

Auckland City Centre Resident's Group

**Meeting MINUTES 14 June 2021
Betty Wark Room, Ellen Melville Centre, commencing 6 p.m.**

Welcome: The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present: Noelene Buckland, Sri Maxwell, Antony Phillips, Jenny Hillas, Mik Smellie, Michael McKeown, Ardeth Lobet, Bruce Ross, Helen White, Danny ?

Apologies: Adam Parkinson, Marjorie McLean, Kerrin Leoni, Bryce Bartley, Julia Peter.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Resolved

That the minutes of the previous 3 May 2021 meeting be approved as a true and correct record.

N Buckland/A Lobet

Financial Report:

Sri Maxwell presented the verbal financial report advising that the current account balance was \$13,106.77 and the monthly surplus of \$273.40.

Resolved.

That the Financial report be received and transactions be approved:

S Maxwell/N Buckland

Decision Items.

- 1. Alcohol Licensing** - this has been a topic for locals of late, Heaven Scent, on St Pat's Square, plus several in Fort St and in the last 48 hours some locals have sent around emails in relation to an application up in St Kevin's Arcade.

After general discussion around some of the problems associated with alcohol and that the Waitemata Local Board tends to rely on locals providing feedback on applicants looking to renew licenses. The Chair suggested that CCRG make this known via social media and this might encourage more people to respond to applications.

2. Climate Change Commission Report.

On 9 June, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) released its first advice report to government titled '*Ināia tonu nei: a low emissions future for Aotearoa*'.

The report is on this link – <https://www.climatecommission.govt.nz/news/inaia-tonu-nei-the-time-is-now-for-climate-action>.

The CCC Chair, Rod Carr says the advice shows a thriving, climate-resilient, and low emissions future for Aotearoa is possible – but the work must start now. "Ināia tonu nei is a call to all of us to accelerate climate action today, not the day after tomorrow".

CCRG have an overall vision called People First -

He Tangata He Tangata He Tangata

arts/culture is about people's stories

business exists to serve & employ people

transport exists to move people & their things

governments exist to represent the will of people

infrastructure exists to house & support people to live healthy lives

the environment has to be protected to provide sustenance for all living things

so we must therefore develop the city with a future focus on people

They also have a position statement on Environment and Cultural Heritage as below that we use for all of our submissions and comments to various agencies

Residents are entitled to a healthy City Centre environment. To ensure a healthy environment for all generations Do No Harm is CCRG's first development principle. Auckland's ability to understand, appreciate and celebrate our own, and other cultures and heritage, is the key to our economic future.

The CCRG will advocate for and co-operate with others:

- *that noise, air and light pollution in all forms are significant issues and must be managed to limit the impact on residents, while maintaining a vibrant city centre*
- *for a physically clean city & to find opportunities to reduce waste, increase recycling & limit the impacts of rubbish.*
- *that antisocial behaviour be appropriately managed to ensure the perception and the reality, of a safe city centre.*
- *to ensure that the air, waterways and beaches connected to the city centre, are clean and safe for human use.*

Air Quality is a perennial and useful discussion, how many buses and why, air quality monitors, comparisons to other cities etc.

The intention of these alcohol licensing and air quality issues would be to -

- build the collective understanding of the issues
- share information with each other
- discuss who we might need more information from
- discuss any strategies to assist
- stay focused on forward movement

In light of the Climate Change Commissions report, the meeting discussed whether there were any further points we would like to include in our Position Statement above so that we all use the same messaging.

The general agreement was that the current position was satisfactory. Concerns were expressed around some of the polluting diesel vehicles that service the city centre i.e. Ventia, and that some residents had used air quality monitors in areas close to their apartments and the readings were 'off the charts'.

It was agreed to discuss this further at the 2 August CCRG meeting.

3. Downtown Parking Building.

Process to Date

At the 3 June 2021 Auckland Council Planning Committee Meeting, members received a lengthy report on the strategic transport outcomes for the proposed sale of the Downtown Carpark Building. The agenda item is on page 149 of this link from Auckland councils Agendas and Minutes website -

https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2021/06/PLA_20210603_AGN_10175_AT.PDF

The Planning Committee considered an earlier report at their 1 April 2021 meeting on page 129 of this link - https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2021/04/PLA_20210401_AGN_10177_AT.PDF

The minutes of the 1 April meeting note a decision to ‘Defer the item pending the receipt of further advice’
The minutes of the 3 June meeting are not available on the council website at:
https://infocouncil.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Open/2021/06/PLA_20210603_MIN_10175_WEB.htm

Both the Planning Committee and the Financial and Performance Committee initially considered this matter at their respective December 2020 meetings but the agenda and minutes were confidential so we are not privy to what was presented or agreed.

Background

This site, and any future development of it, will have an enormous impact on the waterfront. It will also impact positively or negatively on existing residential buildings in the surrounding streets depending on what council requires of the development. According to the above reports, Council has received an unsolicited approach from Precinct Properties Ltd (PPL) to purchase the Downtown Carpark (DCP).

A condition of the Development Agreement between Council and PPL for the Commercial Bay site was that PPL would terminate their existing QE Carpark License. The 2015 Sale and Purchase Agreement between council and PPL noted that AT had taken the opportunity to amend and clarify a 1965 agreement with PPL to occupy 200 reserved carparks in the DCP. This resulted in its car parking spaces being grouped together and, for that benefit, PPL paid AT \$500,000 against the value they were paid for the loss of subterranean interest in the CRL tunnels beneath the Commercial Bay building.

The Current Situation

Current concerns are that all of the public discussions to date appear to be focussed on transport issues – bus access, bus depots/facilities, bus driver requirements, bus routes and car parking. In fact, the only public agenda items have been about this topic.

AT and Eke Panuku make many references to the CCMP in their various reports, but primarily these are focussed on Movement and not Place. The reports cover numerous aspects of traffic and the apparent absolute need for a bus facility within the DCP space. This urgency appears to have been invisible to Auckland Transport prior to the approach from PPL to purchase the site as there is no reference to it in the CCMP – a document that AT was heavily involved with during its refresh in 2019/20 and adoption by the Planning Committee on 5 March 2020.

To this point, CCRG have had one opportunity, as a member of the ACCAB, to provide feedback from a workshop on the sale of the DCP albeit that the agenda item fails to identify CCRG as the author. The comments provided are those shown on paragraph 113 of the 3 June 2021 Planning Committee agenda referenced in the first link above -

- Supportive of the CCMP and aspect the council family to give effect to the stated strategic Outcomes and Transformational Moves in the masterplan.
- That the CCMP has been subject to very wide public discussion, review, consultation and agreement and there is confidence that this high level of consensus represents the city centre we all want
- That the Harbour Edge Stitch Transformational Move in the CCMP is not realised by including a bus terminal that occupies half of a city block in the most valuable land in New Zealand

As members of the initial CCMP Working Group, and currently the ACCAB and the A4E Working Group, we are very disappointed that Auckland Transport/Panuku make virtually no reference to the 40,000+ residents who live in the city centre and the impact, either positive or negative, that these proposals will have on them. Politicians and business people have been specifically engaged in this process, but residents have been essentially ignored. It is

simply not possible for any member of the council family to not understand the impact on residents of some 1,000 buses per day moving in, about and around the city centre – whether with passengers or empty.

Paragraph 44 of the 3 June 2021 report identifies that just 22,000 people came into the city centre by bus in February 2020 and that by 2038 a predicted 31,000 people will arrive by bus into the city centre over this two hour peak period. That is less than the people living in the city now let alone by 2038!

Clause 42 of this report also states that –

Buses will continue to be a key travel option into the city centre. Even after both the CRL and ALR are in place, buses are forecast to bring more people into the city centre during peak period than any other transport mode. Forecasting that includes the impact of ALR shows that of the 450 buses currently arriving in the city centre every morning, the two concept schemes are only expected to remove approximately 42 buses per hour – less than 10 percent of the total.

This means that during the peak two-hour morning period in February 2020, 11,000 people per hour came into the city centre by bus. Compare this with the publicly available information that 54,000 people per hour will be able to use the CRL at peak times by 2035 and Light Rail another 18,000 per hour making a total of 62,000 people per hour moving to, and around, the city centre in zero emissions transport. We need to compare that with AT's stated figure of just 31,000 people using buses by 2038 to travel into the city centre.

Issues and Options for CCRG

AT's current proposals to change services so that bus routes run *through* the city centre instead of *to* the city centre creates an enormous demand for bus space in an area that simply does not have that space. The apparent reason for this, according to AT, is that for bus routes to be of most benefit to customers, they need to terminate where passengers are wanting to go.

This 1960's thinking is what has produced the traffic chaos in Auckland, and other cities around the world – more roads needed to take more people to where they want to go. Whether it is a private car with one person in it, or a bus with 20 people in it, makes no difference to the outcome. Each will result in causal and circular processes that produce yet more demand for yet more vehicle infrastructure.

If Auckland is to achieve a sustainable and clean transport system, we must start now. That means much more cycling/micro-mobility/pedestrian spaces and taking passengers to their nearest public transport hub – either train, ferry or buses that have 24/7 designated routes and dropping passengers off at selected locations. For trains these stations are already defined and, across the globe, this works on a station-to-station system, for ferries the same applies in terms of terminal-to-terminal facilities. For large double decker buses this needs to be the same system – hub to hub – and supported by local small electric shuttle buses that can use existing road/street infrastructure.

