



Waitematā Local Board
Auckland Council
Private Bag 92300
Auckland 1142

SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT WAITEMATĀ LOCAL BOARD PLAN 2017

The Parnell Business Association welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Draft Waitematā Local Board Plan 2017.

Your Consultation Document seeks feedback on proposed outcomes as follows: (1) inclusive communities that are vibrant, connected and healthy, (2) versatile public spaces, (3) protection of our natural environment, (4) high quality development that embraces our heritage, (5) accessible, connected and safe transport options and (6) an innovative and resilient local economy.

- While the Association is generally supportive of the Waitematā Local Board's proposals, it would appreciate the Local Board placing more of a priority on issues affecting the economic development in the Parnell precinct.
- The goal of the Parnell Business Association is for **Parnell to become the most sought after Auckland City fringe precinct in which to do business** - and we would really appreciate the assistance of the Waitematā Local Board to realise this goal.
- In our opinion, there has been insignificant support and spend in recent years by Auckland Council, the Waitematā Local Board and associated CCO's, in Parnell, as compared to other adjoining/fringe suburbs. The Parnell Station is the first significant spend in several years and still needs a lot of work and funding to realise its full potential.
- Bearing in mind that this is an interim year, leading up to the next round of the Long Term Plan in 2018, while this submission is a direct response to the Local Board Plan, we feel it is imperative that we advocate for some of the projects to be brought to the table so they may find their way into the Long Term Plan and set the tone of advocacy for the years to come.
- The inclusion of a Local Area Plan is integral in this regard.

(1) INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES THAT ARE VIBRANT, CONNECTED AND HEALTHY

WLB have noted that you will continue to support local events through your grants programme and funding partnerships and are committed to supporting our creative community and arts organisations through the delivery of arts programmes. Also that you would fund new and established local events and assist community groups to run their activities and events and champion community-led initiatives and placemaking



Event Support

- We appreciate that the WLB support the Parnell Festival of Roses. It is unfortunate that this event does not benefit the Parnell retail strip in any way.
- Movies in the Park (when held in The Domain) do not benefit our business community at all.
- In our Marketing Strategy, in addition to our promotional calendar of activities, we have identified the need for more activation near the retail strip in Parnell Road, in order to enhance foot traffic and stimulate dwell time. Parnell has 2 of the best food markets, neither of which assist the retail area. To this end we have enlisted the assistance of Fresh Concepts and will be trying some niche 'market' activation over the summer months in Heard Park.
- As you are aware, at the present moment Heard Park is not an easy venue in which to stage events, nor offer as a facility for the community to use with ease.
- We request that funding for a combined community event in Parnell (such as Festival Italiana) will be considered in the future.
- We would also be grateful for more exposure to any Auckland wide event activation, funded either by the WLB or Council, such as POP (in which Parnell had very limited activation).

(2) ATTRACTIVE AND VERSATILE PUBLIC SPACES THAT MEET OUR COMMUNITIES' NEEDS

The Waitemata area is home to many high-quality parks, reserves, sports clubs and recreation facilities that are well used throughout the year. Some public spaces have the potential to be the heart of local areas, often defining their character, and should be great places for people to come together.

Heard Park

- Heard Park needs to become the 'heart and soul' of Parnell and we need the advocacy and support of the WLB in this regard. We appreciate the effort to date to co-ordinate the various stakeholders so that the following objectives can be realised as soon as possible.
 - It is a difficult space to activate with a lack of event possibility. Limited changes to some infrastructure elements would make the world of difference and we look forward to meeting an urban landscaper from Council to discuss this.
 - It is a hard unattractive space for communities to host events, for the same reasons as above.
 - The building in which The Plunket Room is housed is undesirable and needs an alternative (upgrade or move).
 - We support the desire of Woodpecker Hill to extend onto the park as this will start to add some life into the space.
 - The toilets are largely used by Taxi divers and need relocation.



- On a general note Parnell is in dire need of some well maintained floral displays. In comparison with several of our neighbour BID's as well as some exceptional examples on the North Shore, Parnell Road does not have a single flower display and efforts to get parks to maintain 4 small beds has been fraught with frustration over past years. We really need the WLB to intervene and support this effort.

The WLB have noted that you will also advocate for appropriate levels of funding to implement the Auckland Domain Masterplan.

- Our main area of interest in this regard is the pathway from Parnell Station up into The Domain and linking to Auckland Museum, which needs an upgrade with appropriate security considerations.
- In the long term, we have aspirations for an innovative wayfinding project, connecting all the parks in Parnell and possibly a 'sculpture walk'.

(3) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IS VALUED, PROTECTED AND ENHANCED

We support your aim to undertake localised solutions to restore our key waterways, such as Cox's Creek and the Waipapa Stream, as this will add desirable outcomes to the entire station precinct and Greenways Route

We support your intention to develop programmes to support businesses and households to adopt low carbon practices – and the PBA would like to get involved with some of these initiatives in the future.

(4) A HIGH QUALITY BUILT DEVELOPMENT THAT EMBRACES OUR HERITAGE

We support the view that our unique heritage buildings and places are protected and valued for the stories they tell. Parnell is especially fortunate to have many of Auckland's earliest buildings and suburbs. This historic legacy gives our suburbs their unique urban character; one that varies across the local board area and creates distinctive urban villages.

Digital platforms can be used to support this information tell their history and stories of Waitematā's past.

To preserve the distinctive character of Waitematā the WLB have noted they will support our communities to lead planning initiatives such as new area plans.

Local Area Plan

As confirmed by the WLB Chair, the planning team at Auckland Council have agreed to fund and lead the development of a Parnell Local Area Plan as part of their 17/18 work programme. This is very good news as all our strategic development thus far led us to lobby for a Masterplan for Parnell.



In reporting back on our Strategic Framework, following our Reinvigorate project and revised brand positioning we highlighted that Parnell is really in need of a local area plan, that is Council led, with tangible outcomes in place. Over the past decade, Parnell has developed in an ad hoc fashion and while community led initiatives such as Tomorrow Parnell have been tabled, nothing has been formally adopted.

We have highlighted our needs arising from our lack of connectivity as follows:-

- We are surrounded by major Auckland attractions such as Vector Arena, The Rose Gardens, Auckland Museum, The Domain and ASB Tennis Arena, but we are largely disconnected from all of them and none of them feed the retail strip.
- We have beautiful parkland interspersed in and around the area, which if properly connected with interesting storytelling and wayfinding could become a major tourist attraction.
- We have huge challenges with East /West connections from Gladstone down to St Georges Bay Rd, up to the Town Centre, down to the Parnell Station, up to the museum – exacerbated by topography and pockets of development.
- We are bordered by The Ports of Auckland and a dysfunctional motorway owned by NZTA, creating access issues to Carlaw Park and psychologically cutting us off from the city.

Assistance in correcting these challenges are essential in order to realise the full potential for Parnell, for local business and visitors alike.

Heritage Foreshore Trail interpretative signage

You have noted that you are working to digitise the Heritage Foreshore Trail interpretative signage to make it available online. It will include very valuable information through a series of 25 interpretation panels in 25 locations, along a route tracing the 1840 Mean High Water Mark of the Waitemata foreshore between Point Erin Park and Parnell Baths.

- As noted earlier in this submission, and identified in our Strategic Framework, we have beautiful parkland interspersed in and around the area, which if properly connected with interesting storytelling and wayfinding could become a major tourist attraction.
- We would request that Parnell is prioritised to be the first fringe suburb to continue this project from the Parnell Baths up into and around Parnell and including The Museum and The Domain.

We see the connection of all the green spaces in and around Parnell, telling the stories of both our Maori and Pakeha histories, combined with a possible sculpture route as a major milestone in achieving connectivity in the precinct.



(5) ACCESSIBLE, CONNECTED AND SAFE TRANSPORT OPTIONS WITH WELL-DESIGNED STREETS

We agree with your stance that a great transport network is critical to an effective and functioning Auckland. An accessible, connected and safe network will give people options for moving into, through and around Waitemata. A transport network which includes walking, cycling and quality public transport can improve health outcomes, air quality and safety while reducing congestion and carbon emissions.

Parnell Station

Previously the WLB committed to the following in your advocacy initiatives.

To ensure Parnell Train Station is open and operational to full services at the earliest opportunity. This station has the potential to be the fourth busiest station on the network and will be an essential connection for the University of Auckland, Parnell Town Centre, the Domain, Stanley Street and Beach Rd.

and to

Provide accessible pedestrian and cycling connections to Parnell Station.

*However, we notice that there is **NO mention of the Parnell Station** in your draft document and ask for this to be put back on your agenda as a priority.*

- We are aware the WLB has co-funded the Carlaw Park walkway and happy that the contract has been awarded. It is important that implementation is pushed as fast as possible so that the students can have a safe and accessible pathway from the station.
- Accessible pedestrian links up to Parnell Town Centre are an urgent need and we request the WLB advocate for Auckland Transport to fast track the creation of decent footpaths in the short term and plan appropriate pedestrian links for the future.
- We also request that the WLB, together with the PBA, research and then advocate for an innovative, useful and attractive long-term solution to 'transport' pedestrians up the hill from the station.

In addition

- Parnell Station needs to have a 'destination' appeal, a sense of arrival that will be attractive not only to regular commuters, but to visitors and tourists on their way to The Domain & Auckland Museum as well Parnell Town Centre. To this end we need the support of the WLB to have a small section of the renovated station building allocated for 'community' use – serving as a 'place of information' for stakeholders Auckland Museum, Parnell Heritage, Parnell Trust and Parnell Business Association.



The Parnell Station could become not only the 4th busiest on the network, but the centre point for pathways of discovery right throughout Parnell, from the museum to the sea – an action point in the PBA long-term plan.

Waitematā's Greenways routes.

The Draft Plan states that a priority is to open the Greenways route from Newmarket to The Strand through the old Parnell rail tunnel. The WLB have noted that you will work to secure a regional budget to enable the implementation of Greenways across Auckland. In particular to encourage Auckland Transport to work with Auckland Council to deliver the Waitematā Local Board Greenways prioritized routes, one of which being the Greenways route from the Strand, running alongside the Parnell rail line, through the acquired Summerset Group Holdings Ltd land then through the old Parnell tunnel.

- We agree that Greenways routes provide safe, high amenity walking and cycling connections along with improved ecological and storm water outcomes, including expanded habitats, movement corridors and food sources for native fauna. They also provide the ability to increase recreational opportunities and open space facilities.
- We feel this is a far superior route for both recreational and commuter cyclists and should be prioritised above routes slicing through Parnell and removing large parking allocations, the loss of which will be unable to be withstood by local businesses.
- We need the WLB support, for the PCC, PBA and affected stakeholders in working with Auckland Transport to find a acceptable replacement for the current Gladstone/St Stephens cycleway proposal.
- We support the opening of the tunnel to facilitate this route.

St Georges Bay Road upgrade

The WLB have documented in desired outcomes that you see great streets as more than just transport routes; they help shape our neighbourhoods and town centres – and we agree. Further, that well-designed streets can be great public spaces and contribute to a sense of place –streetscapes where residents and visitors alike feel comfortable to sit, socialise and spend time. And that you would encourage Auckland Transport to integrate placemaking in all streetscape enhancement projects and work with Auckland Transport, the council and developers to better integrate new developments with streetscapes.

- Over the past 3-4 years (including current developments taking place), the landowners in St Georges Bay Road will have invested over \$100 million into that street.
- By early 2018, there will be an additional 800-1,000 people working in the area.
- Several landowners have joined in meetings co-ordinated by the PBA to discuss the potential of an upgrade to St Georges Bay Rd as well as the Kenwyn/Watt/ Faraday link.
- Auckland Transport appointed a project team and has already presented to the group of landowners a preliminary site analysis and a like-for-like estimate of renewal and



maintenance work ball-parked at around \$2 million – noting that should the preference for a higher spec be desired, the shortfall will need to be funded. Several owners are open to a JV discussion.

- Auckland Transport approached the WLB for part of \$125K funding to cover the cost of project management and preparation of an Urban Design Framework/Concept Design for SGB Road. We thank the WLB for committing to assist, but are unsure as to the status of the balance of funds required.
- The WLB have noted that Auckland Transport are to provide opportunities for greenery in every streetscape improvement and renewal and Auckland Council to meet the consequential operational expenditure for maintenance, and we would like this policy incorporated into the design.

*Note on urgent timing

Mansons estimate that their major development will be completed in the first quarter of 2018, at which time they will need to reinstate the footpaths. A Design Framework needs to be completed and agreed upon by this date, in order for the agreed concept to be followed.

The project presents a fantastic opportunity to leverage renewal and maintenance budgets for a superior outcome, but timing is key.

Traffic from Ports of Auckland

We have noted that there is **no mention of this in the WLB Local Board Plan** and suggest that the WLB have an important and essential advocacy role to play in this regard.

- We are bordered by The Ports of Auckland and a dysfunctional motorway owned by NZTA, creating access issues to Carlaw Park and psychologically cutting us off from the city.
- Whatever the future of Ports of Auckland, it is unlikely the footprint will lessen in the foreseeable future and the impact of the traffic along The Strand is already way in excess of desirable proportions.
- The Strand is unsafe for pedestrians, cyclists as well as other vehicles and essential discussions and plans around intersections such as Gladstone/The Strand are impeded as a result of the parties involved.
- We would like the WLB to take a strong advocacy position with the NZTA, in order to co-ordinate short-term issues and to fight for a long-term solution (such as undergrounding the final section of the motorway to the Port). It is inappropriate that this initiative has been put on the 20-year horizon and needs to be brought forward as a matter of urgency.



Gladstone/Upper St Stephens cycleway

The WLB have noted that you will advocate for street designs which deliver slower traffic speeds, better intersections, footpaths and cycle lanes designed and built to worldwide best practice and that you would carry out place-making projects which enhance the amenity of our streets and provide more public spaces that prioritise people.

- In December 2016, Auckland Transport distributed a consultation leaflet on a proposed cycleway down both sides of St Stephens Ave and Gladstone Road. As previously communicated, we were very concerned that the proposal tabled by AT indicated the loss of 95 parking bays which will adversely affect several businesses and communities in that area.
- In addition we were extremely unhappy that the proposal did not offer any added amenity or place-making.
- Following a very comprehensive submission process including surveys, public meetings, petitions, hearings at the Waitemata Local Board, as well as the board of Auckland Transport, Auckland Transport agreed to re-engage with stakeholders before proceeding further. The Parnell Business Association together with Parnell Community Committee and other active stakeholders are participating in workshops and we are hopeful for an outcome that satisfies the objectives of a range of stakeholders.

Parnell Parking Management Plan

We agree that due to our inner city location, many of our suburbs experience significant pressure from commuter parking in residential streets close to main transport networks. The WLB have noted that you will continue to support Auckland Transport's roll out of residential and town centre parking zones that effectively manage parking

- We need to WLB to continue to advocate for the co-ordinated and integrated implementation of both the Residents Parking as well as Business Parking Management plan as soon as possible.
- Both PCC and PBA are in agreement that a co-ordinated effort is essential so as not to 'bleed' the problem into adjacent areas, increasing congestion and frustration and will work with Auckland Transport to facilitate feedback where required.
- We have major concerns that the first residential parking zone will be implemented prior to the business zone and have implored Auckland Transport to accelerate the consultation process for the business zone so there is not too much time between the implementation of the residential and business areas.

Auckland Transport Mini Explorer Signage

Auckland Transport have detailed in communication, that as part of the roll out for their new wayfinding plinths, they have allocated 2 x information plinths for Parnell, one in Nicholls Lane



and 1 in Parnell Road. They have indicated that we would need to approach the WLB for funding for additional plinths.

- This is hopelessly inadequate.
- As we have noted, we have topographical challenges and lack of connectivity. A person at the bottom of Parnell Rise or St Georges Bay Rd would not know what awaits at the top of the hill.
- We would request that seven Mini Explorer plinths are funded for Parnell, one for Nicholls Lane, one for St Georges Bay Rd, one for Gladstone/St Stephens and 3-4 for Parnell Road (between The Strand and the Jubilee building).
- Auckland Museum have a very inadequate visual presence from Parnell Road and need a combination of signage solutions to address this – of which these plinths are only 1 part.

(6) AN INNOVATIVE, PRODUCTIVE AND RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY

You have stated in the draft plan that the WLB is committed to partnering with the seven business associations to lead innovative programmes and initiatives, which strengthen the local economy. In addition to continue to implement the Waitemata City Fringe Economic Development Action Plan and work with Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED) to help our local businesses maximise the opportunities created by major events. Also, promoting Waitemata as an exciting destination for tourism, conferences, events and trade fairs, as well as a great place for cruise ship passengers to spend time, will be a focus for the board.

WLB have noted you will continue to enhance our town centres through initiatives such as the Newmarket Laneways Project and Ponsonby Road Plan to attract businesses and create places where residents and visitors want to spend time. To ensure our local business areas thrive, you will continue to work actively with the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

- We thank the WLB for the support to date and are hopeful that with all the aforementioned initiatives, which are pivotal at this point in our evolution, **that Parnell will realise our aspiration to become the most sought after Auckland City fringe precinct in which to do business.**
- One aspect that has not been noted or discussed in the WLB plan is the scourge of vacant premises in our town centres, left deliberately unoccupied by 'absent landowners'. We are of the opinion that we (all BID's and WLB) need to collectively lobby for a change in the bylaws, in order to give us some powers in this regard.

Yours sincerely,
Cheryl Adamson
General Manager
Parnell Business Association
T 09 379 0606 | E cheryl@parnell.net.nz

