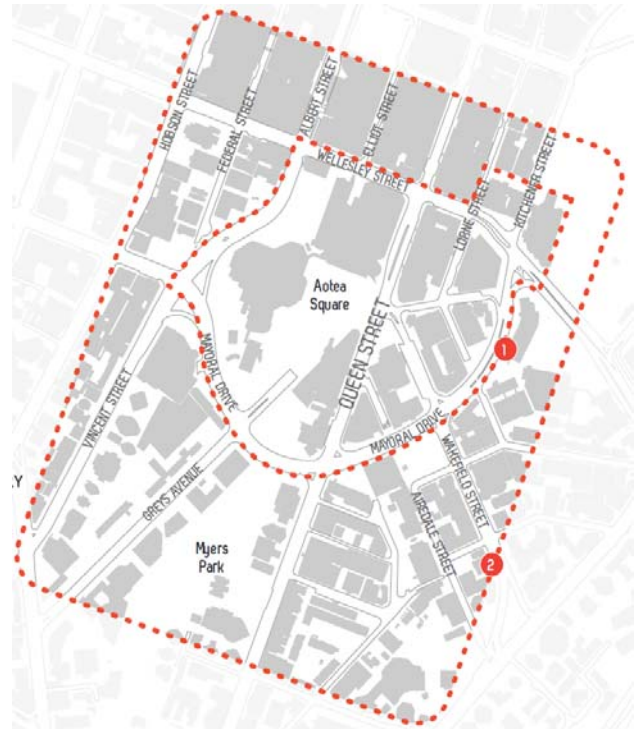




Submission of Civic Trust Auckland

Aotea Quarter Framework

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Civic Trust Auckland

Civic Trust Auckland (CTA) is a non-profit public interest group, incorporated in 1968, with activities and interests throughout the greater Auckland region.

The aims of the Trust include:

- Protection of natural landforms
- Preservation of heritage, in all its aspects
- Encouragement of good planning for the city and region.

CTA appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback. We are of the view that public involvement is important in order to assist with good outcomes for public space and amenities for the public. We note that some of our number live and/or work in the Aotea Quarter, and a further number live and/or work nearby and are frequent users of the area. We have read the full consultation document.

CTA has made many submissions on Council plans, including, more recently, and of relevance to this consultation: the Lorne and Rutland Streets Upgrade on 8 February 2010, the Draft Auckland Regional Transport Plan on 24 December 2009, the City Centre Masterplan on 17 June 2011 and the Proposed Auckland Unitary Plan on 31 May 2013 (primary submission) and 28 February 2014 (further submission). These two latter submissions included elevating the current heritage protection of a number of buildings within the Aotea Quarter, namely: the Civic Administration Building; the Bledisloe State Building; the Greys Avenue Flats, 115-139 Greys Avenue; the Smith & Caughey Department Store; the Civic Tavern; the Commercial Building, 317 Queen St; and the Theosophical Society Building, 371 Queen St.

We have provided answers as per the questions posed in the online survey, with an extended answer to Q6, i.e. "other comments or feedback". Page references are to the consultation document.

1A What is the most important thing to you when it comes to unleashing the Aotea Quarter's potential to be the civic, arts and cultural heart of Auckland?

CTA's main concern is the protection and enhancement of heritage buildings in the quarter. This includes the restoration of the St James Theatre, and Council should ensure that some of its own funds are allocated towards this work. Another important building in the quarter is the City Administration Building, which CTA is concerned to see appropriately renovated and reused.

It is pleasing to see that the framework includes mention of a number of significant heritage buildings in the area. The final Aotea Quarter Framework should include a more thorough assessment of these buildings as well as identification and assessment of the remaining heritage buildings and other heritage features in the quarter, with the aim to put protections in place before planning proceeds to the next stage.

2A What events or activities (large or small) have you enjoyed in and around the Aotea Quarter? What else would you like to see? What would you prefer not to see?

Events or activities enjoyed by our members have been:

- the skating rink
- markets
- festivals, including the writers' festival, arts festival, film festival
- community protests and marches
- quality street buskers
- watching children playing around the Mountain Fountain
- concerts and shows at the Town Hall, Aotea Centre & Civic Theatre
- varied outdoor entertainment and catering in the square during the Auckland Festival
- the Santa Parade
- any events or activities that close off the streets to traffic.

Other events/activities/objects that members would like to see are:

- more markets, especially with fresh produce
- a dedicated place for skateboarders
- a safe playground for very young children
- more events that close off the streets to traffic
- more art works such as the windmill in the image (overlooking Myers Park).



