



INNER-CITY
WELLINGTON Te Reo Pokapū o Pōneke

VOICE OF TE ARO AND WELLINGTON CENTRAL



Submission to WCC
Te Ngākau-Civic Square Framework 2021

The sooner the community becomes involved in the planning for a public space, the better; it is ideal that they join before any work has been done. They also should be encouraged to stay involved throughout the improvement effort so that they become owners or stewards of the place as it evolves.

<https://www.pps.org/article/11principles>

Who are we:

An Association that represents the Residents in the Te Aro and Wellington Central, while recognising 'our space' is also the space used by business, workers, and visitors. This area has become the largest residential suburb in Wellington in terms of population - on the smallest land area.

Our purpose:

To be a progressive and influential voice for our members through engagement with the appropriate public authorities to enhance the wellbeing of those living in the inner-city.

Area of interest:

To achieve a sustainable living environment in the inner-city through adherence to UN Sustainable Development Goals, and proactively working to enhance Democratic Resilience through co-design and civic engagement

INTRODUCTION

ICW maintains it is vital that any redevelopment of Te Ngākau-Civic Square (the square) recognises that Inner-city residents now make up the largest suburb in Wellington in terms of population (on the smallest area of land in Wellington).

As this population is expected to grow considerably it is vital the Square also functions as the heart of the Inner City Community, as well as being developed as the Civic heart and cultural hub of the city,

Key to our Community is retention of a sizeable outdoor space, especially green space. Currently the inner city is woefully devoid of community open space for its residents, and we cannot afford to lose any that we currently have. Jack Ilott Green adjacent to the Square is the only large sized easily accessible area in the CBD that provides essential green park-like space for children and adults alike to play and relax.

While we understand there are serious issues to be considered, given the huge financial pressure on the city due to failing infrastructure and strengthening of the library and town hall we believe that a total redevelopment of the precinct is unnecessary and imprudent.

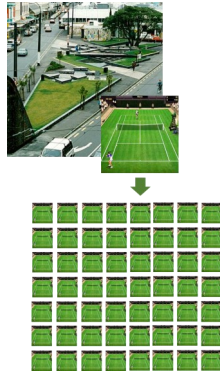


We see no reason why the Harris Street Nikau walkway should be demolished and believe the City to Sea Bridge should be remediated and Jack Ilott Green retained and upgraded. We suggest that, if designed well, the redevelopment of the CAB and MOB buildings could go a long way to providing an attractive entranceway(s) to enhance the square, without the massive expense of a total redevelopment.

PUBLIC SPACE ANALYSIS

The importance of high-quality green space was identified in the public space analysis in the framework, particularly when taking into account the 50,000-80,000 more people expected to live in Wellington by 2050.

The inner city has already been identified¹ as being critically short of green space for the present-day population. The current amount of additional green space required for today's population has been quantified as 10 Aro Parks¹, or 56 tennis court sized areas.



Therefore, it comes as a surprise that the proposed framework does not support the retention of the only large green space (Jack Ilott Green) within the CBD and instead the overall amount of open/green space is reduced and replaced with 3 small spaces that will provide limited use.



We also note that in a City Strategy meeting April 2018, in response to a public petition of over 10,000 signatures to Save Jack Ilott Green, council officers were charged with generating a paper "outlining final options on the most appropriate process to protect Jack Ilott Green as a reserve". A request that to our knowledge has never been followed up.



ICW maintains that this framework not only completely fails to provide local residents with the existing green space amenity they have, but also fails to uphold the following framework objectives

- 5.1 *An increase in the quantum of green space in the precinct is to be achieved through site re-design. This should include provision of high-quality landscaping, greening of existing public spaces and creation of new usable green open space areas.*
- 5.2 *Areas of green open space should be located and of adequate size and dimension to ensure safety, usability, and shelter.*

And that "Open space should be designed with reference to how it contributes and links to the inner-city network of open space, supporting the needs of both inner-city residents and visitors",

ICW contends that Jack Ilott Green must be retained and upgraded to continue to provide a large green community space for group activities, relaxing, and watching entertainment.

ICW also questions WCC commitment to climate change when it appears a large area of permeable green space is deemed available for development which can include a building or other non-permeable surface.



ICW envisions the area with the addition of a small amphitheatre and simple stage, while retaining a green area large enough for group physical activities that are already played on the green by locals during the day and evenings . Activities such as volleyball, touch rugby, Tai Chi, Gym sessions, music, dance, children playing, picnics, etc. The addition of screening by a fence or planting and more seating around the edges would further enhance the park. Spectators could also continue to stand on the bridge and Harris St Nikau walkway and enjoy the activities.

GREENING OF STREETS

ICW accept that “Surrounding streets should also contribute as green streets integrated with sustainable stormwater drainage”

ICW contends that green streets cannot be a substitute for open useable green spaces (which along with being a community amenity have the additional advantages of permeability and carrying less maintenance cost).

CONNECTIVITY

Harris Street Nikau walkway

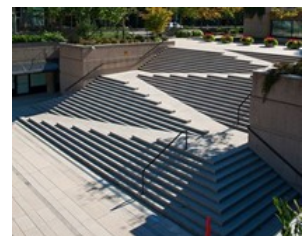
It seems the walkway from Harris Street - Nikau to the bridge and square with its impressive iconic tree sculptures is to be removed, even though large volumes of people use it daily.



The walkway is the major corridor from the waterfront to Harris Street/Chews Lane/Willis street used by city workers, local residents, and visitors daily, and to our knowledge there is no serious structural reason why it should go. It also acts as a lookout over the square and the park where glorious views of the harbour come into play.

We note that some of the concerns regarding connectivity are based on current issues with closure and mobility which surely will be addressed at the time of the redevelopment and strengthening of buildings.

Mobility issues could easily be resolved if these were seen to be a problem.



ICW strongly opposes the removal of the existing walkway from Harris Street and believes it provides an inviting and exciting method of reaching the square. and the bridge.

CITY TO SEA BRIDGE



The bridge is one of the most popular areas of the square used by thousands who enjoy sitting relaxing, meeting on the bridge, admiring the spectacular views, not only across the harbour but also the intimate views back to the city and across the square (*which would not be available from down on the square level*).

The bridge also provides instant and SAFE access across the Quay to the waterfront and has historic and cultural value.



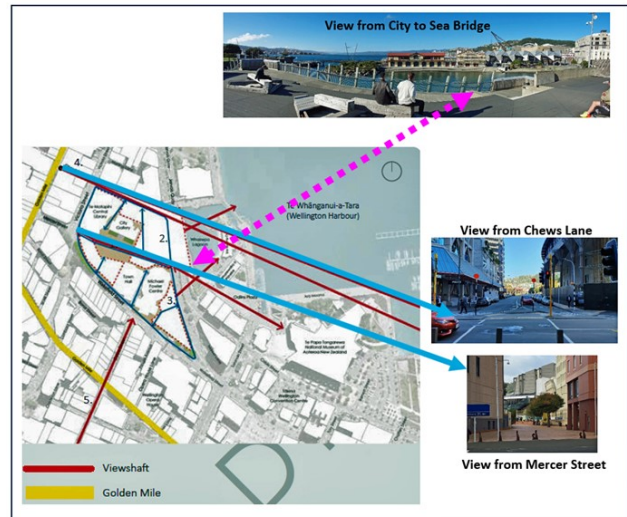
Contrary to being the barrier the Framework suggests, the bridge provides the best visual connection with the waterfront and, should it be removed, the view from down at square level would be predominantly of passing traffic, and the top of the buildings by the lagoon.

ICW opposes the removal of the City to Sea bridge which is an iconic part of the Civic Square used and enjoyed by huge numbers of people daily.

ICW agrees that a ground level pedestrian crossing across Jervois Quay at the end of Harris Street would be beneficial, **but does not accept that this should in any way be the main access to the waterfront from the square.**

VIEW SHAFTS

We are at a loss to understand the prominence placed on view shafts defined in the framework, as these do not provide captivating *visual connections between the harbour, the precinct and the central city.*



From Mercer St the view is through to the Michael Fowler Centre which juts into the Square on one side and the Art Gallery on the other, limiting any ground level view to the traffic on Jervois Quay.

We accept that new buildings at the Mercer Street end might give a better viewshaft into the square, but . . .

ICW argues that using the need for a view shaft of the harbour from Mercer Street and the entrance to the square as a rationale for removing the City to Sea Bridge is erroneous.

COMMUNITY SPACES

ICW was pleased to see that it was proposed that “Consideration should be given to providing some flexible community spaces, suitable for a range of community uses, as part of building redesign “ and that there be “Allowance for residential and commercial development in the upper levels of buildings within the precinct to encourage people using the precinct both day and night”

However, ICW maintains that community spaces in buildings must be mandated not considered .

SUNLIGHT

The proposal that the design of all buildings and structures in the precinct must maintain sunlight access to and prevent shading of Civic Square between the hours of 12pm and 2pm throughout the year is simply unacceptable.

The proposed hours of sun appear to be based solely on lunchtime hours for workers, without any concern or consideration of the local community who will want to enjoy and relax in the sun for more than 2 hours per day through the weekdays and weekends.

Currently the square becomes cold and unattractive when shaded, unlike the City to Sea Bridge which gets all day sun.



ICW insists the hours of sunlight as specified are completely unacceptable.

Finally, ICW thanks WCC for the opportunity to present our submission on the understanding our concerns will be recognised and taken seriously and advises we wish to present an oral submission to council.



Stephen King

CHAIR



Jack Ilott Green = 26 May 2021

The most successful places grow out of understanding what a space needs to offer so that people will use it. However, in most cases, it is not until after a space is built that much thought is given to how people will use it; this is a major reason why much retrofitting goes on in failed public spaces: because the space's function was never seriously considered at the outset.

<https://www.pps.org/article/11principles>



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Inner-City Wellington seeks to serve as a progressive and influential voice of and for the residential community in the suburbs of Te Aro and Wellington Central