

Heart of the City Submission – Midtown Bus Route

Heart of the City has been advocating strongly for a holistic and integrated approach to transport planning in the city centre that has great place making front of mind. We are heartened to see recent moves towards this approach by Auckland Transport in closer association with Auckland Council and hope to see this continue at pace.

With regards the request for submissions on the Learning Quarter Bus Project, we would like to draw attention to Heart of the City's earlier participation in the East-West Transport Study (CEWTS). At that time, both Heart of the City and the Waitemata Local Board expressed the view that there was more value to be gained from a major park extension on the south side of Wellesley St (outside the Civic Theatre and with guaranteed sun access) than from the "Linear Park" portrayed in the City Centre Master Plan on the south side of Victoria St.

This view did not prevail at the time, and unfortunately the choices under consideration seemed to offer an "either/or" option of a high-quality park extension in only one of the two parallel streets - in turn condemning the other street to being an unpleasant two-way bus interchange.

Heart of the City believes it is vital to consider the impact of bus routes through Wellesley Street in the context of an attractive city streetscape. Proposed updates to the City Centre Masterplan appear to acknowledge this and our submission is that Heart of the City urges Auckland Transport to work closely with Auckland Council to ensure this is the case.

A variation of the Option 1 that appears to be favoured might offer the opportunity of a win-win solution in which both Victoria and Wellesley Street could have park extensions near their intersections with Queen Street.

Heart of the City remains focused on great outcomes for the city centre and we will seek opportunities to participate in this discussion as the City Centre Masterplan review progresses.