

**BEFORE AN INDEPENDENT HEARINGS PANEL
OF THE HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL**

IN THE MATTER of the Resource Management Act
1991 (**RMA**)

AND

IN THE MATTER of an application for resource
consent for the redevelopment of the
former Hamilton Hotel building at 170
Victoria Street, Hamilton CBD.

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE OF RUSSELL ALECK BRANDON
ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT**

**TRANSPORTATION
1 October 2019**

1. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 1.1 My full name is Russell Aleck Brandon.
- 1.2 I hold a Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) with First Class Honours and a Master of Engineering Studies (Transportation) with First Class Honours, from the University of Auckland. I am a member of Engineering New Zealand and a member of the Engineering New Zealand Transportation Technical
- 1.3 I am employed as a Senior Transportation Engineer at Flow Transportation Specialists Limited (**Flow**), and I have worked for Flow for four years. Along with my previous positions, I have over six years' experience in traffic engineering and transport planning.
- 1.4 I have a broad range of experience as the lead transportation consultant and advisor for traffic engineering design and transportation planning associated with major developments, including for HLC, Housing New Zealand, Oceania Group, Avanda Group, and Fletcher Living. My experience includes mixed use developments and hotels, and also residential, commercial, and hospital developments.
- 1.5 I have also prepared and reviewed Construction Traffic Management Plans (**CTMP**) for developments in Auckland, many of which have been located in complex environments such as the city centre, or other town centres, similar to the context of the Proposal.
- 1.6 I have been engaged by the Applicant to provide traffic engineering and transport planning advice and assessment for the proposed Waikato Regional Theatre development (**Proposal**) since February 2018. My involvement to date includes:
- a) A review of the concept design, providing advice on parking provision, access for all modes of travel, transport related design matters, and servicing and loading;
 - b) Advice on transport accessibility and design matters relating to the developed design; and
 - c) Preparation of the Integrated Transport Assessment (**ITA**) to support the resource consent application for the proposal, and responses to the subsequent

Section 92 requests for further information from Hamilton City Council
(Council).

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

2.1 My qualifications as an expert are set out above. I confirm that I have read the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses contained in the Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and have complied with it in preparing this evidence. I confirm that the issues addressed in this evidence are within my area of expertise and I have not omitted material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my evidence.

3. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

3.1 I have been asked to provide evidence in relation to transport matters relating to the Proposal.

3.2 As noted above, I prepared an ITA (November 2018) which was lodged with the application. Subsequent to this I prepared Section 92 Responses dated March 2019 and July 2019. I have read the submissions received on the application and the Council Report.

3.3 My evidence will address the following aspects of the resource consent, which are within my area of expertise:

- a) Summary of Transportation Assessment;
- b) Transportation effects during construction;
- c) Transportation effects during operation;
- d) Comments on the Hamilton City Council Staff Report;
- e) Consideration of submissions; and
- f) Conclusion.

4. RELEVANT FACTS AND CONTEXT

4.1 In preparing this evidence, I rely on the information contained within my ITA and subsequent Section 92 responses. I have therefore not repeated the detailed assessment contained within these documents.

4.2 In preparing this evidence, I rely on the description of the site location and Proposal provided in the planning evidence prepared by Mr Mark Vinall, and the Proposal plans prepared in the evidence of David Pugh. I therefore do not repeat any of this information. For reference, I note that the main transportation related elements of the Proposal include:

- a) A basement containing seven car parking spaces, with access from Sapper Moore-Jones Place;
- b) A loading dock for the theatre, accessed off Sapper Moore-Jones Place;
- c) An upgrade of Sapper Moore-Jones Place to ensure it is suitable for loading dock access, and to improve general access to the theatre;
- d) Implementation of P10 parking on Victoria Street in front of the Proposal site, to accommodate day to day pick up and drop off and loading activity associated with the food and beverage tenancies, the hotel, and the theatre; and
- e) An Operational Traffic Management Plan (**OTMP**) to manage drop off/pick up and pedestrian demand generated by the proposal, and truck access to the loading dock.

5. SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT

Transport Accessibility

5.1 Located within the Hamilton City Centre and adjacent to the Waikato River Path, the Proposal site has excellent pedestrian access. In particular, I note that Victoria Street is a high amenity/quality pedestrian environment, with wide footpaths, regular pedestrian crossing points, and a speed limit of 30 km/h.

- 5.2** There are limited existing cycle facilities that link to the Proposal site. However, the proposed Hamilton Biking Plan indicates a route along Victoria Street, which would improve cycle accessibility to the Proposal site.
- 5.3** The Proposal site has good public transport access. The Hamilton Transport Centre, the terminus of most of the city bus services, is located within a ten-minute walk. Victoria Street and other adjacent streets also form part of multiple bus routes with bus stops nearer to the site than the Transport Centre.
- 5.4** The Proposal site is located within close proximity of Hamilton's arterial and strategic road network, and therefore has good vehicle access.

Transport Design

- 5.5** There are non-compliant aspects of the proposed basement ramp gradient¹. However, I am of the view that this will not affect the safe operation of the vehicle access.
- 5.6** The basement vehicle access does not provide the desired visibility splays at the property boundary. Again, I am of the view that this will not affect the safe operation of the vehicle access.

Parking Effects

- 5.7** As per Table 15-1B of the Operative Hamilton District Plan October 2018 (District Plan), developments within the Central City Zone are not required to provide any on-site car parking.
- 5.8** I have undertaken an assessment of existing public parking provision in the Hamilton City Centre. Within a five-minute walk of the Proposal site, it appears that there are around 2,250 public car parking spaces, and a further 1,300 within a ten-minute walk.
- 5.9** I have estimated that the peak parking demand generated by the Proposal could be around 410-650 cars², most of this is associated with the theatre if a show or event is

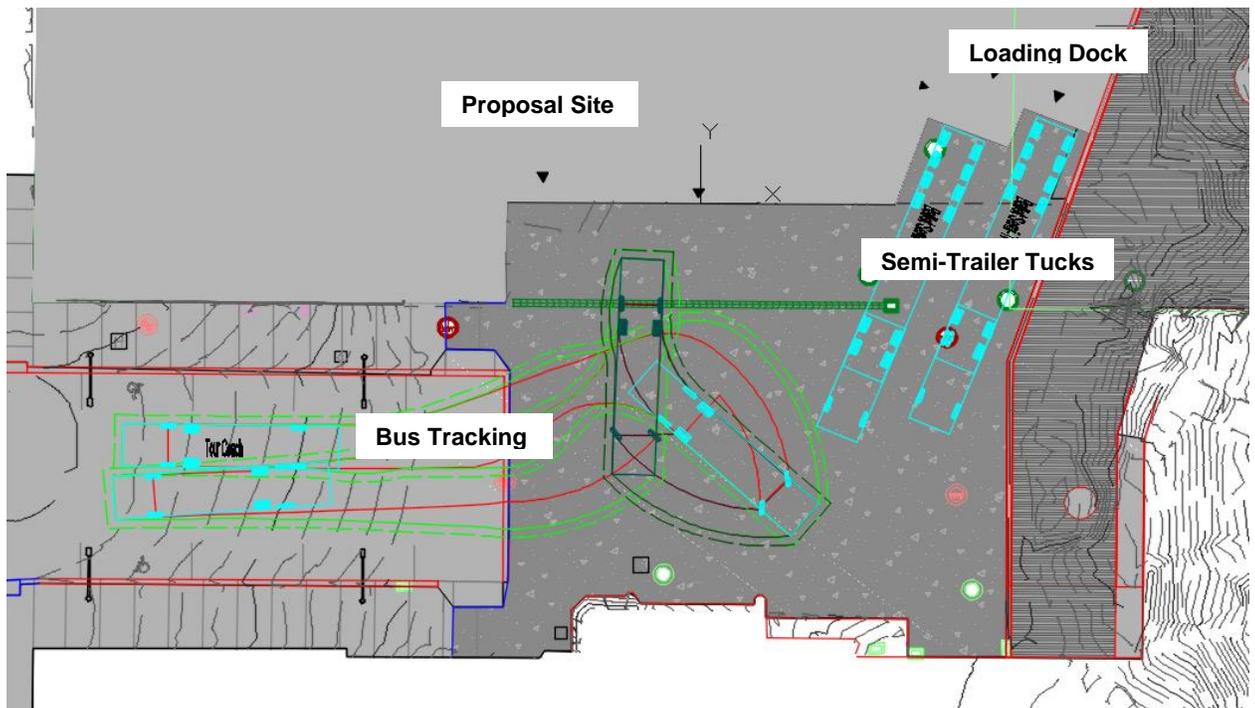
¹ AS/NZS2890.1:2004 requires a maximum gradient of 1:20 for the first 6 m of the ramp sloping away from the footpath. The proposed gradient is 1:6.

² In section 8.1.1 of the ITA, I estimated a peak parking demand of 410 cars. In the Section 92 response, I updated the traffic assessment to be more conservative. This revised assessment indicates a peak parking demand of around 650 cars.

occurring. I am of the opinion that the existing parking provision in the Hamilton City Centre is sufficient to cater for the additional demand generated by the Proposal. Peak theatre car parking demand is unlikely to coincide with the peak demand of workers in the city. The Proposal includes the conversion of the 18 m long (three parking spaces) P10 Loading Zone/Taxi Parking bay on Victoria Street in front of the Proposal site to P10 at all times parking. I am of the view that this is sufficient to cater for day-to-day hotel pick up/drop off parking demand, as well as general loading and servicing demand generated by the hotel and food and beverage tenancies. In this regard, I also note that there are multiple other loading zones provided on Victoria Street in this area. I have shown all the proposed permanent on-street parking changes in **Appendix A** of my evidence. The parking changes on Sapper Moore-Jones Place can be finalised as part of the detailed design for the upgrade.

- 5.10** In the Section 92 request, Council raised a query regarding accessible parking in the area. In response to this, I noted that the traffic management required for large trucks will result in period of time where this parking may be temporary unavailable, and suggested possible locations for it to be relocated to. I have shown possible accessible parking locations in Appendix A of my evidence, but I note that this can be amended and finalised in consultation with Council and other accessibility stakeholders before the Council Bylaw is amended to incorporate the changes.
- 5.11** In the Section 92 request, Council raised a query regarding coach parking and drop off/pick up. In response to this, I noted that no specific coach parking will be provided, and that the P10 parking, temporary drop off parking, or other nearby loading areas, or existing bus parking on Grantham Street or Caro Street can be utilised. I also noted that coaches that pull into Sapper Moore-Jones Place will be able to turn around even if there are trucks parked in the loading dock. This tracking is shown in Figure 1. Further tracking can be provided with the finalised detailed design.

Figure 1: Sapper Moore-Jones Place Bus Turnaround Tracking



5.12 As outlined in the ITA and Section 92 responses, additional temporary drop off/pick up parking is proposed to help accommodate additional demand generated by people being dropped off and picked up on Victoria Street for theatre shows/events. The following is proposed:

- a) Three additional drop off/pick up spaces for 50% to 75% capacity shows; and
- b) Six additional spaces for 75% plus capacity shows.

I am of the view that these additional temporary drop off/pick up spaces will be adequate to cater for additional demand. Temporary parking changes are covered in the Operational Traffic Effects section of my evidence.

5.13 Bicycle parking will be provided for staff and visitors to the site. The provision for staff will be compliant with the requirement in the District Plan. However, the District Plan requires 260 bicycle parking spaces for theatre patrons alone. Only 26 visitor bicycle parking spaces are proposed. I consider that that this will be sufficient to cater for current levels of demand. Additional bicycle parking can be added in the area if demand increases in future.

General Traffic Effects

- 5.14** Based on the assessment I have undertaken, I anticipate that the Proposal will not generate any noticeable traffic effects during weekday commuter peak hours. Peak traffic generation by the Proposal will be shortly before and after theatre shows/events, and shows and events do not typically begin or end during weekday commuter peak hours.
- 5.15** The additional traffic generated by the proposed hotel will be minimal as only 22 rooms are proposed. The proposed food and beverage tenancies have a Gross Floor Area (**GFA**) less than what was previously provided on the site. I therefore consider it likely that the proposed food and beverage GFA will generate less traffic than the previous food and beverage tenancies on the site.
- 5.16** Given that there is no public onsite parking proposed, the traffic demand generated by the Proposal will generally be distributed around the city to where parking is available, making the effects during peak times less noticeable. Drop offs and pick-ups at the Proposal site will generate some congestion on Victoria Street. However, this will be short lived, limited to shortly before and after a show or event. I am of the view that any traffic congestion caused by the Proposal is acceptable given that Victoria Street is not intended to function as a thoroughfare through the Hamilton City Centre, and it will generally occur outside of commuter peak hours.
- 5.17** Given the abundance of public car parking within a short walk of the site, I also anticipate that unless people have accessibility needs, most people are unlikely to drive to the Proposal site before and after attending a show/event. Rather they will go directly to their chosen parking area, and walk to and from the theatre. People are even more likely to behave in this way if Victoria Street is congested before and after an event/show.

