

DISABILITY REFERENCE GROUP

MINUTES

5.30 P.M. – Tuesday 13th October, 2009

Committee Room 2

Members Present

Sara Pivac Alexander (Co-Chair)
Rosie Macleod (Co-Chair)
Thomas Bryan
Alan Royal
Philippa McDonald

Also Present

Jula Goebel (WCC)

1. Welcome

The chair welcomed the group and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from James Tait, Sandi Waddell, Lisette Wesseling, Jules Taniwha and Councillor Iona Pannett.

3. Greg Campbell – Manners Mall Proposal

Greg Campbell handed out copies of the submission documents "Have Your Say On Opening Manners Mall to Buses". He then went on to explain the process so far including what the Golden Mile is and the proposals that have been looked at. 722 submissions were received and Council have changed their proposal for Manners Mall after consideration of these submissions. He then talked about the shared space concept for the bottom of Cuba Street. The reasoning for opening up Manners Mall included the time taken for bus journeys, increase in growth of usage of public transport, improvement to the Golden Mile bus route and time savings. The proposal for Manners Mall will include a roadway for busses, there will still be wide footpaths, the speed limit will decrease and this will provide an improved pedestrian route throughout the city. Lower Cuba Street will have vehicle access for parking and servicing of shops, traffic will be low, it could be closed off for events and some parts will be pedestrian only areas. Three scenarios were developed with scenario two being the favoured option. Other improvements will include two new bus stops and improvements to other streets in the area. Benefits will include a faster more reliable bus service, better links in the city; this will ease bus congestion and improved relationship between public spaces. Disadvantages will include the cost, potential impact on retailers, reduction of public space in Manners Mall and some slowing of traffic. Council also looked at the advantages and disadvantages of retaining Manners Mall. Submissions on this proposal need to be received by Council by 30 October and oral submissions will be heard from 9 November.

Questions & Comments:

With the reduction of speed and time savings was this worked out on present speeds? *No this is worked out on the 30km speed.*

In the shared space can you give a guarantee that vehicles will slow down and are there any proposals to put in speed humps? *The final design has not been decided on yet. There will be*

signs stating that this is a shared space but there are no plans to install speed humps. Overseas experience shows that vehicles will slow down as traffic does not have the right of way. Raised areas in the road do seem to be a good way of slowing traffic like the ones in Kilbirnie. Kilbirnie is a different concept that has a defined roadway. In the concept proposed pedestrians can go anywhere and they have the right of way but this is something to consider.

In terms of the shared space, is this proposed for all of lower Cuba Street or only part? *The area will include all of lower Cuba Street between Manners Mall and Wakefield Street.*

Can you give an example of a shared space in New Zealand that it currently in operation? *There is a similar one in Woodward Street but this is not quite the same as a street where vehicles are allowed to travel that pedestrians also use. There are no further examples that I know of. Council have had a UK expert visit to discuss this concept. Council have also looked at a continuum with Courtenay Place being part of a shared continuum.*

It may not be a good idea going by the UK experience as their drivers are different to NZ drivers.

One concern noted was around the actual pedestrian walkways. When pedestrians walk near shops these areas need to be kept clear of signs, tables and any other obstacles. If people have to walk in the middle of the road some disabled people will not use this space at all. There has been a consultation process carried out in Auckland and as a result there are now specific requirements with regard to this problem. There is a need to keep building lines clear and provide crossing points and tactile markers. *This is good feedback that Council needs to be made aware of so that we can pick up on these issues.*

It was noted that it is hard to comment on the proposal at the moment because there is no defined layout.

If cars are going through this space how will car fumes affect people? *We are expecting very low vehicle numbers of probably about 100 vehicles per hour and this should not be enough to affect pedestrians. People do sit outside in Courtenay Place where the volume of cars is quite high and this does not seem to have any affect.*

Looking at the plans for Manners Mall what will happen with regard to wheelchair users using the leaning busses as they need to have a high kerb provided for ease of access? *There will be a kerb in Manners Mall.*

4. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a true and accurate record by Alan Royal and seconded by Rosie Macleod.

5. Report from the Chairs

Accessibility Advisor's Role – The Co Chairs have had a meeting with Jenny to discuss this. Julia finishes on 30 November at that time the role will be advertised. Council are waiting for the job description to be changed and this should be ready by the middle of November. The DRG will get a copy of the job description and advertisement. Sara will keep everyone up to date on progress.

