

Neighbourhood Conversation Walk

Victoria

A group of 15 people participated in a walk led by local resident Tiria around the 'Victoria' neighbourhood on 19 September 2020. This neighbourhood is an established area with character. Residents living in this area enjoy close proximity to shops, restaurants and green space.

A mix of current residents and people interested in Central City living participated in the walk. The main purpose of the walk was for Council staff to hear people's thoughts and experiences of the neighbourhood and discuss opportunities to enhance neighbourhood elements and character. Informally the walk also served as an opportunity for people to

discover new spaces, talk with each other about Central City living and to make connections with like-minded people. Key spaces and observations are outlined below:



Neighbourhood Strengths

- The neighbourhood has an abundance of green public spaces including Cranmer and Victoria Square, The Commons and Hagley Park which are all well-used for recreation and events.
- Lots of development is planned or underway in the area.
- There are some pockets of strong community in the neighbourhood. The small residential streets of the neighbourhood (Chester Street West, Beveridge, Peacock, Conference and Gracefield) have a good mix of housing types, are quiet and have a good amount of greenery.
- The community has a number of proactive neighbourhood champions within the Victoria Neighbourhood Association.
- A variety of housing types was showcased on the walk including housing units co-located with commercial (Peterborough Street), converted backpackers (Dorset House), older villas and new townhouses.
- The neighbourhood is very accessible and has a range of services and dining options nearby.

Opportunities


- There are a number of large vacant sites in the neighbourhood which provide an opportunity for extensive development. The CDHB (380 Durham Street North) and Casino owned sites (359 Durham Street North) provide opportunities for residential development and a large site by the Ōtākaro River is earmarked for St Mary's School and the Basilica Cathedral.
- Victoria Street has recently been upgraded yet has a high proportion of building vacancy. There may be an opportunity to find creative solutions for vacant sites and spaces in this area.
- Discourage commercial intrusion into residential-zoned areas to achieve residential growth.
- