove them. However, territorial authorities considering resource consents must, under section 104(1)(b) of the RMA, have regard to the car parking provisions in the NPS-UD from the date of commencement of the NPS-UD. Therefore, the NPS-UD car parking provisions will influence resource consents before district plans have been amended to remove car parking minimums.

Areas not affected by Tier 3 status

The car parking policy requires territorial authorities to remove rules, assessment criteria, policies, and objectives that have the effect of setting minimum parking rates. However, it does not impact the following:

- rules and engineering standards that set dimensions for vehicle manoeuvring and car parking spaces when a developer chooses to supply car parks
- parking for vehicles other than cars, such as bus and bike parking
- short term parking for service and utility spaces, such as loading bays and drop-off areas
- rules and other standards held under other statutes and regulations, such as the Building Code as it relates to access for car parks, accessible car parking, and fire service vehicle access
- rules which set the minimum rates of accessible car parks
- rules which set maximum parking rates
- managing the physical effects of car parking such as visual impacts, stormwater effects from impervious areas, and impacts on adjacent uses. Local authorities can continue to manage the effects in ways such as avoiding or managing surface level or front yard parking, and screening parking areas from adjacent activities.

District plans may contain a policy stating that comprehensive parking management plans, travel demand management and other methods are the appropriate means of managing the demand and supply effects of car parking. Policy 11(b) encourages the use of comprehensive parking management National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020 – car parking fact sheet 3 plans. Maximum parking rates can be used and are a legitimate tool for demand management and can support high density and public transport use objectives.

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.

Council should consider the effects a lack of car parking and manoeuvring areas may have on urban design outcomes. Car parking and manoeuvring may be a de-facto means of achieving building separation and outlook, which may be lost if there are no rules or assessment criteria to manage the relationship and separation between buildings, and a developer chooses not to provide car parking. This may be most evident in terraced housing developments.

Parking Restrictions

Time limits

Time limits on public parking are one of the tools Council may use to influence travel behaviour both in terms of when people travel and the mode of transport they choose. In areas where parking demand is high, encouraging turnover is essential to making the most efficient use of limited parking space. The goal is to ensure that parking spaces are well used but not constantly full, supporting both efficiency and fairness in access.

Time limits are already in place across parts of the Far North District. They are intended to manage how long shoppers and visitors stay in town centres. However, these limits can also restrict the range of activities people can undertake, especially if they need more time than allowed. When visitors are forced to move their vehicles mid-visit, this creates unnecessary traffic movements, contributing to congestion and increased vehicle emissions.

While time limits are often seen as effective in discouraging all-day commuter parking and encouraging turnover, they can also reduce the time people spend in town centres. This may discourage longer visits that support local businesses. Removing time limits in some areas could offer greater flexibility, allowing people to stay longer if they are willing to pay a premium for on-street parking.

Enforcement is another consideration. Time limits require frequent monitoring, which makes them more expensive to enforce than priced parking. In the Far North, a mix of time-limited and priced parking exists, with varying levels of enforcement. Time limits can also create a polarising experience; some people benefit from free short-term parking, while others may miss out entirely or receive infringement notices. These notices are often viewed negatively and can damage public perceptions of Council.

In some cases, combining time limits with pricing may be the most effective approach. This can prevent people from occupying premium spaces all day, even if they are willing to pay. In areas with lower parking demand, time limits are likely to be more appropriate than pricing, offering a low-cost way to manage turnover without deterring visitors.

Paid parking

Paid parking is managed through meters or ticketing systems and is used to influence travel behaviour and manage demand. It supports principles of consumer choice and prioritisation by encouraging turnover without relying on time limits. However, it is often perceived by the public as a revenue-generating tool rather than a demand management strategy.

Charging for parking ensures that users contribute to the cost of the space they occupy. It works well in prioritising high-value users, such as short-stay visitors, while discouraging long-stay users like commuters. The effectiveness of paid parking depends on setting the right price. If parking is overpriced, spaces may go unused; if underpriced, they may become saturated, preventing access for others. Research shows that parking demand is

elastic, particularly for long-stay users, who are more likely to seek cheaper alternatives or change their travel mode when pricing is introduced.

Paid parking is most effective in areas with peak occupancy above 70%. In such locations, pricing encourages natural turnover and reduces the need for time limits. Where demand is low, the appropriate price may be zero. Council's approach should ensure off-street parking remains cheaper than the most desirable on-street spaces, helping shift long-term parking to less congested areas and freeing up prime locations for short-term use.

Introducing paid parking requires careful planning. Council must assess current occupancy levels and conduct cost-benefit analyses to determine whether the investment in parking technology is justified. Although paid parking is not currently used in the Far North District other than a private paid car park in Paihia, ongoing data collection will help identify areas where it may become necessary. If implemented, pricing should be demand-responsive, adjusting rates based on occupancy levels to maintain availability and support turnover. Prices should remain low enough to retain the appeal of town centres and support local businesses.

Paid parking can reduce the public subsidy for driving and prompt people to consider alternative transport modes such as walking, cycling, public transport, or carpooling. It also avoids the polarising effects of time limits, which can result in either free parking or infringement notices. Enforcement of paid parking is generally more straightforward and less costly than time-limit enforcement.

Council may consider applying paid parking during busy night-time periods or special events, where demand spikes. Peak and off-peak pricing could be used to reflect variations in demand throughout the day.

Revenue from paid parking should be reinvested into public improvements, helping to create more attractive and accessible urban environments. This visible reinvestment can help justify parking charges and improve public acceptance.

If paid parking is introduced, it should be guided by principles that prioritise short-stay visitor access, maintain occupancy below 85%, and ensure pricing is market-driven rather than revenue-driven. Paid parking may be applied with or without time limits, depending on the context. Ultimately, the goal is to manage demand efficiently, support equitable access, and align parking management with broader transport and urban planning objectives.

Recommended Technologies

The Council recognises the value of modern parking technology to improve parking management, collect accurate data, and address public concerns.

CCTV Monitoring

CCTV is recommended for high-use and remote areas. It supports:

- Monitoring parking duration and identifying overstays
- Enforcing mobility parking compliance
- Surveillance of problem areas (e.g. maritime facilities, sports grounds, freedom camping zones)
- Real-time data sharing with other authorities (e.g. Police)
- Automated reporting and reduced need for manual data collection

CCTV will help identify areas needing timed or paid parking, or where low demand may allow alternative uses like parklets. Revenue from infringements may fund further CCTV expansion.

Payment Kiosks

Self-service machines offering chip and pin, cash, and receipt options provide a simple, cost-effective solution for managing parking payments.

Smartphone Parking Apps

Apps assist users in locating parking, navigating to spaces, and managing payments. They also track EV charging points and aim to integrate parking and charging payments into a single process.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

ANPR uses infrared cameras to capture vehicle plates in all conditions. It supports:

- 24/7 monitoring
- Accurate enforcement
- Reliable data collection for occupancy and usage trends

Data Use and Integration

Digital tools provide insights into parking patterns, including length of stay, occupancy, and payment trends.

Parking Occupancy Study 2023 Summary

In November and December 2023, Council staff conducted a Parking Occupancy Study to establish a baseline of how parking is utilised in the Far North District, enabling evidence-based decisions on parking management, bylaw enforcement, and future investment.

Objectives

The study sought to:

- Establish baseline data on parking utilisation
- Assess occupancy levels across high-use streets
- Identify spillover impacts on residential areas
- Evaluate the potential impact of parklets
- Test the effectiveness of timed parking (target 85% optimal use)
- Assess disability parking utilisation.

Scope and Method

Parking was surveyed in six towns, Kaitaia, Kaikohe, Kerikeri, Paihia, Kawakawa, and Mangonui, for three separate days across a week (two weekdays and one weekend per town). Occupancy was recorded by percentage of spaces filled, with separate tracking of disability parks.

Constraints

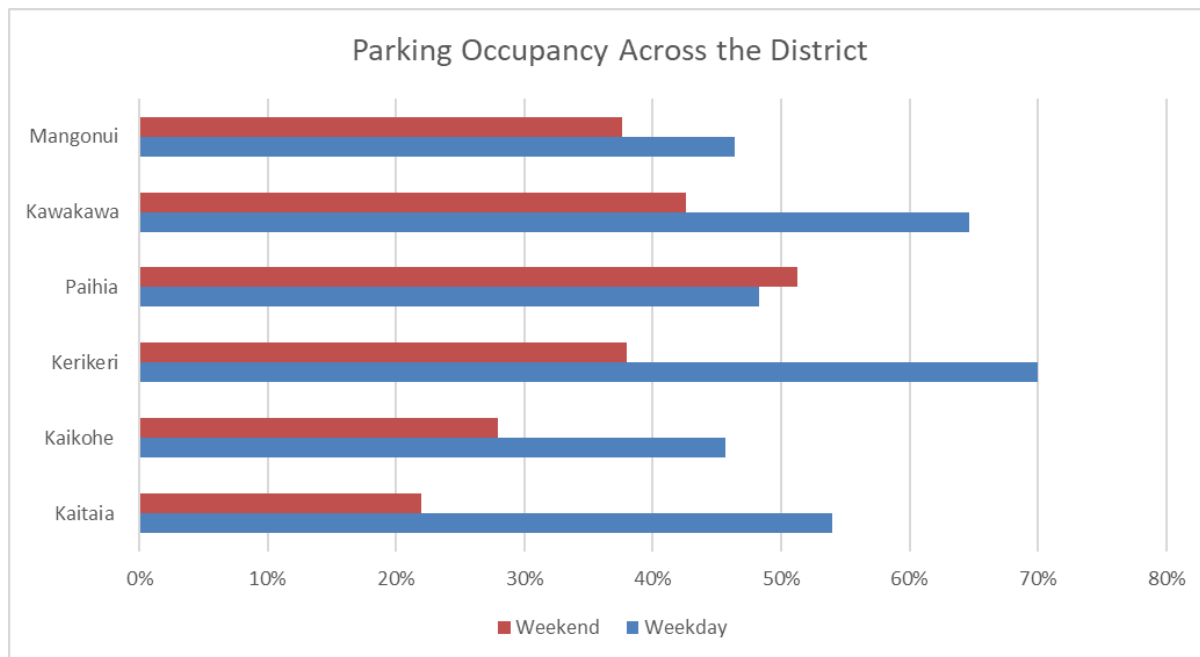
- Limited to three survey days per location, during the pre-Christmas period
- Seasonal and peak visitor impacts (e.g., summer holidays) not fully captured
- Weekday variations outside the survey period may not be represented.

Key Findings

Parking patterns vary widely across towns, reflecting differences in commuter use, tourism, and local activity. Most centres operate well below the optimal 85% occupancy, indicating spare capacity, though Kerikeri and Paihia approach higher demand. Disability parking is mostly underused, with isolated hotspots.

District-wide, occupancy varies significantly by town. Weekday demand is generally higher, except in Paihia where tourism drives strong weekend demand.

Figure 1: Average Occupancy Across the District



In Kerikeri, the highest occupancy overall (54% average, 70% weekdays). Cobham Court peaked at 85% weekday occupancy.

In Paihia, there was consistent demand weekdays (48%) and weekends (51%). Short-stay and paid parks are heavily used; Williams Road is the busiest Road.

In Kawakawa, there is 54% average occupancy: higher on weekdays (65%). Disability parks, particularly Gillies Road is heavily used (75%).

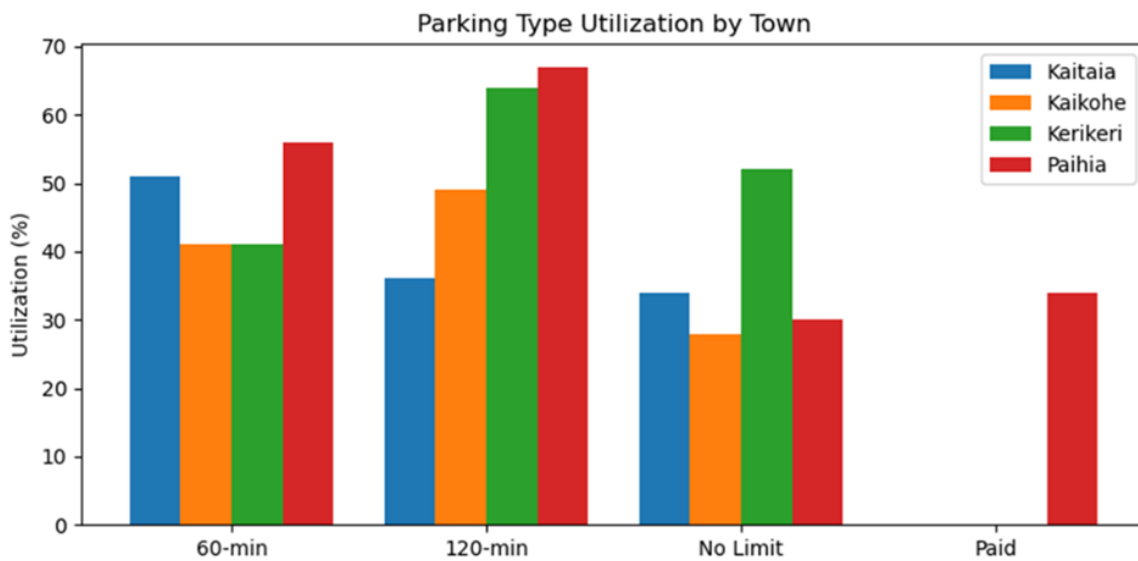
Mangonui: 42–46% occupancy, peaking at midday. Disability parks unused during survey.

