

## **CCRG : Chair's Report**

### **Annual General Meeting : 4 July 2022**

2021/22 was another very disruptive year in our city centre with several major Covid lock downs. With good progress associated with the governments Covid vaccine programme, it is heartening to know that further lock downs may not be needed.

CCRG open meetings have been infrequent with our first 2022 one hosted by City Mission in their new Homeground facility on 2 May. It looks like regular monthly meetings will now return so we can arrange a reliable speaker programme.

Similarly, other meetings have primarily been TEAMS or ZOOM facilitated which allows business to be conducted but relationships are much more challenging to maintain. There does appear to have been some Council success associated with budgetary prudence compared to the 2020/21 financial year so that is encouraging.

Our public meetings ex Covid lockdowns have involved Alcohol Abuse, Regeneration of the City Centre, Replanting of Trees on/around Aotea Square and Noise Control. Our key speaker for our 4 July AGM will be the Census team in preparation for the 2023 Census.

Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley continues to be a project of constant challenges and slow progress. This is probably not surprising given the range of heavily vested interests in how the street looks and works. It is however, very frustrating that the CCMP has such a clear view of what needs to be implemented. With Eke Panuku picking up implementation responsibility for the CCMP, CCRG expect to see a more streamlined and responsive process associated with the various projects that deliver on the CCMP.

To that end, CCRG have recently supported the Auckland Central MP's petition to hasten the CCMP stated intentions of increasing pedestrian space along the entire length of W/QSV. More pleasing is how Freyberg Place, supported by the Ellen Melville Centre, has become a key public space in our city centre and is used extensively by residents and visitors alike as a safe city centre space to relax.

Numerous discussions/meetings have been held over the past year with various parties associated with implementation of the CCMP Access for Everyone (A4E) programme including the essential Service and Delivery documents. At this point, progress has been extremely slow with Auckland Transport now looking for another lead for the A4E programme.

This is a really key aspect of how the city centre will work in the future so CCRG are keen to see this completed. It is now four years since the first meetings were held to discuss this concept as part of the initial CCMP review in 2018/19 so getting that work completed needs to be a high priority for all of us.

A lot of discussion has taken place with both the WLB and Auckland Transport around the 51-53 Albert Street development. This Resource Consent application was recommended for public notification on the basis that the decision to move the main guest entrance from Albert Street to St. Pats Square at the request of Auckland Transport, would have a major impact on St. Pats Square. This resulted in the applicant amending the RC application to provide for no guest vehicles permitted on St. Pats square so the consent was approved without public notification.

Recently, Auckland Transport have advised that they are considering removing the Pedestrian Mall designation from the eastern area of St. Pats square and replacing it with a Shared Space designation. This would allow vehicle entrance for all guests and all other vehicles thus negating the apparent deal the developer negotiated to prevent the RC application from being notified. CCRG are working with the WLB and Auckland Transport to retain the Pedestrian Mall designation and protect the open space that this area was developed for using \$17m of City Centre Targeted Rate.

## Auckland City Centre Residents' Group

CCRG also provided comments to the Waitemata Local Board on the governments new National Policy Statement – Urban Development. This policy requires no height limits in the city centre so we have asked that every Resource Consent include provisions to ensure that our city centre is both sustainable and livable – see below.

*In terms of implementing Policy 3(a) of the NPS-UD we would therefore offer the following suggestions –*

- 1. Sustainability and liveability, as encapsulated in the RMA definition of environment, needs to drive NPSUD implementation of policy.*
- 2. Fewer, simpler more flexible controls that can be targeted to an individual site as/if required.*
- 3. Protecting sunlight, daylight to all city centre open spaces.*
- 4. Protecting city centre amenity (as defined in the RMA) and retaining the 'human scale' of streets i.e. 'people's appreciation of its pleasantness, aesthetic coherence, and cultural and recreational attributes'.*
- 5. Ensure that tall buildings maximise sunlight, daylight and ventilation to enable all people and communities to provide for their social wellbeing, health and safety now and into the future.*
- 6. Protecting local and regional views and the relationship between the city centre and the Waitemata Harbour*
- 7. Protect the historic heritage of the city centre and the outcomes already achieved by existing precincts that enable all people and their communities to provide for their economic and cultural wellbeing.*
- 8. Ensuring city centre development around the Outcomes and Transitional Moves identified in the CCMP with a major focus on mana whenua engagement and Māori Outcomes.*
- 9. Requiring active climate change initiatives, such as the city centre ZEA, in all city centre resource and building consents.*

As with most other Council activities, the work of the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board (ACCAB) has also been disrupted over the past two years. The current CCRG appointees to this Board are the Chair, Noelene Buckland and the Media Spokesperson, Antony Phillips.

With Local Government elections coming up this year, CCRG will run our usual Candidates Forum for those standing for the WLB. This event is planned for 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday 20 September at the Pioneer Women's Hall in Ellen Melville Centre.

I would like to thank again, the CCRG committee for the enormous amount of work they have done over the past year for city centre residents. There are now some 40,000 residents living in the city centre and it is clear that these are the people who have kept the city centre going over the past two years of Covid lockdowns.

We hope, over the next few years that various projects associated with streetscapes and traffic management, will be focused on making our city centre an even better place for people – those living and working here and those who visit.

Noelene Buckland  
Chair CCRG  
July 2022