

Auckland City Centre Resident's Group

City Centre Resident's Group (CCRG)

Presentation to WLB 2020-21 Budget: 4 March 2020

Thank you for the opportunity for CCRG to present to you today.

Our area of focus, in priority order, are the ones we believe are critical to creating a World Class City Centre. For ease of reference we will present these under the Auckland Plan Outcomes and we would suggest that this might be a useful format for all Local Board Plans. It makes measuring success against those Outcomes much easier for citizens to see, and this in itself, increases involvement and interest in elections and the work that the Local Board do.

We believe the following also responds to the various questions posed in the consultation material.

CCRG supports the proposed increases in the waste management targeted rate and the refuse rate as it related to the Auckland city centre.

Belonging and Participating

Two focus areas for CCRG are – developing a vibrant community centre at EMC and providing a safe, secure night shelter for those who need it.

We are excited with the changes at EMC over the past few months and it is now a more open and accessible space for people to relax and enjoy. We are keen to continue this work, with the Boards support, to develop a 24/7 community hub for city centre residents. Our thanks for the efforts of Kurt Timmins and his team who have made huge progress in advancing community engagement in recent months and have strengthened ties with CCRG.

CCRG believe that we do need a night shelter in the city centre and would encourage the WLB to support the current initiative from the NEST people. There should be no need, or excuse, for anyone to sleep rough in our city centre – the minimum we can do is to provide a safe and secure place for people who need it. We believe this is required, in addition to the Housing First initiative and other social housing programmes that are currently underway in the city centre.

Maori Identity and Wellbeing

According to the Treaty of Waitangi website, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei invited English settlers to share the land with them in 1840. Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei agreed to hand over approximately 3000 acres of land for a township to be established and gifted other areas of land within the Waitemata Local Board area.

To give effect to Maori identity and wellbeing CCRG would suggest that this generosity should be more widely acknowledged and celebrated. A useful means of achieving this would be to rename streets and places in the city centre with Maori names that provided some historical connection to place. CCRG support bicultural way finding and the inclusion of Māori interactive public art, both in which provide tangible connections to place and history.

We would also support efforts by Council and the WLB to strengthen ties with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei as mana whenua.

Homes and Places.

We have three areas of interest under this Outcome – disaster preparedness for homes in the city centre, more protected Open Space and improved public amenities.

With the development of high-rise apartments in the city centre CCRG believe there is also an urgent need for the WLB to work with the Governing Body on disaster preparedness plans to ensure that the city centre is a safe place for residents to live. The recent Convention Centre fire highlighted how unprepared we were to provide support for those who needed it and the Coronavirus maybe another example of this need.

The city centre has a desperate shortage of quality open space and that shortage is getting worse. Increasingly our open space is being compromised for more commercial activities with Aotea Square being a classical example. Plonking a shipping container in the middle of our prime civic space for nothing more critical than to sell more alcohol is not quality decision making. Even worse is that the public had no input whatever in that act of commercial exploitation. This has removed the most valuable space in the city centre for young children to play safely where parents/guardians can watch them.

CCRG are very supportive of the 2007 Draft Waterfront Plan, prepared by the former Auckland City Council, making provision for public open space at the end of Wynyard, Halsey, Hobson, Princes, Queen and Captain Cook wharves. We would encourage the WLB to establish, and protect, these same areas as key 24/7 public open spaces in our city centre.

Despite a considerable amount of work little improvement has been made on providing clean toilet, shower and lockers across the city centre. CCRG would like to see this as a priority for the WLB over the next three years with an agreed development programme to support the initiative.

Transport and Access

CCRG are totally supportive of the Access for Everyone programme that has been developed by the expert team Auckland Design Office. It was very pleasing to see the progress on stage 2 of High Street getting underway this morning. A4E has the capacity to change how we use the city centre space with a much stronger focus on people and at far less cost than the traditional permanent infrastructure method. We would like to see this as a priority budget area for the WLB over the next three years and led by the ADO.