Things in the quarter that members would prefer not to see are:

- leaf blowers
- a predominance of fast food outlets, especially in close proximity to Aotea Square
- additional convenience stores, as there are too many already
- beggars on the footpaths (we would like their problems addressed)
- cigarette smoking
- chewing gum on the footpaths
- too much vehicle traffic
- noise - mostly from traffic, and that, mostly from buses
- too many street talkers
- noisy “Bible bashers”
- musical events in the Town Hall being impinged upon by noisy events taking place at the same time in Aotea Square
- too much public space around the edge of Aotea Square “activated” or developed into retail space. Such “unactivated” spaces are necessary to provide respite from the business of the city centre.

2B How would you like to see the quarter fulfil its potential as the creative, civic and cultural heart for all of Auckland (for example types of businesses, design, activities)?

CTA supports the identification, assessment and protection of heritage features in the quarter, including scheduling the Civic Administration Building as a Category A historic heritage item (such scheduling being mentioned on page 61).

Our comments in other parts of this submission address this question further.

3A If you live – or would like to live – in the Aotea Quarter, what amenities or facilities would you like to see in the area?

- colourful flowers, many of them
- a fruit and vegetable market during the weekends as well as one day during the week
- civic administration in the square, adjacent to the Town Hall, in the building designed for that purpose
- high quality cafes
- high quality retail
- a bakery
- a greengrocer
- a community notice board in the quarter, e.g. in Lorne Street outside the library
- more books made available in the central library i.e. brought up from the basement so that they are on hand for browsing purposes
- more trees, ones that suit the space (not nikau).

What would encourage more children and their families to live near or visit the area?

- the quarter being smoke-free
- water features that are more than a trickle
- things to see and do that are unique or events that are low cost or free, such as the skating rink in the holiday period.

3B Which parts of the quarter should be made:

Better for pedestrians and how could these areas be improved? Please specify location(s) within the defined boundary area.

Ideally motorised traffic would be gradually removed from and/or minimised in the city centre.

Mayoral Drive, as identified in the consultation document, is one of the main areas that needs to be improved for pedestrians, and another one within the quarter is Hobson Street. The two-way routing of the latter should improve this stretch for pedestrians, and a narrowing down of the number of lanes on both streets, more in keeping with the laneway or one-way nature of other parts of the city centre, should assist in making these areas better for pedestrians.

The pedestrian crossings within the quarter which allow motorised traffic to turn while pedestrians are crossing should be changed to barn dance style crossings where all traffic comes to a halt while the pedestrians cross.

Traffic signalling should be more responsive to pedestrians so that when a pedestrian pushes the button to cross the road the traffic controls respond promptly to stop the traffic to allow the pedestrian to cross. (It is pleasing to note (as per page 58) that trials in 2015 showed that waiting times at signalised intersections in certain locations had been reduced.)

Some pedestrian lights should have longer phases to allow more time for crossing. The ones with the countdown of numbers do allow enough time, as does the crossing from Elliott Street across Wellesley Street.

The intersections of Wellesley/Queen and Victoria/Queen allow pedestrians to cross twice as often as at other intersections. This pedestrian priority could be extended to other intersections in the quarter where there are large numbers of pedestrians, perhaps for certain times of the day such as the times people are arriving for or leaving from work or for shows in the evening.

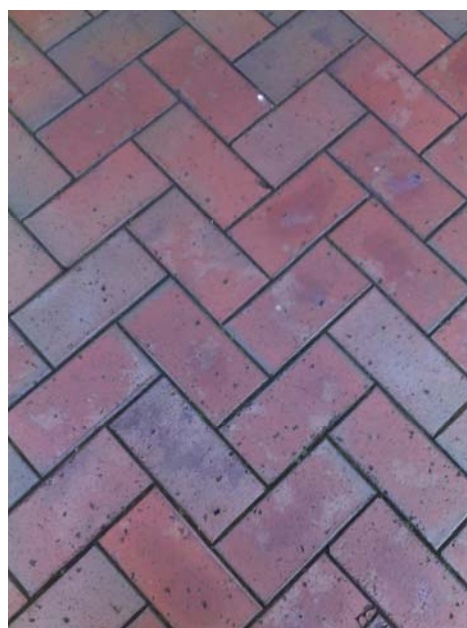
There are some intersections in the city centre where there is no pedestrian crossing on one of the four streets. The Hobson Street/Cook Street intersection needs a pedestrian crossing on its south side (see image). Currently a pedestrian approaching this side needs to make three separate crossings to get to the opposite side of the street.



