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Wellington City Council
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Submission on the Draft Long Term Plan 2015-2025

This submission is made on behalf of an organisation, **Mt Victoria Historical Society Inc.**

It is an incorporated society with the aims of researching and sharing the history of the suburb of Mt Victoria and promoting interest in, and preservation of, its unique heritage.

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This submission addresses only issues in the Long Term Plan which can be considered the mandate of Mt Victoria Historical Society.

Heritage

We note in the *Statements of Service Provision* that one of the Economic Performance Objectives is “city vibrancy” (pg 27), and that under Cultural Wellbeing (pg 28) one of the objectives is “sense of place”. Heritage preservation, in the form of the Built Heritage fund is mentioned in this context and we applaud the proposed increase in this fund. In relation to this, we urge that funding be allocated to St Gerard’s Monastery, which is not only a Mt Victoria landmark but one of the most iconic Wellington heritage buildings.

While the fund is important, however, it will not go far in protecting Wellington’s “sense of place”; for that a wider view of heritage is required. Valuing and retaining built heritage in areas such as Mt Victoria is an important contributor to Wellington’s sense of place, and also to “city vibrancy”. It is one of the things which attracts and retains skilled, creative residents and draws tourists, thus making an important contribution to the economy.

We continue to be concerned that Council disregards its own District Plan and allows developments and subdivisions in Mt Victoria which breach its rules (e.g. 13 Porritt Avenue, 78 Ellice Street). We ask that this situation be addressed. We also urge Council to give more weight to the Demolition Protocol and only allow demolition of pre-1930 buildings if there is no other option.

We request, again, that a heritage audit be conducted in Mt Victoria. This would provide Council and the public with comprehensive and accurate information about heritage characteristics and values, providing a database to inform District Plan development, aid consent decisions, and inform other decisions and activities. Such a holistic view of the environment would help ensure that the value of this high-profile heritage area could not be slowly and inadvertently whittled away until it was effectively destroyed. Such destruction would be detrimental to tourism, the visual interest and attractiveness of the city, to residential character and to rating/property values. (We support Mt Victoria Residents' Association's background paper on a heritage inventory.)

We understand that a heritage inventory could be carried out for a reasonable cost, drawing on existing resources at Wellington City Archives and Mt Victoria Historical Society in particular. We request that \$60,000 over three or four years be allocated to a staged heritage audit, focusing for example on identified special character areas first .

Kent and Cambridge Terraces

We note, in the *Statements of Service Provision* and the *Consultation Document*, that it is intended to allocate funds to an upgrade of Kent and Cambridge Terraces:

Kent and Cambridge terraces will be redeveloped to:

- strengthen transport connections for buses, cycles, pedestrians, and private cars
- use planting and streetscape improvements to give the city a “green edge” and strengthen connections with the waterfront, central city and Memorial Park
- support more apartment and commercial/retail development, ultimately providing for up to 2100 new dwellings and 180,000 square metres of commercial and office space. (pg 20 Consultation Document)

In principle, we support upgrading of Kent and Cambridge Terraces. Large parts of them, however, remain Canal Reserve land and governed by a Trust Deed. A Reserve management plan, as required under the Reserves Management Act, should be developed before planning on any redevelopment gets underway to provide the essential framework for this. All existing Reserve management plans contain the statement “provide Wellington City Council with a clear framework for day to day management and decision making”, and one is also required for the Canal Reserve. This is a very important part of the Wellington landscape and also borders the intensely residential Mt Victoria, so we would also like to see a formal review of District Plan provisions for this area before planning gets underway.

This approach is supported by the fact that the Draft Long-Term Plan (*Statements of Service Provision* pg 45) aligns regeneration of Kent and Cambridge Terraces with “Built heritage development” under Group of Activities and with “Character protection” under Rationale.

Basin Reserve

We are concerned to read the following on Pg 42 of the *Statements of Service Provision*:

Improvements are also needed to the vehicle network. We support NZTA's programme for Wellington, which aims to unlock the city's economic potential by improving transport routes into the city, and from the city to the airport.

This implies that Wellington City Council supports NZTA's attempt to overturn the Board of Inquiry decision on the Basin Reserve flyover and its proposal to build the flyover, buildings on the Basin Reserve and related works. We strongly oppose the flyover because of the adverse impact on the heritage of the Basin Reserve, the surrounding landscape and southern Mt Victoria.

The Council's website structure makes it very difficult to bring all the relevant documents for the Draft Long Term Plan together but fortunately an officer provided a copy of the single page outline of the 'Basin Reserve Master Plan' which is briefly mentioned in the *Statements of Service Provision*.

We appreciate that this is an outline, therefore only comment on some of our greatest concerns, as follows:

- There is still no reserve management plan for the Basin Reserve, which is an essential pre-requisite and framework for any development of this nationally significant Reserve and a requirement under the Reserves Act. This must be an immediate action and be developed before the Master Plan is worked up in more detail. Funding should be allocated for this in the Long Term Plan, presumably under the *Infrastructure Strategy*, Parks and Open Spaces. (In Appendix 1 we attach extracts from other Reserve Management Plans acknowledging the importance of such instruments.)
- We are concerned that there has not been wider consultation on development of this outline.
- In principle, we support refurbishment of the Groundsman's Cottage but defer judgment until what is meant by "incorporate it into the building design" is explained.
- We oppose demolition of the old Museum Stand and support its strengthening and refurbishment.
- We are extremely concerned to see that a "Northern Gateway and player pavilion" described as "operating facilities that include offices for Wellington Cricket, fit for purpose entrance/ticketing facilities . . . etc" are in the plan. This looks very like the original NZTA plan. If space for buildings is an issue, we question why Cricket Wellington has its offices within the Basin Reserve. (The Phoenix and The Hurricanes, for instance, do not have offices within sporting venues.)

While we express these concerns, we applaud the very-overdue allocation of funding to maintain the seriously neglected Basin Reserve.

The Basin Reserve is registered as an Historic Area in the National Register of Heritage New Zealand and it is therefore a serious omission that it is not included in the District Plan. We also request that the Council take immediate action to remedy the omission and include the Basin Reserve in the District Plan heritage inventory.

We also note that one of the four "activities" of the Basin Reserve Trust is listed as "Preserves and enhances the heritage value of the Basin Reserve". In light of this, and reviewing the membership of the Trust, we suggest that it is time that a Wellington heritage expert be appointed to a Board which is otherwise weighted unduly towards cricket.

Extracts from WCC Reserves Management Plans

Showing how they are considered essential to management and decision-making about the reserves they cover.

From: Introduction, Northern Reserves Management Plan 2008

The purpose of the Northern Reserves Management Plan (NRMP) is to provide Wellington City Council with a clear framework for day to day management and decision making for the Council-owned reserves and open spaces in the northern area (northern reserves) for the next 10 years. Objectives and policies give guidance for the development, management, protection, operation and public use of the northern reserves.

A primary objective of the NRMP is to ensure that the local and wider connections, recreational and ecological, are well integrated as development proceeds. The extent, location, form, and connectedness of open space at the local as well as the wider landscape scale are key determinants of visual amenity values as well as the wider landscapes character and quality.

From: Introduction, Town Belt Management Plan 2013

The purpose of the Wellington Town Belt Management Plan is to provide Wellington City Council with a clear framework for making decisions and managing the Town Belt for at least the next 10 years.

The plan provides a framework for addressing issues common to the Town Belt and managing them in a comprehensive and consistent way. Objectives and policies give guidance for the development, management, protection, operation and public use of the Town Belt.

From: Introduction, Draft Suburban Reserves Management Plan 2014

Within any community, open space holds important landscape, recreational, social, ecological, amenity and cultural or heritage values. As Wellington grows and changes, it is important to ensure open space across the city is well planned for and managed. Preparation of a management plan for suburban reserves¹ enables the values of these reserves to be managed in a way that reflects their particular role in the open space network. Suburban reserves have a unique set of functions and values that, while part of the citywide open space network, have an important neighbourhood role.

The purpose of the Suburban Reserves Management Plan (SRMP) is to provide Wellington City Council with a clear framework for day-to-day management and decision-making for Council-administered reserves and open spaces