

Auckland City Centre Resident's Group

Feedback on the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP) Refresh

General Introductory Comments:

The City Centre Resident's Group welcome the opportunity to comment on the CCMP refresh and would like to reinforce what we understand is the entire purpose of this and other council planning document.

PEOPLE FIRST

arts/culture is about people's stories

business exists to serve and employ people

transport exists to move people and their things

governments exist to represent the will of people

infrastructure exists to house and support people to live healthy lives

the environment has to be protected to provide food & water for all living things

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

Overall, we believe that this version of the CCMP is not as inspiring or as definitive as the 2012 version. There seems to be far too many words and not enough pictures – it is the graphic images that people remember and that encompass both vision and definition.

We would recommend editing down by 50% and re-designed to make simpler, clearer statements that capture people's imagination and evidence the capacity for us to make a real difference to the city centre and the people who live, work and visit the area.

Currently the CCMP is not well known or understood within the Auckland community, compared to the Auckland Plan, and we think it is necessary to change this situation in order for residents to have more buy in to what is being planned for their home. Although the CCMP applies to a relatively small area of Auckland, what happens in this space impacts on many residents so a broader understanding of the plan is required.

A lot of editing could simply involve the removal what we have achieved already as this is material that would more properly be contained in Annual Reports. The CCMP needs to be our Vision and Strategy document that drives all development in the city centre – social, environmental, economic and cultural.

We need deliberate, determined language that is going to make the city centre a world class, highly liveable place. A good starting point would be better connections and referencing between outcomes with the relevant transformational moves.

It is critical that manageable project delivery is achieved including quality development response mechanisms. There is a lot going on in the city centre now and that is likely to continue for another five years so very careful delivery is essential in order to not penalise business owners and residents within a particular area of development. Delivery of projects should ensure that neither businesses nor residents within the CCMP are expected to subsidise what is designed to be regional infrastructure used by all Aucklanders, visitors and workers e.g. the CRL construction in Albert Street.

We also require, throughout the text, continuous reference to the waterfront under every heading. Just tagging the Waterfront Plan (WFP) onto one transformational move is insufficient. The CCMP needs to be a single document with many delivery agents – council, AT, POAL, Panuku, RFA, ATEED. All of the council

family should be a part of delivering the CCMP otherwise we won't get the world class city we need and aspire to.

Residents view all the various agencies of Council as a single entity. As the perceived lead agent, Council should bring all relevant agencies to meetings and ensure that people deal with one lead person to deliver all outcomes.

The POAL land/property has to be included as well – a key requirement – we can't pretend that the POAL estate is not an integral part of this CCMP vision.

All the planning documents need to be tied together into a cohesive and connected set. To that end it would be really useful for the CCMP to include the illustration below as a more deliberate link with the Auckland Plan. The CCMP Outcomes and Transformational Moves should then show how it is delivering on the Development Strategy, Directions and Focus areas of the Auckland Plan – see below.

Outcomes

What the plan aims to achieve



Having clear referencing text and visual graphs showing connections to the Auckland Plan visions and delivery aspects would be really useful and would enable better comparisons, along with an obvious hereditary linkage, between the two documents.

CCMP Outcomes

By and large, we are very supportive of the intent, as well as the statements contained in all the Outcomes, bearing in mind our previously stated provisos around conciseness, and creating more 'punchy' clarity in the whole document.

We also have the following specific comments and suggestions.

The ten outcomes from the CCMP should reference which of the Auckland Plan outcomes/directions they deliver on.

It is really important to have a coherent planning structure and to be regularly reporting on how the various parts of that feed into achieving the Auckland Plan.

The framework on page three should be accompanied by an engagement and consultation plan so we all know how and where we get to be involved in the various decisions.

The left hand graph should also show Values and Vision above the dotted line and Strategy/Goals moving down.

The Transformational Moves, Action Plans, Framework Plan, Implementation Strategy and reference designs are the KEY engagement areas, and at a very early stage.

CCRG want to see more workshops, with ALL of the council family involved right at the start of conversations around purpose, preferences and priorities. This saves time and money across the entire council family and ensures public input at an early stage so that staff time and money is spent on what people want rather than what they are told they should want.