Kaitaia: Lowest overall occupancy (38%); weekdays higher (54%) than weekends (22%). Melba Street reached 85%.

Kaikohe: Low occupancy (37% overall); weekday peak 63% at 1pm. New World carpark busiest.

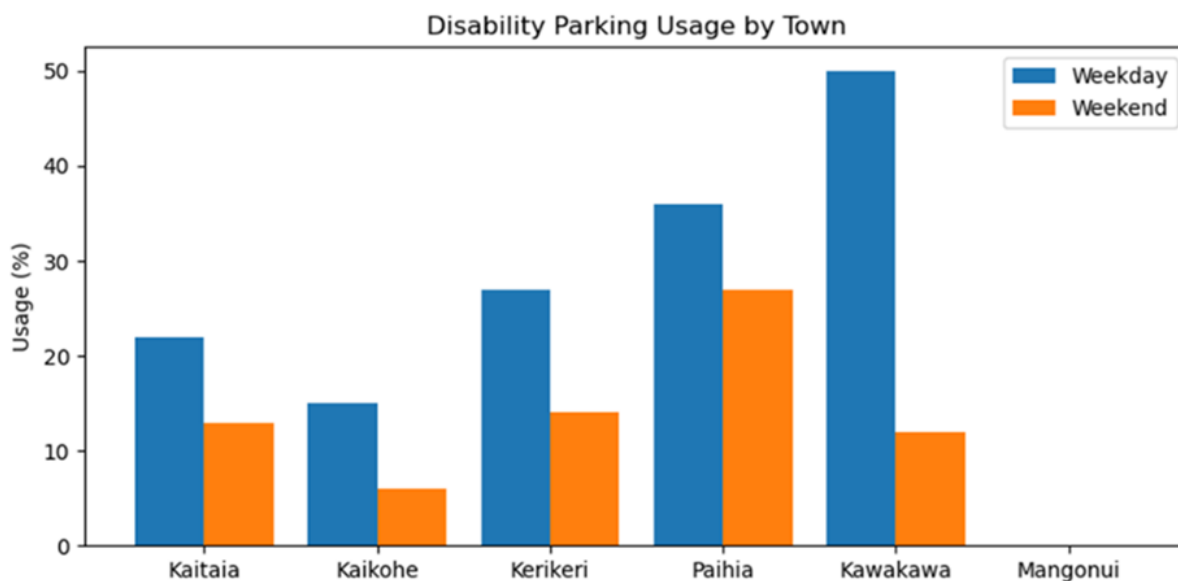
According to the data, excepting Melba Street in Kaitaia and Cobham Court in Kerikeri, parklets could be considered in all six towns surveyed as they are below the optimal parking occupancy levels of 85%.

Figure 2: Parking Type Utilisation



Disability Parking is generally underutilised across the district (0–27%), except in Kawakawa.

Figure 3: Disability Parking Usage



Conclusion

The parking occupancy analysis across the district's urban areas reveals varied results across the district. The results are influenced by factors such as weekdays versus weekends, peak hours, and location-specific demand. Kaitaia, Kaikohe, Kerikeri, Paihia, and Kawakawa all exhibit varying levels of parking demand. While Paihia exhibits consistent demand throughout the week. This illustrates that each urban area has different parking needs and availability.

This study underscores the necessity of a comprehensive parking strategy aligned with the Integrated Transport Plan's vision for a safer, more accessible transport system.