
REPORT 4
(1215/52/IM)

COURTENAY PRECINCT PROJECT UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of progress and planned future work in the Courtenay precinct.

2. Executive Summary

In March 2008, the Strategy and Policy Committee agreed to a programme of work being carried out in the Courtenay precinct. That work was aimed at addressing issues associated with safety, alcohol, streetscape design and vehicular management. Most of the initiatives are underway or complete and this paper provides an update for the Strategy and Policy Committee (SPC) on the work programme.

The focus in the Courtenay precinct is currently on its use during the Rugby World Cup and a comprehensive audit of the area is planned. Officers continue to work with stakeholders to improve vehicle management and to find solutions for managing taxis in the area.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Strategy and Policy Committee:

1. *Receives the information.*
2. *Notes work is being carried out in Courtenay Place to address a range of issues including safety and vehicular management.*
3. *Notes that an audit of Courtenay Place will be carried out in order to develop a proposal for short term capital upgrades along with long term solutions for the precinct. This work will also be included in Wellington 2040.*

4. Background

In March 2008, the Strategy and Policy Committee considered a paper on the Courtenay precinct. That paper proposed a five-year vision that the Courtenay precinct will:

- continue to develop as the city's premiere entertainment district but with greater diversity in venues and more outdoor café seating
- have a streetscape which accommodates late-night crowds and also meets the priorities of the day and evening economies
- be exciting, inviting and safe.

That paper noted that the key issues to be addressed arise from safety concerns related to the large number of people who gravitate to the precinct for late-night entertainment. The issues include:

- alcohol-related harm (disorder, criminal offending and anti-social behaviour)
- footpath and traffic congestion
- streetscape design, including lighting
- public transport and taxi management
- public place activity.

An integrated set of solutions to deliver on the five-year vision was proposed. The solutions will address the issues associated with late-night entertainment and meet the daytime and evening priorities of local businesses and public transport.

SPC agreed that work would be undertaken to revitalise the Courtenay precinct. Proposals on street lighting and CCTV were presented in June 2008 and in December 2008 SPC agreed to a pilot project to control traffic movements in Courtenay Place.

It was agreed that officers would undertake further work on the following 12 initiatives.

- Introduce a 24/7 liquor ban across the central city
- Establish an alcohol accord
- More Walkwise officers at peak times
- Install CCTV (city wide initiative)
- Upgrade street lighting – Courtenay Place
- Upgrade street lighting – Allen and Blair Streets
- Develop a role within Council to manage the Courtenay precinct
- Establish a late-night taxi stand and queuing system
- Facilitate summer concerts in Courtenay Place Park
- Convert the heritage men's toilet into storage and dressing rooms for events
- Develop a flexible / revitalised streetscape
- Implement bus priority at peak commuter hours (subject to further consultation)

This report provides further information on the Courtenay project.

5. Discussion

5.1 Work to date

The following table summarises progress to date on the initiatives noted above.

Action	Comment	Status
Introduce a 24/7 liquor ban across the central city	The 24/7 liquor ban came into force on 31 July 2008.	Action complete
Establish an alcohol accord	Officers continue to meet with the Courtenay Accord Group. Only some bars are represented at these meetings and officers will aim for greater participation by Courtenay bars. An alcohol management plan for the city is being developed.	Ongoing
More Walkwise officers at peak times	Additional staff on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights through re-prioritised scheduling however there are also increasing calls for Walkwise to patrol or be available in other areas.	Action complete
Install CCTV (city wide initiative)	CCTV cameras have been installed in the Courtenay precinct and are being monitored by Walkwise at peak times.	Action complete
Upgrade street lighting – Courtenay Place	Street lighting has been upgraded. The lighting option agreed and installed gave optimum pedestrian-use visual provision, enhanced safety and was both energy efficient and environmentally friendly.	Action complete
Upgrade street lighting – Allen and Blair Streets		
Develop a role within Council to manage the Courtenay precinct	This role was developed and an officer appointed. Her current focus is	Action complete

Action	Comment	Status
	working on Courtenay Place issues in preparation for the Rugby World Cup and the officer is currently seconded to the Rugby World Cup team	
Establish a late-night taxi stand and queuing system	See discussion below (Flexible /revitalised streetscape)	
Facilitate summer concerts in Courtenay Place Park	Summer concerts are held as part of the Cuba Street Carnival and sometimes as part of other events such as the Sevens. The Council accommodates acts and entertainers in the area and it is a popular site for late night entertainers and buskers.	No further action (business as usual)
Convert the heritage men's toilet into storage and dressing rooms for events	Issues related to maintenance, heritage characteristics and urban design considerations mean that conversion to storage and dressing rooms is neither practical nor economic.	Officers are exploring other options for the use of the building taking into account heritage considerations.
Develop a flexible / revitalised streetscape	See discussion below	Ongoing.
Implement bus priority at peak commuter hours (subject to further consultation)	After further consideration, Council agreed to a more holistic package of options to improve the central city bus system (Golden Mile/ Manners Mall project). This package is being implemented.	Ongoing.

5.2 Develop a flexible/ revitalised streetscape

There are at least two streams to this initiative; one is concerned with the physical characteristics of the area (for example the assets in the area or the layout of the area) and the other with vehicular management. It can be noted that shared space was created in Courtenay Place between Tory and Taranaki

Streets for use as parking during the day and for pedestrians at night. This is expected to alleviate pressures arising from queuing in the area.

Physical characteristics

The Council is committed to ensuring that the Courtenay precinct is in excellent shape for hosting visitors to the city expected for the Rugby World Cup in 2011. To this end, officers will undertake an audit to quantify the existing assets in the Courtenay precinct. Following that audit, a proposal will be developed for short term capital upgrades for the Rugby World Cup along with long term solutions for the precinct, which will be integrated into Wellington 2040.

Vehicle Management

The Courtenay precinct has three quite different uses with different transport implications– the daytime economy which calls for amenity that supports shoppers and workers, such as short term car parking and a public transport hub; the night time economy when there is a demand for greater pedestrian space along with space for outdoor dining and/ or drinking and less demand for parking and thirdly as an events venue where road(s) may be closed to traffic.

In December 2008, as a pilot, vehicular access from Courtenay Place into Allen and Blair Streets was restricted.

In 2009 some areas of parking were removed at night. This has created safer and more pedestrian movement areas and eliminated some conflict between moving vehicles and pedestrians. Police consider this to be highly successful, telling us that it reduced the incidence of fights, accidents, injuries and private property damage. Temporary measures are being used to implement this and traffic resolutions that support permanent implementation are scheduled to be presented to SPC on 18 March 2010.

Taxi congestion late at night and in the early hours of the morning (particularly Friday and Saturday nights) has been a concern in Courtenay Place for some time. Council officers have worked with the taxi companies, police and NZTA to identify solutions. For example some additional late night taxi stands have been provided however this does not seem to be alleviating the problem. There are ongoing discussions with the taxi industry through the Taxi Forum.

5.3 Consultation and Engagement

Consultation and engagement is carried out with stakeholders within each of the sub-projects.

5.4 Financial Considerations

There are no further financial implications at this time although there may be some following the audit and development of a proposal for upgrading the area.

5.5 Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

There are no further climate change implications and considerations.

5.6 Long-Term Council Community Plan Considerations

There are no further LTCCP implications at this time.

6. Conclusion

This paper provides an update for SPC on progress in Courtenay precinct and on further work being carried out in the precinct.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

The work programme supports Council's vision for Courtenay Place and has been previously agreed by the Committee.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

There are no LTCCP implications.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no Treaty of Waitangi considerations.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Stakeholders are consulted in the course of the implementation of the project.

b) Consultation with Maori

Maori have not been specifically consulted.

6) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report is consistent with existing policy.