The Long-Term Plan and Strategic/Business Case proposals should be less widely consulted/engaged on because, assuming the required consultation has taken place, the rest of the process, focussed on what people want, should be automatic.

We strongly believe there needs to be much more emphasis on residents in the CCMP refresh. Residents are the most essential aspect of whether or not something is a benefit or a nuisance. They provide the most sensitive receptor i.e. noise levels, street and park closures for events, LED Billboards etc.

As the people who call this place home, and with numbers expected to exceed 100,000 within 10 years, this fundamental emphasis on residents needs to be much more strongly embedded in the CCMP refresh.

To quote the famous urbanist, Jane Jacobs -

“There is no logic that can be superimposed on the city; people make it, and it is to them, not buildings, that we must fit our plans.”

The Sustainable and Prosperous City centre could be combined into one Outcome and a new outcome titled – A Connected City Centre which would include the entire waterfront incorporating the POAL water and land space.

The severance of communities i.e. safe people-oriented intersections and pedestrian crossings needs to be addresses as this is an issue across almost all the Outcomes, and Transformational Moves. A4E partly addresses this, but not for many areas, importantly in the highly residential Victoria Quarter – the most densely populated area of the city centre.

Severance also refers to other degraded or non-existent infrastructure - footpath conditions, pram ramps, lighting, cleanliness/refuse disposal, lack of enforcement re footpath or shared space parking and so on. These all create physical and psychological barriers to connecting people with people and more especially with people in other areas.

1. Tāmaki Makaurau

The CCRG supports:

Outcome 01. 'Tamaki Makaurau: Our Place in the World', which seeks to promote a thriving and authentic Maori identity and culture, including:

- a prominent, authentic and active mana whenua presence; and
- an Auckland design approach founded on Te Aranga Maori Design Principles – which provide for the 'protection, reinstatement, development and articulation of mana whenua cultural landscapes'; and

The CCRG supports working within a truly authentic bicultural framework. It is the view of the CCRG that Auckland Council staff 'side-by-side' iwi representatives and consult widely and often and ensure Māori culture and iconography is engaged with sensitively, appropriately and professionally with the utmost avoidance of tokenism cultural misappropriation. Te Aranga Māori Design principles are open to interpretation, and it advised advice should be sought from mana whenua who should be interpreting these on a case by case basis.

2. Accessible City Centre

A4E is one of those inspirational and ground breaking evolutions that the CCMP refresh needs. It will deliver, or at the very east enable, much of what City Centre Residents desire, and what the CCMP vision envisages. We wholeheartedly support the visions and practical delivery of A4E. But the section needs to be edited down to better grab that vision, convey the benefits, and instil the buzz, in simpler terms. The careful planning that will underpin people's requirements for open space, access to public transport, provision of delivery vehicles/tradespeople/couriers facilities and a clean environment can all be achieved though the A4E programme and we look forward to working with council on this initiative.

3. Inclusive, Engaging & Child/Friendly City Centre (Antony to complete this)

Yes, to more amenities, but we would like to see deliberate language about what will be done and when – a strategy and targets. For example, there are now 1,000 children under the age of five living in the city centre but still no state primary school for them to attend and no indication of when this might be provided. For most parents of young people in New Zealand, an assessment of the quality of the community infrastructure informs the decision where best to raise their family. Housing affordability and other economic drivers are the key reasons why families now choose the city to raise their children. These families do not have the luxury of choice when deciding their community. With the significant number of families and young people calling the city centre home, the provision of a state-school within the City Centre has now become not only important but critical.

Presently, there are insufficient green spaces, public, child-friendly spaces with shelter and quiet spaces, all of which should form public infrastructure to local families with children but also those visiting the city. To add to this, there is a distinct lack of clean accessible toilet facilities and changing room facilities, this can put a lot of pressure parents with young children in need of these. The CCRG would like to see a focus on increasing the number and access to these facilities.

The further adoption of court-yard style developments and high-density developments with greenspaces warrants further consideration in the City Centre.

In recent years, the City Centre has become an attractive place to live for many seniors to live, drawn by the buzz of city life and ease of apartment living. This is great, as it adds to the wonderful diversity of the

City Centre. If the City Centre is going to be a truly inclusive community and age-friendly, the community infrastructure needs to catch up with the growing senior population.