Barn-dance style pedestrian crossings could be considered for parts of Hobson (and Nelson Street) so that traffic bound for (or exiting from) the motorway does not inhibit passage for pedestrians. We note that residents in the area report that motorists regularly drive through such crossings in a dangerous manner when pedestrians are attempting to cross.

CTA supports the two-way redesign of Hobson Street (and Nelson Street), with the addition of trees to screen the new-built environment. Such tree planting would serve to mitigate somewhat the loss of trees on the western side of Albert St due to the CRL works.

More shared spaces and more one-way single-lane streets will make the quarter more attractive for pedestrians. However, the shared spaces should either retain some of the colour of the paving that is already in situ (as unfortunately was not the case for the Federal Street shared space - see image below of previous paving) or consider adding some colour or variation to the grey pavers of the "legible" shared spaces.



Trials of closed roads at low usage times such as in the weekend could be carried out. Queen Street has been closed for a number of different reasons, with very successful outcomes. (See image below: Diwali Festival, October 2013, adjacent to the Town Hall)



Malling of Queen Street has been advocated many times by many different people. We suggest that as an experiment, to mall Queen Street from Mayoral Drive to Victoria Street from 10am - 4pm on Friday 11, Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 December 2015. Some pre-Christmas activities could be planned and perhaps one of the days could include a fresh food market.

More seating along streets to enable pedestrians to sit and rest would contribute to making the city centre more walkable. In some places, especially Queen Street and the shared spaces, this is well catered for.

Shelter from the rain at key points needs to be considered, for example, filling in the gaps between awnings on primary retail streets such as Queen Street. These should always be appropriate to the heritage/design of the respective buildings.

Lowering the speed limit to 30kph for the approaches to Queen Street was a good move and such lowering of speeds could be extended to other parts of the quarter.

Undergrounding vehicular traffic along the same route as the inner city loop could be considered. Commuters who have difficulty walking to a train station or bus stop could then have the choice of leaving their vehicle at a park and ride at a train station or driving underground into the city centre and parking their vehicle in an underground parking lot.

Footpaths need to be made physically safe to walk on, both in terms of the initial surface provided, the main criteria being non-slip, and regular monitoring and maintenance to deal with damage such as potholes.

If pedestrians could be directed to walk on the left-hand side of the footpaths on Queen Street and the other main thoroughfares at busy times, this would assist the flow of people. (Walking on the left has been advocated by Living Streets Aotearoa and Walk Auckland.)

3C Better for people cycling and how could these areas be improved? Please specify location(s) within the defined boundary area.

CTA supports the further development of pedestrian/cycle routes in the quarter, including the one off the Mayoral Drive/Cook Street intersection and into Aotea Square.

CTA supports two-way cycling on one-way streets and in the shared spaces, e.g. outside the central library and along Lorne Street.

A trial to allow cyclists to cycle through intersections while pedestrians are crossing if they keep to a speed that does not exceed that of the average pedestrian should be carried out in the city centre. This would speed up the journey for cyclists, deal to the issue of cyclists disturbing pedestrians by currently cycling through crossings, and enable cyclists to be separated from motorised traffic for a bigger portion of their journey.

To cater effectively for cyclists' needs, we would suggest that decision makers need to be aware of their needs by either getting on a bicycle themselves or consulting with groups such as Cycle Action Auckland. Cyclists' needs could be further addressed by Council appointing a "cycling champion", as advocated for by Cycle Action Auckland.

We note that sharing bus lanes only works for cyclists when there are no buses in them.

Where parking for bicycles is provided it should be situated under existing cover where possible (to protect them from rain).

The provision of free public showers would serve cyclists who wish to commute but their place of work or study does not provide showers (at the same time as providing for rough sleepers). These might be well sited within the CRL station boxes.

3D Safer and how could these areas be improved? Please specify location(s) within the defined boundary area.

Keep as much vehicle traffic out of the entire quarter as possible. Maybe start this by banning traffic during the weekends.

3E What could the council and its partners do to assist rough sleepers in the area?

Rough sleepers could have accommodation provided for them in the Civic Administration Building, if this building is developed as residential apartments, aiming at a mix of apartments for rough sleepers and general apartments (with active ground floors such as retail or internal social spaces).

If the CAB is developed for some other purpose (CTA has other suggestions) Council could assist with housing rough sleepers in other buildings, particularly those that Council owns and/or on sites that Council owns.

Council should give more funding to the organisations which already work with rough sleepers, such as Auckland City Mission and Lifewise. Maybe training more counsellors would assist.

Council should encourage beggars and rough sleepers to access community services to help with their needs, and educate residents/workers/visitors to the CBD about how to respond to these people. These people deserve our compassion and can be from all walks of life.

Council could employ rough sleepers to sweep up leaves and litter, rather than using noise polluting leaf blowers. Council could consider employing them to sell a magazine similar to Australia's "Big Issue" <http://www.thebigissue.org.au/> Council should provide showers for rough sleepers, which could also be used by travellers, cyclists and joggers.

4A The council owns several sites around Aotea Square, including uncovered surface car parks and the Civic Administration Building surrounds. How do you think these sites could be better used to help realise the area's potential?

As suggested above, some of these sites could house rough sleepers.
"A decent provision for the poor is the true test of civilization." - Samuel Johnson, *Boswell: Life of Johnson*

Alternatively, the central library could be re-housed in the Civic Administration Building. The current library building could become part of AUT, if this institution needs more space, or the library site could be used for apartments, reusing as much of the fabric of the current building as possible. Currently with a two-storey building on it, this site is under-utilised, and further development on the site to a greater height would make good use of the space and provide for other community services and a wonderful amenity, e.g. a view across Albert Park to the harbour).

The proposed green development south of Aotea Square leading into Myers Park is a good use of council site space.

Some sites could be developed as pocket parks and small squares where people can relax and/or meet each other. We support the concept on page 32 of "the creation of new courtyard spaces".

Surface car parks could become parklike pedestrian areas. Parking could be underground only in the quarter, so that full use of the land surface available can be made, and to make the area more pedestrian friendly and more aesthetically pleasing.

Any parking considerations should take into account the increased use of motor scooters, for which parking facilities are scarce and/or not clearly defined in the inner city.

The caretaker's cottage in Myers Park could be a café and the changing rooms could be a resource recovery centre (refer page 52).

5A

How and where would you like to see the quarter showcase: Civic identity?

Reopening the Civic Administration Building.
The Town Hall already showcases civic identity.

5B Māori identity?

One way might be through artwork in the Aotea Station and its entrances. Other ways would include telling the stories of the Māori history of the area through artwork and signage.

CTA supports the application of the Te Aranga Māori design principles, which should enable Māori identity to be expressed throughout the quarter.

5C Pacific identity?

5D Other cultural identity?

All these cultures can be showcased in changing displays in the square, the library and Aotea Centre, as well as more permanent art work in the quarter.

5E Progress towards self-sustainability?

CTA supports the points on page 78 of the consultation document with regard to sustainability.

All new vehicles over which Council has purchase control should be electric or low emission.

Council could promote car sharing and car pooling amongst apartment dwellers, by including information about car pooling on its website and Auckland Transport's website, such as a link to <http://www.jayride.co.nz/> and by advertising car pooling on billboards.

Council staff should be encouraged to walk or cycle to meetings in the central city, and to use public transport for other journeys, including to and from their work place.

There should be a permanent easy-to-use public cycle hire service available in the quarter.

Renewable energy generation could be supported in the first instance by supporting solar energy generation, including making this a requirement for all new buildings, encouraging owners of buildings in existence to use solar power, perhaps with Council offering a rebate, and Council using solar panels where possible on its own buildings.

There could be a resource recovery centre in the quarter, perhaps based at AUT and/or using the empty Council building in Myers Park.

The library or the Council service centre could be a depot for recycling batteries.

CTA supports the greening of all buildings, both commercial and residential. New businesses and buildings should all be clean and energy efficient and Council should put regulations in place to ensure this.

CTA supports the introduction of a green roof on the Aotea Centre (as per page 65) that will be accessible to the public, and we would also like to see solar panels on the roof.

Battery charging stations could be installed in some of the carparking areas.

Demolition of buildings should be viewed as non-sustainable, as when a building is demolished not only may any inherent character values be destroyed but the demolition and disposal of waste materials is expensive both in monetary and environmental terms. Furthermore, the embodied energy (the total expenditure involved in the creation of a building and its constituent materials) should be taken into account in assessing the real sustainability. This would be in line with the principles of Whakamaramatanga, which calls for water, energy and material resources are conserved.

We further support the Mana whenua aspirations and expectations of the quarter's development to include net zero energy and water, zero waste and toxicity from the completed project, storm water retention, rain water collection, botanical waste water systems, and use of solar energy.

CTA does not consider that planting trees in a concrete surround is sustainable, as has been amply demonstrated by the pin oak in upper Khartoum Place - one of several reasons given for its removal being that it had outgrown the concrete box in which it had been planted.

Any water features in the quarter should recycle the water used.

6A Any other comments or feedback on other aspects of the Aotea Quarter?

(1) We would like to see as many people as possible have the opportunity to enjoy the entertainment venues and public square events.

(2) The area, once upgraded, needs to be sufficiently maintained. We recommend that street furniture and other vulnerable aspects of the space be vandal-proofed, as far as that is possible.

(3) Design principles should take into account the necessity to protect all artworks and other elements created for public spaces, as outlined on page 85, and one means of protection that has become obvious as regards the REO sculpture outside the central library is to protect such items from traffic, as the damage in the image below demonstrates.



(4) CTA supports the application of the Te Aranga Māori design principles and trusts that the details of these will become more apparent in the final form of the framework.

(5) CTA recommends that the Aotea Quarter become a smoke-free area, that this designation be notified by means of well designed/subtle signage in the area and that the signage makes clear that it is a voluntary smoke-free area, i.e. the area is not policed. The litter laws around smoking should be enforced.

(6) Shading, as mentioned on page 75, is an important consideration. Both Aotea Square and Myers Park are appreciated by those who frequent this area for the sunlight that they afford, and this must not be compromised.

(7) Seating should be planned to be in the sun as well as in the shade.

(8) We would like to see cafe seating included in the public open space areas, with umbrellas at the tables. This has been successful in lower Khartoum Place.

(9) Instead of multiple fast food outlets and convenience stores in Queen Street, there should be a variety of interesting shops with quality merchandise. Quality local shops should be supported and proposed new ones should take into account whether there is already adequate provision in the area. We note, for example, the recent closure of Gloria Jeans which was located in Upper Khartoum Place, in direct competition with Gloria Jeans in lower Khartoum Place. We also note the relatively recent dismal retail offering opposite the Town Hall on Queen Street; a number of these premises are failing. There could be rates reduction for small businesses in the city centre which support a quality retail district.

(10) The south side of Aotea Square does not need to be “activated”. It is a park area and just needs to lead better into the adjoining park space in Myers Park. We challenge the statement on page 35 that “numerous inactive edges adjacent to Aotea Square and Myers Park dilute the experience and safety of these spaces” though we agree there could be merit in the second half of the statement that “underdeveloped council-owned sites represent missed opportunities and create challenging spaces”. Public spaces around the edge of Aotea Square do not need to be “activated” or turned into retail spaces.

(11) There is currently poor access to Myer’s Park, with associated safety concerns and we look forward to the completion of the Mayoral Drive underpass redevelopment.

(12) There should be a recognition in the final Aotea Quarter Framework for the need to continue to cater for the large student population at AUT and the University of Auckland, along with the residential student population.

(13) There should be more discouragement of cars in the CBD, both from parking restrictions/costs and making the city environment give priority to pedestrians.

(14) There is not enough parking available for those who wish to use it if there are events at all three Edge venues. Better public transport, particularly the rail link should alleviate this problem. In the meantime, priority/free parking could be made available for those who use a private vehicle to transport people to places such as The Edge for arts events.

(15) Motor scooters should be encouraged into the city centre in place of cars (as long as they emit low noise). There should be adequate parking provision for scooters and this could be free, as for bicycles.

(16) The heritage toilets in Wellesley St East could become some sort of kiosk, preferably one selling fruit and vegetables, and also magazines. Until this structure is redeveloped, it should be maintained better than its current unsightly state. Cleaning it would be a marked improvement. These (disused) toilets are in a prominent place opposite the central library, just up from Queen Street and just down from the Auckland Art Gallery. Their future use when Auckland's population increases significantly could be the entrance to an underpass under Wellesley Street.

(17) Any increased activities involving significant noise need to be considered carefully, as there are many people who live in the Aotea Quarter, and this number is increasing.

(18) Activity in the quarter should not impinge on the quality of life of the residents, particularly in terms of the noisy behaviour of drunk people.

(19) Despite provisions in the Unitary Plan, Council needs to monitor the effect of excessive noise and lighting on those who use the quarter, and heed their feedback. CTA disagrees with the statement on page 47 that "to enable a vibrant and culturally active precinct, noisy events will be necessary". Cultural fairs and markets are not necessarily noisy, and "fan zones" don't need to be situated in places where there is a high concentration of residents.

(20) Much of the noise nuisance in the quarter is under Council control. Regulations regarding the night-time collection of rubbish, particularly glass, the hours of operation of cleaning machines and leaf blowers, the permitted hours of construction work and the timing of road works need to be considered.

(21) CTA strongly advocates that leaf blowers be replaced by brooms.

There should be standards for all new buildings which are for entertainment use to have superior exterior sound-proofing and double doors at the entrance.

(22) New developments not only adjacent to the square but throughout the quarter (and the entire central city) should will be designed to manage noise generated not only from the square but from building sites, restaurants and pubs, entertainment venues, cleaning and rubbish collections.

(23) Concerts and events taking place in the buildings and the square should not impinge on each other. There have been occasions when classical concerts in the Town Hall have been ruined by very loud pop music in the square.

(24) For people to visit the theatre district at night or to experience other aspects of the city centre nightlife, there needs to be an improvement in the safety or perceived safety of the city after dark. For example, some people do not want to walk some distance alone in the dark to where they have parked their car.

(25) Major buildings and other developments planned for the quarter should be vetted by the Urban Design Panel, with heritage experts appointed where relevant.

(26) All development, from street furniture and road markings to symbolic public buildings should be the subject of considered design aesthetics.

(27) New apartments can be good adaptations of already existing buildings. New apartments should contain communal areas for the purposes of people interacting, such as a common deck space or a meeting room, and adequate areas for neighbouring children to play and should, where possible, incorporate roof gardens, solar power and a place to hang washing that is open to the wind, protected from the rain and not visible from the street. Minimum space requirements (as per the District Plan) are important, as are double-glazing for exterior sound-proofing and heat retention; high standard internal sound-proofing and adequate fenestration to allow natural light penetration and outlook. Also important are adequate play areas for children.

(28) To cater for families, some new apartments need to be family-sized, with sufficient separate rooms. Onsite facilities such as swimming pools would assist in catering for some of the recreational needs of families.

(29) Skateboarders in the city centre constantly challenge the city street furniture, which suggests the need for more dedicated skateboarding opportunities, taking into consideration the desire of skateboarders to be “creative”, i.e. to use the streets as well as sites set aside for their use. Rather than creating a large fixed skateboard area, Council could consult with skateboard users regarding a number of small areas of such a design that elements can be altered to maintain ongoing interest. Informing such considerations should be the noise caused by skateboard use.

(30) One such dedicated area could be at the back of the Bledisloe State Building. If a building is destined for this site then perhaps a floor for skateboarders could be created within the building, e.g. on the ground level in order to provide activation (i.e. the skateboarding floor can be seen from outside the building).

(31) Various disused/underused parts of the quarter such as the ceiling of the underpass to Myers Park could be considered for development as climbing walls, with constantly changing configurations, as provided for in other cities, e.g. Melbourne.

(32) It would enhance the Aotea Quarter if creative enterprises such as those that are a feature of the K Road Quarter (as mentioned on page 23) could become a part of the Aotea Quarter. These would be encouraged by low rentals, at least in the start-up phase, and the incentive to adaptively reuse heritage buildings, which often appeal to such ventures.

(33) The statement on page 35 of the consultation document that “direct new development to create active edges onto streets and spaces, with a preference for mid-range food and beverage and creative/arts-based tenancies” should apply to street frontages but not the square and the park. Such active street frontages could be developed in buildings that are closed in the evenings and weekends, such as banks, which should be encouraged to move all their operations to first floor level so that the street levels can be active when the banks are closed. There are four such banks within the Aotea Quarter, all on Queen Street.

(34) CTA supports the development of the land at the rear of Aotea Centre as a series of studio spaces, practice rooms and offices as a home for the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra, New Zealand Opera and Black Grace Dance Company, an Auckland base for the Royal New Zealand Ballet and a range of other companies as adding to the cultural life of the quarter, dependent on the design of such spaces. We also support the other benefits such a development is seen to bring, including a

more active built edge to Mayoral Drive, better pedestrian and cycling connections and the growth of ancillary businesses, particularly the creative industries.

(35) However, we note that that Mayoral Drive along the section from Albert St behind the Aotea Centre has a pleasant aspect due to the extensive planting there and we would not want to see these trees and plants removed (see image below).



(36) The opportunities mentioned on page 43 to introduce food and beverage activity on the ground floor of the Auckland Town Hall fronting Aotea Square would be opposed by CTA if this meant any change to the fabric of the building or obscuring of the view of it.

(37) CTA does not agree that “the southern and eastern edges of Aotea Square still lack definition and activity, to the detriment of the overall space” (page 46). The eastern edge of Aotea Square is predominantly the western wall of the Town Hall, a beautiful heritage building that is often festooned with colourful flags (see image).



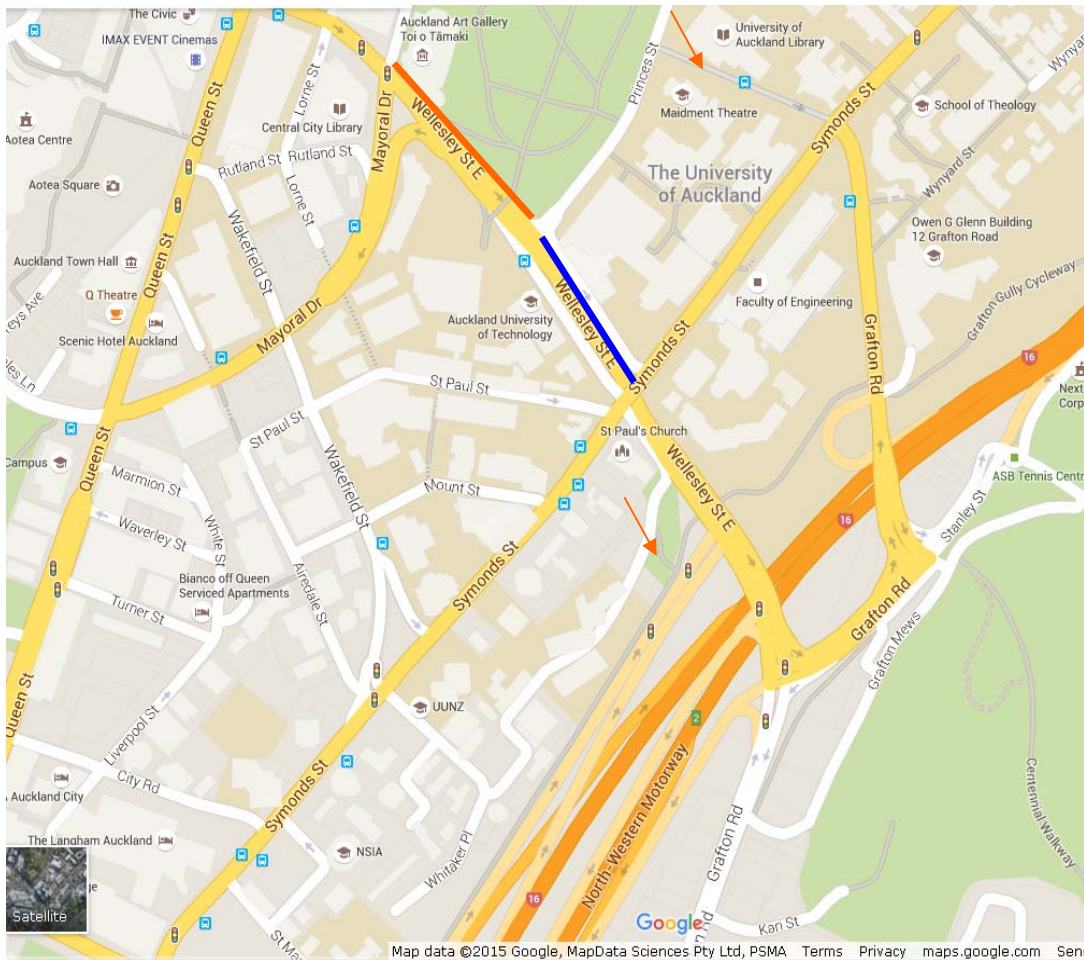
(38) “Given its size [i.e. Aotea Square], it can often feel empty and uninviting in the evening.” (page 46) We understood that the reason for the moving of the gateway, the removal of the water feature on the western side of the square and the removal of the Mountain Fountain was so that the square would be a big empty space to enable the accommodation of certain entertainment events.

(39) The statement on page 48 that “there are no community or business groups that specifically represent the subareas” does not take into account the representation of the CBD Residents’ Advisory Group, some members of which live in the subareas.



(40) Page 50 suggests:

(a) “a possible cycleway up part of Wellesley Street East, into Princes Street, Aitken and down Grafton Road to access the separated Grafton Gully shared pedestrian/cycleway”. We note that there is already a cycleway, of the white painted lane type (see photo above), as marked in red on the map below, and that Alfred Street (which we presume is what is meant by “Aitken”, as marked by the red arrow at the top of the map) is already a pedestrian mall that only allows access for cyclists, buses and authorised vehicles. Furthermore, there is an alternative route that continues up Wellesley St East, as marked by the blue line on the map, to connect across Symonds St and down beside St Paul’s Church at the northern end of Whitaker Place with the bridge, marked by the arrow at the bottom of the map, that leads to the Grafton Gully pedestrian/cycleway.



(b) “a possible cycleway up Wakefield Street (uphill side) which could connect to the bridge in Whitaker Place to the Grafton Gully shared pedestrian and cycleway. This would provide separated access to uptown and downtown as an alternative to Symonds Street.”

(41) We suggest that a cyclist who is at or near the bottom of Wakefield Street can more easily walk up Queen Street (or cycle along the eastern side of Aotea Square and through Myers Park, carrying the bicycle up the steps to St Kevin’s Arcade) to reach uptown, than cycle up Wakefield Street, down Whitaker Place and up the Grafton Gully cycleway to exit on Upper Queen Street, and to reach downtown there are a number of options, including via the one-way streets of Kitchener and Courthouse Lane and on through the shared spaces of Jean-Batten Place and Fort Street.

(42) We support the tree-planting mentioned on page 51: “Opportunities for improvement could include street tree-planting to add amenity to the changing character of the area towards apartments” and although we recognise that one of the values of trees is to soften the hard edges of buildings, we would not like to think that that future designs will so poor that they need to be screened by trees. (See image below of Volt Apartments at 430 Queen St, which we do not consider to be a good example of apartment design.)



(43) Any planting undertaken should be of robust trees that are not susceptible to the actions of vandals - as was the fate of a number of the new trees in stage 1 of the Lorne St upgrade. We do not think nikau are a good choice in the urban environment as many of these trees across Auckland, including in the Aotea Quarter look scruffy and sick.

(44) Trees act as carbon sinks and also offer visual amenity, shade and supporting biodiversity. However, care should be taken that trees will not compromise views of heritage or character buildings or other valued views.

(45) We note that many of the trees in the Aotea Quarter have been breaking out of their concrete straight-jackets and that this does not seem to be a sustainable way to plant and care for trees.

(46) CTA prefers trams (or light rail) to buses in the city centre.

(47) The installation of trams to connect with neighbouring parts of the city centre would both address the issue of what is steep terrain in some places and provide an attractive transport option. This would not only serve the interests of Aucklanders but also of tourists to bring them both to the Aotea Quarter and beyond. A tram service departing from the Civic Theatre to go up Wellesley St West, Victoria St West and College Hill to Three Lamps would be a good start. Trams are more attractive, safer and more sustainable than other forms of public transport. A unique tram service would add to the character of the Quarter and be a reference to the heritage of the inner city.

(48) CTA supports the use of light rail proposed to run along Queen Street (as per page 56) between Britomart and Kingsland and the future light rail extensions to Dominion, Mt Eden, Sandringham and Manukau Roads.

(49) Light rail should allow for the carriage of bicycles, to assist residents/workers to get up out of the Queen Street valley to the ridges.

(50) Although CTA supports accessibility, we also support walking, one reason being for people's health, and the "no need to walk 10-15 minutes" to an alternative train station is not necessarily a gain overall.

(51) We note (on page 57) that Wellesley Street, planned to be the primary east-west public transport spine across the midtown area of the city centre and a model civic public transport street will not be at the same time “an enhanced public realm” if the buses that traverse it continue to be noisy and dominating. If several buses are lined up one behind the other, pedestrians cannot see the other side of the road and have difficulty crossing between them, especially at the Lorne Street/Wellesley Street intersection, such crossing made possible only by the courtesy of drivers making space for the pedestrians to cross in front of them while they are queued up waiting to move down towards Queen Street.

(52) Consideration needs to be given to premises for new businesses which cater both for people working from home who require space for an office with adequate facilities, and boutique offices with only two or three people. Shared facilities such as a common conference room and shared infrastructure should be in the mix.

(53) Purchase prices of properties and Council rates will need to reflect support for small business, a sector which gives a strong contribution to the city’s economy yet does not receive the benefit of support in many areas.

(54) Shopping opportunities within the Victoria Quarter for residents/workers such as stores with fresh fruit and vegetables within close proximity (lacking in other parts of the CBD) are important. The aesthetics and mix of strip shopping and cafes should meet the vision for the Quarter.

(55) With a substantial and increasing number of Asian Aucklanders, it would seem that Council would do well to engage thoroughly with these ethnic groups in discussions about the Aotea Quarter Framework.

(56) We trust that Council is continuing to study what other cities have done to enhance their central quarters, particularly having regard to the many valuable lessons that have come out of the many years of Auckland Conversations.

Date of submission: 22 October 2015

Signature:



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Audrey van Ryn". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Audrey van Ryn
Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland