

Submission on City Heart Developments, Garden Place

The Reality

- Increasing numbers of New Zealanders are struggling with day-to-day expenses as a result of rising costs of fuel, falling house values and rapidly rising commodity prices
- People need access to low-cost, safe and family-friendly shopping and entertainment
- There is little amusement and few pleasant surprises to be had from wandering in the Hamilton CBD as it is – it's dull.

Council's suggested solution for Garden Place

- Allow more room for cars
- Install upmarket, high-rent luxury shops selling expensive goods
- Reduce the opportunity and space for interesting things to happen

There may be a problem here.

How about a different solution?

- Minimise the car traffic. Encourage alternative transport: feet, cycles, buses, mobility taxis and mobility scooters
- Provide cheap, fun activities not available elsewhere, so "there's always something happening in town".

How could we do this? Don't try to make Garden Place another suburban mall.

- The CBD can't compete with the malls. They are already expert at providing trendy clothes shops, fast food and glossy accessories. They also do the same thing everywhere: seen one mall, seen them all, regardless of whether it's Hamilton, Auckland, Wellington, Palmerston North, Christchurch or Dunedin.
- The malls have sterility – Garden Place could be given humanity.
- Council could facilitate this at relatively little cost. Don't build a road – use the money to take over the leases of the shops instead, and rent them out cheaply on a limited term basis, so there is always something new coming along.
- Hamilton has lots of creative people, who would like to test their market, but can't risk commitment to a standard long-term lease: seek them out and offer them the chance to display their talent and make some money while they're at it. We have Wintec, the University, the Waikato Society of Arts, the self-employed, the retired, and a lot of talented kids who are still at school but producing great things. Let's give them a chance to make Hamilton something special. Regard it as a creative and retail incubator, rather like the Innovation Park is for the agro-industry.
- Use our local musical talent as well – encourage soloists, small groups and informal concerts. Pay them a small fee and let them busk as well. They will attract people in to Garden Place to see what's new and who's playing.
- To make it easier for families to think about going to Garden Place "to see what's happening", make it a child and teenager-friendly zone – not just a "hanging-out" place but one which also provides role models in the form of other young people running stalls and making music. In addition, the movie theatres, and the family entertainment areas in the casino complex are nearby and could be integrated into Garden Place with nothing more than a bit of promotion. A few amusements for littlies, like bouncy castles, and paid storytellers (teenagers to grandparents) hosted by the library, would be great too.
- Set up a marketplace. Frankton is a thriving example – it's full on a Saturday, with not a car in sight in the main street. It's cheap and fascinating and alive. We need more of that, and less of the expensive stuff that the majority of the population can no longer afford. Food is always an attraction, as shown by Frankton and the Farmers Market. There are increasing numbers of people living in the central city. They have to eat – encourage fresh food shops selling vegetables, fruit, bread, fish, and meat. Encourage cooked food stalls too – they always attract enthusiastic consumers and are a feature of many markets all over the world.
- **Bring back the heart to the city – give people a reason to be there. It needn't be flashy – it needs to be human! Flashy and expensive is depressing to many – it only reminds them of what they haven't got. Let's remind ourselves of what we have got, instead.**

Public Places that attract people



Aotea market, Auckland



Frankton Market: streets full on a Saturday morning



A new use for traffic islands, Frankton market



A new use for roads, Frankton Market

Submissions regarding Transport – Access Hamilton

I have made four separate submissions dealing with similar issues around Hamilton, which have already been read. I would like to provide an overview expressing Living Streets Hamilton's concerns about pedestrian and general active transport issues in the city.

While we are delighted that progress is being made in making many new areas much more walk and cycle friendly, we are still very concerned about the "bits in between" which are often what stop people from making use of otherwise excellent facilities. When this happens, it is very tempting for those in public bodies such as council to become negative and discouraged and feel that "it doesn't matter what you do, people won't get out of their cars and use what we've provided".

Our view is that with a few alterations, big differences might start to happen. We are probably very near the tipping point for viability of private car use. A recent survey suggests that up to 40% of New Zealanders will make significant changes to their car use once petrol hits \$2 per litre – sometime next week? It may not take much help from council to convince Hamiltonians that various combinations of walking, cycling, and public transport are a viable alternative to taking the car for local trips.

We need to future-proof our cities by making active transport a top priority, not just something done by the brave and the lunatic fringe. It mainly needs a shift in priorities, from

CARS AND TRUCKS
BIKES & MOBILITY SCOOTERS
PEDESTRIANS

TO

PEDESTRIANS
BIKES & MOBILITY SCOOTERS
CARS AND TRUCKS

Please note, we are NOT suggesting removal of cars and trucks. They are necessary and will continue to be for certain purposes. We are merely suggesting that they be put in their proper place: at the bottom of the priority list for convenience and access, as is already the case in some places elsewhere in the world.

Cities, or parts of cities, which encourage safe access tend to be sought after as places to live. In the USA, house buyers are already talking with their feet – house prices are dropping and sales are falling in outlying suburbs, but prices and demand are rising steadily in inner-city environments where people can walk to work and school.

Hamilton has great potential as an active transport city. It is flat, fairly compact, and as our recent researches into walking maps show, most of the CBD and Hamilton East is accessible on foot within a half-hour stroll.

At the moment, many people are inhibited from walking by unpleasant intersections like the ones mentioned in my submissions: Fairfield bridge, Anglesea St and the length of Boundary Rd and Fifth Avenue. If areas like these could have the priorities inverted, and safe walking and cycling environments installed, Hamilton would be in an ideal situation to be one of the most walkable cities in New Zealand. All we need then is good reason to walk to the CBD. At the moment it is boring, as mentioned in my preceding personal submission.

At the moment, we seem unable even to entertain the idea of allowing an extra ten seconds at an intersection to allow pedestrians to cross in safety, because it is unthinkable to slow down vehicular traffic.

Looking even a short distance into the future, is this really sensible?

Pedestrian- and Cycle-friendly initiatives in Napier and Wellington



Clip-on bridge under construction for cyclists and pedestrians, Napier



Courtesy zone, Napier waterfront



Waterfront, Napier



CBD, Wellington: a 30kph limit in this street since 2006

Some pedestrian and cycle unfriendly situations in Hamilton



Five Cross Roads – how long can you wait to get across?



Heaphy Tce at Claude St, near the roundabout



Te Rapa near Beerescourt



Stop for cars.....



Try crossing here....especially at rush hour



Yes, well....