That system distinguishes local from regional/national transport – local being the smallest, cleanest and most frequent service designed to support communities and the residents who live there. That also allows people to live healthy lives without the need for a motor vehicle and that is critical to the success of any transport system in Auckland. Removing general traffic provides more reliable travel times for essential traffic such as emergency, delivery, service, courier, mobility and taxi services.

The other issue of prime concern to residents is the complete lack of public discussion about the place making requirements of a replacement building for the DCP. As these discussions have been considered in confidential sessions, residents are not privy to what council has determined as key issues.

Again, CCRG might like to reaffirm the CCMP statements in the Harbour Edge Stitch along with the sketches that display the outcome we have all agreed we want – see below.



Rather than a transport facility that was not important enough for AT to have it included in the CCMP, CCRG might like to see something like this sketch as part of the process of addressing the chronic shortfall of public space in the city centre. This could be the kind of public space that provides a sister space to Te Komititanga and connects the Viaduct/Wynyard to the city centre with attractive pedestrian friendly public spaces.

These spaces also provide ample opportunities for both cyclists and users of various micro-mobility options. A building is not required for these facilities thus saving the cost of building a bus facility AND maximising the returns to council from the sale of the current building and site.

CCRG might like to also consider the design of any building so that sun and views are not entirely blocked out for buildings behind this one. Council has required this for the building above the Aotea Station and there needs to be a good reason as to why the same cannot apply to the DCP site. Many other cities require this environmental consideration – e.g. Melbourne - which often results in taller buildings tapering to a narrow top that allows maximum sun in public spaces around the buildings.

There may also be opportunities to provide publicly accessible/managed viewing platforms/decks on the west and north side of any new building to provide elevated views of the harbour.

From an environmental perspective, there should also be opportunities to utilise solar energy for lighting, heating and AC facilities in any new building.

Perhaps councils Urban Design Panel should also be making suggestions to council at this early stage in terms of the Placemaking capacities of this site - <https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/about-auckland-council/how-auckland-council-works/advisory-panels/Pages/auckland-urban-design-panel.aspx>.

Given that any development of the site is some three years away there does seem to be time for adequate discussion from a wide selection of professionals that council has access to.

Taking the above into consideration, CCRG members considered recommendations for Council consideration related to the sale of the DCP building and site as below –

The CCMP Transformational Moves and Outcomes should be driving all developments in the city centre, and this Downtown Carpark site is prime land ear marked for improved and more open public spaces, people centred activities and stronger connections between the land and the harbour.

The prime land is too valuable for facilities like bus stations/layovers etc. especially given that AT did not require this as part of the CCMP refresh.

Concerns that PT trying to take people to where they want to go on the same bus is not achievable. It is common in other cities around the world to take several buses to get to a final destination so there must be lessons we can learn from cities that have been doing this well for many decades. Supportive of the proposal but question why the Albert Street Bus facility not adequate for North Shore buses as that is what it was designed for just a few years ago? What emphasis is being placed on additional ferry use and making these electric vehicles? How does bringing more diesel buses into the city centre help us achieve our climate change targets? PT needs to be accessible and all facilities that assist this need to be considered – will this downtown facility be permanent or temporary and what difference will they make in terms of PT use?

4. Trading, Events and Filming Bylaw.

Council is inviting public feedback on streamlining of Bylaw including clarification of rental micro mobility devices. This bylaw will replace the current, Trading and Events in Public Places Bylaw 2015, which expires next year.

The purpose of the bylaw is to minimise public safety risks, nuisance and the misuse of council-controlled public places, including among other things - clarifying trading activities that require an approval, including rental micro mobility devices. Consultation closes Friday 16 July 2021

<https://ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/articles/news/2021/06/aucklanders-asked-to-have-their-say-on-plans-to-introduce-new-rules-about-beehives-in-the-city>.

Members considered this and agreed that CCRG should make a submission focussing on the need for enforcement as without that it does not matter what is in a by-law.

5. Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley

The latest update on 8 June advises that the construction works on the stretch of Queen St between Customs and Shortland are underway and are on track for completion at the end of June.

The concepts for the Fort St Pocket Park are being developed by the urban planning designers and will be shared with ACCAB for feedback.

A Project Delivery Plan for the delivery of the rest of the Pilot – i.e. Shortland St to Mayoral Drive – is being prepared. This sets out the project objectives, the key performance indicators and measures for the project and the consultation processes/programme.

It will show the next phase of the construction works commencing in early September with all of the works being completed this coming financial year. The project team will engage with and seek feedback on the project delivery plan from ACCAB at their 28 June workshop

6. Access for Everyone and Light Rail

ACCAB are on the A4E Working Group and met last week to discuss progress of the strategy. The attached PP provides an update and, in addition to workshop discussion, CCRG have provided the following feedback to the four questions provided -

Does the work to date cover the issues we consider important?