Servicing and Loading

- 5.18** A truck loading dock is proposed for the theatre on Sapper Moore-Jones Place. I have assessed the layout of this loading dock, and layout and gradient of the proposed changes to Sapper Moor-Jones Place, and the tracking of the trucks turning and

reversing. Overall, I am of the view that the proposed loading dock can be accessed safely.

5.19 I provided tracking with the ITA showing semi-trailers, large rigid trucks, and medium rigid trucks accessing the loading bay. This tracking is shown on the existing Sapper Moore-Jones Place streetscape, and I note that now it is proposed to upgrade the streetscape. In this regard, I note that the proposed upgrade does not change the space available, so my previous tracking assessment in the ITA still demonstrates that the loading dock will be accessible by the trucks required. Final tracking plans can be provided with the final detailed design of the Sapper Moore-Jones Place upgrade for Council approval.

5.20 Loading and servicing associated with the hotel and food and beverage GFA can be accommodated by the proposed P10 parking, and other loading zones in the area.

Safety Effects

5.21 My review of the recorded crashes in the vicinity of the Proposal site reveals a trend of pedestrians being hit on Victoria Street in the early hours of the morning. The Proposal is unlikely to generate high volumes of pedestrians or vehicles on Victoria Street at this time, and exacerbate this issue.

5.22 Overall, given that Victoria Street is a low speed, high amenity/quality pedestrian environment, I consider that the Proposal will not create any road safety issues, provided that the traffic operation procedures are followed as outlined in Operational Traffic Effects section of my evidence.

6. SAPPER MOOR JONES PLACE UPGRADE

6.1 As part of the Proposal, it is proposed to regrade and convert the lower half of Sapper Moor-Jones Place into a shared space. This is to improve pedestrian accessibility in this area, and allow for better truck access to the theatre loading dock.

6.2 The loss of on-street parking on Sapper Moore-Jones Place is shown in Appendix A of my evidence. All existing vehicle accesses to neighbouring properties will be retained.

6.3 I have reviewed the proposed plans, vehicle tracking, and operational procedures for the loading dock access, and I am confident that Sapper Moore-Jones Place will continue to operate safely after the upgrade has been constructed.

6.4 I also note that the detailed plans for the Sapper Moore-Jones Place changes will be subject to Council approval.

7. CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC EFFECTS

7.1 A draft Construction Management Plan (**CMP**) has been prepared by Southbase Construction. In terms of traffic this CMP outlines the timing of construction, how pedestrians and general traffic will be safely managed, and how construction traffic will be managed.

7.2 The CMP proposes keeping the footpath on Victoria Street open during most of the construction period, protected by a gantry. This is common practice for construction sites in urban environments such as this, and I am confident that pedestrian safety can be maintained.

7.3 The footpath on the northern side of Sapper Moore-Jones Place is proposed to be closed and incorporated into the construction site. A lot of construction activity will be undertaken from this side of the Proposal site, therefore closing the footpath will help ensure pedestrian safety in this area. The access to the Waikato River Path at the end of Sapper Moore-Jones Place will generally remain open during construction.

7.4 It is proposed to temporarily remove all on-street parking on Sapper Moore-Jones Place during the construction period. The on-street parking on the northern side is proposed to be incorporated into the construction site, and the on-street parking on the southern side removed to allow for two-way traffic movement to be retained, and to retain access to neighbouring properties. I am of the view that the temporary removal of these 12 parking spaces will not create any unreasonable effects, particularly when noting that some of these spaces are proposed to be removed permanently as part of the Sapper Moore-Jones Place upgrade.

7.5 Three parking spaces on Victoria Street are proposed to be converted to a construction traffic waiting zone. These are on the site frontage, and the use of these spaces by

construction traffic will not have any noticeable impact on surrounding properties. It is also beneficial to provide such a waiting space, so construction traffic does not wait in the road lanes, blocking through traffic.

- 7.6** A construction loading zone is proposed within the construction site, accessed off Sapper Moore-Jones Place. With the footpath closed, I am confident that this loading zone can be accessed and used safely through the construction period.
- 7.7** An additional loading zone is proposed on Embassy Plaza, within the construction site. Access to this loading area will be over the Victoria Street footpath, which is proposed to remain open throughout construction. Management of pedestrians and general traffic will be required at the times when access to this loading area is needed. With a detailed CTMP in place, I am confident that access to this loading area can be provided safely.
- 7.8** It is likely that closures of Victoria Street and Sapper Moore-Jones Place to pedestrian and vehicle traffic will be required for short periods of time, related to specific, one-off activities, for example crane arrival. These closures will be covered by specific Traffic Management Plans (**TMP**), which will require approval from Council. Similarly, the pedestrian access to the Waikato River Path via Embassy Plaza and Sapper Moore-Jones Place may require occasional closure, which can be covered by a TMP. Given the layout of the road network, I anticipate that suitable detours can be put in place for both vehicles and pedestrians during these closures
- 7.9** There is no space for construction staff or contractor parking on site, therefore all parking will be in public parking areas.
- 7.10** The CMP has identified the surrounding neighbours directly affected by the Proposal construction, including residential properties. The CMP has been developed to minimise disruption on these neighbours.
- 7.11** Proposed Conditions 64 to 70 sets out the framework for a CTMP. This CTMP will be subject to approval by Council. Overall, I am confident that construction of the Proposal undertaken in accordance with the CTMP can be undertaken safely and disruption to the surrounding road network is minimised as much as possible.

8. OPERATIONAL TRAFFIC EFFECTS

8.1 In my response to Council Section 92 requests, I have provided a framework for an OTMP, covering:

- a) Semi-Trailer truck access to the theatre loading dock;
- b) Temporary drop off/pick up parking for theatre shows/events; and
- c) Pedestrian management after theatre shows/events.

8.2 Proposed Conditions 133-136 sets out the requirements for the OTMP. This OTMP will be subject to approval by Council and can be amended as required. Overall, I am confident that an OTMP that adheres to the framework I provided and the proposed condition will ensure that semi-trailers can access the loading dock safely, that there will be sufficient drop off/pick up space for theatre shows, and that people can exit the theatre onto Victoria Street safely after a show.

8.3 I note however that Condition 133(a)(vi) stipulates that semi-trailer truck movements should not occur 7 am to 9 am and 4 pm to 6 pm weekdays, and 10 pm to 4 am Fridays and Saturdays. I assume that this is to reduce the impact of semi-trailer truck arrivals and departures on peak commuter traffic, and avoid having trucks on Victoria Street during times when there is most likely to be higher volumes of bar patrons on the street. I understand that due to show timetables, trucks will often be required to leave immediately after a show has finished and all the equipment loaded back into the truck, in order to make the next show. This may require trucks to leave or arrive during the times specified above.

8.4 With the OTMP in place, I consider that the arrival and departure of a semi-trailer truck can be safely managed at all times of day and the time restrictions are not required. Specifically I note that the flagmen guiding the truck will be able to manage pedestrians and vehicles while the truck is manoeuvring. I also note that, where possible, arrival and departure times will likely be scheduled to avoid peak traffic times anyway.

8.5 I also consider it to be important that the need for additional temporary drop off/pick up parking, and post theatre show/event management is able to be reviewed in future once the theatre has become established within the city centre and travel behaviours have

settled. Given that the theatre is located on the main street of the city centre, and that Victoria Street is a low speed and high amenity/quality pedestrian environment, I anticipate that the active management of drop off/pick up parking and pedestrian activity will not be an ongoing requirement. I am not aware of other theatres of similar or larger size in city centres in New Zealand, such as the Civic and ASB theatres in Auckland, or the St James in Wellington, having such requirements.

- 8.6** I note that being located in the city centre, adjacent sites are also likely to be redeveloped in future which may change the transport environment, and change the need for or the requirements of the OTMP. As such I consider it important that any requirements for an OTMP remain flexible.

9. COMMENTS ON THE COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

- 9.1** I have reviewed Council's section 42A report, including the recommendations made by Council's reporting officer and by Council's transport engineer, Alastair Black.

- 9.2** With the recommended conditions, Council's transport engineer considers that the transportation effects of the Proposal can be managed to an acceptable level, and will be no more than minor.

- 9.3** Mr Black agrees that the effects of construction on the surrounding road network can be suitably managed by a CTMP, noting that adjoining residents and businesses can have input via the proposed Neighbourhood Liaison Group.

- 9.4** Mr Black agrees that the traffic effects of the Proposal are acceptable, and that there is sufficient public parking in the area to accommodate additional demand. He also recommends that the Travel Demand Management Plan is made readily available to patrons, and included on the theatre website. I support this recommendation.

- 9.5** Mr Black agrees with the general framework for the OTMP, and supports the proposal to review the need for both the drop off and pick up parking, and for the post show pedestrian management included in future.

- 9.6** Mr Black has recommended that the accessible parking on Sapper Moore-Jones Place remains in its current location, and he has concerns about how the proposed shared space will be designed and managed in terms of loading dock and neighbouring property

accesses. However, he accepts that these concerns can be addressed in the detailed design of the street upgrade. All the proposed permanent parking changes can be finalised with Council as part of the bylaw change process.

9.7 Mr Black has proposed that buses/coaches parking on Victoria Street should be avoided, and that buses/ coaches instead park on Grantham Street and Caro Street. I accept this is appropriate. He also recommends that bus/coach use of Sapper Moore-Jones Place be avoided unless tracking can be provided showing that there is sufficient space for manoeuvring. I have shown in Figure 1 that this tracking can work, but agree that use of Sapper Moore-Jones Place by buses should not generally be encouraged.

9.8 In terms of loading dock access on Sapper Moore-Jones Place, Mr Black has requested further vehicle tracking. Vehicle tracking was provided in Appendix A of the ITA, including rigid truck tracking. This tracking was based on the existing layout of Sapper Moore-Jones Place as opposed to the revised upgrade plan. However, the space available will remain the same after the proposed upgrade, therefore I am of the opinion that this tracking is adequate to demonstrate that there is sufficient space, and to demonstrate what on-street parking is affected. Additional tracking details can be provided if needed as part of the OTMP and detailed design of Sapper Moore-Jones Place, which will be required as conditions, and subject to Council approval.

10. CONSIDERATION OF SUBMISSIONS

10.1 A number of submitters commented on the traffic effects of the Proposal. As I have outlined in my evidence, I believe that the traffic effects of the Proposal on the wider network during peak commute hours will not be noticeable. There may be some congestion on Victoria Street before the start and after the end of theatre shows/events. However, I am of the opinion that this is acceptable when considering that Victoria Street is not intended to function as a main thoroughfare in the Hamilton City Centre, and it will generally occur outside of commuter peak hours.

10.2 A number of submitters have raised issues regarding the effects and management of construction traffic. A CTMP requirement is proposed as a condition, and will be subject to review by Council. Based on the information provided in the CMP, and the proposed condition, I believe that the effects of construction traffic can be suitably managed.

10.3 Some submitters have raised concerns regarding a loss of pedestrian safety resulting from the Proposal. Pedestrian facilities on Victoria Street will not be affected by the Proposal, and facilities on Sapper Moore-Jones Place will be improved by the Proposal. Use of the theatre loading dock will be managed to ensure truck manoeuvres do not affect pedestrian safety. This will be set out in the OTMP. As such, I consider that there will be no permanent negative effects on pedestrian safety as a result of the Proposal.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 In conclusion, I confirm that:

- a) That the additional traffic generated by the Proposal can be accommodated by the surrounding road network without any significant adverse effects to function or safety;
- b) That the proposed Sapper Moore-Jones Place upgrade will not affect the safe or efficient operation of the street;
- c) With a CTMP in place, construction traffic effects can be suitably managed, minimising disruption and helping to ensure the adjacent road network continues to operate safely for all road users; and
- d) With an OTMP in place, the use of the theatre loading dock by large trucks, and traffic/pedestrians before and after a theatre show/event can be safely and efficiently managed.

Russell Aleck Brandon

1 October 2019

APPENDIX A – PROPOSED ON-STREET PARKING CHANGES

