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### **Submission of Civic Trust Auckland on the Draft Karangahape Road Plan**

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#### **Civic Trust Auckland**

Civic Trust Auckland is a non-profit public interest group, incorporated in 1968, with membership, 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 would like to be kept informed about the Karangahape Road Plan and we would welcome the opportunity for further engagement to discuss our feedback.

Currently one of our Board members lives in the K' Road area. Several other of our Board members live nearby and frequently visit the area, and other members of the Trust also visit the area on occasion, for shopping and to take part in events. One of our Board members has attended stakeholder consultation meetings for the Draft Karangahape Road Plan.

**1.** We agree with the key outcome for the future of the K' Road area, with the addition of the words in blue: *"K' Road is a safe and well-connected place that offers a range of housing and employment generating activities, celebrates and protects its distinctive historical and cultural heritage, and reinforces its role as the colourful 24/7 entertainment and creative fringe of the city centre"*.

**2.** The addition of these words reflects Key Move 2, the importance of K' Road as an area of historic and cultural heritage, not just locally, but regionally and nationally, and the Waitemata Local Board's stated intentions to identify heritage as per its Local

Board Plan as well as its first listed priority as, “A distinctive, high-quality built environment that embraces its heritage”.

3. We agree with all the five key moves:

1. Revitalise and enhance the K’ Road area as the creative, edgy fringe of the city centre
2. Protect, enhance and celebrate K’ Road’s historic and cultural heritage, and people
3. Develop an integrated network of open and public spaces in the area
4. Provide safe and convenient connections in the area
5. Create a safe and enjoyable environment to live, work and play.

4. CTA strongly supports Key Move 2, and 2.1 in particular, to *“Investigate options for formal protection of the historic character and buildings, individually and as a whole in the K’ Road area”*. However, the options should already be obvious and we submit that it is now time to put the protections in place.

5. Council’s response to key actions 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 needs to be approached in an integrated manner that treats the area as a whole and not simply as a collection of individual sites. Success in achieving this will require political commitment to the implementation of an incentives policy which equitably shares the costs associated with heritage amongst those who benefit from it (owners and public together).

6. We also strongly support 4.2 as regards use of the Nelson Street off-ramp and suggest that the investigation of this has already been carried out and that it is now time for an action plan. We note that the off-ramp would run straight in front of the Beresford Street Station and that there is perhaps an opportunity for a connection between the two.

7. We suggest that K’ Road’s built environment is one of the reasons that underpins its character as the *“creative, edgy fringe of the city centre”* and that the top priority should be to protect and enhance the area’s historic and cultural heritage.

8. We quote from the Draft Newton Plan, a passage we would like to see included in the Draft Karangahape Road Plan, *“Before we can plan for growth, we need to understand the existing context of the area.”* (page 5). This applies equally to K’ Road. However, in contrast to the Newton area, which we consider is an area where growth can happen, K’ Road is an area where the focus should be on preservation, and any growth should be very carefully considered to see whether it would have any adverse effects on the existing built environment.

9. Under the heading “Protecting our Heritage and Character” on page 13 the Waitemata Local Board Plan states:

*“We will value and protect character areas and preserve heritage residential housing and local commercial buildings within Waitemata. We will work to make respecting and valuing heritage part of our everyday lives. This includes protecting against unfortunate cases of “demolition by neglect”. The council is developing a heritage plan for the entire region, and Waitemata Local Board will ensure a specific plan for Waitemata is created in which heritage is assessed, valued and protected. We will ensure the protection of the heritage and unique characters of our urban villages. We*

*will complete the identification of city centre buildings and structures with significant heritage qualities and special character including mid- 20th century commercial buildings. We will also develop a range of incentives and controls to protect buildings and mitigate potential economic effects for property owners. We will proactively identify and support the preservation of important heritage buildings ....*

**10.** We note the NZHPT (now Heritage New Zealand) submission to the Waitematā Local Board Plan stated as follows:

*“In particular the NZHPT considers that Local Boards can and should have a critical role to play in the comprehensive assessment of historic heritage within the Boards’ boundaries, so that this information can help inform plans and policies currently under development by Auckland Council. As all of Auckland’s legacy planning documents are combined into one Unitary Plan, it will be helpful for each Local Board to have a detailed knowledge of which heritage items warrant identification and protection to ensure that the diversity, representativeness and extent of historic heritage within their areas can be identified and protected.*

*As the Local Board area contains many of the earlier settled parts of Auckland there is a particularly high richness and diversity of heritage in this area. At the same time, the central location of the Waitemata Local Board area means there are development pressures ... ”*

**11.** CTA is of the view that the Local Board should be liaising with local building owners to encourage retention of existing heritage buildings. The Local Board could advise owners on mechanisms available to help with this and could assist with heritage grants. The Auckland Plan Committee and Governing Body minutes of 10 September 2013 state that Council has been mandated to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with relevant landowners to undertake historic heritage assessments and appropriate retention of exemplar areas”. An equitable arrangement should be made with owners to retain heritage value for the benefit of future generations.

**12.** The historic heritage of the Karangahape Road area needs to be properly assessed and protected before the proposed CRL station and railway connections are planned. As well as the commercial buildings in the area, this includes Māori heritage, archaeological items and the remaining early residences of the whole area that this plan covers. Whilst individual character buildings within K’ Rd may not meet the threshold for scheduling, it is the collective value of the contributions of all those individual buildings that combine to give the K’ Road area sufficient heritage value to warrant protection as an area for the purposes of the Unitary Plan.

**13.** We note in the introduction of the draft plan that, *“This plan is just the starting point for discussion,”* and look forward to opportunities for more discussion once more details of the plan are presented. The draft plan being only ten pages long, there is as yet little of substance to comment on. (In comparison, the Draft Ponsonby Road Masterplan is 50 pages in length.) We note that on the final page it is stated, *“A full document will be developed with additional background information, strategic context and a detailed implementation strategy”.* We submit that the draft of the full document be made available for public consultation.

**14.** The full document should reference the various reports that have been written about K’ Road over the years. It should include recognition of Karangahape Road as an area of national heritage significance. We note that the Draft Heritage Evaluation of Karangahape Road prepared by Auckland Council’s Heritage Unit in January 2014

says on page 20: “The Karangahape Road Area meets the threshold for scheduling as a Historic Heritage Area: Category B”.

**15.** It would also have been useful to include a list of stakeholders (as per the working group list for the Draft Ponsonby Road Masterplan) rather than merely state that there were some. We submit that these stakeholders be listed in the full document.

**16.** We strongly support making Karangahape Rd more cycle and pedestrian friendly but note that no details are given about how this could be done. CTA submits that one way to make it safer for pedestrians is to ensure there are no areas where pedestrians can slip. For example, when it rains, the surface at the east end of Karangahape Rd becomes slippery through rainwater being spread onto the surface by people’s shoes.

**17.** CTA supports the creation of an outdoor performance space in the natural amphitheatre provided at the southern / K’ Road end of Myers Park. (see images) Public access around the curvature of the amphitheatre would be by way of level landscaped pathways extending from the three landings on the stairs descending from St Kevin’s Arcade into Myers Park. This would enhance cultural activity and activity would improve security.



**18. Key Move 3**

**3.1** *“To develop Beresford Street and surrounding pedestrian entrance as a key public space and focal point around the new K’ Road Station entrance.”*

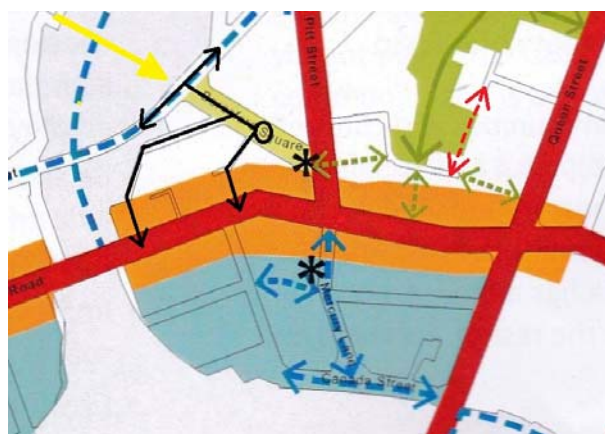
Although the CRL and the station at Beresford Street is said to be the reason and focus for the plan, very little is mentioned about it in the draft plan. No details are given about the design of the station. A concept picture of the station and its placement in the Square would seem to be an essential part of the plan.

**19.** There already exists a beautiful place called Beresford Square comprising a number of character and heritage buildings.

**20.** The rationale behind the proposed station entrance in Beresford Street is unclear. Judging from the sketch plan in the Draft Karangahape Road Plan (page 6), there is no apparent assessment of some of the feeder routes for people to approach the station.

**21.** The station entrance should form part of an integrated development of Beresford Square and the remainder of Beresford Street in order that some of the amenity that exists there can be taken advantage of to much greater effect. The station itself does not have to be a big building and much of its service function can be underground. Greening of this area could be carried out like that envisaged for Victoria Street in the City Centre Masterplan.

**22.** This diagram is based on the one at page 6 of the Draft Karangahape Road Plan, with additions that are explained below.



In our view, the station should be at the crest of Beresford Street, where the “S” is circled in black, thereby preserving the existing amenity of Beresford Street, improving access to other approaches to the station and providing an opportunity to develop the steepest section of Beresford St (immediately beneath the word “Beresford”). The yellow arrow pointing towards Beresford Street represents the afternoon sun. The black lines represent other well trodden paths that support a more detailed investigation of the portal. The dashed red line represents the considerable existing foot traffic from Scotia Place through a currently vacant site to the east of Espano Flats. Council should negotiate some kind of easement or through-site link in this area.

**23.** 4.3 *Investigate with Auckland Transport opportunities for speed reduction and traffic calming measures in the K' Road area.*

We suggest that much of the traffic through K Road is coming from Ponsonby Road and Great North Road, using K' Road as an approach to the motorway onramp by Grafton Bridge. Council might usefully investigate with Auckland Transport creating a new onramp to the motorway off Newton Road to be incorporated in the area earmarked for intensification on the southern side of K' Road. (There is also an alternative onramp at Wellesley Street East.) Consideration could then be given to removing the motorway onramp at the intersection of K' Road, Symonds Street and Grafton Bridge. This would serve to lessen the number of vehicles that use K' Road, thereby enhancing the area and making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

**24.** Many desired outcomes / actions are listed in the draft plan, including “work with” and “focus on”. Some of the entities that Council intends to work with are mentioned but more detail about who is carrying out what actions and how their outcomes will be measured should be included in the full document. This should also include how it will be ensured that a future Board will carry out these actions, as well as details of the budget that will be available.

Date of submission: 14 May 2014

Signature:



*Audrey van der Pijl*

Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland