
REPORT 1
(1215/52/IM)

COURTENAY PLACE PROJECT

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Councillors with a five-year vision and a coherent package of solutions for the Courtenay precinct to:

- address the alcohol-related issues
- improve safety
- support the diverse activity and the 24-hour economy.

2. Executive Summary

The Courtenay Place project examined the complex interplay of factors impacting on the Courtenay precinct.

A five-year vision has been developed proposing that the Courtenay precinct will:

- continue to develop as the city's premiere entertainment district but with greater diversity in venues and more outdoor café seating
- have a streetscape which accommodates late-night crowds and also meets the priorities of the day and evening economies
- be exciting, inviting and safe.

The key issues to be addressed arise from safety concerns related to the large number of people who gravitate to the precinct for late-night entertainment. The issues include:

- alcohol-related harm (disorder, criminal offending and anti-social behaviour)
- footpath and traffic congestion
- streetscape design, including lighting
- public transport and taxi management
- public place activity.

An integrated set of solutions to deliver on the five-year vision is proposed. The solutions will address the issues associated with late-night entertainment and meet the daytime and evening priorities of local businesses and public transport.

A majority of the proposed solutions will require new funding.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note that the complex range of factors impacting on the Courtenay precinct has been considered, particularly:*
 - *alcohol-related harm*
 - *footpath and traffic congestion*
 - *streetscape design, including lighting*
 - *public transport and taxi management*
 - *public place activity.*
3. *Agree that the Courtenay precinct should remain the city's premiere entertainment area, and also cater for the 24-hour economy.*
4. *Agree that further work be undertaken, with proposals to be presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee by July 2008 on:*
 - *street lighting*
 - *surveillance using CCTV*
 - *late-night taxi management.*
5. *Agree that further work be undertaken to design a flexible, revitalised streetscape, and a proposal presented to the Strategy and Policy Committee by December 2008.*
6. *Note that initiatives not requiring new funding will be progressed within existing budgets by the relevant Council business units.*
7. *Agree new funding as outlined in Table 1 for inclusion in the Draft Annual Plan for consultation.*
8. *Note that officers will present a paper on 27 March 2008 proposing an all-year, central city 24/7 liquor ban.*

4. Background

The Courtenay Place project was initiated following the 2007 Footpath Management Policy Review. The review identified a complex interplay of factors associated with the Courtenay precinct as the premiere entertainment district. The Strategy and Policy Committee approved a project to create a vision and to develop an integrated programme of work to improve the area.

4.1 Methodology

The methodology used to examine the issues and potential solutions has included:

- a review of relevant legislation, plans and policies
- research into strategies adopted in other cities to address similar problems
- audits of the physical environment from safety and universal access perspectives
- consideration of pedestrian movement, traffic and streetscape
- information gathered from key stakeholders¹
- consideration of the positioning of the Courtenay precinct relative to other areas of the central city, such as Cuba Mall
- a review of other Council initiatives with the potential to impact the Courtenay precinct.

4.2 Streets included in the Courtenay precinct

For the purpose of this project the Courtenay precinct includes Courtenay Place, Allan and Blair Streets, Kent and Cambridge Terraces between Courtenay Place and Wakefield Street (Embassy Theatre area), the east side of Taranaki Street between Courtenay Place and Wakefield Street, Tory Street from Holland Street to Wakefield Street, and Holland Street.

A map of the Courtenay precinct can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3 Current activity in the Courtenay precinct

The Courtenay precinct provides activity 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with daytime shopping and early evening leisure activities (eating, drinking, cinema, theatre), followed by late-night drinking and dancing into the early morning.

The precinct, is best known for its thriving, vibrant and slightly edgy entertainment scene. The 2005 review of the Downtown Wellington Campaign identified the Courtenay precinct as “Robbie Williams, mainstream, night-time, confident, bright and brash.” On weekend nights there can be up to 20,000 people who come to the precinct, and more than this for major city events.

Retailers and service organisations including banking, legal, health, recruitment, design, and educational services are also located in the Courtenay precinct. It is expected the establishment of specialised boutique style shops will continue and that bars and restaurants will continue to dominate.

¹ These included Council officers, New Zealand Police, Walkwise, Land Transport New Zealand’s Taxi Enforcement Unit, Positively Wellington Tourism, the hospitality industry, Courtenay Quarter Accord and a Courtenay Place resident group.

Retailers, service organisations and restaurants place significant value on the availability of daytime on-street parking near their businesses.

Although there is not currently a significant amount of residential living in the immediate vicinity, the number of apartments in close proximity is growing and further apartment developments are planned.

The precinct's history, buildings and streetscape, particularly the refurbished Embassy Theatre and the Edwardian warehouse buildings which housed the city's markets for 90 years, add important heritage value to the city.

4.4 Key issues

The Courtenay precinct is different to the rest of the city because of the large number of people who gravitate to the precinct for the diverse activities which occur there. Like other cities with thriving entertainment districts and 24-hour economies, there are safety, social, environmental, design and transport factors to manage, particularly:

- alcohol-related harm (disorder, criminal offending and anti-social behaviour)
- footpath and traffic congestion
- streetscape design, including lighting
- public transport and taxi management
- public place activity.

Alcohol is a key element of the evening and late-night entertainment culture. Although most people drink in moderation, alcohol-related harm is a growing problem in the Courtenay precinct with social, environmental and economic impacts for the city.

Factors include:

- a binge drinking culture
- an increased level of violent offending and other crime, disorder, anti-social behavior and public nuisance
- unsafe practices by young people. Of particular concern, is a recent increase in risk taking activity by young woman when inebriated
- groups of people who come to the precinct to intentionally drink in public places, rather than in licensed areas
- practices of some licensed premises.

Footpaths on Courtenay Place get very congested on Friday and Saturday nights because of the large number of pedestrians and the additional pressure on footpath space for out-door furniture, queuing, smoking and busking. Congestion contributes to aggressive behaviour, altercations and unsafe practices.

There is insufficient parking space for the number of taxis that come to the precinct on Friday and Saturday nights. The consequent demand leads to some taxi drivers parking illegally and dangerously, or driving around until a parking

space or fare is found. These practices contribute to the late-night traffic congestion that occurs.

The issues impacting the Courtenay precinct are described further in Appendix 2.

4.5 Existing Council initiatives impacting on the Courtenay precinct

4.5.1 CCTV review

The City Safety Council business unit operates a CCTV system with three cameras in the Cuba Street, Dixon Street and Manners Mall area. A review of the City Safety CCTV System completed in January 2008 identified where CCTV cameras should be located and advised that the current system should be replaced.

4.5.2 Courtenay Place Park

The new park currently being constructed on the corner of Courtenay Place and Taranaki Street will expand the existing space around the heritage men's toilet building and remove some road and parking. The main features of the design include an open paved area for events, a double row of trees and light boxes for displaying art. There are no plans in place for the use of the heritage men's toilet building.

4.5.3 Bus Priority Plan

The Bus Priority Plan is an initiative to move buses through the city more efficiently, including along Courtenay Place.

5. Discussion

5.1 Five-year vision for the Courtenay precinct

The following five-year vision is proposed for the Courtenay precinct:

The Courtenay precinct will maintain its position as the city's premiere entertainment district. By day, the shops, cinemas and service organisations will attract people to the precinct. In the evenings the attraction will be entertainment and dining, and late-night it will be entertainment, drinking and dancing.

Allen and Blair Streets and the Courtenay Place Park will provide space for street theatre, live music, markets and cultural events.

The streetscape will be flexible to accommodate the diverse activities throughout the day and a safe place for large crowds during major city events. The precinct will feel safe and exciting, and continue to attract large numbers of people.

Alcohol will likely remain a significant factor late at night. Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights will continue to attract a younger late-night crowd.

Drinking will take place in controlled environments with good alcohol management practices and the level of alcohol abuse will be reduced. Public place drinking will be prohibited with a 24/7 liquor ban. People will be aware of the consequences of breaching the bylaw and choose not to drink illegally. People will also be more aware of the dangers of abusing alcohol and take responsibility for looking after their friends.

A significant decrease in alcohol-related harm, offending, disorder and anti-social behaviour is expected.

The Council will continue to have a strong and positive relationship with local businesses, resident groups and other key stakeholders. There will be a shared commitment to keeping the precinct safe and vibrant. A local alcohol accord will be established with key stakeholders who take a partnered approach addressing safety and alcohol related issues.

