
REPORT 10
(1215/52/IM)

PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN POLICY REVIEW

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek agreement to new public space design objectives for Wellington City, and an implementation plan that will embed these objectives in the Council's operations.

2. Executive Summary

Wellington City has a proud collection of public spaces, including some very attractive streets, promenades, squares and parks. However, community concern in 2007 around some street furniture (notably bus shelter) placement has highlighted the need for the Council to clarify its objectives and guidelines for public space design, and the need to standardise and better coordinate street furniture provision.

This paper recommends seven new objectives for public space design. These objectives would apply to the design of all new public spaces, and the furniture and key infrastructure linked to public spaces. It is proposed that these objectives be embedded in the organisation through an implementation plan that has four key actions: revising the public space and centre development programme; finalising a public space design guide; finalising a street furniture catalogue; and setting up a public space advisory group. Targeted professional and community consultation will be undertaken on the public space design guide and street furniture catalogue before their finalisation.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*
- 2. Agree to the proposed public spaces design objectives and the associated implementation plan.*

4. Background

Streets, parks, promenades and squares are the public spaces of a city – and public spaces are where many of the key events of urban living take place: **movement** (by foot, car, bus or bike), **gatherings** (events, concerts, games),

recreation (eating, coffee drinking, promenading, picnics) and a myriad of other **encounters** of an urban nature.

Wellington has some very attractive and well-loved streets, parks, squares and promenades, and the Council has over the last 25 years invested heavily in the quality of the most heavily used central area and suburban places, including Civic Square, the waterfront and its promenade, the Golden Mile, and the 'high streets' of most of the suburban centres (including, for example, a new community square in Karori Town Centre).

At the end of 2007 the Mayor requested a review of public space design at the Council, and a report back to the Strategy and Policy Committee. This request was in response to a deputation on behalf of a Ngaio-Khandallah residents group (B.U.S.) to the *Strategy and Policy Committee* in June 2007 where the group noted their dissatisfaction with the proposed placement of *Adshel* bus shelters in their local streets. The group felt that the shelters highlighted weaknesses with Council policies, and requested that the Council undertake comprehensive research on where bus shelters should be located and develop appropriate policies.

The subsequent review has noted the successes of recent public space design projects, but has also identified four key issues or areas for improvement, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Key Areas for Improvement in Public Space Design

Issues identified in the review		Explanation
1	There is no formally agreed set of objectives for public space design in Wellington City	<i>While the Council has many strategy and policy statements about the importance of public spaces and centres, there is no one set of objectives that can inform the whole range of activities that relate to the design and maintenance of public spaces.</i>
2	The current Public Space and Centre Development Programme has run out of steam, and has overlooked some suburban centres	<i>The programme is an overall framework for the ongoing development of public spaces and was initially developed in 2000/01 – it has guided the investment in key public spaces and centres over the last 8 years, and was last reviewed in 2005. Centres such as Kelburn and Roseneath have not received any upgrades through the programme, and some inspiring new ideas are needed to take the programme forward into the 2009/10 LTCCP.</i>
3	There is no clear set of guidelines for the design	<i>Many parts of the Council, and external parties, are involved in the design and</i>

Issues identified in the review		Explanation
	and management of public spaces in Wellington City	<i>management of public spaces; having all these parties refer to one single set of design guidelines will ensure that important design issues are not overlooked, and that there is a consistent level of quality in the design of all spaces</i>
4	The design and provision of street furniture is at times uncoordinated, and does not adequately consider maintenance and renewal costs	<i>Providing street furniture in a more consistent and standardised manner will lower ongoing maintenance and renewal costs, but also pay greater attention to sense of place and community character.</i>

5. Discussion

In response to the issues identified in the review, Officers are recommending a new set of public space design objectives and four related actions.

5.1 Objectives for Public Space Design

Seven new objectives for the design of public spaces in Wellington City are being proposed (refer Table 2). These objectives will apply to the design of all new public spaces, and the furniture and key infrastructure linked to public spaces. The objectives have been drawn from urban design studies; from previous work on public space design programmes; and with reference to similar objectives for cities in Australia.

Table 2 – Wellington City Public Space Design Objectives

Proposed Objective for Public Space Design in Wellington City		Explanation
1	Enhance Wellington's sense of place	<i>Each public space project to attempt to better define the identity of the local area, with reference to Wellington as a whole</i>
2	Make the structure of Wellington better understood as a city	<i>Wellington as a city needs to be legible. It has to have a clear image and users need to be able to orientate themselves in the city by ensuring that the city's structure is easily understood</i>
3	Improve accessibility for all	<i>The city is a place for all people to be able to easily get to and move around</i>

Proposed Objective for Public Space Design in Wellington City		Explanation
4	Improve the diversity of experience for Wellingtonians and visitors	<i>A variety of and choice of spaces to use and experience and having spaces that can change and adapt to changing needs is critical</i>
5	Enhance the night-time environment of the city	<i>Wellington's night-time economy is an important constituent of the city and an area of focus at present</i>
6	Deliver high quality design through good urban design processes and linking to sustainability considerations	<i>Successful public spaces have a high quality of urban design innovation which provides attractive, safe and sustainable environments.</i>
7	Ensure that public spaces are designed and maintained in an effective and affordable manner	<i>The most promising public space design will be ineffective if the space is not adequately maintained and renewed; design should take into account the ongoing costs of renewal and maintenance to ensure affordability over time.</i>

NB The first six of these objectives form the basis for the objectives in the design guide attached as Appendix 2.

5.2 Implementation of the Objectives

The proposed objectives will be implemented through the four new actions set out Table 3 below. Together these four actions will improve the standard of delivery, management and maintenance of public spaces which are crucial to making public spaces work and the city successful. The implementation plan is set out in greater detail in Appendix 1.

Table 3 –Public Space Design Objectives Implementation Plan

Proposed Action		Description
1	Review the <i>Public Space Development and Centres Development Programme</i> for the 2009/10 LTCCP	<i>The revised programme will differentiate streets and spaces and provide for differing levels of amenity dependant on a classification system, and will identify levels of service and degrees of intervention in regards design and types of furniture in respective locations in the city.</i> <i>The programme review will also identify</i>

Proposed Action	Description
	<i>options to procure new appropriately located spaces.</i>
2 Consult on, finalise and apply the draft <i>Public Space Design Guide</i> attached in <i>Appendix 2</i>	<p><i>The aim of the Public Space Design Guide is to provide practical guidance to the designers of public spaces, street furniture and related infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>The Design Guide will be finalised in 2008 following consultation with key stakeholders, including professional and community based groups and organisations.</i></p>
3 Consult on, finalise and apply a <i>Wellington City Street Furniture Catalogue</i> , an extract from which is attached in <i>Appendix 3</i>	<p><i>The Council has a half completed catalogue of street furniture.</i></p> <p><i>Completion of this catalogue in 2008 will allow the Council to standardise its range of street furniture, thereby lowering maintenance and renewal costs. The catalogue will specify in which locations certain furniture (e.g. bus shelters) will be used.</i></p> <p><i>The Catalogue will be finalised in 2008 following consultation with key stakeholders, including professional and community based groups and organisations.</i></p>
4 Set up a <i>Public Space Advisory Group</i> that will provide direction for work undertaken in the City's public spaces	<i>This group will review and be guided by the Public Space Design Guide. It will advise on decisions relating to projects/outcomes in the city's public spaces. It will be made up of senior Council officers from across Council with the support of up to four external advisers including a community and a Disability Reference Group representative.</i>

6. Conclusion

The proposed public space design objectives, and four related actions, will together deliver on the Council's desire to continue to deliver high quality public spaces through continuous improvements and in a cost-effective manner.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

This proposal supports Council's overall strategic direction around urban development and transport.

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

The outcomes of this process are likely to be put up as new initiatives as part of the LTCCP process

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no specific Treaty issues.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision under the Local Government Act.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

Internal consultation has been undertaken. External consultation is not considered necessary fro these decisions.

b) Consultation with Maori

6) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report proposes a policy that provides an overarching framework that provides a framework for existing policies to work with.