



## **Submission of Civic Trust Auckland**

### **Draft Plans for Westhaven**

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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.

In general, CTA supports the Westhaven Plan and the draft vision “*To be the most successful marina in the Southern Hemisphere and home to a globally renowned marine industry. An iconic Auckland destination that is vibrant, accessible and attracts people to the sea*”.

We support the objectives of: “*a blue-green waterfront, a public waterfront, a smart, working waterfront, a connected waterfront, a liveable waterfront*”.

CTA also supports the key themes of:

- sustainable development and environmental enhancement
- culture and heritage
- public spaces and activation

We support the creation of an interpretive heritage walkway around the marina.

Regarding the fifth theme around car parking, we comment further below.

With regard to the various funded and planned projects, along with the proposed projects, we comment further on each below.

## **Land Based Projects**

### **1. Westhaven Promenade and Cycleway**

CTA is fully supportive of this initiative and notes that this project is currently close to commencing. This will be a positive development, both for current users struggling to negotiate the narrow footpath along Westhaven Drive, and to attract new users.

However, we expected to see inclusion of the SkyPath project in the Draft Plans for Westhaven, as SkyPath requires connection with the Westhaven promenade. In order for cyclists to get safely to the waterfront from other parts of Auckland, cycleways need to be linked up, and SkyPath forms a vital part of this transport network. This cycleway / walkway would serve to bring people from the North Shore to Westhaven, and, aside from the benefits to commuters (both pedestrians and cyclists), SkyPath has great potential as a tourist attraction. It is an asset which will greatly contribute to the Westhaven area. Furthermore, cycle parking takes up a lot less room than car parking.

The SkyPath connection fits with the draft plans' vision *"To be a part of regionally connected networks (both transport and information technology)"* and *"To provide high quality pedestrian, cycle, boat and vehicle access to the marina for the community, visitors and berth users"*.

### **2. Westhaven Marine Centre**

We note that considerable areas of public parking will be removed to cater for this new Marine Centre, backing on to the edge of the Shelly Beach Rd/Ponsonby off ramp from the Harbour Bridge.

We are concerned that this may create problems for current water users of the adjacent berths and potential for conflict of use and access for promenaders and water users.

Promenaders are being attracted to the area to appreciate the boats and marine activities. If the needs of boat users are not met, there will be no boats to be admired. Boat users' needs should not become secondary to land-based visitors.

While CTA supports, in principle, development here related to marine industries and hospitality, we note that apartment development in this area has been mentioned in the past, and is not indicated in this present plan. Some clarification regarding future plans is needed, as residential accommodation needs further consideration with regard to access, parking, and issues of noise and compatibility with the existing marine uses and social uses of the existing yacht clubs.

### **3. Upgrade of Harbour Bridge Park**

CTA supports plans to improve this currently barren area. The proposed cultural and heritage developments will be welcome.

An opportunity to recognise one aspect of the cultural heritage of the site is to erect a small memorial in the park, this being the nearest public space to where the Ranger was anchored when the decision was made (on the prompting of Hobson's doctor) on the location of the Auckland settlement - later the CBD. Such a memorial could be a

sculptural rendition of the Ranger's keel and ribs and a plaque with the relevant historical information.

We submit that Harbour Bridge Park have reinstated an original Maori name or be renamed Ranger Park in memory of this important episode in the history of Auckland.

The points that follow relate to the park but also to other public open spaces in the Westhaven area:

- windbreaks and shade trees need to be included
- some provision for seating should be under trees or umbrellas
- sunblock could be provided in the public toilets
- flowers and grass are preferable to concrete
- non-slip surfaces and wheelchair friendly routes would contribute to safety, accessibility and inclusiveness.

We note (e.g. on page 9 of the summary) that, *"Many of the projects outlined require careful consideration of parking demand and will require some car parking reconfiguration to optimise space. Some operational improvements are being proposed to:*

- *upgrade parking layout compliant with district plan standards*
- *separate berth holders and public carparking*
- *improve operational efficiency of the marina*
- *provide for the introduction of ticket machines to enable a charging regime to be introduced for the public car parks, in line with other CBD fringe areas".*

Although we support the first three points we do not support charging for parking in the Harbour Bridge Park area, nor, indeed the Westhaven area as a whole. In order for the area to be *"a welcoming place for all Aucklanders to explore and spend time in,"* and to meet Water Auckland's *"commitment to make the most of the public asset by developing it into an inclusive and diverse place"* parking should either be free or a minimal charge such as \$2 for the day. Some people are discouraged by parking charges and other people simply cannot afford them.

#### **4. St Mary's Bay – water quality improvements and open space developments**

We support the various plans for this area, particularly moves to improve water quality. But we feel it is still unlikely that a re-sanded beach would become suitable for swimming at this stage, particularly when there are many magnificent beaches in other easy accessible parts of Auckland. Amenities proposed for development should be appropriate for the area.

The heritage aspects of "restoring" St Mary's Bay are to be commended.

The improvements should lead to greater non-motorised water use of this area, a pleasant outlook for walkers and provide opportunities for passive recreation.

## **Waterspace Projects**

### **1. X and Y Pier Extension**

This development is in line with the increasing demand for finger berths over swing moorings. We note that this could reduce the width of open water available to boats manoeuvring to the Z Pier charter berths, the fuel station and the dry stack areas.

### **2. Pile Mooring Redevelopment**

This development is in line with the increasing demand for finger berths over swing moorings. However, we question whether conversion to finger berths will increase silting in the marina.

We have concerns about the ramifications of closing the secondary entrance to the marina, with regards to silting, water flow and therefore water quality.

### **3. Z Pier Reconfiguration and Reclamation**

We support the reclamation to the landward side of the public boat ramp and its proposed use for non-boat users and as the gateway to the new promenade.

We support redevelopment of Z Pier for charter boat users and for visitor berthing.

We have concerns about the lack of discussion regarding the public boat ramp and associated car and trailer parking. This ramp is the only all-tide public boat launching ramp in the central area, with the nearest to the east at Okahu Bay and to the west at Te Atatu. As such, it offers the only access for a substantial part of the isthmus population. It is very popular, and, at present, the car and trailer parking is at a premium at the weekends and throughout summer.

This boat trailer parking should be preserved or increased for the benefit of the very large section of the boating public who use trailer boats, both powered and trailered yachts.

## **Long Term Projects**

### **1. Redevelopment of Piers G to S**

No comment.

### **2. Westhaven North and Open Space**

This reclaimed space could provide a great viewing platform; however, it needs further discussion about the ramifications of this substantial reclamation. We are concerned that the narrowing of the entrance may have unintended consequences for the whole of the Westhaven Marina. We are also concerned that there may be silting issues with this reclamation.

### **3. Transformation of Yacht Club Sites**

Our concerns about this proposal are:

- Whether accommodation / apartments are planned for these sites, which we do not support.
- How easy access will be for the relocated yacht clubs. From the concept plans, it seems to suggest only walking access.

### **4. Heritage Yacht Basin and Headland Park**

We support the concept of a berthing area for heritage boats and the associated Headland Park proposal on the Wynyard Quarter side of the Westhaven entrance.

We note, however, that proposed development will narrow the access to the whole marina area and this may have ramifications.

### **Further Concerns regarding the Draft Westhaven Plans**

#### **Public Transport and Rooding**

There is very little in this plan about providing public transport to the marina area – none is available at present. The existing single lane each way road is likely to come under more pressure, with substantial new development.

We note that the vision of being a liveable waterfront is to *“create an attractive, vibrant, safe and accessible place that becomes an integral part of the CBD waterfront experience”* and here we highlight the word “accessible”. Furthermore, if *“Waterfront Auckland has a commitment to make the most of the public asset by developing it into an inclusive and diverse place”* then to make good that commitment, people without private vehicles need to be included.

Plans for the Westhaven North and Open Space area include a water taxi wharf. We strongly support this facility and suggest that water taxis from the Ferry Building area be considered, with further stops to include Devonport and other wharfs currently served by ferries.

We note that the Orakei Local Board is intending to pilot shuttle buses on some routes in its area and suggest that the same could be done for access to Westhaven, perhaps as a temporary measure until other means of public transport are introduced.

We would like to see the extension of the Wynyard Quarter tramline to the Westhaven area. With the new ASB centre opening on Jellicoe Street and further developments planned for the area, a light rail connection will be an important piece of infrastructure for the Wynyard Quarter. We note that the intention for this tram was to extend it to Britomart and that modern light rail vehicles be used on the track. A tramline that extends east to Britomart and west to Westhaven would bring more people to the Westhaven area, take the pressure off car parking and add further interest.

## **2. Parking**

Boat users need access to adequate parking, as public transport is almost never an option, due to the gear needed for boating. These users should have priority over casual visitors to the area.

Public parking for car and trailers should not be reduced and, ideally increased, to allow access to the water for the largest section of the boating population – trailer yachts and power boats.

There needs to be some visitor parking that is long term, for boat users who are not berth holders and without access to berth holder parking – i.e., crew on boats, timeshare boat owners, etc.

Commuter parking in the same area as boat users should be firmly discouraged.

If pay and display parking for short stay visitors is introduced, there should be graduated tariffs for longer stay boat users (who can be away for days at a time).

## **3. Living in the Marina**

Reasonable live-in use of the marina is to be encouraged. It adds to colour and vibrancy of the area. It does have parking and security ramifications.

If purpose-built houseboats are to be permitted at Westhaven they should be confined to a dedicated area. However, we do not support the type of “houseboats” depicted in the draft plans, which are out of scale with the existing boats and detract from the visual amenity. Houseboats which are single storey and have individual character could be an attractive addition to the marina, but not apartment style living at the water’s edge, as per the image in the plan.

## **4. Security Concerns**

Live-in use of the marina creates security issues for both berth holders and those who would live in.

The suggestion that the pier gates could be left open during the day would be of serious concern and we do not support this. Boats are not as secure as houses, with substantial amounts of equipment at risk.

## **5. Amount of Reclamation Proposed**

A substantial amount of reclamation is proposed – in St Mary’s Bay and at the marina entrance. Along with the conversion to finger berths and the closing of the secondary marina entrance, this may lead to increased silting of the marina. Potential environmental impacts of these reclamations need to be considered.

## **6. Narrowing of the Marina Entrance**

The proposed reclamation at the marina entrance, the conversion of the present swing moorings to the X and Y piers, the increase to the Z pier, the developments proposed

along the western side of the Wynyard Quarter/Tank Farm, all narrow the entrance and manoeuvring space available.

With the proposed closure of the secondary entrance, the boat traffic entering and exiting will become increasingly concentrated. From the personal experience of CTA members, when returning to Westhaven in the evening on a summer weekend, the boat traffic can become very congested. Research needs to be carried out on typical boat movements and the effects of the proposed changes.

CTA raises the above concerns with Waterfront Auckland. We would welcome assurance that the proposed developments and changes will not have any negative environmental impacts or loss of amenity for the boating public of Auckland.

Overall, we support the major themes and proposals for the Westhaven Marina area.

Date of submission: 12 April 2013



Signature:

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

Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland