

Auckland City Centre Resident's Group

Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley 9 February 2021

Noelene Buckland - sent today to Michael Wood, Chloe Swarbrick, Phil Goff, Pippa Coom, Chris Darby and Richard Northey.

It draws accurately the issues we are trying to deal with in terms of getting the CCMP implemented.

Kia ora,

I am writing today to seek your support for immediate implementation of carbon reducing transport on Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley (W/QSV).

The Auckland City Centre Residents Group (www.ccr.org.nz) express our thanks and appreciation for the various initiatives recently announced by government, and Auckland Council, to reduce carbon emissions in Aotearoa.

This, together with the recommendations of the recently published Climate Change Commissions 2021 Draft Advice for Consultation tell us that we all have to start this work today – not tomorrow, but today.

Vehicles emissions, tyre and brake wear, are the cause of major health issues in some urban areas but one of our primary streets – W/QSV, in the Auckland city centre – is the most severely impacted.

We note highlights from the February 2020 “Air quality in Auckland: in-depth trend analysis February 2020 Technical Report 2020/004”

- file:///C:/Users/Admin/Downloads/TR2020004AirqualityinAucklandtrendanalysis.pdf - authored by Nick Talbot and Paul Crimmins

The Queen Street site is the most central site providing information on possible personal exposure in one of the most densely populated areas of Auckland with several million people walking below the monitoring site every year (Talbot & Lehn, 2018). In most locations, PM10 and PM2.5 had statistically significant decreasing monotonic trends for both short- and long-term timeframes. Queen Street is not following this trend. This city centre site has shown significant increases in PM2.5 and PM10 for the short-term analysis.

Traffic numbers have remained steady on Queen Street; however, there has been an increase in bus numbers and construction vehicles with a new downtown mall and commencement of the City Rail Link underground railway in the adjacent street.

In-depth research of city centre traffic pollution carried out by Talbot and Lehn 2018 revealed that 12% of weekday on-road fleet on upper Queen Street are diesel-powered buses. It is likely that these buses, plus the increase in construction vehicles, is driving up concentrations, along with increased building height and the blocking off Queen Street at the lower end, decreasing ventilation when the wind comes from the southerly sector.

There was a step change decrease in NO2 between 2011 and 2012 within the deseasonalised data (Figure 60). This was likely due to the reconfiguration of buses along Queen Street, reducing NO2 emitting diesel vehicles (Talbot & Lehn, 2018). Since, 2013 NO2 concentrations are increasing at a statistically significant rate – see Source Apportionment data for PM2.5 in Queen Street between 2006-2013 -

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Diesel Vehicles | 39% |
| Marine Aerosol | 24% |
| Secondary Sulphate | 11% |
| Biomass Burning | 9% |
| Construction | 7% |
| Ship Emissions | 5% |
| Petrol Vehicles | 3% |
| Soil | 2% |

Finally, for PM2.5 it is notable how much higher PM2.5 and NO2 are at Queen Street when compared to other sites across the Auckland air quality network (Figure 46). Mean concentrations taken over a 10-year period at Queen Street show PM2.5 to be over 2 µg/m³ higher than the citywide average (derived from the average of Penrose, Takapuna and Henderson) and almost double for the citywide NO2 average.

We accept that this report is one year old but, given the disruptions associated with Covid management, no other data will better represent the current norm than this. Auckland Transport have declined to provide CCRG with any assessments of future pollution levels based on the proposed bus network, nor what they will do to mitigate potentially increasing and guideline-smashing hazardous levels of air pollution – NO₂, Nox, Black Carbon. We have to assume therefore, that AT will accept any level of air pollution which is an unacceptable proposition for people living in the city centre for any length of time. Auckland Transport have also advised us that “there had been queries about which metrics are most useful, how reliable they are, and what they actually tell us” and “we’ll be using data for Queen St that we’re recommended to use by people who know more about it”. It is unclear as to why AT is not able to use the same data and professional advice that has been collected for years and provides useful annual comparisons for everyone to work with.

Over the past two years, we worked with the former Auckland Design Office team, and others at Council, to refresh the City Centre Master Plan - <https://aucklandccmp.co.nz> . That work culminated in its adoption by the Auckland Council Planning Committee on 5 March 2020. The document represents the views and aspirations of many thousands of residents and business owners who call the city centre their home and who contributed to the refresh process. Although not a statutory document, it does articulate the Vision and Outcomes for the city centre as the primary delivery document for the Auckland Plan - which is a statutory document.

Of particular interest, in relation to Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley is the Access for Everyone concept, specifically designed to accommodate electric light rail, and the Zero Emissions Area for Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley.

In recent weeks, there has been considerable correspondence between CCRG and Auckland Transport outlining their decision to re-route hundreds of mostly diesel buses around various city centre streets, including Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley.

CCRG are unable to support these proposals for the following reasons –

- 1 They add further pollution to an already heavily polluted street when there are alternate options where AT maximises East/West bus travel/stops and passengers walk a little further.
- 2 Rather than giving effect to the Zero Emissions Area referenced in the CCMP, they exacerbate air pollution and create additional visual pollution.
- 3 Several million people walking along Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley every year are being asked to compromise their health.
- 4 That compromise is expected to last until such time as the CRL work is finished – an unknown factor given Covid19.
- 5 City centre residents who live in this area are being asked to compromise their health 24/7 for as long as it takes.
- 6 Auckland Transport have known for years that disruptions to bus routes would occur during CRL construction.
- 7 A Bus Reference Case to manage that disruption was only commenced in mid-2020 and completed in late 2020.
- 8 It makes little reference to the highly supported CCMP Vision and Outcomes essentially ignoring the Zero Emissions Area commitments.
- 9 Rather than support for ZEA, the suggestion is that entire sections of Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley will have 4-6 lanes blocked off for bus use only – with most of these being diesel.
- 10 One of these areas is the street space closest to the Arts and Cultural sector of the city centre and where dozens of eateries provide seating, or use the public seating, immediately next to diesel buses.
- 11 NO consultation occurred during the preparation of the Bus Reference Case and specifically the impacts the proposals will have on surrounding streets, delivery and service vehicles.
- 12 Most of those streets have already been re-created as Shared Spaces over the past ten years costing millions and funded from City Centre Targeted Rates specifically as slow traffic residentially-focussed spaces.
- 13 \$1m of government funding has been allocated for the W/QSV Innovating Streets programme and \$600,000 of funding from the City Centre Targeted Rate has also been allocated to W/QSV to support development of the Access for Everyone concept.

- 14 From these funds, \$705,000 has been spent on Communications and Engagement, \$740,00 on Design and Construction and \$155,000 on maintenance and it is unclear what, or whether, any further funding is available.
- 15 As a minimum, the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board should have been consulted during the preparation of the Bus Reference Case and subsequent to its completion.
- 16 After years of working on the concept, Auckland Transport have known since 5 March 2020, that the Access for Everyone concept needed to be urgently developed across the entire city centre.
- 17 That work has to be done before any rational decisions can be made about one particular street and yet it is only now getting underway – 10 months after the adoption of the CCMP.
- 18 Co-design workshops for Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley endorsed what was already in the CCMP and particularly the ZEA that ensures a pedestrian friendly street.
- 19 Auckland Transport's lack of commitment and urgency to getting key Placemaking work done on time will severely impact effective decision making.
- 20 Auckland Transport now appears to expect that businesses and residents should pay the price of their inability to consult and/or deliver key research and documents on time.
- 21 This expectation is being put on the businesses and residents who have already been severely impacted by Covid on Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley.
- 22 The negative outcome will be what has always happened in Auckland – Movement continues to take precedence over Place.
- 23 This exacerbates the circular and causal nature of that process i.e. the more we have the more we need more, thus ensuring that traffic congestion continues unabated.
- 24 Traffic includes buses no matter how they are described – public, private, diesel, electric, double decker or single.
- 25 Our city centre deserves better and there are options that could, and should, have been discussed during the refresh of the CCMP in 2019 and/or subsequently.
- 26 The failure to undertake this simple, and expected dialogue, has wasted two years of precious time and the opportunities that time provides for the required comprehensive and integrated decision making.
- 27 ***Wai Horotiu deserves more respect than this, as do residents who live here.***

CCRG will continue to work with all parties involved, but to achieve the outcome we have all said we want one decision needs to be made.

Our request to is that you make a strong commitment to Auckland's climate change initiatives by requiring electric buses only on Waihorotiu/Queen Street Valley effective from 1 June 2021 with all other vehicles from 1 June 2022.

That simple decision puts immediate parameters around decision making and elevates Place over Movement thus ensuring that we will develop the city centre we have all said we want.

**A vibrant pedestrian priority shopping street at the heart of Waihorotiu / Queen Street Valley.
Queen Street will support centre-running transit (starting with buses)
and become the centrepiece of a greatly expanded pedestrian priority and low emissions zone**

Electric shuttle buses can work in much the same way as light rail would and that can be done now. The remaining areas of the street can then be opened up and developed in a way that those using it know immediately that they are in Tāmaki Makaurau.

Nga mihi nui
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