

## AESTHETICS and ACCESSIBILITY - CITY TO SEA BRIDGE

*The Access Route* to and from this bridge begins at Civic Square.

Civic Square is very popular where people congregate for all manner of events or they use it as a recreational area. People of all ages and abilities relax either at the lower or upper level. The upper level provides wonderful views of the Waterfront.



Aesthetically the City to Sea bridge has been enhanced with its Para Matchett design. It is unique - there is no other bridge like it in New Zealand. It incorporates many textures of wood, concrete, bricks and rocks. It is a joy to behold and satisfies the senses. There is even a green patch on the eastern side. Apparently this is where the proposed pedestrian bridge is intended to begin.

**Accessibility.** A wide ramp leads to the lagoon and towards Frank Kitts Park. It has been designed to blend with the architectural features of the whole structure. All people use it. Unfortunately it does not lead in the direction of Te Papa. Currently this journey is steps only unless you take the longer journey provided by the ramp.



This bridge looks incomplete at the point where these steps are. This is where a ramp should have continued towards Te Papa. It is hard to understand why this was not completed at the time of construction. Possibly economic constraints.



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If a new ramp was designed from this position to match the current ramp on the City to Sea bridge it could be a harmonious addition blending in with the landscape. It would be accessible and yet not obviously so. It would be used by everyone needing to access the Te Papa end of the Waterfront.

### **New bridge proposal**

What is being proposed by WWC is a simple pedestrian bridge with no aesthetic attributes to begin at the same height of the existing bridge and lead from the green space and run parallel with the Para Matchett bridge in the direction of Te Papa. Because of the height and length it would require a very long ramp so this is why steps have been introduced at the end by the designers.



### **The negatives are -**

- It will run in front of the Michael Fowler Centre and so obstruct the harbour view of those using the Function Rooms.
- It will be another threatening overhead structure for those travelling in vehicles -making three structures within 100mtrs
- The current design is not in keeping with the existing Bridge and therefore will not add to the present harmonious landscape.
- The green patch will disappear.
- With steps at the end of the proposed bridge it will only be usable by the fit and physically able. It should be noted that 1in 5 have a mobility impairment.
- It will be an unnecessary cost if a totally new bridge is constructed.

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### Heights of both proposals.

Height where new bridge will start and the green area will disappear to accommodate the new bridge.

The difference between the heights of both proposals needs to be established.

Height where an alternative bridge could commence. This alternative height would be

less intrusive, designed to blend in with the existing landscape and suit more users.



### Legislative issue:

It will be a building under the Building Act 2004. Section 118 requires new constructions to be accessible. There are no Waivers allowed.

Each Territorial Authority or Building Control Authority has the legal authority to enforce the legislation. It cannot be seen making rules to suit itself and expecting others to comply when it does not.

As a building it will require a Building Consent and Council Officers should not be put in a position of having to bend the rules. Litigation could follow by way of a Determination under section 176 of the Building Act.

### Conclusion:

The Para Matchett Bridge can be extended to lead directly in the direction to Te Papa keeping the design compatible and harmonious with the landscape. It should be noted that in another Council briefing paper it is stated "Landscape material shall be consistent with elsewhere on the waterfront"

It should be less costly if the proposal for a new pedestrian bridge was abandoned and instead the current City to Sea bridge extended.



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This simple and less costly solution would provide access to everyone regardless of the level of their mobility.

The Wellington City Council is to be commended for its policy of equal opportunity and full participation for everyone. Therefore the aesthetics and accessibility to and along the Waterfront extending from Waitangi Park through to Kumutoto should not be an issue.

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