



Submission of Civic Trust Auckland

Auckland Council Draft Annual Plan 2013/2014

We wish to speak in support of our submission at a public hearing.

Full Name: Mrs Audrey van Ryn (Secretary)

Organisation: Civic Trust Auckland

Phone (daytime): 368 1516

Phone (evening): 368 1516

Mobile: 021 035 4431

Email: cta@civictrustauckland.org.nz

Postal address: PO Box 74 049 Greenlane

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.

The Trust submitted on the 2011/2012 Draft Annual Plan and has submitted recently on a range of Auckland plans.

Civic Trust Auckland supports the general direction of the Annual Plan and congratulates Auckland Council, and, in particular, the Local Boards, for their vision for the city and its people. We support the investments being made in the city's key infrastructure, such as the \$342 million for Watercare, improvements to the stormwater network, the maintenance and upgrading of numerous community facilities and the emergency management activities.

The Trust supports the key goals of the Auckland Plan which have guided the decision-making for the Annual Plan:

- a fair, safe and healthy Auckland
- a green Auckland
- an Auckland of prosperity and opportunity
- a well-connected and accessible Auckland
- a beautiful Auckland that is loved by its people
- a culturally rich and creative Auckland
- Te Hau o Te Whenua, Te Hau o Te Tangata – a Māori identity that is Auckland's point of difference in the world.

Submission Questions

1. Service reductions: *Do you agree or disagree with the proposals to reduce some of our services?* Generally agree

As regards the mowing of berms, we feel it is important that Council considers the views of Local Boards on this matter, especially as regards possible difficulties this would impose on some households. We suggest that if people are required to mow their own berms then, in appropriate areas, such as quiet residential streets, they should be permitted to grow flowers and vegetables on them, i.e. any vegetation that won't interrupt the provision of services.

2. Rates: *The proposed changes have reduced the projected average rates increase from 4.8 to 2.9 per cent. Do you agree or disagree with this level of change?* Generally agree, however, heritage being a collective asset, and, given the publicised intention to provide heritage incentives, there may be some scope within the existing rate cap to provide such incentives, which don't appear to be provided thus far, e.g. no incentives at all in the Long-Term Plan toward the earthquake upgrading requirements for private building owners.

3. Fees: *Do you agree or disagree with proposed changes to fees?* Agree

4. Parks and open spaces: *Do you agree or disagree with these proposals for additional funding?* Agree

CTA recognises and celebrates Auckland's parks as highly valuable assets for the region and supports the budget of \$36.4 million to acquire land for parks across the region. We appreciate the care given the natural environment of Auckland, a feature of our city which contributes greatly to its livability.

5. Community and events: *Do you agree or disagree with these proposals for additional funding?* Agree

6. Planning and economic development: *Do you agree or disagree with additional budget to develop the Unitary Plan?* Agree.

7. Proposed rates remission and postponement policy: *Do you agree or disagree with the proposed policy changes?* Agree. There could also be rates remission provided for owners of heritage buildings that need upgrading and maintenance. The development of any incentives for heritage protection should include consideration of rates remission and postponements.

8. TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre: *Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to contribute to its development from the sale of surplus land (estimated at \$20-30 million)?* Disagree

Instead of provision for kayaking and white water rafting on dry land, it would seem to be a better use of resources to provide for such activities on one of the many bodies of water with which Auckland is endowed. The funds generated by the sale of land might be better put towards a sinking fund that contributes to the maintenance of swimming pools and/or subsidising pool entrance fees in the Manukau area and/or providing funding for trips to natural areas of white water where the surrounding environment is an integral part of the white water rafting experience.

There are many other possible events that could take place at an events centre.

9. Local communities: *Which local board does your submission relate to?*

Our submission relates to all Auckland Local Boards.

Do you agree or disagree with the local board priorities for 2013/2014 included in your local board's budget? Generally agree

Do you agree or disagree with the local boards' proposed changes? Generally agree.

We trust that the Local Boards are in tune with the needs and aspirations of their communities and have consulted with them and will carry out their responsibility to retain and support the special character and identity of their particular area.

10. Do you have any other comments on the draft Annual Plan 2013/2014?

See the following pages. Some points expand upon the answers to the above questions.

Transport

CTA supports in principle the key public transport projects outlined, including the progress on the airport rail link and the inner city rail link. The built heritage in areas to be serviced by these new links needs careful assessment, with consultation with the communities who live, work and play in these areas carried out to ensure that the built and natural environment is protected against inappropriate new infrastructure.

We are of the view that roading projects should not be prioritised over public transport improvements.

CTA supports the continued electrification of the rail network and the upgrade of rail stations.

We feel that more consideration needs to be given to water transport as a means of moving people around the city. Water transport does not require extensive infrastructure, is free from congestion and has other benefits for the environment. There are opportunities for a much extended network to the many bays and inlets of our city, especially within the inner harbour, where the demand will justify the provision of services. Ferries can be a tourist magnet, generating economic value.

CTA is pleased to see the development of a park and ride facility to support the new ferry service between the CBD and Hobsonville. We support new and extended park and ride facilities but caution that the placement of these must take into account the effect on the surrounding environment and community. Parking for cars uses up valuable land and is usually unattractive.

We support the inclusion of walking and cycling in the transport network and would like to see more funds allocated to supporting these active travel modes. We advocate for more cycle paths separated from motorised traffic, as per the well-used north-western cycleway.

We are pleased to see Dominion Road referred to in the Plan as “iconic” and trust that the transport upgrades planned here will recognise and respect the built heritage of the area.

Unitary Plan

Page 16 states that, *“The development of Auckland Councils first Unitary Plan will combine the best of our existing district and regional plans with the direction of the Auckland Plan to provide consistent, clear and simplified rules on what development can happen and where. While funding was provided in the LTP 2012-2022, additional resourcing is essential (\$753,000) for more extensive community engagement to deliver this complex and challenging piece of work within the tight deadline.”*

CTA supports more extensive community engagement and questions the necessity for a tight deadline for this important plan.

Built and Natural Environment Theme

We suggest that this is not one theme but two and feel it would be useful to separate them in the Plan. We note that the glossary of terms includes “natural heritage” but does not include “built heritage.”

We also note that the description of the “built and natural environment theme” is somewhat vague in terms of the built environment (and seems to omit a word), viz (page 71), *“Through the built and natural environment activities the council aims to protect and enhance Auckland’s natural environment through monitoring our air, land and water quality; promoting urban design and conserving our historic and regulating a number of activities”.*

We suggest that monitoring air, land and water quality is more measurable than the quality of urban design and that the remainder of the theme description needs to be more robust to be useful.

Council's activities under this theme are weighted towards the natural environment, and the one activity related to the built environment is again vague, i.e. that Council is *"identifying and protecting further historic heritage places, increasing the percentage of Auckland that has been assessed for historic heritage and enabling communities to be better placed to appreciate Auckland's heritage"*.

The Trust is yet to be convinced that Council is, *"promoting urban design to help achieve high-quality, well-planned and sustainable environments"* and *"providing specialist advice to transformational public and private developments, education and advocacy to promote the value of high-quality urban design, and opportunities for engagement"*. (page 72)

We are not sure where the description of built environment activities ends and the description of natural environment activities begins in the following (page 73): *"managing, protecting and conserving Auckland's historic heritage through research, providing expert advice, supporting heritage policies and projects, incentivising best practice, community involvement, and ongoing conservation programmes at regional parks"*.

We further note that under the Lifestyle and Culture theme (page 137) that lifestyle and culture activities are said to contribute *"through recognising and promoting the contribution of our natural heritage to urban character, quality, amenity and sense of place"*. We would have expected mention of built heritage as part of this theme.

We are pleased to see the protecting and preserving of volcanic cones included in the Plan and are satisfied that the bus ban on Maungawhau has served not only to provide protection for this unique geological feature but has enhanced the visitor experience of this mountain and removed the risk to pedestrians and cyclists.

Heritage

To quote from page 18 of the Plan, *"The Built Heritage Protection Fund will provide \$3.1 million this year for two area-based heritage assessments"*. CTA suggests that the national importance of heritage, pursuant to the Resource Management Act s.6(f), is not adequately recognised and provided for with the proposed level of funding. *"The council will also be developing a policy to incentivise the protection and restoration of natural and historic heritage."* We would like to know what effects Council expects this policy to have.

If heritage assessment is not already within the Local Board budgets, then priority should be given to initial level 1 thematic assessments of heritage areas. This work could then be integrated with other Local Board assessments and form part of the Unitary Plan's recognition of significant heritage.

We note the following under "Key projects and priorities for 2013/2014" - *"Working closely with heritage groups to document, celebrate and preserve Auckland's cultural heritage"*. More details should be provided for these projects, which are not specified in the Plan, aside from the repair of the barracks at Fort Takapuna. The provision of such information can encourage the community to buy in to such projects and assist both physically and financially.

Waterfront Development

We support a careful and people-focused development of the Wynyard Quarter, including the proposed waterfront walkway and cycleway.

Shed 11 has been dismantled and is currently in storage as a series of trusses and accompanying material. All or part thereof could be reassembled in some configuration on Marsden Wharf and this could house a resource recovery centre.

CTA supports the development of a marine spatial plan for the Hauraki Gulf Marine Park.

CTA does not support the Auckland Theatre Company's project to build a new theatre complex in the Wynyard Quarter. We advocate instead for the restoration of the St James Theatre so that it can resume its role as a valued city centre entertainment venue. Rather than create a new theatre, it would seem a better use of the city's resources to make good a theatre we already have and which has lain unused for a long time.

Other Key Projects

Project Twin Streams is a wonderful example of a resource that will benefit many generations to come and is a great model for community and Council collaboration.

Having made a strong submission on the Draft Auckland Waste Management & Minimisation Plan in January 2012, CTA particularly supports finding better ways to recover and re-use resources and send less waste to landfill. We support the \$500,000 funding scheme to seed fund community and business waste initiatives to reduce waste and encourage effective waste management. We also appreciate Council advocating for law changes requiring manufacturers to take full responsibility for disposing of or recycling products at the end of their lifecycle, and for industry to have the same obligation to minimise waste as local authorities. We further commend Council for looking to designing litter and recycling bins that fit in with a well-designed urban environment.

We support the continuing development of Quay Street as a waterfront boulevard and of the Fort Street area, and would particularly like to see the inclusion of more street art in these areas. As a small matter of detail, the southernmost of the two trees sitting at the western end of Fort Street, in the position planted will in relatively short time obscure the axial view looking westward along Fort St towards Gilfillan's Building, which stands directly across Queen St from Fort St and which provides a very important heritage focus, judging by Council's decision to place a virtually unprecedented heritage order on that building. The tree in question should be moved.

CTA's submission on O'Connell Street last year supported the widening of footpaths, the removal of car parking spaces, the removal of clutter and the installation of a public art work and seating. We questioned the use of basalt paving and asked that consideration be given to closing the street completely to cars, except for specific loading times for vehicles and for emergency vehicles at all times. We also suggested that this area become another smokefree area in the CBD and that a new pair of trees be planted either side of the entrance to the building in front of which the tulip tree currently stands, in the ground-based panting boxes already existing.

Advisory Panels

Council's six advisory panels are an excellent opportunity for Council to be provided with informed views by the members of these panels, and, through them, by the wider community. The corollary is that Council heeds the advice of these panels. The Trust feels that there should be better public access to the advice that the panels are providing in order to appreciate the work these people are doing on the community's behalf and for both the community and Council itself to readily assess the usefulness of the panels and Council's willingness to listen to their recommendations, perhaps in a similar way to the performance measures outlined in the Plan.

Local Board Agreements

We list below a number of Local Board key projects, amongst many others, which CTA supports and is looking forward to seeing implemented. We support the Local Boards collaborating on various initiatives and we commend the many Local Boards who are working towards better public transport and the development of cycleways, walkways and Greenways.

- identifying and protecting unique volcanic features (e.g. Albert-Eden, Orakei)
- developing a virtual sustainability centre (Albert-Eden)
- restoration and protection of heritage buildings (e.g. Albert-Eden, Hibiscus & Bays, Waitemata)
- restoring and developing the tea kiosk on Maungawhau (Albert-Eden)
- establishing Resource Recovery Programmes and Centres (Albert-Eden, Waitemata, Puketapapa)
- removing unnecessary litter bins in parks (Devonport-Takapuna)
- completing the repair to Victoria Wharf (Devonport-Takapuna)
- further development of the Takapuna-Milford coastal walkway (Devonport-Takapuna)
- addressing coastal erosion and sustainable management of the harbour (Franklin)
- researching options to enhance Great Barrier's unique environment (Great Barrier)
- advocating for the Shoal Bay Wharf upgrade (Great Barrier)
- maintaining the Corban Art Estate (Henderson-Massey)
- advocating for a dedicated busway along the northwestern motorway (Henderson-Massey)
- the completion of the Silverdale Park and Ride (Hibiscus and Bays)
- advocating for development of the Howick Village Master Plan and a heritage plan (Howick)
- advocating for water transport/ferry services for East Auckland (Howick)
- advocating for the de-silting of the Onepoto Pond (Kaipatiki)
- advocating for urban design improvements to Glenfield Town Centre (Kaipatiki)
- advocating for protection heritage areas and provisions for high quality design in the development of the Unitary Plan (Kaipatiki)
- upgrading bush tracks (Kaipatiki)
- supporting assessment of sites of heritage value in the area (Māngere-Ōtāhuhu)
- strengthening Nathan Homestead's role as a community arts and function centre (Manurewa)
- management and removal of mangroves from the Manukau Harbour (Maungakiekie-Tāmaki)
- progressing the Onehunga Bay foreshore restoration project (Maungakiekie-Tāmaki)
- improving the intersection at Tāmaki Drive/Ngapipi Road (Orakei)
- piloting the use of shuttle bus routes and monitoring the usage and impact (Orakei)
- implementing the Orakei Catchment Ecological Restoration Plan (Orakei)
- upgrading the Manukau Central streetscape and Hunters Corner (Ōtara-Papatoetoe)
- supporting the community to establish community gardens (Papakura, Waitakere Ranges, Waitemata)
- advocating for the development and protection of the Manukau Foreshore (Puketapapa)
- improving the health of streams and waterways, including through protection in the Unitary Plan (Puketapapa)
- advocating for the improvement of the health of streams and waterways (Rodney)
- retaining the property at 31 – 35 Mill Road, Helensville for local community uses (Rodney)
- developing the reserves in the Hobsonville Corridor (Upper Harbour Local Board)
- advocating for improved access to the Britomart Transport Centre (Waiheke)
- advocating for the Glen Eden Park and Ride facility (Waitākere Ranges)
- developing a new local area plan under the Waitākere Ranges Heritage Area Act (Waitākere Ranges)
- improving community facilities at the Pioneer Women's Hall (Waitemata)
- developing a Noise Management Action Plan for the City Centre (Waitemata)
- upgrading Myers Park - though with reconsideration of the development of the southern end and edges of the park (Waitemata)
- advocating for progression of SkyPath (Waitemata)
- identification of heritage buildings in the City Centre (Waitemata)
- development of a walkway around the Whau River (Whau)

Date of submission: 25 February 2013



Signature:

Audrey van der Pijl

Secretary, Civic Trust Auckland