



## **Submission of Civic Trust Auckland**

### **Draft Long-Term Plan 2015 - 2025**

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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.

*NB Page number references unless otherwise stated are either to the consultation document or to the supporting information (combined) document.*

## **Key issue 1: Investing in Auckland - balancing progress with affordability**

**1.1** CTA supports the general rates increase of 3.5% each year if this is necessary to maintain important services and carry out essential projects.

**1.2** Alongside a rates increase, we support a reduction of spending by Council, e.g. by deferring or cancelling certain projects. A prescribed level of community support should be required as a threshold to progress any project. For example, it does not seem wise use of a limited budget to replace street signs throughout an area such as Mt Eden when the legacy signs are adequate (and easier to read than the replacements).

**1.3** CTA suggests that if ratepayers had a more direct say on how their rates are spent they would be more supportive of the rates levy. Rates bills could be formatted in such a way as to provide an opportunity for ratepayers to tick boxes indicating their support or otherwise for kinds of expenditure. If, say, the majority of ratepayers ticked the "library spending" box then Council would be justified in the level of spending proposed.

**1.4** CTA suggests that further analysis be undertaken to reduce the amount spent on planning.

**1.5** CTA supports empowering communities to deliver for themselves and this should include more support by Council for volunteers looking after assets such as parks (through planting, weeding and clearing up rubbish), and by reducing compliance, documentation and associated fees faced by community groups.

**1.6** CTA does not support a reduction in library hours (pg 27). Education plays a large part in forming strong resilient communities, which is an aspiration of Council. To quote from the Annual Plan of 2011 - 2012 on page 47, *"The council's community services are designed to help the region's communities become stronger, more resilient, and better able to meet their needs"*.

**1.7** Rather than reducing parks maintenance such as removing street gardens that are expensive to maintain (pg 23) Council should, through its local boards, investigate the opportunity for the community to maintain such areas.

**1.8** Due to the importance of our environment for the liveability of Auckland City, CTA does not support reduced spending on environmental advisory and education services (pg 23).

**1.9** CTA considers that renewing ageing Auckland Zoo infrastructure (pg 27), if it is to house animals, should not be included in Council's budget. The zoo should be a place where education and conservation practices are carried out that do not involve keeping animals in cages, unless temporarily in the case of injured animals until they are released back into the wild.

## **Key issue 2: Fixing Auckland's transport**

**2.1** Increasing public transport use and reducing congestion have been stated over many times by successive Councils as prime goals for Auckland City. Public transport, walking and cycling should remain a priority in the Council's current budget cycle.

**2.2** CTA does not support a reduction in spending in the cycle and walking network, park and rides and public transport infrastructure (pg 32). As stated in the consultation document (pg 20), this *"will impact on previously projected public transport boardings ... [and] higher levels of congestion across Auckland than forecast in our previous plan."*

**2.3** Council has proposed two options for funding transport. CTA considers that a fuel tax and a rates increase are two separate streams of income and for the purpose of funding transport there is no imperative for them to be paired. For example, a fuel tax alone could be used.

**2.4** If not enough revenue is gained from one revenue source, e. g. a fuel tax then the level at which that tax is levied could be increased.

**2.5** If motorway user charges are adopted, it is assumed that technology monitoring / charging would be effected using technology such as cameras monitoring entry to and exit from the motorway network. Since the technology exists to monitor vehicle occupancy, it may be possible to integrate that technology to impose a higher motorway using levy to single occupants of a private motor car (unless the driver is a person with a disability).

**2.6** CTA notes that formal agreement by central government has not been provided. We further note recent support for AT for investigation of light rail and CTA would certainly support consideration of light rail integrated into Auckland's transport network as being as important as the CRL.

**2.7** The ferry network should be greatly extended and include trips from the North Shore to the eastern suburbs and from the CBD to the eastern suburbs.

**2.8** With regard to traffic flow at times of low use (e.g. between midnight and 5.00am) CTA proposes funding the investigation and implementation of the use of flashing orange traffic lights (where drivers may proceed through intersections once they have ascertained that no traffic is coming). This system is used in other countries and could be introduced in Auckland on a trial basis. The elimination of such unnecessary waiting times may serve to mitigate waiting during times of congestion when it *is* necessary to wait.

**2.9** CTA supports the implementation of low cost improvements for cycling such as painting white lines on footpaths (to provide a cycle lane on one side and space for pedestrians on the other).

**2.10** We do not support funding for *"improvements to cycling in the vicinity of the airport"* (pg 17) unless there is evidence for potential good use by cyclists in this area.

**2.11** Funding should be provided for Council to provide further education about the benefits of public transport use, including the fact that *"time lost in congestion is non-productive and comes at a high cost"* (11-58) applies less when travelling on public transport than in a private vehicle, as one is able to use such travel time for work purposes, particularly with the use of electronic devices such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops.

**2.12** Footpaths are a key part of the infrastructure for walking. As such, funding should be set aside for the enhancement of the amenity and safety of that infrastructure.

**2.13** Council should encourage the use of motorbikes and motor scooters, as these vehicles assist in reducing congestion. The financial incentive of free parking for such vehicles should be extended and the regulations about where such vehicles can be parked should be clarified.

**2.14** Funding should be provided for adequate seating at all bus stops, with shelter from the weather.

**2.15** CTA proposes that Council trial one region-wide free public transport day per month as a means to promote the use of public transport.

**2.16** Council should encourage businesses and schools to adopt "glide time" to alleviate problems of congestion and unreliable travel times could be alleviated through more".

### **Key issue 3: A more active development role for council**

**3.1** In principle CTA supports Council taking a more active role in urban redevelopment and to this end the establishment of the new development agency (Development Auckland) is supported.

**3.2** We see potential for this new CCO to utilise the skills of Auckland Council Properties Ltd to restore properties such as Carlisle House to a useable condition and then resell it to the private sector with appropriate heritage protection in place.

**3.3** Before disposing of surplus or underutilised Council land (pg 15) further consultation with the community is required as to whether those assets are indeed surplus or underutilised.

**3.4** Assets such as parks may appear to be "under-utilised", yet they serve valuable purposes other than being used as a thoroughfare or for daily active recreation, including visual relief from the built environment for nearby residents as well as passers-by.

**3.5** Although we recognise the need for additional dwellings to accommodate an increased Auckland population, CTA is concerned about fast-tracked planning processes for Special Housing Areas, with regard to both design outcomes for such housing and also the effect on the built and natural environment that currently exists in those areas. These planning processes should be better informed as to the value of existing amenity before development is approved and they should be monitored to ensure good outcomes.

### **General Submission Points**

#### **Heritage**

CTA supports the Council's LTP provision for "*Ongoing work to improve recognition and appropriate management of Auckland's historic heritage, cultural heritage and historic character* (pg 5-15):

- regarding operational costs, CTA supports the increase in the number of scheduled historic heritage places (target 4.1). The identification and

protection of historic heritage is one of the roles of Council. However, it is not clear in the budget where the funding provision has been made to increase the number of such sites from 2,100 to 4,200 by 2030 (pg 5-11).

- regarding capital expenditure CTA would support increased funding for the built heritage protection fund
- regarding the funding of provision of incentives for heritage, the need for these exists mainly in the public / private realm of the streetscape. The traditional tram stop villages, for example, in many instances comprise unreinforced one and two- brick masonry buildings. These face the looming cost of seismic upgrades and development potential under the PAUP which may not be attainable without compromising the collective heritage/character amenity of the streetscape. These costs should be borne solely by individual property owners, but also by the community at large who share its amenity. Council should consider the levying of targeted rates within defined precincts to assist in the protection of that amenity. Those property owners in Ponsonby Road for example that benefit from up-zoning might equitably contribute to those qualifying (character defining) buildings which face the cost of seismic upgrading and which agree to waive development potential.

### **Urban Design**

- Auckland's harbours are amongst its assets and unobstructed views of the harbour from numerous vantage points including of the Waitematā Harbour from the city centre waterfront are valued highly by the citizens of Auckland, as well as easy and safe access for pleasure boats. Storage of used cars and other imported goods should be inland, not on the waterfront. A comprehensive long-term study of environmental, social and economic impacts should be undertaken before any port expansion occurs.
- CTA supports funds being allocated to the High Street precinct, and that this work be integrated with the upgrades of Freyberg Square and Ellen Melville Hall upgrade, in further consultation with the local community.
- The Quay Street Boulevard and Central Wharves Study should be planned in conjunction with the wider strategy for the waterfront, including the port, and not until the full stage 2 study is complete.

### **Infrastructure**

- CTA supports the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan (pg 27), particularly the implementation of the resource recovery network.
- CTA supports education of the public and businesses to reduce water consumption (pg 11). We consider that education in other areas which could result in minimising the need for new infrastructure and services is important and that this should include education about reducing waste.
- With regard to vital infrastructure such as the water supply and sewage system, CTA considers that Council should maintain and renew this when necessary rather than waiting to repair it when it fails.

### Local Boards

- The aspirations of the Local Boards should be provided for.
- CTA supports the increase in funding proposed by various Local Boards for the suburbs which have suffered under-investment in comparison to others.
- CTA considers that inadequate investigation of the existing context and opportunities has been undertaken in relation to the following projects:
  - Playground and park upgrade of Myers Park 3.3 m
  - Development of Beresford Square, 1,5 m
  - Redevelopment of Pioneer Women's and Ellen Melville Hall, 3,629 m

Better investigation needs to be undertaken before embarking on local projects.

Date of submission: 16 March 2015

Signature:



Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland