

Car Parking and Canopy Scenario

The mayor and councillors of Hobbiton have been concerned for a while that people aren't coming into the city anymore for a range of reasons. Businesses are closing and the city centre seems to be in a spiral of decline.

High on the list of complaints to councillors is that "it's impossible to get a park", and, when one does, the parking time limits are so short they invariably end up receiving a ticket from the council parking ranger, Mr Meena.

Mayor Han Dowl and the councillors are determined to arrest the decline and bring the city back to life. The mayor wishes to comply with the state's urban forest canopy target of 40% because he thinks heat is another major deterrent to visitors in the city.

The council owns a two-storey 100 space public car park in a central location between shops, which is sorely in need of renovation.

A successful developer, Mr Ed Vansmen, has approached the council strategic planner, Ms Dee Zein, to discuss ideas for a new shopping centre complex in the CBD of Hobbiton, potentially incorporating the dilapidated car park. Mr Vansmen is keen to have a state-of-the-art development that will draw people back to the city. However, he is not convinced that having lots of trees will help. In fact, he thinks that they are messy and may well distract from the clean, new image. The word gets back to the mayor who is keen to ensure that adequate parking and shade are major considerations.

Negotiations begin between Mr Vansmen and the council to enter a public-private partnership to develop a new shopping complex with a shared 700-space parking facility and create shaded open space for multiple community uses in a central location.

The mayor and councillors agree that at least 25% canopy within 10 years is their bottom line. The council arborist, Ms Theresa Best, advises the council that the easiest way to achieve canopy quickly is to plant a lot of small species trees, which are often shorter-lived. Larger trees will provide better canopy in the long term but will take longer to establish.

Mayor Han Dowl and the councillors propose a design competition, to which Mr Ed Vansmen agrees. However, he requires that 60% of the land is available for commercial and retail use. A local, internationally recognised architect, Mr ArchieTect, has invited you to join a focus group to help guide the design. The challenge is to find space for urban forest canopy.

- How do you find space for commercial and retail development, parking, open space and canopy?
- What options are there to provide a sufficient number of car parking spaces?
- What kind of landscaping is acceptable to consider urban canopy? Why?
- Is it preferable to achieve canopy quickly with smaller, shorter-lived species or is slower canopy development warranted to get larger, longer-lived species?
- Will the shading created from the 25% canopy provide strategic shade and cooling?