The deductive and analytical process used to develop the pizza is both necessary and excellent. The missing issue is climate change and how we respond to that in everything we plan and do NOW. AT in particular, needs to step up with a strong statement that tomorrow is not OK, it is today that we need to change. Walking and walkability is not mentioned and this is critical to achieving A4E and ZEA so we need to add it to the conversation.

People who live in the city centre walk everywhere but people living in Red Beach (as an example) somehow think they should be able to get a bus to their specific destination in the city centre.

Others think they should be able to drive to their specific destination in the city centre and we know that idea is simply unsustainable.

Clearly, we can't do everything at once, but we can step by step achieve the environmental outcomes we need so include those steps in the documentation.

Have we missed any issues or opportunities?

The environment/walking and in today's public space that is the number one topic.

It is also the area where AT is most at risk and visibly so – more particularly to younger people.

When referencing Queen Street we should be using Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley as that is the name in the CCMP.

We also need to ensure that we are referring to the entire street not just wee pockets of it.

I would have thought that W/QSV and the Arts Quarter should be Low Traffic Neighbourhoods so why are they not included in the list.

How do you think we can explain the emerging programme and the rationale?

There is only one programme – A4E/ZEA – and it will be made up, influenced by, and, in turn, influence dozens of other programmes and projects.

Hierarchy helps – Auckland Plan/CCMP/RLTP/A4E and all of the programmes/projects it intersects with.

However, for the purposes of CCMP implementation, we only need to cover off how A4E/ZEA will be delivered.

The numerous other projects (internal) are not necessarily of interest to ordinary people so yes, they need to be a part of the analytical/budgeting work but not the PR/Comms story (external).

Which are the most important elements to proceed with?

The comms around why we are doing this – the CCMP, A4E/ZEA is about our environment – how we can continue to develop the city centre for business to thrive and for people to enjoy today and tomorrow.

Make sure our proposals and messages speak to families, woman and children as that is a very large audience.

Get the essential traffic sorted quickly – where and how do service/delivery/taxi/mobility vehicles share the street spaces in the city centre without compromising what we have already done i.e. shared spaces/Britomart/Downtown, etc.

That, along with our Maori heritage, is how we will succeed in building a city centre that is unique, supports business, is pedestrian friendly (walking) and environmentally safe (ZEA).

Britomart is the model for the city centre – that area accommodates all of these activities yet provides wonderful, green, clean, quiet spaces for people/business/shopping/hospitality.

The Minister of Transport has set up an Establishment Board to assist with advice on the Light Rail project for Auckland, Leigh Auton, who served as CE of the former Manukau City Council will be the independent Chair of this unit. Daniel Newcombe from Auckland Transport has asked that the same Working Group that advised on the CCMP refresh, and currently the A4E project assist the AT/AC light rail team with their work. This provides CCRG with an opportunity to provide a resident voice on these key issues around the future of transport in the city centre.

7. Information Items:

CCRG Feedback on the CRL Community Liaison Group Presentation on 20 May 2021.

The following feedback was provided to the CRL team on 3 June 2021.

The material and structure of the document is exceeding formal and not designed for community feedback.

That will undoubtedly reduce the quality and quantity of feedback received.

CCRG are focussed primarily on what the streetscapes will look like once the CRL work is complete.



The overall impression is of an uninviting concrete jungle which is the very opposite to what is required. That maybe a result of the report having to deal with an abnormal level of details but is non-the-less disappointing.

CCRG would ask that green be the colour of choice for the streetscape remediation rather than grey. This can come in many forms and we would be happy to discuss these further with the landscaping team. Trees, plants and water are the three elements that turn city spaces into people spaces. We really like the proposed use of boulders and concrete slabs with the timber seating attached to it. They look great in the Auckland environment and the seating will damage vehicles, rather than vice versa, which is what happens across the city centre now.

Water needs to be much more of a feature so that we all get to see Wai Horotiu again. This can be in the form of fountains, rills, ponds and/or waterfalls on various walls i.e. the north wall of the somewhat ugly Bledisloe House sounds like a huge improvement. We are aware that CRL have a 1 for 1 replacement category for trees removed/replaced in the city centre and we could not find reference to this in the report. We would appreciate the opportunity to also discuss how the CRL meets their obligations under this requirement.

In the end what matters is that the CRL, and associated streetscapes, adds value to the people who live, work and visit the city centre.

From what we have seen in this report, there appears to be a lot of work and planning still to be done. We look forward to the opportunity of discussing this with the CRL team as soon as possible.

Members received items 5, 6 and 7.

8. General Business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.