- Ensure adequate and accessible green spaces with shelter
- Ensure adequate and accessible public toilets
- Ensure footpaths and pedestrian crossings are sufficient width and without obstruction for wheelchairs, walkers and strollers.
- Signage and wayfinding are clear
- There is a strategy, formulated with other central and local government agencies and NGOs in place, who conduct home visits that these can be done with ease and without obstruction (e.g. parking, transportation provision etc).
- Community spaces are available for seniors' groups

For residents, and others, an 'engaging city' is also one that provides quietness and privacy that every resident in other parts of Auckland enjoys. It is not at all clear that they require constant events in order to 'engage' with the city centre – if residents were not engaged, they would not have chosen to live here in the first place. The CCRG would like to see an increased level of inclusion and consultation with the residential community around events that bring varying levels of disruption to residential and community life.

4. A Green City Centre

Yes, yes and yes to this.

There does not appear to be any defensible reason to not use the word 'planned' for Wynyard Point rather than 'proposed', as 'proposed' provides very little assurance. The CCMP refresh requires more definitive language and this particular space certainly needs that.

There is no reference to vertical gardens and/or rooftop gardens, and these should to be considered as part of our 'green' effort – especially for those bonus floor provisions. The amount of greenery within the Wynyard quarter is much more than in other areas of the city centre and there is no reason why that is the case. Our city centre can have more greenery on every street and apartment buildings should also be encouraged/rewarded for providing greenery where they can.

Pocket Parks (also mentioned in the Public Life Outcome), should be referenced as a desirable method of providing third spaces, where larger tracts of land are not practicably available. This is likely to include repurposed street space as part of the A4E programme so really needs to be more explicit in terms of what we want to achieve.

5. Public Life

This section is far too word-heavy and needs serious downsizing. What needs to be said has to go on one page and be more heavily resident focussed. We all know that we have a major deficit in public open spaces so this section should focus on our vision for more spaces and the strategies needed to achieve this.

The CCRG would recommend consideration of many suggestions from this recent article by Carl Douglas from the School of Art and Design at the Auckland University of Technology
https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12275934.

6. Liveable City Centre

For residents, the one key aspect of this heading is Community Safety. Community safety and perceptions of safety are one of the most critical issues for us and yet this entry contains just four lines of very little substance. The provision of a City Centre Police Station would be a positive move towards creating a safer community and more important now given the Central Police Station has been moved to Ponsonby.

The CCRG would like to see the Police work with other agencies to share the burden of patrolling the City Centre and maintain peace. The *Guardian Angel* programme which started in New York City and spread to a number of cities across the US, and internationally, is a model the CCRG believe warrants consideration.

Social and physical services provision to residents not well thought through. A strategy to connect other state sector agencies and NGOs working in this space is highly desirable. (*Ref to last para: Age-friendly City Centre*).

The homeless population is part of our community and we are a part of their community. There has been policy and resource development in this area across central and local government (Housing First increase in funding, Liston House refurbishment and Home Ground development) however; the work is far from done to improve the lives of those who remain outdoors. The CCRG urges the inclusion in CCMP refresh for the provision of a night shelter. This would address the significant policy gap in short term provision, which currently only aspires to long-term outcomes.

Council's policy on homelessness is that it should be rare, brief and non-recurring. Adequate and appropriate social housing provided by government can manage the rare and non-recurring aspects of this policy, but warm, dry and safe shelter is required for the 'brief' aspects and that is the role of a night shelter.

There is a significant residential population now living in the city. Many of those people, as aforementioned in this submission are choosing to live here, which is a marked difference from past years. The CCRG's position that the residential population be regarded as the primary stakeholder group and the role of people in the city centre pervade all the aspirational strategies and outcomes proposed in the CCMP.

More deliberate language and intent in this section is required if we want to deliver on all of the other outcomes. Like most other sections there is too much PR padding with current projects underway or already completed, which tends to overwhelm the forward-looking vision and strategy that this document should be championing.

7. Quality Built Form

Another section that should be a one pager.

It is also a bit problematic as every building can exceed AUP height and scale requirements for reasons that council determines e.g. Commercial Bay exceeds by many floors the maximum height for the downtown Queen Street valley area. It is also not 'tall and slim' (p19 second column, fourth paragraph) when viewed from the harbour so what's the point of making these statements if every building is to be approved as some sort of 'one off' design?

As stated at the top of page 19, third column, *the rules provide for flexibility in development and built form* means they are not really rules at all – just guidelines and those can be influenced by additional financial contributions and other considerations.

The Auckland Urban Design Panel can provide independent advice but there is no requirement for them to be involved - it is an option chosen by staff, not by people who live here, and the advice from the AUDP can be ignored.

The CCRG believe that any resource consent for a non-complying activity should automatically be notified. This allows for the essential public input to a proposal that has not been agreed on in previous consultation for our key planning documents.

8. Heritage Defined City Centre

It is very worrying that under “Current Protection” the best we can say is “The plan seeks to manage change to these places so that they maintain their significance and continue to inspire and define our city” – what does that mean? If they are heritage why do they need “managed change”?

The CCRG are of the view that further public provision of financial resource be provided to assist owners of heritage buildings to strengthen the protection of our heritage and character values. This is especially important for Scheduled and Listed buildings in terms of structural strengthening, conservation work, heritage maintenance and consenting costs.

Furthermore, the CCRG supports a ‘Heritage Defined City Centre’ which supports:

- Active stewardship of and investment in our heritage places and streetscapes.
- New and re-development which enhances heritage values and supports adaptive reuse.
- Street and public space upgrades and informed by heritage values

9. Sustainable City Centre

We think we could be far more aspirational with this aspect of the plan.

There needs to be a section in this dealing with construction, household and commercial waste collection/recycling as this is a huge part of sustainability.

10. Prosperous City Centre

This is summed up in the last sentence on p25 –

“A challenge for the city centre will be how it caters for the different needs of its cosmopolitan population”.

Surely this was the reason we created a CCMP so how we cater for this has to be an integral part of the plan. Similarly, the last sentence under “Retail, entertainment and dining’ on p26 referring to a “lack of coherence” is something that needs to be addressed not just referenced.

It is interesting that under this Prosperous City Centre there is a table on p27/28 identifying an issue and how we intend to respond to it. We suggest that table would be useful for each of the outcomes albeit the language could be more definitive.

The comments around Commercial Bay “counteracting the threat from regional shopping malls” seems somewhat jarring. Perhaps a more positive statement like ‘providing retail opportunities equivalent to regional shopping malls’ would be more in keeping with the tone of the document.

Transformational Moves.

We support these and the presentation, with one exception, is good.

The exception O8 – Harbour Edge Stitch as this really needs to be THE key part of the CCMP and be a part of every aspect within the CCMP.

O6 The Green Stitch – with the Wellington street improvements, it should be envisioned to include Western Park in the ‘Green Link’ -accessible to City Centre residents

The “Impressive” progress since 2012 identified on page 21 needs removing – that is annual report material, and has no place in a future-focussed document.

This section also needs to include the Port of Auckland land and water space.

Access for Everyone and Zero Emissions Area

We strongly support both of these in their entirety, including the Grafton Boulevard, although we would like the whole of the city centre to be emissions free – tying that into the whole of A4E seems an appropriate and holistic solution to a major city centre health issue.

Some of the wording under ZEA is a bit loose and could be more definitive.

Additional Clauses

A crucial issue is that these plans need to explicitly show the process that council will follow for any changes to the plan.

To support democracy, and uphold the integrity of our planning documents, it really matters that any changes to consulted and adopted plans have to be carried out according to councils Significance and Engagement Policy.

This policy is part of Councils statutory requirements under the Local Government Act 2002 and provides, or should provide, for clear consultation requirements, involving a choice of options for people to consider and discuss.

We look forward to continuing our involvement in the planning and development of the Auckland City Centre as this is the place where we belong. To quote Jane Jacobs again from her book “The Death and Life of Great American Cities” -

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

We would encourage the Auckland family to adopt this statement as their primary consultation and engagement philosophy for the CCMP.