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Submission of Civic Trust Auckland on the Draft Newton 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 Newton Plan and we would welcome the opportunity for further engagement to discuss our feedback.

Several of our Board members live nearby the Newton area and they and other members of our Trust frequently pass through the area on the way to Maungawhau, Mt Eden Village and Dominion Road, when using the north western cycleway and also occasionally shopping in the area. A family member of one of our Board members owns a building in Symonds Street near the intersection with Mt Eden Road.

1. We would choose “Eden Terrace” as the one name that best defines the “study area” partly because it is more distinctive than the other names suggested and partly because the word “Eden” references to both the maunga and the nearby character village.

2. We agree with the key outcomes for Newton and see its potential as an area to be developed, whether or not the CRL goes ahead. It is currently somewhat of a wasteland of commercial buildings and poor housing stock, including leaky houses. CTA supports quality intensive development in the area, as long as it is sensitive to

the existing character and heritage buildings and does not impinge on sightlines to heritage buildings and natural heritage, including the maunga.

3. We support all the key moves, in particular Key Move 4:

“New development creates a distinctive place that integrates with the variety of historical and cultural character elements existing within Newton.”

4. However, we are concerned that the historic heritage of Newton is not yet properly assessed. This needs to be done before the proposed CRL station and railway connections are planned, in order to protect the buildings in the area. As well as the commercial buildings, this should include Māori heritage, archaeological items and the remaining early residences. The registered Upper Symonds Street Historic Area should be recognised in the Draft Newton Plan.

5. Such assessments would support the following statements in the plan:

“This will mean protecting and enhancing the things that people value, including the unique character and heritage of the area” (page 4).

“Before we can plan for growth, we need to understand the existing context of the area.” (page 5)

“Redevelopment of the main streets will need to be sensitive to the existing heritage and character values of the area.” (page 5)

6. The draft plan being only ten pages long, there is as yet little of substance to comment on. We submit that there be further public consultation before the final implementation strategy is produced, with a special emphasis on feedback from people who live in the area.

7. Although the new train station in Newton is given as the reason and focus for the plan, very little is mentioned about it. No details are given about the design of the station. A concept picture of the station and its placement would seem to be an essential part of the plan.

8. We submit that an iconic art work such as a windmill (referencing to Partington’s Mill) be considered for the Newton Station area.

9. 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 final implementation strategy.

10. The final implementation strategy 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.

11. Council should encourage the already long-existing presence of a bicycle shop at the intersection of Khyber Pass, Symonds St and Newton Road, just along from the proposed new CRL station. This is an important location by virtue of its position as the highest topographical point in this part of the city and from where one can glide for one kilometre downhill towards Auckland’s waterfront, virtually without turning the pedals. A cycle shop in this area would underpin Key Action 4.1 regarding a focus on active transport.

12. We support enhancing green space in the area as per Key Move 5, including the linking of existing green spaces. New developments could easily include pocket parks.

13. *“There is potential for new through-site links and laneways within Newton to improve pedestrian and cycle connections through the area.”* (page 6) This should take into account people going to and from the station.

14. If Auckland City is aiming to reduce car use, then the following two statements from the plan do not fit well, *“The sloping topography of Newton allows for cheaper semi/full basement parking for new developments”.* (page 5) *“Investigate the role of on-street and off-street car parking in the ongoing development of Newton into a ‘prominent centre’ for business.”* (page 8) The point of the City Rail Link is to encourage more use of the train.

15. 2.1 under Supporting actions (page 8) states, “Investment in thoughtful and high-quality public spaces will provide for people’s needs and will support further residential and business growth.” We submit that the Newton area not incorporate any “shared spaces” as we do not consider these to be high quality, especially the choice of grey pavers with no colour or features that are distinctive.

16. The acknowledgement of the two church spires at Supporting Action 2.5 is noted and we would also like to see acknowledgement of St David’s Church in Khyber Pass as a valued feature of this area - see images on following page.

17. We submit that consideration be given to undergrounding Ian McKinnon Drive and that the area on top then be developed in the way that has been proposed in the City Centre Masterplan for the area over Grafton Gully - refer Move 07 “Putting a lid on it”.

Date of submission: 14 May 2014

Signature:



Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Audrey van der Pijl".

