Parking Sensors
Frequently Asked Questions

City of Newcastle

What is City of Newcastle's approach to parking?

In 2019, City of Newcastle (CN) adopted a Parking Plan which set a clear goal to manage parking to improve the amenity of our streets, support accessibility of our commercial precincts and to encourage mode shift to active and public transport.

Our Parking Implementation Plan sets timeframes and assigns responsibilities for projects and initiatives to improve the management of parking in our city. CN is currently working on several actions identified in the Implementation Plan, including a review of existing timed parking restrictions across the city centre, and the installation of smart parking sensors.

What are the benefits of smart parking sensors?

CN uses proven technology, innovation, data analysis, and the Newcastle Parking Management Framework to ensure parking restrictions are appropriate for the local context and support the needs of local business, residents, and visitors.

The use of smart technology is identified in the CN Parking Plan as an effective tool to provide data on parking occupancy and turnover. Data collected will be used to better understand challenges and identify opportunities to optimise parking.

Smart parking sensors also have the capacity to monitor the length of time a vehicle stays in a parking bay, which will assist CN to better manage public parking in high-demand areas and reduce congestion associated with drivers looking for a place to park.

Ensuring the steady turnover of parking spaces helps to make parking more readily available for customers, visitors, and residents. It also ensures the supply of public carparking is managed in a fair and equitable manner.

How do smart parking sensors work?

Smart parking sensors are small electronic devices which are installed into the road pavement. The sensors detect a vehicle and record the time a vehicle enters and leaves a parking space. The sensors do not record any images or identifiable information.

The time limit starts when a driver enters a parking space, not when they leave the vehicle. This means if a driver sits in their car for 10 minutes after they park, that time will count towards their total time limit in the space.

Sensors are installed below the surface and are covered to ensure that they don't pose a trip or cycle hazard.

What data will smart parking sensors provide?

Smart parking sensors provide data on individual parking occurrences, which enables us to better understand parking behaviours within specific areas.

Some examples of the information we would analyse are:

- Occupancy rates for parking spaces over various periods of time:
    - Occupancy trends by time of day will enable us to understand if demand is constant throughout the day or if there are times during the day which are more popular.
    - Occupancy trends across days of the week will highlight if any day(s) of the week attract higher or lower demand.
- Changes in the average length of stay over time e.g. per day, week, month, quarter or year.

This information can be used to test if our current restrictions are aligned with actual usage, or to determine the most appropriate parking restrictions for the area.

Where are smart parking sensors planned to be installed?

Since 2018, we have trialled smart parking sensors to collect data on parking at beachside carparks and to manage parking at the Strzelecki lookout.

Three high demand commercial locations have also been selected as planned sites for smart parking sensors in 2023, including Darby Street, Beaumont Street and Hunter Street. These areas are within existing exclusion zones for resident and visitor permits.

Following support from the Darby Street business community in an online survey*, CN will now progress with the installation of parking sensors in Darby Street precinct.

From May 2023, sensors will be installed in existing parallel and angled parking spaces on:

- Darby Street between Bull Street and Queen Street
- Council Street between Darby Street and the Council Street carpark exit
- The Council Street public carpark, behind Hotel Delany

Additional locations for parking sensors are under review for commercial precincts in Beaumont Street, Hamilton, and selected areas of Hunter Street, Newcastle.

Installation is planned to occur later this year in Hamilton, with areas in the Hunter Street precinct in Newcastle under consideration for installation in line with current infrastructure works in this area.

**An online survey conducted by the City of Newcastle in April 2023, found that at least 60% of businesses surveyed in the Darby Street and Beaumont Street commercial precincts support the installation of parking sensors.*

What engagement is CN undertaking?

In March/April 2023 CN sought feedback from businesses about the installation of smart parking sensors in precincts that are zoned for commercial use including, Newcastle City Centre, Darby Street, Cooks Hill, and Hamilton commercial precincts via an online survey.

The installation of smart parking sensors has also been discussed with members of the Newcastle City Business Improvement Association and the Hamilton Business Improvement Association.

A follow up survey with businesses will be completed six months after installation to help us understand how the sensors are working and if they can be improved.

Should you have any other feedback, please complete the Customer Request form or call 02 4974 2000.

Parking obligations

Obligations as a driver have not changed.

Drivers must only park for the maximum time shown on the signposting. Parking for longer than the time shown is breaching the parking rules and may result in a penalty notice being issued.

You must also pay for parking in ticket/phone parking zones. Payment should be made as soon as possible after you've arrived in the space.

Parking with mobility permits

The installation of smart parking sensors has not changed the obligations or the rights of drivers with mobility permits. Parking officers always check the vehicle to see whether a valid permit is displayed in accordance with the conditions of use.

Are smart parking sensors accurate?

Smart parking sensors are extremely accurate. They record the exact time that a vehicle enters and leaves a parking space.

Sensors provide a more consistent and accurate approach to parking management by encouraging drivers to comply with the signposted parking restrictions.

In-ground smart parking sensors are the simplest and most widespread method used for monitoring parking availability and are currently used in several cities and towns across New South Wales, and Australia more broadly.