

Purpose: To represent and advocate for all Auckland city centre residents to Auckland Council and other relevant agencies/organisation. The purpose of such representation is to make known the concerns of residents, to work for the best possible living environment and to support community building in the central city.



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City Centre Residents' Feedback on Waterfront and Mid-Town Development

August 2017

The overall strategic intent the city centre residents want for the Auckland Waterfront is that the provision of public open space has automatic priority over private or commercial use.

Competing spatial and operational demands will need to take second place as this position has to be non-negotiable if we are to improve the current (and declining) deficit of this vital space in the city centre.

Auckland deserves nothing less than the best Waterfront in the world and this will only happen if the public realm is respected and our history honoured.

Major Points

Ferry Terminal – requires exclusive use of the basin between Princes and Queens Wharf along with the associated public open space on both wharves.

Cruise Ships – a Ports of Auckland responsibility that should be accommodated within the existing wharf footprint from, east of and including, the east side of Queens Wharf.

Sequencing of Downtown Developments – remediate the ferry area seawall, remove wharf parking/develop public open space on Princes Wharf, create a sense of place in lower Albert Street, lower Queen Street open public space with strong sense of place and public art, all connected active modes prioritising the “Friendlier on Foot” message, followed by public transport (where appropriate).

America’s Cup – either around Wynyard Point or Halsey Street with legacy infrastructure.

Wynyard Point – public open space paramount, with iconic building preferred over private developments.

Mid-Town Bus Routes – protect Victoria Street Linear Park and develop ASAP. Provide pedestrian/cycling cover across Grafton Gully as part of the proposed bus terminal. Replace existing diesel buses with electric ones in city centre area.

A Meaningful Increase in Public Space – ensuring public spaces are not ‘privatised’ as a result of private events that exclude the public

Height restrictions – these absolutely have to be maintained at the current level across the entire waterfront, including the operating port areas.

Discussion.

The CCRG supports the current goals in the Waterfront Plan -

- A public waterfront
- A working waterfront
- A growing waterfront

- A connected waterfront
- More ferries
- Quay St - Friendlier on foot
- Meander through laneways
- Water park and community
- A new beach (St. Mary's Bay)
- 20 new places.

In terms of the central wharves we would like to see the entire water space between Princes and Queens Wharf to be dedicated to ferry traffic only and to increase the use of ferries as a means of public transport. This would mean no cruise ships in the ferry basin and no parking at wharf level – instead being replaced with facilities that support ferry use. We are not convinced that \$20m (Precinct contribution) is needed to provide more public space in the ferry basin - a more realistic option is to develop the public space on Princes Wharf as that infrastructure is already available and is achievable with changes to existing leases. \$20m would be a reasonable contribution to expand ferry berths on the eastern side of Princes Wharf or to create the public park on Queens Wharf.

Residents want, and Auckland needs, Queens wharf to be a public space/park/gardens as soon as the Cloud is removed but with Shed 10 remaining as a cruise ship terminal until, and if, alternative facilities are available. We would not support extending the current ferry facilities any further along Queen's Wharf, which would most certainly entail a loss of the current western side of Queens Wharf to ferry infrastructure, at a time when we need to be increasing prime central public space, rather than diminishing it.

In relation to cruise ships we support the responsibility for providing cruise ship berthing and terminal facilities sitting with Ports of Auckland, and we recommend that Council instruct them accordingly through the annual Statement of Intent process. We would want this to include a proviso that these facilities must be located east of Queen's wharf, including the east side of that wharf, and within the existing Ports of Auckland footprint and height limitations.

We expect that Ports of Auckland have the expertise, funding, incentive and responsibility to do this themselves, and while this might impact on the very profitable used car business, the parking for those is able to be accommodated within a temporary low rise parking building that sits no higher than the existing stacks of shipping containers. An alternative is to develop better facilities at Onehunga specifically for this purpose.

The sequencing of downtown developments is a very challenging topic to form a view on, as we don't necessarily know when each of the various initiatives will be completed.

Seawall – fix it up now

Princes Wharf - remove vehicles and provide improved public facilities/access around the entire wharf for ferry users.

Lower Albert Street – sense of place rather than a collection of bus stops.

Lower Queen Street – an open public space featuring our Maori/Pacific history that 'frames' the ferry building and waterfront vista. Portable furniture, POP art/performances/curated space, shade trees in portable containers so can be moved if/when required, Wai Horotiu entering the harbour from a permanent feature with potable water.

Existing viaduct footbridge – strengthen as part of America's Cup legacy – remove all car parking in that prime, area and prioritise pedestrians instead.

We support the suggestion of the America' Cup being provided in and around the Wynyard Point/Viaduct Marina/Basin area – with the legacy additions such as strengthening the existing footbridge. However, we do not support extending

Halsey Street Wharf in an east/west alignment as this blocks the view of the harbour from surrounding public space – thus negating one of the purposes of providing it in the first place. Temporary space could be provided for luxury yachts at Wynyard Wharf which is some years away from being required for other purposes (but NOT cruise ships).

The proposal to move the connection between the Daldy Street Linear Park and Wynyard Point from the west side of Wynyard Point to the east side needs further information. While we are not uncomfortable with this proposal, we are concerned that the main reason for this may be to provide for the area to be blocked off for events, which means private events, because there is never any need to block off public space for public events. We certainly want to maintain the linear view west when walking along North Wharf, and do not want to see this closed off with buildings. It was also our understanding that a major iconic building was to be created in that space, with the park on the north end. We want Wynyard Point to be public space – full stop. The nature of that space will depend on what other buildings are within the area and what use the public space is to provide.

We would like to see an iconic building in that area and would prefer something like the Pacific Maritime Museum which would involve moving the current Maritime museum and adding a lot of Pacific material/exhibits. These could also incorporate opportunities for people to actively sail on outrigger canoes, waka, rowing skiffs, etc. plus a chance for people to see them being made. The existing wharf in this area would be ideal for this purpose in the longer term as it is very visible from surrounding public space. Whether a further facility such as a Marine Research Centre could be included as part of a broader marine precinct is something that might also be investigated.

We think it might be useful to question the whole idea around soil/grass on Wynyard Point which might alleviate the very expensive need to remove some of the contaminated material. Perhaps only small areas of grass are required given that most of the activity may well be pedestrian and related activities. As an example, the paved/ rain garden areas around the Silos provide a good example of strong, easily maintainable, practical urban public spaces that work.

Buildings are also able to be built above the ground so that public space can remain underneath – this could accommodate flexible and modifiable spaces, such as a salt water swimming pool, tennis courts, protected seating/lounge areas, futsal and/or volley ball space and the likes.

The CCRG were very pleased with the new designs for the Mid-Town Bus routes and specifically the required decision to respect the City Centre Master Plan, which incorporates the Victoria Street Linear Park as a major public thoroughway across the city for pedestrians and cyclists. The connections between Albert and Victoria Parks are essential, and the additions to Daldy Street in the west, and the proposed Albert Park tunnels to the east will be transformational developments for the city centre and the people who live and work there.

Although little detail was available on the proposed Grafton Gully bus terminal, the opportunity for further transformational work in that destroyed area of the city is compelling. We would like to encourage Auckland Transport and the Auckland Design Office to continue working on the Grafton ideas, with a view to a pedestrian/cycling cover across the gully to provide a much needed link to the Auckland Domain and beyond. To that end we would suggest a facility like the High Line in New York would be a very good design starting point.

Our final concern is environmental and to that end we want to see the current very noisy and polluting diesel buses replaced with electric buses in the city centre area.

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