

***Wellington's Waterfront:
Are we on the right track?***

**Strategy and Policy
Committee**

6 September 2011

The area we are discussing...



Background, objectives and methodology

2001 Framework: 7 Values

Are these values still relevant?

- Expression of heritage and history
- Expression of Maori heritage and presence
- Sense of place for Wellingtonians
- Diversity of experience
- Sense of collective ownership and involvement
- Experience of space and openness
- Ease of access for all

Research questions

- How do people and businesses value Wellington's waterfront?
- What role and functions does the waterfront play in the CBD and Wellington as a whole?
- Which spaces along the waterfront work well and which do not, and why?
- How do people and businesses value Wellington's waterfront and how has this changed over the past ten years?
- Do people compare Wellington's waterfront to other cities? If so, which cities and how do they compare?
- Have the 2001 values been achieved? Are they still relevant?

Research methodology: Focus groups with users of the Waterfront

- 5 focus groups with general public:
 - Young people (18-25 years)
 - Employed people aged 30 years plus and working in the CBD
 - Families who use the waterfront for leisure
 - Older people – aged 65 years plus
 - Business owners whose business is in the CBD
- Screened to ensure that participants use the waterfront frequently (at least once per month), have a wide variety of uses, a mix of age, gender and ethnicity (Pakeha, Māori, Pasifika)
- 9-13 May 2011
- Total of 28 people and 12 hours discussion

Research methodology cont: 3 interviews with interest groups

- 3 individual face to face interviews with representatives from interest groups:
 - Architectural Centre Inc
 - Guy Marriage, Architect, Senior Lecturer at Victoria University and former President of the Architectural Centre
 - Waterfront Watch
 - Pauline Swann, President of Waterfront Watch Inc.
 - Rosamund Averton
 - Wellington Civic Trust
 - Peter Brooke, Trustee of the Wellington Civic Trust, Waterfront Issues Convenor
- Interviews in June 2011 (after the general public)

Research Questions:

How do people and businesses value Wellington's waterfront?

What role and functions does the waterfront play in the CBD and Wellington as a whole?

Wellingtonians are 'laid back bohemians'

- Bohemian, arty, cultural, appreciative of design
- Corporate suits Monday-Friday, casual/gumboot/shorts Saturday-Sunday
- Family, community, village important
- Relaxed, laidback, grounded
- Resilient
- Receptive to new ideas
- Friendly, helpful, approachable
- Green, environmental, drawn to open spaces, green belt, sea
- Proud of Wellington
- Culturally diverse

The waterfront persona is 'quirky' – A congenial match with Wellingtonians

- Business person who takes tie off to relax Monday–Friday
- Family Saturday-Sunday
- Eclectic, diverse, interesting, quirky, youthful, sexy, cheeky, not traditional or conservative or staid
- Vision, entrepreneur, always trying something new, leading the way, ahead of the game
- Fit, healthy
- Cultured, creative
- Sustainability, recycling important
- Friendly, intelligent

The waterfront unmistakably contributes to our emotional well-being: being there makes us happy and this is where we make memories!

- Clears the head of cobwebs, problems melt away, not trapped, not tense, time slows down, not so grumpy
- Relaxation, peace, balance, chilled, escapism, freedom, quiet, simplicity, get away, let go, not claustrophobic, calm, have a break, serenity
- Fresh, alive, vibrant, exciting, energy, interest, interaction, busy, socialise, lively, vibe, buzz
- Happiness, pleasure, laughter, fun, memories, enjoyment
- Inclusion, connection, together, shared, belonging

The waterfront powerfully contributes to the identity of Wellington: It is Wellington!

- Heart, identity, soul, face
- Focus, hub
- Inclusion, connection, community, pride, together, shared, belonging
- Representation of the city identity – diversity, walking, cycling, activities, culture, art, history, Māori, design, cafes, bars, markets, theatre, people, etc
- Showcases the physical environment – sun, green, hills, sea, harbour, buildings, plants, weather

Identity of Wellington

“A reason to open the curtains and say this is why I love Wellington.”

“It’s our identity as a city. This is what Wellington represents.”

“Good memories, no bad times on the waterfront.”

“The heart of the city.”

“Best little city in the world.”

“Finest natural harbour in the Southern hemisphere.”

“Central focus for all of Wellington.”

“Magic.”

“Jewel of the city.”

Most people think of the waterfront in terms of recreation and leisure, rather than contribution to the economy of Wellington

- However, people recognise that the waterfront is a drawcard for tourists and that tourism contributes to the economy of Wellington
- There is some contribution from bars and restaurants and limited contribution from retail (people recognise that retail hasn't really worked)

Business people more insightful into economic contribution of the waterfront

- Increasingly concerned about the demise of public sector in Wellington and shift of corporate to Auckland
- Waterfront as 'jewel in the crown' increasingly important to Wellington as a drawcard and therefore business viability
- Wellington waterfront distinguishes us from Auckland and attracts people to live here
- Opportunity to showcase Wellington business, retail, arts, culture, café
- Important to physically link waterfront to city at many points along the waterfront so that there is a seamless pedestrian flow from city to waterfront and visa versa
- Northern end as gateway/welcome to tourists, close to transport hub strategically important

Research Question:
What spaces work well?

Kumutoto (Meridian area) work wells

- Landscaping
- Bridge
- Places to sit
- Cluster
- Interesting design
- Sun, water



Queens Wharf = restaurants and bars contribute to wine and food culture, energy for higher income crowd

- Shed 5, Dockside, Foxglove
- Interesting, vibrant, people, social, places to sit in the sun, water
- Somewhere for the older, higher income, more corporate crowd
- Restaurants, bars, yachts

Queens Wharf – restaurants and bars



Frank Kitts Park – works well = meets the need for play, socialising and family time. Plus people value its flexible use

- Very people friendly
- Landscaping levels and amphitheatre add interest
- Crucially the open space allows flexibility and ability to rejuvenate interest - changing events and displays
- Play area is iconic [Don't remove the big slide and lighthouse], but keep it fresh
- [Could be opened to the sea, but people like it how it is – sheltered, 'cluster' spaces, levels]

Frank Kitts Park



Taranaki Street Wharf - works well = heritage, Māori, culture and people 'buzz'

- Key destination for Wellingtonians and tourists
- Te Papa, Circa, Wharewaka, City to Sea bridge = arts, history, Māori, culture, design
- Mac's Brewery, St Johns = people buzz, energy
- Lagoon, grass, wharf, sea, sun = meets and creates the mood (energy or relax)
- [Note people want clean lagoon so they can swim]

Taranaki Street Wharf



Waitangi Park – works well = the mood of the waterfront

- Markets, Skateboard Park = people buzz, energy
- Landscaping (grass, boardwalks, water, planting) very successful – interesting, vibrant
- Open space – rejuvenation, new and interesting events/displays eg Christmas tree and beanbags
- Play area – family friendly

Waitangi Park



CITY MARKET
SUNDAYS 8.30am - 12.30pm www.citymarket.co.nz
fantastic weekly food and wine market showcasing Wellington artisans



Research Question:

And what spaces don't work well?

Kumutoto (North of Meridian) = bleak



Kumutoto (North of Meridian) = bleak

- Nothing there, What Northern end?
- Access way to somewhere else
- Cars and camper vans
- Not pedestrian friendly
- No connection to sea or city
- Bleak, embarrassing, shabby, industrial, closed off, empty
- Wasted space, space not well utilised
- What we love about the 'Waterfront' is not represented here

Kumutoto (North of Meridian) = huge potential

- Gateway to waterfront
- Welcome to Wellington
- Potential presented by transport hubs (train, cruise ships, ferry, camper vans) = tourists
- Potential presented by existing commercial/business development = people already there
- Potential (and limitations) of working port area = interesting

Kumutoto (North of Meridian) = lack of awareness/information

- People unaware of any planned developments here (site 8,9,10)
- People unaware of funding, financial implications (think that waterfront development comes from rates)
- Once people are informed they understand trade-offs and willing to make them (development/open space)

Queens Wharf = TSB Bank Arena and landscaping not working



Queens Wharf = TSB Bank Arena and landscaping not working

- First attempt, design not interesting and have learnt from this
- ASB Bank Arena building closed off from the water, not big enough for concerts, uninteresting
- Landscape – recognise it needs to accommodate crowds, but flat, open, sterile, uninteresting, difficult access from city

Research Questions:

How do people and businesses value Wellington's waterfront and how has this changed over the past ten years?

