Wellington City Youth Council.

The Youth Council wishes to make an oral submission.

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The Wellington City Youth Council welcomes the opportunity to submit on the 2014/15 Draft Annual Plan.

1. Development Contributions

1.1 We support the reduction of development contributions for five star rated buildings. These buildings reduce energy consumption and aids progress towards achieving the goals of 'Wellington 2040: Eco City'.

1.2 The Youth Council supports this proposal as it will assist Wellington to become Carbon Neutral. We would like to see Wellington become Carbon Neutral by 2040.

2. Earthquake Strengthening

2.1 The Youth Council believes that in order for Wellington to be a Resilient City, all buildings must, at a minimum, meet the standards set by the building code, and business owners should be encouraged to strengthen their buildings to as high a standard as is practical.

2.2 We believe this standard to be at least 67% of building code, as established by the Building Act 2004 as being the level below which buildings are considered 'earthquake risk'. We generally support any moves that allow and encourage building owners to strengthen their buildings faster.

2.3 The Youth Council believes that the strengthening of the Cuba Precinct must be expedited. This is an important location where many young people live, work and relax.

3. Living Wage

3.1 In principle, we support the living wage. We recognise there are costs and the living wage will not be suitable for every individual CCO but we believe that
as a major employer, the Wellington City Council should show leadership in pay rates.

3.2 We believe a living wage is as much about accessibility to the community as it is about basic necessities.

4. Cycling

4.1 We support increased mode share for alternative transport. We recognize that with limited road space, decisions regarding share of space for each mode of transport must be made, but cycling does not have to be sacrificed in favor of traditional, car based, transport.

4.2 We believe that the Wellington City Council should investigate the possibilities of segregation of motor vehicle traffic and cycle traffic. Excellent examples of this have been achieved in New York City.

4.3 An associated issue, which Wellington City Council is unsuited to influence, is the absence of post-ride showering facilities, which discourages commuter cycling. The Youth Council raises this issue in this context to emphasize that encouraging sustainable mode-share is a many-faceted issue.

5. Lombard Lane

5.1 We support the redevelopment of Lombard Lane. This will be an excellent inner city open space. The Youth Council previously submitted in support of the development of an inner city green space in Long Term Plan 2012-2022.

6. Healthy Homes

6.1 We would like the council to continue to pursue a minimum standard for rental homes. If legislation introduced by MP Phil Twyford is passed by Parliament, the council should immediately develop a framework to ensure that rental property owners begin to meet this standard.
6.2 We congratulate the council for undertaking their program to ensure council owned housing stock already meets this standard, and would support the council continuing programs to promote installing insulation in private homes.

7. Eight Big Ideas For Economic Growth

7.1 The Youth Council generally supports the concept of picking projects with which to rejuvenate the Wellington economy. We feel that it is important for the Wellington City Council to set aspirational goals and ideas when planning for the future. We commend council for its willingness to consider the future.

7.2 However, we think the ideas proposed in the 2014/15 Annual Plan partially lack imagination and are not goals that council can aspire to.

7.3 The Youth Council supports a film museum. Our film industry is world-class, and showcasing this is an excellent idea. The 'Weta Cave', for example, already draws many visitors to Wellington. However, we do not believe that this is a particularly aspirational goal to grow the economy.

7.4 We consider international air connections and a runway extension to be inevitable and necessary, at least within current transport technology. We must be a connected city in order to retain and attract talent.

7.5 A related issue to the international air connections is that of public transport connections to the Airport. We do not think the Airport Flyer adequately services this route. We think the decisions made around the Spine Study are a missed opportunity to create fast and effective public transport between the Airport and the railway station. The absence of proper and cheap transport to the airport is a significant setback to air patronage.

7.6 A technology precinct is a fantastic idea. Properly and aggressively pursued, this project may make a tangible and substantial contribution to economic growth between now and 2040.
7.7 We recommend the council actively consider ways in which it can support development of new information technology businesses. A potential location for this precinct could be the upper Taranaki Street area, between Courtenay Place and Vivian Street.

7.8 Alongside this proposal, the Youth Council would like Council to investigate gigabit internet within the CBD, in order to bring our internet infrastructure properly in line with world-class standards.

7.9 We are not convinced the demand exists for a convention centre beyond what the city already offers. This is in part due to these facilities existing or being developed in Auckland, but mostly due to our geographic isolation relative to the rest of the world. Perhaps this “big idea” should be revisited when that demand can be convincingly proven.

7.10 However, we believe there is some merit in a smaller arena with a capacity of 6,000-12,000 people, for music concerts and similar. We believe the demand does exist, as larger acts currently avoid Wellington in favour of Auckland due to the lack of viably-sized venues. A potential place for such a venue is next to the Westpac Trust Stadium, a site that was flagged by a Wellington Venues' investigation in 2011. With careful planning, perhaps this could be integrated with the conference centre idea.

7.11 We do not understand how a “Miramar framework” and the “open for business” plan amount to a meaningful growth plan. We should support business, and the fledgling film industry is a perfect example of a suitable area, but it is not something that we consider particularly worthy of comment. Instead, council should be already doing this.

7.12 Our transport development is being stalled by policies of Greater Wellington Regional Council, such as the annual rise in fares irrespective of patronage changes. Whilst there are some easy improvements that can be made, these are prevented by a “balanced” approach to planning that unduly favours private
vehicles. That said, we recognize Wellington’s successes in public transport to date.