5.2 Proposed package of solutions

The key objectives of the package are to:

- improve safety
- minimise the risk of alcohol-related harm
- reduce late-night footpath congestion
- reduce late-night traffic congestion
- in the longer term, revitalise the streetscape
- facilitate complementary activity in public places to create diversity and attract a wider variety of people
- minimise bus delays at peak commuter times.

The table below, lists the proposed solutions and offers prioritisation. It also provides estimates of cost and the proposed implementation timeframe. High priority initiatives are those considered essential for improving safety and minimising alcohol-related harm and therefore should be progressed with urgency.

TABLE 1: Proposed package of solutions

| | Initiative | Priority | Capex | Opex | Timeframe | Factors the solutions are addressing |
|-----|---|----------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1. | Introduce a 24/7 liquor ban across the central city | High | 30k | 5k - Within existing funding | Jul-08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Alcohol abuse and related harm |
| 2. | Establish an alcohol accord | High | | 5k - Within existing funding | Jul-08 | |
| 4. | More Walkwise officers at peak times | High | | 90k ² | Jul-08 | |
| 3. | Install CCTV ³ (city wide initiative) | High | \$140k | \$107k | Aug-08 ⁴ | |
| 5a. | Upgrade street lighting – Courtenay Place | High | \$150k | | Aug-08 ⁵ | |
| 5b. | Upgrade street lighting – Allen and Blair Streets | High | \$50k | | Aug-08 | |
| 10. | Develop a role within Council to manage the Courtenay precinct | High | | 80k | Jul-08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety / Alcohol abuse and related harm • Public place activity to create diversity • Alignment with City Events programme |
| 7. | Establish a late-night taxi stand and queuing system | High | \$10k - Within existing funding | | Nov-08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Traffic congestion / Taxi management |
| 8. | Facilitate summer concerts in Courtenay Place Park | Medium | | Within existing funding | Nov-08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety / Alcohol abuse and related harm • Public place activity to create diversity |
| 9. | Convert the heritage men's toilet into storage and dressing rooms for events | Low | \$50k | 10k | Nov-08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports public place activity to create diversity |
| 6. | Develop a flexible / revitalised streetscape | High | TBD | | Concept plan Dec-08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Alcohol abuse and related harm • Footpath and traffic congestion |
| 11. | Implement bus priority at peak commuter hours (subject to further consultation) | High | Within existing funding | | TBD | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus priority • Traffic congestion |

² \$90k includes the \$40k Walkwise new initiative presented to the DAP workshop 25 Feb 2008 for consideration

³ Same new initiative as presented to DAP 25 Feb 2008 for consideration

⁴ Timing for CCTV is subject to a closed tender process. If open tender process is used the delivery date is Nov 08

⁵ Lighting timing is subject to work being completed by Council's existing lighting contractor

An explanation of proposed solutions is provided in Appendix 3.

The proposed package of solutions will require:

- new capex funding of \$420k (this excludes capex for developing a flexible / revitalised streetscape)
- new opex funding of \$287k.

6. Conclusion

A comprehensive package of solutions has been proposed to address, over time, the complex interplay of issues in the Courtenay precinct. A number of the initiatives can be delivered within existing budgets through appropriate business units. It is proposed that the initiatives requiring new funding be included for consideration in the Draft Annual Plan.

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Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

Urban Development Strategy - Outcome 7: Better Connected, and *Transport Strategy* - Outcome 1: More liveable - easy to get around and pedestrian-friendly, offering quality public transport choices, including balanced parking provision.

Urban Development Strategy - Outcome 2: Stronger Sense of Place - a memorable, beautiful city, celebrating and building on its sense-of-place.

Transport Strategy - Outcome 8: More sustainable - seeking to reduce negative environmental effects by improving efficiency of the road and public transport networks and managing traffic demand. Outcome 10: Healthier - a transport system that contributes to healthy communities and social interaction.

Economic Development Strategy - Outcome 3: More compact - Wellington central city will be the premier and most rapidly growing speciality retail, entertainment, service and knowledge centre for the region.

Social Strategy - Outcome 9: Safer – a safe living environment and a vibrant city where people participate in their communities and activities.

Central City Streetscape Plan - consistent design and installation of streetscape elements based on comfort and safety for all pedestrians, accommodation of a wide range of functions, visual simplicity and absence of clutter, maintenance requirements, alignment with the local character and activity, and secondary prioritisation of utility services and private advertising over other street functions.

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

Some of the proposed initiatives can be achieved within existing budgets. For other proposals, there will be future implications for capital and operational expenditure. However, only estimated costs and timeframes are able to be provided at this stage.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no known considerations at this stage.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision.

5) Consultation

a) General Consultation

The Courtenay Place Project responds to the consultation feedback for the 2007 Footpath Management Policy. Officers have engaged with key stakeholders and the local community in the development of this paper. General and/or targeted consultation will be undertaken as appropriate for individual initiatives. The proposed liquor ban will be the first such initiative requiring consultation.

b) Consultation with Maori

Parts of the precinct are of special significance to mana whenua and they will be invited to contribute to the development of relevant proposals as they are progressed.

6) Legal Implications

No legal advice has been received for this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

This report makes recommendations which are consistent with the District Plan, existing Wellington City Council policies for Road Encroachment, Liquor Licensing, Trading in Public Places and Footpath Management, bylaws for Public Places and Liquor Control, and relevant Council strategies.

The Courtenay precinct



Legend

Courtenay precinct

DATA STATEMENT

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Property boundaries Land Information NZ Date: 18/03/2015 Class: Copyright reserved Accuracy: ± 0.1m (95%) | Other data have been sourced from a number of sources and accuracy may vary | No content displayed on this app/website without the express written agreement of Wellington City Council | Other content displayed on this app/website is the property of Wellington City Council |
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Courtenay precinct



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Wellington**
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WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Key findings / factors requiring consideration

The Courtenay precinct is different to the rest of the city because of the large number of people who gravitate to the precinct for the diverse activities which occur there. Like other cities with thriving entertainment districts and 24-hour economies, there are safety, social, environmental, design and transport factors to manage, particularly:

- alcohol-related harm (disorder, criminal offending and anti-social behaviour)
- footpath and traffic congestion
- streetscape design, including lighting
- public transport and taxi management
- public place activity.

These are described further below.

1. Alcohol abuse and related harm

1.1 Drinking culture

Alcohol is a key element of the evening and late-night entertainment culture. Although most people drink in moderation (enjoying an after-work or pre-theatre drink, a few beers while watching sport, or cocktails in a nightclub), alcohol abuse and related harm has become a problem in the Courtenay precinct late at night.

People often drink prior to coming to the precinct and once there to circuit the bars. For some, the vibrancy of the precinct equates to a perceived requirement that they get drunk as quickly as possible.

1.2 Practices of licensed premises

There is evidence that some premises have unhelpful practices, including:

- discounted drink promotions which encourage heavy drinking over a short period of time
- inadequate levels of checking for minors and intoxicated people when serving
- the unavailability of food for sale after 10pm
- removal of intoxicated patrons onto the street instead of arranging a safe transport option home.

1.3 Lack of diversity in late-night venues

Late-night venues tend to target the 'fun loving', younger age group, deterring others coming to the precinct late at night. Research⁶ indicates that where there is a more diverse range of age groups present, alcohol-related aggression can reduce.

1.4 Alcohol-related harm

Alcohol-related harm is becoming a problem in the Courtenay precinct with social, environmental and economic impacts for the city.

Alcohol-related harm includes:

- disorder and violent offending
- vandalism and damage to property

⁶ Civic Trust, Town Centres for All - Oct 2006

- unsafe and risky behavior
- anti-social behaviour
- fear of crime and intimidation.

Police statistics show:

- the peak hours for criminal offending are between the hours of 10pm and 6am on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights
- over 60% of the offending is between the hours of midnight and 4am
- the rapid tail off in offending corresponds with the closing of licensed premises
- 90% of the offences are alcohol related
- offenders are often young males, although there is a growing trend for young women to offend
- offenders include drunk people who are otherwise generally decent, law abiding citizens
- offending is generally concentrated in the vicinity of bars and nightclubs as well as the following hot spots:
 - Courtenay Place outside Reading Cinemas and the Westpac St James Theatre
 - Allen and Blair Streets
 - the intersection of Courtenay Place and Tory Street.

In the 2007 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey, there was a significant drop in the number of residents reporting feeling safe in the city at night.

1.5 The Liquor Control Bylaw

Public place drinking is contributing to disorderly and anti-social behaviours, crime and violence, unsafe practices, property damage, vandalism and littering, and makes some people feel intimidated and threatened. It occurs both inside and outside the hours of the liquor ban.

A 2005 evaluation of the liquor ban concluded that there was a general awareness of the liquor ban but confusion around the days and hours it was in effect.

Public place drinking is supported by the lower cost of alcohol from off-licence premises and more prevalent because of the presence of underage people.

2. Late-night public transport

Wellington has a taxi voucher system, called Homesafe which targets getting young people home safely. Wellington's train services run until 1am and resume at 6am, and it has a late-night bus service which runs until 3am to Porirua City and 4am to the Hutt Valley. This bus service was initiated by the Wellington City Youth Council and is funded by the Greater Wellington Regional Council. Unfortunately the timetables are not well aligned with the times bars close, and people wanting to leave the area after 3am can be stranded if they don't have money for a taxi.

3. Traffic and road safety

3.1 Traffic congestion

By day, apart from peak commuter hours when there is a significant increase in the number of buses, traffic moves freely along Courtenay Place. Although some of the daytime congestion at peak times is caused by private vehicles, congestion is also due to the number and size of buses. The road can become blocked as buses wait to pull into bus stops, and full buses can be delayed at pedestrian crossings by just one person crossing.

Courtenay Place becomes congested with traffic on Friday and Saturday nights from 10pm onwards because of an increase in traffic (particularly taxis), driver behaviour and the steady stream of pedestrians crossing the road.

3.2 Boy racers

Boy racers parade their cars along Courtenay Place on Friday and Saturday nights. If the opportunity arises, some accelerate at speed from traffic lights and at pedestrian crossings to create engine noise. Although they are unable to travel far because of the congestion, the initial speed creates a safety concern.

3.3 Taxis

There are four official taxi stands on Courtenay Place, providing a total of 15 car spaces. Of these official stands, two (providing seven parks) are not regularly used on Friday and Saturday nights due to being located away from the main activity area, leaving only eight well-used taxi spaces. Taxis are also allowed to wait on loading zones after 6pm and bus stops after 12am.

The quality of taxi service and vehicles varies. Deregulation of the taxi industry has resulted in fierce competition amongst the 1300 taxis in Wellington. Consequently the Courtenay precinct has an abundance of taxis. For example, at 2am on one Saturday there were more than 200 taxis in the precinct.

The overcrowding of taxis encourages low-level stationary and moving offences and anti-social behaviour by a number of drivers.

Land Transport NZ, which has statutory responsibility for regulatory control of taxis, has embarked on a number of activities to improve industry performance. One of those initiatives is the introduction of a National Taxi Enforcement Unit who monitors and investigates the activities of taxi operators and the quality of vehicles. The Wellington unit has been operational since June 2007.

3.4 Vehicle / pedestrian collisions

Road safety statistics show that over the past five years 34% of reported collisions in the Courtenay precinct occurred on weekend nights, with 60% occurring at intersections. Taxis are involved in a large proportion of these collisions. The full number of collisions is unknown because non-injury incidents are often not reported. Crashes and near misses are generally caused by:

- intoxicated pedestrians jaywalking or crossing street intersections against the lights
- drivers failing to give way to pedestrians or performing u-turns.

3.5 Parking

Retailers, service organisations and restaurants place significant value on the availability of daytime, on-street parking near their businesses. Bars and clubs place less value on the need for car parks, saying they are prepared to sacrifice car parks for more footpath space. There is an inherent tension between the provision of space for parking and for other activities.

There are four parking buildings in close proximity, but some people feel unsafe walking to these parking buildings late at night because of poor lighting and the presence of intoxicated people.

Parking is also an issue in Allen and Blair Streets (see section 4.2).

4. Streetscape design

The Courtenay precinct underwent significant development between 1995 and 2000 to revitalise the area. New street lighting was installed at this time.

