

Access for Everyone Workshop – City Centre Advisory Panel

Panel lead: Patrick Reynolds, Deputy Chair and Transport Lead

Date: 19 February 2025

Attendees: Noelene Buckland, Patrick Reynolds, Viv Beck, Jamey Holloway, Antony Phillips, Genevive Sage, Conor Roberts (alternate)

Apologies: A Parkinson, A Tang, A Malcolm, B Haldane, D Summers, G Kemble, H Barrett, H Robinson, K Coughlan, Mayor W Brown, Cr M Lee, N Allen, N Findlay, S Pritchard, G Crawford

Overview

The recent City Centre Advisory Panel workshop on Access for Everyone (A4E) was an opportunity to reflect on progress, challenges, and the path forward. The initial request for the workshop was to outline the details of the A4E implementation plan and circulation plans.

A4E plays a vital role in shaping the future of the city centre and delivering the outcomes outlined in the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP). It sits at the intersection of numerous, often competing, priorities within the transport network. Accommodating these varying perspectives can be challenging but is central to A4E's purpose—linking transport and place outcomes to create a more connected, more prosperous and vibrant city centre.

The panel remains deeply committed to seeing A4E fully realised. However, there is a strong consensus that progress, particularly regarding the essential traffic circulation plan, has been slower than anticipated over the past four to five years. This delay has impacted the ability to inform and guide crucial street design decisions, especially in coordination with the ongoing City Rail Link (CRL) construction works. While acknowledging that the Council group's recent efforts have primarily targeted significant infrastructure projects—including the CRL, Wellesley Street bus corridor, and Te Hā Noa, which all contribute to A4E outcomes—the panel emphasises that finalising and implementing clear network circulation plans must be the top priority.

There are positive signs. Recent focus on the Aotea Arts Quarter and Midtown block has resulted in promising progress, with detailed proposals starting to take shape, including for increased number of pick-up and drop-off spaces to support the Arts Quarter and clearer road layouts to improve navigation and circulation.

These areas are emerging as tangible examples of how A4E can begin to deliver the CCMP's vision, providing a foundation upon which the wider programme can build.

A4E needs to advance on multiple levels—it is both strategic and operational. It must progress a big-picture vision while ensuring practical, street-level changes to support the daily functioning of a thriving city centre. As a change programme, A4E also requires plans that are proactive yet flexible enough to adapt to shifting contexts and emerging challenges.

The workshop reaffirmed the panel's previous advice and its call to accelerate progress.

- **Detailed circulation plan:** Producing a comprehensive and clearly articulated circulation plan remains a critical priority. Network planning outcomes from the A4E

business cases should be shared with the panel for review and feedback before the close of this financial year.

- **Clear outcomes and benefits:** The panel emphasised the need for greater clarity in communicating intended outcomes, explicitly linking project proposals to tangible community and stakeholder benefits.
- **Immediate action and continuous improvement:** There must be a sharper focus on implementing immediate, practical solutions to existing challenges, coupled with an iterative approach that fosters ongoing improvement and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

Panel Discussion – Advice, feedback and actions

The panel’s priority is to see A4E actively implemented. The next workshop must provide clear and detailed outcomes, a summary of recent progress and a roadmap of upcoming actions.

- **Action:** Structure workshop presentations with immediate outcomes first, ensuring clarity on progress and next steps.

Evaluation of Interventions:

The panel stressed the importance of clearly defining how interventions are evaluated to effectively communicate their benefits to communities and stakeholders. This includes being explicit about the outcomes for each package.

- **Action:** Present a clearer articulation of localised outcomes and benefits for each package of circulation plans across the three horizons. This should detail how initiatives and interventions deliver place, transport, and operational outcomes, with these outcomes clearly represented on maps.

Immediate implementation opportunities:

The panel highlighted the need to focus on immediate, actionable interventions alongside long-term proposals. Greater clarity is needed on what is and could be implemented now to address current transport challenges.

- **Action:** Provide a “Horizon Zero” circulation plan outlining current and potential initiatives that respond to here-and-now issues, and show how they align with the broader A4E strategy

Aotea Arts Quarter and midtown block:

The Aotea Arts Quarter remains a key focus for the panel. The level of detail developed so far was acknowledged as a positive step, and the panel seeks a clearer articulation of intended outcomes, mapped alongside enabling initiatives and timelines for delivery.

- **Action:** Present updated circulation plans for the Aotea Arts Quarter and Midtown block, including short-term implementation strategies around access, pick-up and drop-off, clarity and legibility, linked to precinct level outcomes.

Optimisation of modal filters:

The Authorised Vehicle Only (AVO) area has been effective in maintaining bus travel times along Queen Street; however, it remains unclear how the current setup supports loading, servicing, and pick-up/drop-off needs.

- **Action:** The panel would like to see an assessment of options to optimise and manage modal filters to better enable these functions. This should include tangible examples to support communication of benefits to wider stakeholder groups.

Temporal controls:

The panel discussed the importance of temporal controls in achieving A4E objectives, particularly the ability to adjust operational focus in local network areas over a 24-hour period to support the city centre’s diverse needs. This includes the management of modal filters like the Queen Street AVO.

- **Action:** The panel would like to see proposals developed for implementing temporal controls that optimise network efficiency and improve access to and through the city centre. This should include strategies for signal timing adjustments, dynamic management of modal filters, and the selective filtering of turning movements.

Large-Scale Infrastructure and Network Improvements:

The panel agreed that large-scale infrastructure is essential for driving improvements in the city centre and enabling A4E’s higher-order outcomes. Auckland Transport is encouraged to adopt a proactive approach to circulation and network changes that complement major projects, while maintaining the flexibility to make iterative improvements that enhance network efficiency over time.

Train Service Operations:

The panel emphasised the importance of prioritising all-night train services with the City Rail Link (CRL) opening, particularly from Thursday to Saturday, to enhance access and support the night-time experience. This applies to workers’ travel as much as it does to customers.

- **Action:** Provide clarification on planned CRL train service operating times once the network is operational.

Zero Emissions Area (ZEA):

The ZEA remains a key component of A4E and the CCMP. The panel stressed the need for a dedicated, proactive implementation plan rather than relying on related interventions to gradually deliver the desired outcomes.

- **Action:** The panel would like to see explicit proposals developed for an ZEA implementation plan as part of the current work, outlining the steps required to achieve the associated outcomes and benefits.

Loading, Servicing and Pick-up and Drop-off:

Loading and servicing and pick-up and drop-off continue to be critical amenity to get right for the city centre. The panel would like to see the proposals developed through Room 2 Move incorporated into the A4E implementation plans and more strongly aligned with network circulation plans.

- **Action:** Develop proposals for enabling additional loading and servicing and pick-up and drop-off on side streets along the Albert Street corridor, with commensurate kerbside management

Next Steps

- The panel remains committed to actively engaging in the development of A4E.
- A workshop with the transport working group is proposed for May to test the proof-of-concept proposals across the three horizons, with final plans to be presented to the full panel in June.