

29 July 2016

Chris Meale
CRL Project Director
AMP L17 - 29 Customs Street West
City Rail Link
Auckland Transport

RE: Albert Street and Lower Queen Street Public Realm Works – Funding and Outcomes

Dear Chris,

At the June Meeting of the Auckland City Centre Advisory Board (**ACCAB**) it was agreed that as Chair of the board I write to you, as Director of the City Rail Link (**CRL**) to confirm our support and funding for both the Albert Street and Lower Queen Street public realm works, which are to be undertaken as part of the CRL project.

In May 2016 the ACCAB endorsed that:

- \$20 million of City Centre Targeted Rate funding be directed to Albert Street public realm works, and
- \$10 million of City Centre Targeted Rate funding be directed to Lower Queen Street public realm works.

The City Centre Targeted Rate (**CCTR**) is levied to enhance the City Centre as a place to work, live, visit and do business. It achieves this by providing a high-quality urban environment, promoting the competitive advantages of the City Centre as a business location, and promoting the City Centre as a place for high-quality education, research and development.

Based on this policy, it was agreed by ACCAB members that both public realm upgrades in Albert Street and Lower Queen Street, which are occurring as a consequence of CRL, are suitable for CCTR funding, as they are significant and the impact of them will be wide reaching.

ACCAB was established by Council to plan, develop, shape and drive the delivery of city centre strategies, and to provide leadership as a key stakeholder reference groups on specific projects impacting the City Centre. Its key objectives including recommending expenditure of the CCTR, and reviewing and providing feedback on streetscape projects. The board members represent a wide range of City Centre groups and users or 'customers' and by this measure we can provide the client view of large sections of the public.

Given this mandate, it is ACCAB's expectation that this CCTR funding comes with "strings attached" and the Board expects:

- a) the CRL team to request bid teams to identify good public realm outcomes upon which they will be assessed as part of their tender;
- b) to be consulted in a meaningful way on the design of the Albert Street / Lower Queen Street public realm; and
- c) that the CRL budget also makes a substantial contribution to the Albert Street / Lower Queen Street public realm upgrade.

To summarise the good public realm outcomes, the Board are seeking an Albert Street / Lower Queen Street design that:

1. is set in the context of Auckland's urban legibility (sense of place) and emerging significant commercial land uses and as such deliver a high quality public realm for 24-hour use;
2. enhances and frames their unique characteristics and waterfront views;
3. supports exceptional public life on the street through dignified human scale amenity and equity for all users;
4. is constructed from quality timeless, high quality materials (not paint and signs); and
5. reflects best practise with sustainability, resilience of design and lifecycle costs.

In addition the Board are seeking an Albert Street public realm outcome that also:

1. prioritises users: pedestrians as the first priority and bus public transport should displace general traffic, especially peak hour movements;
2. provides a clear and open street character: uncluttered and function for movement (pedestrians), moments (higher amenity at links at Victoria Linear Park and laneways) and waiting (bus PT stops);
3. delivers a street for public transport but softened with distinctive vegetation (street trees) appropriate in structure, form and framing.

Please refer to the attachment for more specific information regarding the Board's public realm outcomes for Albert Street.

We understand that your team are currently in the process of confirming the procurement process and so it is timely that we are able to input into the public realm aspect(s) of this process, in order to maximise the competitive advantage of the tender process on the above ground works.

To follow up, I would be pleased to meet with you and your team at your earliest convenience to discuss how we are able to ensure the CCTR funding that is to be contributed will deliver the outcomes that the groups we represent expect.

Kind regards



Kate Healy
Chair, Auckland City Centre Advisory Board

Cc:

Auckland City Centre Advisory Board Members
John Fellows, Design Manager, CRL
Mark Walker, Group Manager Design, Auckland Transport
Ludo Campbell-Reid, General Manager, Auckland Design Office

Attachments:

Albert Street Public Realm Outcomes

Albert Street Public Realm Outcomes

BUS CORRIDOR

The design should support the creation of a bus corridor - but not in a 'business-as-usual' approach:

The street design should challenge normal street layout approaches and specifically work toward establishing a new typology for bus corridors. I.e. one that celebrates the fact that buses are the major arrival point for a majority of people accessing the city centre.

The inseparable relationship between bus and walking networks should be recognised and addressed, with celebrated provision for both.

US "transit malls" provide a potential benchmark.

DESIGNING FOR THE FUTURE CONTEXT

The changing nature and role of Albert Street in the future should be allowed for. I.e. current indicators suggest Albert Street will become a new commercial business district (akin to the role that Shortland Street currently provides). Significant building redevelopment will see Albert St emerge as a parallel spine to Queen Street with a potential for significant increase in pedestrian demand and street level interface (economic exchange) opportunity. There will also be a corresponding demand for better linkages eastward to Queen Street, and West to the laneway circuit and land development potential of the western Victoria Quarter.

TRANSPORT MODE HIERARCHY, PLACE AND MOVEMENT BALANCE AND TRANSPORT DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transport operation efficiencies should be exhausted before any consideration is given of reduced public space, including:

- Progressive and balanced thinking on bus operations – enabling efficient bus service is a key objective but should be approached with contemporary international best practice – which carefully balances stop size and capacity with the needs of pedestrian and place needs. And, integrated with other Transport Demand Management techniques. In particular peak hour demands should not dictate or outbalance the 24hr use requirements of the street.
- Peak bus demand should displace general traffic (as an inefficient transport mode) before it displaces pedestrian space (which is a highly efficient transport mode, and requirement for economic exchange) E.g. peak hour restrictions on general traffic are preferable to additional laneway capacity because it does not compromise 24hour infrastructure of the street.
- Designs that allow for flexible bus stop function such as stopping in-lane outside of a designated bus stop location, (to cater for occasional movements or demands) should take preference over designing excess roadway capacity (eg indented bus stop bays) for 'occasional demand'.

STREETScape CHARACTER

The street environment should promote a clear and open character – one that portrays a perception of safety. This is especially important given the new bus network emphasises all hours use (not just a peak time service). The design should provide for a safe environment at a street-structure level, rather than as a tacked-on initiative in a detailed design phase.

Street Design character should reflect:

- Dignified human scale established - narrowing of the road cross section area dedicated to motorised vehicle movement.
- The perception that pedestrians are valued.
- Detuned road dominance - distinguishing the bus lanes from general traffic elevates the priority of public transport over general traffic
- Pavement material hierarchy should distinguish bus priority movement from general traffic. As much as possible this should be established with a simple and intuitive layout and use of quality materials rather than signage or painted road surfaces.

PLACE VALUE & STREETScape ELEMENTS

The underlying sense of place should be recognised first. This includes the landform / topography and built form.

- The view to the sea should be another primary principle behind the structuring of the street. The existing Downtown over bridge limits views to the sea, but does not destroy the sense of one's location within the city - it therefore still contributes to city legibility and thus sense of place.
- As a sloping site the openness to the sky should be recognised.
- The relatively complete built form containment of the street reinforces the framed outlook of the street.

Street trees are an essential component in creating a dignified street experience and a new typology for bus corridors. Street trees are the single most important element for structuring a street to provide human scale, to detune the roadway dominance and to balance the large vehicle size of buses .

Tree canopies should not:

- obscure views
- Introduce heavy winter shading
- Restrict flexibility in bus stop locations or pedestrian movement.

Trees canopies should:

- Be canopy lifted and/ or vertical form (street openness and clarity supports a perception of safety.)
- Be regularly spaced to establish an ordered street structure (street orderliness and pattern support street clarity)
- Frame views.

Street furniture, ground level planting and bus shelters should minimise obstruction to pedestrian movement:

- Limit the use of ground planting and streamline designs. Clear open sightlines and freedom of pedestrian movement are priorities.
- Locate furniture in zones to define and naturally regulate through zones and bus waiting zones.
- An uncluttered environment is key to establishing a clear open environment, freedom of movement, and future flexibility in use and function.

FUTURE PROOFING AND LIFECYCLE COSTS.

Materials should consider lifecycle costs not just initial capital costs. Perhaps contradictory to typical street upgrades, this is particularly important for the road (bus lane) carriageway where upgrading the pavement quality in the future is more difficult than the footpaths

ROAD MEDIANS SKY LIGHTS VERSUS FOOTPATH SPACE

Sky lights in central medians should be avoided if a minimum footpath width of 5m can not be established on both sides of the street. Or a minimum of 3m on one side with 7m on the opposite side (i.e a total minimum of 10m and absolute minimum of 3m where there is an inactive frontage).

Alternatives to median islands sky lights should be considered such as fibre optic supply of natural light (as proposed for in the New York's underground "Low Line") or grated drive over sky lights.

Alternatively - underground stations are rather novel for Auckland, daylighting can be considered as a less critical requirement. I.e. instead the platform design could look to celebrate its underground location rather than consider the need to mitigate this at the expense of a suboptimal provision of street level pedestrian space.