4.1 Street Lighting

A safety and lighting audit was completed in September, 2007, and concluded that, although the existing lighting levels are adequate for traffic, the overall lighting quality is low for pedestrians. Some lighting is in a poor state of repair and should be replaced, some is now considered inappropriate to its purpose, and in some areas there are not enough lights. There is a high level of visual pollution and glare (well above standard limits) being emitted by the decorative lights. This excessive glare inhibits vision.

Courtenay Place footpath lighting is supported by privately owned under-veranda and interior shop lighting and this, in some places, is inadequate or not functioning.

4.2 Footpaths

Footpaths are primarily for the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians. Over the years the Courtenay Place streetscape has become busy due to a plethora of:

- core services e.g. utility poles and cabinets, traffic and street light poles, information sign poles, bus shelters, pay and display machines, litter bins, mail boxes, phone booths and bicycle parking
- streetscape enhancements e.g. benches, seating, trees, sculptures, bollards, pedestrian shelters and information kiosks
- private non-pedestrian activities e.g. sandwich boards, retail displays, and outdoor café seating.

Some items, obstruct pedestrian movement and others, such as trees, can create barriers to good surveillance.

APPENDIX 2

Courtenay Place footpaths become very congested on Friday and Saturday nights because of the number of pedestrians and the additional pressure on footpath space for outdoor furniture, queuing, smoking and busking. Footpath congestion can result in aggressive behaviour and unsafe practices. Regular significant congestion occurs on the:

- south side, between Tory Street and the Westpac St James Theatre
- north side, between Allen and Blair Streets.

The footpaths on Allen and Blair streets are sometimes narrowed by parked cars because there is no demarcation between the footpath and the parking spaces. Many pedestrians choose to walk down the vehicle carriageway rather than the footpath, particularly when in groups.

4.3 Noise

Noise is an ongoing issue for inner city residents, particularly sound system and refrigeration unit noise from late-night venues. Some licensed premises have taken measures to manage noise by installing delimiters on sound systems.

Vehicle exhaust and stereo noise also contribute.

4.4 Universal access

An accessibility and safety audit for people with disabilities was completed in June 2007. It found that, in general, universal access provision is 'OK' to 'Good'. However, the audit advised there were some factors creating issues for people with disabilities.

The factors identified in the audit have been raised with appropriate business units as there is a commitment within Council, through the Accessible Wellington Programme, for alignment with the New Zealand Disability Strategy⁷.

4.5 Litter

Despite the availability of litter bins throughout the precinct and a regular cleaning regime, including daily road sweeping, litter is an ongoing problem. Revellers tend to 'drink, eat and drop'. The litter can include bottles, cans, broken glass, plastic bags, wine casks, food scraps and wrappers. Litter bins have provision for cigarette butts but these are seldom used, and the two drinking water fountains in the precinct often become unusable at night. Storm water sumps are regularly cleared of litter to avoid blockages and flooding to the city.

4.6 Directional signage

There is a lack of directional signage linking the precinct with other key tourist destinations such as the Waterfront, resulting in visitors and tourists often having to ask for directions.

⁷ The New Zealand Disability Strategy can be found at [<http://www.odi.govt.nz/nzds/>].

5. *Street entertainment*

In comparison to Cuba Mall there is little busking and live performance in the Courtenay precinct, mainly because there is less suitable public space. Because of the low frequency of street entertainment, the precinct is not currently viewed as a place to visit for street entertainment.

Proposed solutions

Initiative 1 – Introduce a 24/7 liquor ban across the central city

The Strategy and Policy Committee will be asked on 27 March 2008, to consider amending the Liquor Control Bylaw to prohibit the possession and consumption of liquor across the central city 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Rationale

Despite a liquor ban being in place from 5pm each Thursday, Friday and Saturday until 8am the following morning, some public place drinking in the Courtenay precinct occurs, both during and outside the hours of the liquor ban.

Wellington Police support a 24/7 liquor ban across the central city and are committed to enforcing it. There is also strong support from the Courtenay Place resident group, Courtenay Quarter Accord and Cuba Street business owners.

Critical success factors

The effectiveness of the liquor ban will depend upon:

- sufficient police resource for enforcement
- good communication prior to implementation of the 24/7 liquor ban so that the community is aware of the ban, the reasons for it, and the consequences of breaching it
- clear signage.

Cost to implement

| | | |
|-------|-------|---------------------------|
| Capex | \$30k | (new funding required) |
| Opex | \$5k | (within existing funding) |

Initiative 2 – Establish an alcohol accord

Rationale

An alcohol accord enables a co-ordinated partnership approach between licensees, agencies and the local community in addressing safety and alcohol-related issues.

A number of accords have been established in recent years in Australia and New Zealand and are proving effective in minimising alcohol-related harm in their cities. Christchurch City has an alcohol accord. The ‘one way door at 4’ was their first initiative. From October 2006 to March 2007, the period the accord was trialled, the number of serious offences (grievous assaults, sexual attacks and robberies) fell by as much as 21% compared with the same period in 2005/06.

Structure and role of the Accord

The accord would be established as an incorporated society and consist of key stakeholders with an interest in minimising alcohol-related harm (including representatives from Wellington City Council, Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand, Wellington Police, Regional Public Health, Accident Compensation Commission, Hospitality Association of New Zealand, local licensees and relevant community groups (such as for students, youth

and local iwi). The mandate for the accord will be to develop and implement strategies that address safety and alcohol-related issues in the Courtenay precinct. External funding would be sought for projects.

Estimated cost

Opex \$5k (within existing funding)

Assumes external funding will be obtained for alcohol harm minimisation projects

Initiative 3 – Install Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV)

Rationale

The Courtenay precinct has a number of hot spots with a high level of disorder, violence and anti-social behaviour.

A CCTV system will enable multiple hot spot locations to be observed without a physical presence at each. This will:

- enable early detection of disorder
- allow a quick, co-ordinated response which may reduce the seriousness of incidents
- aid police in managing their resources more effectively by co-ordinating appropriate responses for each situation
- aid the identification and apprehension of offenders, and provide evidence for prosecution
- act as a deterrent to offenders because of the increased likelihood of being identified.

The presence of CCTV can also diminish people's feelings of being unsafe.

Critical success factors

- Trees and fixtures that block surveillance will need to be removed or relocated.
- The CCTV screens will need to be monitored live at known high-risk times
- Police will need to build response to CCTV surveillance into their command and control strategies.

Estimated cost

Capex \$140k (new funding is required)

Opex \$107k (new funding is required)

The estimated costs are for an eight-camera system. Three of these cameras would be located in the Courtenay precinct.

Initiative 4 – Increase the number of Walkwise officers at peak times

Rationale

Walkwise officers have a positive impact on safety in the Courtenay precinct, defusing volatile situations, escalating serious incidents to the police, and providing assistance to people who feel unsafe or simply require directions. They also:

- discourage public place drinking when it is not allowed
- provide assistance to intoxicated people
- move taxis that are parked in an unsafe or illegal manner
- distribute City Safety educational material
- report maintenance requirements and property damage to Council
- provide intelligence to police. Wellington Police say that Walkwise are their best intelligence source.

There are generally two Walkwise officers working in the city on Wednesday night and four on Friday and Saturday nights. An additional two Walkwise officers, dedicated to the Courtenay precinct from 10pm Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights to 5am the following morning, would have a positive impact on safety in the area.

Estimated cost

Opex \$90k⁸ (new funding is required)

Initiative 5 – Upgrade street lighting

Rationale

Although the existing lighting levels are adequate for traffic, the overall quality of lighting is low for pedestrians. An upgrade of street lighting is required to support a safe pedestrian environment.

Estimated cost

Capex \$200k (new funding is required)

Initiative 6 – Develop a flexible, revitalised streetscape

Courtenay Place

Rationale

There is significant pressure on Courtenay Place at varying times of the day, and days of the week, due to traffic, pedestrian numbers and competing needs for footpath space.

Additional footpath space is required on Friday and Saturday nights to accommodate the large number of pedestrians, smokers and queues. Permanently widening footpaths would require the removal of car parks which are important during the day to retailers, service organisations and local businesses.

A revitalisation approach which incorporates a flexible streetscape will enable:

⁸ \$90k includes the \$40k Walkwise new initiative presented to the DAP workshop 25 Feb 2008 for consideration

APPENDIX 3

- bus prioritisation during peak commuter hours
- car parks to be available in daytime businesses hours
- additional out-door café seating to be permitted
- reduced late-night footpath congestion and improved pedestrian safety
- the aesthetics of the streetscape, and provision for universal access, to be enhanced.

The desired flexibility will be achieved through the redesign and positioning of car parking and kerbing to allow some car parks to be used as footpath space on Friday and Saturday nights.

The conversion of on-street parking to footpath space is currently being trialled on Courtenay Place, late Friday and Saturday nights when footpath congestion is exacerbated by queues.

Allen and Blair Streets

Allen and Blair Streets are similar in style and use, housing retail, service organisations, apartments, restaurants and bars. The footpaths are only two metres wide and car parks are at right angles. The footpath widths are insufficient to allow for any other use than pedestrian traffic. The footpaths at the southern ends of Allen and Blair Streets become heavily congested by queuing on Friday and Saturday night. Pedestrians consequently use the road as a carriageway and as a place to congregate.

Some Allen and Blair Street restaurant and bar owners would like to provide their customers with outdoor seating. The streets are generally quieter than Courtenay Place and would provide a good environment for outdoor seating if space allowed.

The priorities proposed for Allen and Blair Streets are:

- car parking from 6am to 6pm
- outdoor seating from 6pm to 11pm
- pedestrians on Friday and Saturday nights at the southern end of the streets.

Car parking space that is not required for outdoor seating or pedestrians would continue to be used as car parks. Resident access to their car parks would be retained.

Estimated cost

Costs cannot be determined until concept drawings are developed.

The desired flexibility in Allen and Blair Streets should be able to be achieved without significant cost as there is no physical definition between footpaths and car parks, and changes can be largely cosmetic or regulatory.

Initiative 7 – Establish a late-night taxi-stand and queuing system

Rationale

There is insufficient parking space for the number of taxis that come to the precinct Friday and Saturday nights. The consequent demand leads to some taxi drivers parking illegally or dangerously, or driving around ('cruising') until a parking space or fare is found.

A late-night taxi stand and queuing system will provide an orderly and equitable system for taxis and support improved enforcement.

Estimated cost

Capex \$10k (within existing funding)

Initiative 8 – Facilitate summer concerts at Courtenay Place Park

Rationale

The new Courtenay Place Park will need regular activity to attract people. Wellington has abundant talented, emerging performers who struggle to find an audience space where they can perform. The design of the park allows for small events and could provide a venue for theatre, dance, music and markets. This would:

- provide a complementary mix to the current range of precinct activity
- minimise the perception held by some, that the Courtenay precinct is 'all about alcohol'
- lift the profile of the park and create its reputation as a venue for live performance
- draw a new and more diverse group of people to the precinct
- make live performance more accessible to the public
- provide economic benefits to businesses in the area.

Estimated cost

No additional funding is required. To be managed within existing budgets.

Initiative 9 – Convert the heritage men's toilet building in Courtenay Place Park into storage and dressing rooms

Rationale

The heritage men's toilet building is not currently used. The new Courtenay Place Park is to become a venue for theatre, dance, music and markets. Storage and dressing room facilities will support the proposed activities.

Work is required to make the building water tight and functional for the proposed uses, including the provision of power and water services.

Estimated cost

Capex \$50k (new funding required)
Opex \$10k (new funding required)

Initiative 10 – Develop a role within Council to co-ordinate activity in the Courtenay precinct

Rationale

The Courtenay precinct has a unique set of characteristics to manage, because of its diverse activity and 24 hour economy. The key responsibility of the role will be to sustain and manage a safe and vibrant entertainment district that delivers economic benefits to the city.

Estimated cost

Opex \$80k (new funding required)

Initiative 11 – Implement the Bus Priority Plan through Courtenay Place during peak commuter hours

Rationale

Courtenay Place is the link between the public transport systems which serve the inner city and the eastern suburbs. At peak commuter hours, traffic congestion delays buses.

Council is developing a bus priority plan for the Golden Mile, which includes Courtenay Place. An option is to remove private vehicles from Courtenay Place on weekdays at peak commuter hours.

The removal of private vehicles at peak commuter hours will free up more road and parking space for buses, and reduce congestion. Further consultation and investigation will be undertaken to determine the most appropriate solution.

Estimated cost

No additional funding is required. This work is included in the Bus Priority Plan budget.