DRG Member Positions – Four people are leaving the DRG. These positions have been advertised and applications close on 21 October. DRG members need to let people know who may be interested in applying and should encourage them to do so. Applicants will need to have a current CV. The Co Chairs and one Council staff member will be involved in shortlisting. Shortlisting will be on 27 October and interviews will be held in the week 3-5 November. Sara

asked for suggestions about what to look for when shortlisting. Maybe it would be helpful to look at what the gaps will be in the DRG when the current members leave and what gaps we see at the moment. This will give the Co Chairs an idea of what sort of things to look for.

Comments: Maybe it would be good to look for people with physical disabilities as the two current members will be resigning; also people who are blind or have a guide dog; someone with a learning or intellectual disability may be an option; it may also be good to have a representative from the ethnic community.

Phillipa noted that she has a friend who is interested in applying who is not disabled but has a daughter who is. Can she apply to be on the DRG from this perspective? *Anyone can apply but this will depend on what the TOR state as the criteria is very clear regarding eligibility.* **Action:** Julia to send out the TOR to members. It was noted that it would be a valuable contribution to the DRG to have someone represent disabled youth.

Sara asked whether any current members have indicated that they will stand again as everyone is welcome to reapply. *The TOR state how many times you can stand for the DRG.*

Waterfront Development – a submission has been made on line on behalf of the DRG. It was noted that DRG members did not provide sufficient feedback on this submission and the responsibility for the submission was put solely on the co-chairs. For future submissions DRG members will be notified of the date when comments/feedback needs to be received so that a submission can be put in on behalf of the DRG and not just the co-chairs. It was suggested that the co-chairs could delegate the responsibility of putting in submissions on behalf of the DRG to the sub groups. Your own personal email address can be used when putting in submissions but say you represent the DRG when doing so. It was agreed that all submissions and replies should be sent to the Accessibility Advisor in hard copy so that a record of all submissions is kept.

November Meeting – there are two possible presenters for the November meeting – Baz Kaufman on accessibility measures and the response to the submission made to the LTCCP and Charles Gordon who is the project leader in charge of Te Raekaihau.

Positively Wellington Tourism Website – this issue still needs to be addressed. Julia will look into progress on this website. This information will then be discussed at the sub group meeting and then by the whole of the DRG.

Election of New Officers – Sara thanked Rosie for her hard work during her term as a co-chair. It was agreed that Phillipa will be the new co-chair with Sara.

6. Warren Ulusele – Johnsonville Mall Development

The resource consent has been given for the new Johnsonville Mall development. The resource consent focuses on certain issues. These relate generally to traffic, urban design of the building and high level issues. The primary focus of the resource consent is in terms of the District Plan. The concerns that have been raised are of a more detailed nature and these concerns are dealt with in the building consent process. Detailed plans of the building will be provided at the building consent phase. Council are not ignoring the concerns that have been raised but the policies that guide Council where there may be possible design outcomes can only be considered on public property. Where private property is concerned Council can only request changes at the building plan consent stage.

Questions & Comments:

With regard to the concerns raised if details about access come at a later stage what can we discuss tonight as we need to make a response to the concerns raised? *Council cannot deal with these issues at this stage but Council are not ignoring these concerns. We need to make it clear*

that council only has a remote ability to influence anything within the building at this stage. The reason for attending this meeting tonight is more about clarification for the group.

Is there anything that we as a group should keep an eye on? The process that will allow further input is the building consent process. When the developer puts forward a proposal that for a building that is privately owned they have to provide outline plans only of the building to get resource consent.

If the plans show too steeper incline in the mall why would resource consent be given? The reason is because they are separate considerations. So Council would give resource consent even though it does not comply with the building code? You have to bear in mind that Council are not assessing the building code when assessing resource consent and Council do not have the level of details to assess whether this complies with the building code. Council look at traffic and urban design principles but do not look at the building code at the resource consent stage as Council do not have the drawings to make this assessment. Do you suggest that the DRG should get in touch with the developers to express our concerns? Yes

Would things like the size of car parks and access to public transport be considered at the resource consent stage? In terms of broader traffic concerns Council have to look at modes of transport, give consideration to public transport, train and bus improvements but this is done at a very broad level. More technical assessments are taken in terms of size of the car parks are looked at the resource consent process. Are the number of accessible car parks assessed at the time of resource consent? They are and the advice received is that the car parks exceed the standard in terms of numbers and proximity.

It was noted that the DRG would be interested in seeing the plan for the car parks.

It was noted that the location of car parks is quite crucial and also access to the mall via bus or train stops for pedestrians. Have these issues been considered? Part of the overall consideration is the movement of people and vehicles and access to public transport. Council have worked with other parties looking at improvements to the train and bus routes but were unable to come up with a solution. Council do have an agreement from the mall owners that their design will allow for any further improvements to transport routes.

It was noted that the DRG had received a letter about complaints about the new bus stops that have been put in.

Is there a safe pedestrian walkway that enables people to get to the mall through the car park? There are improvements that may be made to this area over time but the key obstacle is the Countdown building. If this building was removed that would leave the area open for further improvements with regard to access.

Have the number and location of toilet facilities been looked at? This comes in at the building consent stage.

It was noted that it would be good for the DRG to be able to look at the building plans with regard to compliance with the building code and the DRG could bring any non compliance issues to the attention of the Council.

Are the car parks that are designated as commuter car parks monitored by Council and will they be part of the mall development? There are about 25 car parks currently designated as commuter parking. These car parks will be lost as a result of road widening but all car parks that are lost will be replaced by parking within the parking building as part of the redevelopment.

Is there a lift in the building and is this raised at the building resource consent stage or building consent process? This will be need to be confirmed. Warren to get back to the DRG about this.

It was agreed that the DRG would look at the building plans as a group and would like a Council Officer to talk through these plans with them. It was agreed that that it would be best to take any concerns about the building development back to the designer.

7. Advisor's Report

The recent NZ Sign Language tours at the City Gallery were a success with about 20 people attending the tour. The next tour will be held on Saturday, 17 October.

Library VRS – training has been given to library staff to use this equipment and the equipment has been advertised at the Deaf Society.

2040 Workshop – Lisette and Alan attended this workshop. Two things noted were the need to plan towards changing age demographics and visual impairment.

Wellington Airport – Julia will arrange another meeting regarding the upgrades.

PWT Website – this website is due for launching in March 2010 and work is ongoing. There have been no progress updates received. Julia will arrange a meeting for the ICT subgroup on this.

Adelaide Road/John Street – no updates have been received as work is still progressing on the traffic lane and bus lane plan. The John Street plans may be deferred because of the supermarket development. The concept plan has been finished and will be presented to the DRG next year possibly in February.

Sailability Wellington – a brochure has been received from Councillor Pannett about this. If you want more information please see Julia.

8. Subgroup Reports

Housing Subgroup – have had an update on the housing upgrade and the group have looked at the plans for the proposed accessible flats in the Central Park complex. The plans seem to be an improvement on what there is to date. There is closer access to the flats from the carparks and we have suggested that there is cover provided as well. The subgroup do have a concern that they are unable to comment on issues that may be raised by other parts of the disability community.

This does raise the question whether the accessible units will be the only units that have flashing fire alarms and whether there will be money available to install these at a later stage and also whether units can be adapted for disabilities if the need arises. It was noted that some of the units will have lifetime design concepts incorporated.

It was also noted that there is a concern about the number of units per block that are accessible or that can be adapted. This issue was raised from the beginning of the project raising the concern that the position will remain the same regarding the lack of accessible units. This needs to be clarified.

Action: Julia to talk to the Housing Project Team about this.

ICT Subgroup – this group are working on current issues. On another issue it was noted that there is a concern around accessibility of documents in the Health Review. This will be discussed at the next subgroup meeting.

Arts Subgroup – Arts Access Aotearoa are still working on their book.

9. Other Business

The work that Auckland City Council has carried out on making their website accessible was noted. This shows what can be done to work towards removing barriers for people with disabilities. This information has been sent on to the Regional Council who will be having a meeting in November and this subject will be included on the agenda.

Manners Mall Submission – it was agreed that Thomas would put this submission together with feedback from DRG members. Sara will send an email to DRG members requesting their feedback to be sent to Thomas with the deadline for feedback one week before submissions close.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm
Next meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, November 10th, 2009 at 5:30 pm.

DRAFT