We are also aware of a huge shortage of designated Goods Service Vehicle parking spaces in the city centre. Without the capacity to deliver these critical aspects of living, working and doing business in the city centre, the current traffic congestion and abuse of pedestrian spaces will only get worse.

CCRG are supportive of the existing Bus Terminal remaining where it is at SkyCity and do not believe it should be moved. It is in the most central location and within very close proximity to the

CRL Aotea Station, so for passengers there is not better space in the city centre. It also has a 999 year Resource Consent and, since its inception, thousands of subsequent planning, traffic and place making decisions have been made on the basis that it would be in this SkyCity location for a very long time. To suggest it should be moved because it does not fit with the new Convention Centre is neither a useful, or correct, statement. CCRG would encourage the various parties to work together and develop a World Class bus terminal on the current site that gives effect to the World Class city we all aspire to and that adds value to the investment the taxpayers and ratepayers have made in the New Zealand International Convention Centre development.

Environment and Cultural Heritage

The city centre environment is deteriorating rapidly as a consequence of the number of diesel buses travelling in/around the city centre, and the various ferry, cruise and freight ships. The black carbon levels in Queen Street are a health hazard and this is totally unsatisfactory from CCRG's perspective.

We would like to see the WLB required many more, and improved, multi-site monitoring stations that will measure the air quality across the entire city centre. This will also provide the information needed to measure the success of various initiatives to reduce air pollution in the city centre.

There is currently a plethora of street works taking place in the city centre and very little, if any, protection is provided to the public from dust and noise associated with this work. There is no excuse for this and in many cities across the globe this would not be accepted. We would request that the WLB require every construction site to have screens/vegetation that protect the public from dust and noise, along with improved street lighting for safety at night.

CCRG are also increasingly concerned at the poor quality of street maintenance/cleaning in the city centre and this adds to the sense of ugliness associated with the construction work. We would like to see monitoring of this as a priority for the WLB.

There has been an increasing amount of man-made noise in the city centre during the hours of 11pm and 4am by Ventia Contractors. We have had feedback from residents that AC noise control advise that this is permissible activity noise that they and have no control over this but suggested that we take it up with the LB. CCRG appreciate these works are necessary (cleaning etc.) however noisy works conducted in the middle of the night are not good outcomes for residents.

Another initiative that we would be keen to see the Board support is the development of charging stations for electric vehicles and particularly in spaces that do not compromise pedestrian activity.

Yes please to lot's more trees and bees – CCRG are very supportive of the Urban Ngahere Strategy and would like to see this implement throughout the city centre. It will be especially important as we reforest following the destruction of trees for the CRL works.

Opportunity and Prosperity

The extremely low voter turnout in Auckland at the last Local Government elections is an issue that we think all Local Boards should be addressing with the Governing Body. There appears to be

ample scope for improved community engagement in this area as the current levels are a lost opportunity for all.

CCRG would also like to see more work done around distance working as a means of reducing peak traffic demand in the city centre. 24/7 secure work hubs across Auckland provide the opportunity to better manage peak traffic in the city centre and improve both family and community life which supports shared prosperity amongst all Aucklanders.

Development Strategy

The lack of a cohesive, co-ordinated approach to developments across Auckland leads to significant delays and overlaps which usually come at a cost to ratepayers and residents. CCRG would like to see the Governing Body, in association with Local Boards, develop standard Resource Consent conditions that provide for set timeline/timeframes for each specific construction project, or project stages, with penalties if these are not achieved.

Although outside the scope of this particular submission, it is also CCRG's view, that the Governing Body should be the owner, and instigator, of the annual CCO Statement of Intent process and that may provide another opportunity to be more specific with expectations of project delivery.

Thank you again for this opportunity and we look forward to working with the Board on the development of a World Class City centre.

Noelene Buckland

Chair CCRG

www.ccrg.org.nz

021 449995