

# Living Streets Aotearoa



[www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)

## Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa to Wellington City Council on Te Ngākau Civic Square proposal 2021

Contact person: **Ellen Blake**  
Email: **[wellington@livingstreets.org.nz](mailto:wellington@livingstreets.org.nz)**  
Phone: **021 106 7139**  
Date: **16 June 2021**  
To **[communications@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:communications@wcc.govt.nz)**

### 1 Vision

Living Streets support the vision for a return of the heart of our city. This includes incorporating our local democratic institution as a core civic function, the Wellington City Council. Is collide the right word in this phrase, it sounds a bit unplanned.

*Te Ngākau – Civic Square is the beating heart of our capital city: A thriving neighbourhood where creativity, culture, democracy, discovery, and arts experiences collide on the edge of Te Whānganui-a-Tara (Wellington).*

### 2 Seven objectives

Living Streets supports the seven objectives.

2.7 Objective 7: Te Ngākau is easily and safely accessible and integrated with the wider transport network.

Does the use of network only mean the current road system or should it mean public transport and make explicit the need for safe and accessible access for pedestrians?

### 3 Other comments

#### **Buildings and structures**

The framework should be more explicit about which existing buildings should be permanently retained.

We support retention of the library building with improved access and a more active frontage to Civic Square, and look forward to this being done as soon as possible.

We support more than just the Town Hall and the old library/City Gallery being retained. The Municipal Office Building should be one of these existing buildings that should be permanently retained. A positive decision on strengthening and permanently retaining the Municipal Office Building should be made before the framework is finalized and adopted and this decision should be written into the framework. The Municipal Office Building should be strengthened, fitted out with the latest design of base isolators and the interior layout changed to a modern office style. Strengthening the MOB, then modernising its interior would enable WCC staff and councillors to return to where they rightfully belong - in Te Ngākau = the heart of the city - where they once were.

Similarly if the CAB can be strengthened and fitted with the latest type of base isolators, that is preferable to demolition with the resulting high impacts of noise and dust, on traffic, and the waste of embodied energy and materials it was made of, plus the impacts on the valuable life of the Southern Landfill.

Active frontages have increased but not markedly. The Town Hall, MOB and CAB and western aspect of the Michael Fowler Centre still seem 'quiet' as does the northern side of Wakefield Street. The northern side of Harris St which is the Police station is marked active but no change is proposed to do this.

### **Transport connections**

As the plans show, LGWM's preferred (but yet to be confirmed) mass transit route is along Jervois Quay. If this happens, there need to be excellent links to the nearest stops and in any case good links to all existing public transport.

If the City-to-Sea Bridge is to be retained (and it has its good features and is well liked) accessibility needs improving on the seaward side, for instance some handrails are missing - I'm surprised more people don't trip/slip here.

### **Pedestrian facilities**

The additional and improved pedestrian crossings across the streets surrounding Te Ngākau are welcomed. The framework should require that all of these pedestrian crossings should allow pedestrians to cross the full width of the street in a single stage (and not just to a central island or reservation as at St Johns). This should include the proposed new and existing pedestrian crossings across Jervois Quay.

Pedestrian crossings leading to Te Ngākau (Victoria, Wakefield, Cable, Harris Streets, Jervois Quay) should all be on raised platforms. There also needs to be better links from the Square to those streets, e.g the long blank space between Mercer St and the Michael Fowler carpark, which even before EQ closure was connected by an office-hours-only link through

WCC reception and by a slippery laneway past the Town Hall entrance. The connections to the Civic Square need to also be 24/7 links through any retained or new buildings to both Wakefield and Victoria Streets, and improved through to Jervois Quay.

### **Green spaces**

It is disappointing to see Ilott Green and the small green and seating area at the back of the City Gallery removed and a building replacement. There are few enough green spaces in Wellington central and in this area. We support retention of Ilott Green and the smaller green space with the wonderful fountain behind the library and improving the connectivity to these spaces incorporated to the street.

The turf (albeit artificial) laid down for the Cricket World Cup changed usage of Civic Square and this sort of activation needs to be maintained. Flexible seating arrangements would be a useful addition.

We would like to be heard in support of this submission.

### **About Living Streets**

Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand's national walking and pedestrian organisation, providing a positive voice for people on foot and working to promote walking-friendly planning and development around the country. Our vision is "More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places".

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are:

- to promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation
- to promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
- to work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners, including walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed and safety
- to advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional and urban land-use and transport planning.

For more information, please see: [www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)