Do people compare Wellington's waterfront to other cities? If so, which cities and how do they compare?

10-15 years ago – what waterfront?

- Bleak, industrial, closed off, shabby, wouldn't go there
- Have made huge gains in short time period

We don't really care what is happening in other countries – we are leaders not followers

- Similar to Sydney in vibe
- Wellington is ours and represents Wellington and Wellingtonians - therefore we don't really look to what is happening overseas

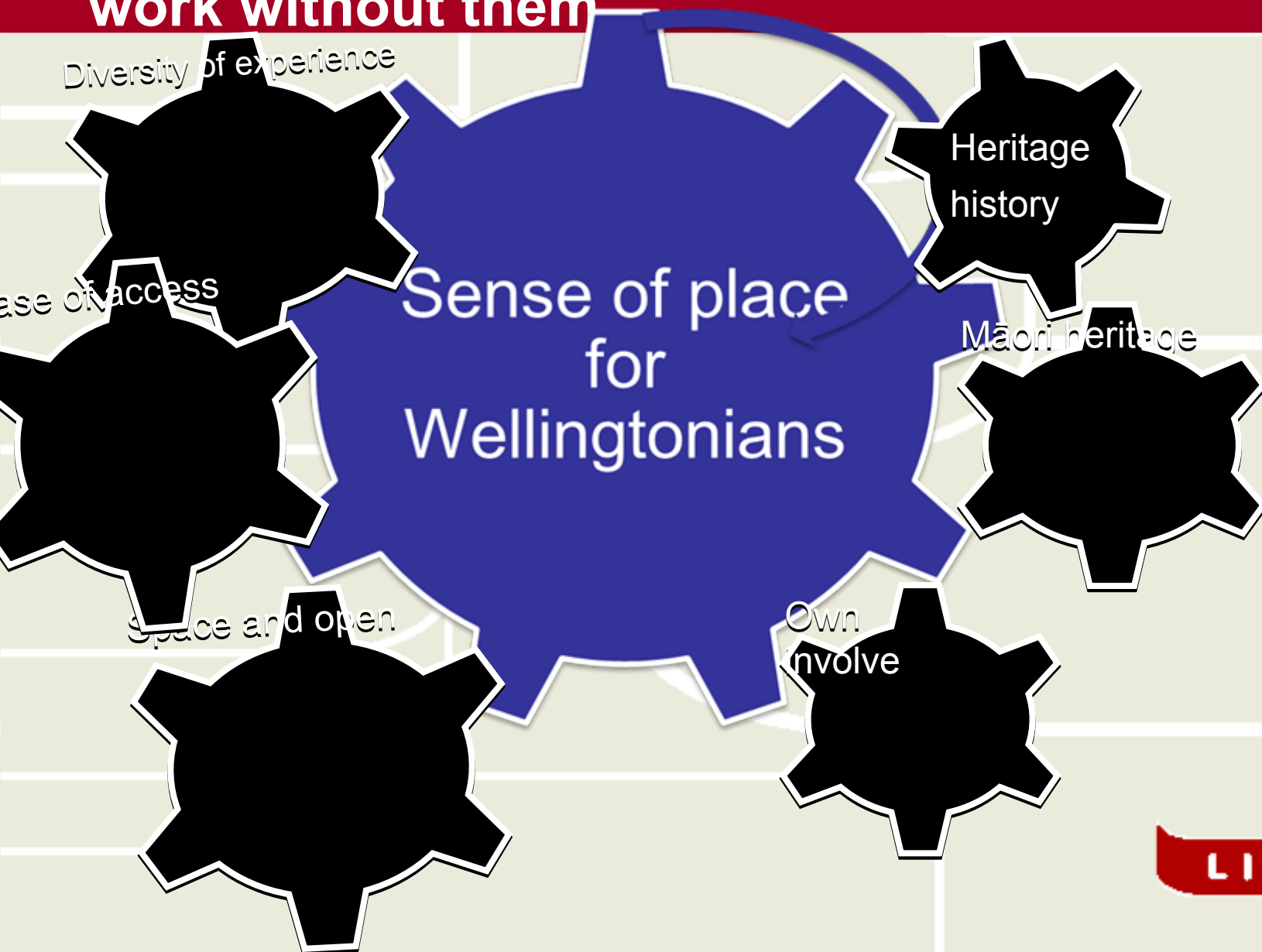
Auckland is not in the contest

- Wellington is leading the way in New Zealand
- Auckland's Viaduct – corporate, boring, money, limited, closed off from the city

“Does Auckland have a waterfront?”

Research Questions:
Have the 2001 values been
achieved?
Are they still relevant?

'Sense of place' encapsulates the waterfront: other values contribute to this and the whole would not work without them



Sense of place for Wellingtonians – a core value and yes achieved (A+)

- Showcases Wellington
- It feels like our place
- We love it
- We feel proud of it



Experience of space and openness – yes, achieved (A+)

- Sea, Green, Sun, Clean
- Open Space
- Separate but linked to city



Ease of access for all – yes achieved (A+) for Wellingtonians, [but only a ‘C’ for tourists]

- Bike, walk, run
- Buggy, skateboard, rollerblade
- Swim, kayak, boat
- Easy to drive to/park
- Inclusive, all age groups, income
- Free things to do
- Safe



Ease of access for all – not achieved for tourists

- Need more/better city to sea access, especially at Northern end
- Improve for cruise tourists to access by foot [wind, rain, uneven ground, no cover, bleak, traffic]
- Opportunity for gateway, welcome to Wellington
- Improve access from train, stadium, ferry, cruise ship

Expression of heritage and history – yes achieved (A)

- Te Papa, maritime museum
- Old buildings, old wharf
- Plaques, writing
- [We are still making history]



Expression of Maori heritage and presence – achieved (B)

- Potential of Wharewaka
- Te Papa, City to Sea bridge
- [Need more visibility/profile – contemporary and historical]



Sense of collective ownership and involvement – yes, achieved (B)

- Available to all
- Sense of pride
- For next generations
- [Meaning difficult to interpret]
- [What is 'collective ownership'?]
- [What is 'involvement'?]



Where to from here?

LITMUS

'Keep it real'! (Enhances sense of place for Wellingtonians)

- Keep it real, grounded, down to earth, lived in, not too new and shiny, we like old (history), tussocks, rustic, organic and weatherworn appearance.
- Let us settle in, live in it, round off the new edges, get to know it and grow into it.

Keep it 'fresh'! (Enhances diversity of experience)

- Vibrant, rejuvenating, exciting, not static
- Keep spaces for events/activities/displays to 'happen' eg, Frank Kitts and Waitangi Park
- Changing arts and sculptures
- Keep drawing diverse people in – something for everyone, people make it interesting

Be creative – keep the quality *building* design coming! (Sense of place for Wellingtonians)

- Te Papa, Circa, Wharewaka, St Johns, Boatshed, Macs Brewery, Shed 5, Dockside, Foxglove.
- Interesting, architectural (sense of place)
- Old buildings – new use (expression of heritage and history)
- Low level buildings that allow sun, unobstructed water views and access
- Incorporated into land and seascapes (space and openness)
- Buildings that create interesting outside spaces (space and openness and access)
- Mixed use – apartments, cafes, coffee, bars, museums, art galleries, markets, retail, business (diversity of experience)

Be creative - keep the creative, quality *landscape* design coming! (Enhances the experience of space and openness and ease of access)

- Interesting, cluster spaces, green, planting, hard materials, water, art, flexible and diverse use, sun, sea, relax, play
- Oriental bay – play area, beach, sand
- Waitangi Park – boardwalks, water, planting, grass, open space, play area, ducks, flexible and innovative use (eg xmas tree and bean bags)
- Skateboard Park – mixed age groups (small children and teenagers)
- Cut-outs in wharf – water, interest
- Wharewaka/St John's/lagoon – sunny, grass, levels, history, culture, Māori, water
- Frank Kitts Park – levels, cluster spaces, amphitheatre, shelter, grass, play area
- Meridian/Mojo – levels, interest, cluster spaces, history
- Art, sculptures, writers walk, history – creates interest [could have still more especially Māori, contemporary, history]

Keep the creative, quality *landscape design* coming!



Keep the art, sculptures, plaques, objects, writing coming!

- Wellington based artists
- Māori (enhances the expression of Māori heritage and presence)
- Contemporary
- Historical (enhances the expression of heritage and history)
- Always something new to look at - contributes to vibrancy
- Doesn't need to be big, permanent things – emphasis on keeping it fresh and interesting (enhances the expression of diversity of experience)

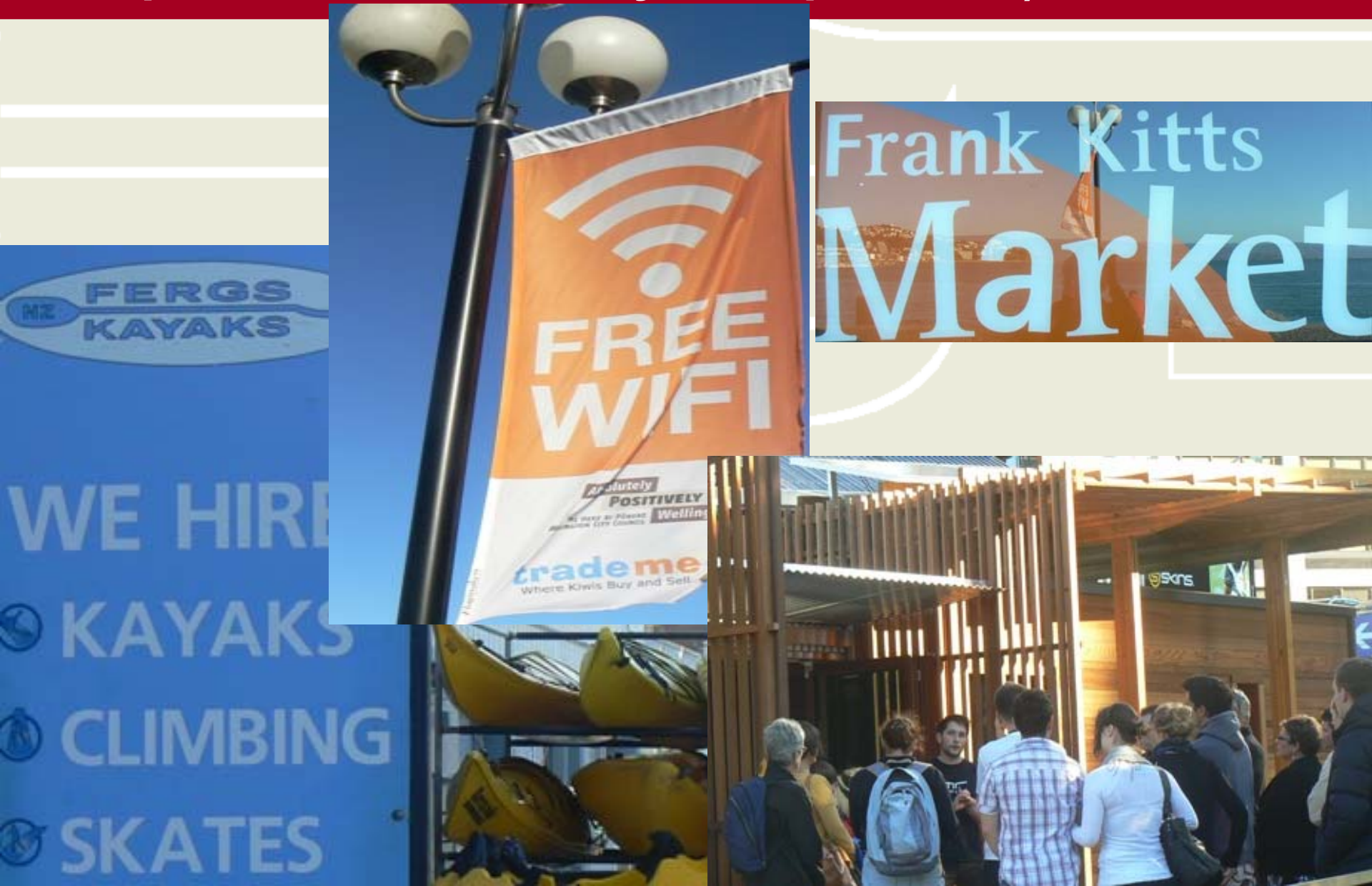
Keep the art, sculptures, plaques, historical objects, writing coming!

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MARINE CORPS
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Keep the events and facilities coming! (Enhances expression of diversity of experience)



Some facilities need to be added to waterfront

- Access city to sea – more of it and interesting eg, City to Sea bridge design. Key movement points are St Johns and Northern end
- More family, student, low income friendly - low cost food (fish and chips) and coffee
- More outside shelter and cover – all weather eg, Frank Kitts
- Toilets and change facilities
- Cleaning of lagoon - swim
- Maintenance of play areas – Frank Kitts big slide not ‘slidey’

Are the 2001 values still relevant and important now and in the future? YES!



3 values not as strongly recognisable as others

- **Expression of Māori heritage and presence** – now that there is the Wharewaka building (as well as Te Papa) this value is now more recognisable, but could still be more – plaques, art, design etc along the waterfront
- **Ease of access for all** – for most of the waterfront this is true, but North of Meridian the access is poor (and needs to be an integral part of development). There needs to be more seamless pedestrian flow city-to-waterfront all along the waterfront
- **Sense of collective ownership and involvement** – people (especially young) don't understand the wording of this value. People have strong ownership in terms of pride, but less awareness of what 'ownership' might mean and limited involvement (in informed decision-making)

There are values that people want more overtly expressed/incorporated into the existing values

- We want to refresh, rejuvenate, evolve, grow our waterfront journey and take it slowly. We want it to be grounded and not shiny and new. This is ‘keep it real’ and ‘keep it fresh’. A journey that we are taking together = **‘pride in our journey’**
- As well as heritage and history, we want to showcase and express who we are **now** and who we will be tomorrow (future generations) innovative, cutting edge, creative, contemporary design (buildings, landscape, art, theatre, food) = **‘creativity’**

Interest group input consistent with general public pride and passion for the waterfront

- Interest groups same as general public on the values, plus they emphasise the need to take it slow and the importance of quality design of buildings and open spaces
- Interest groups have the same narrative on the waterfront, but with greater knowledge/information and a particular lens/position eg design (Architecture Centre) and open spaces (Waterfront Watch)
- Interest groups advocate for greater information sharing and engagement with general public so that general public input is from an informed base
- Framework should form basis for decision-making

Conclusions

1. People love what has happened on the waterfront, so yes it's on the right track!
2. All of the values are still relevant - 'Sense of place for Wellingtonians' is the core value and the other values are key enablers!
3. The collective ownership/involvement value is relevant, but wording is awkward and needs to be more recognisable in terms of pride and involvement!
4. There are 2 key values not overtly expressed – journey and creativity – need to be incorporated!
5. Push for North of Meridian to be developed and people understand that there will be trade-offs – want the same balance/feeling that has already been achieved along other parts of the Waterfront!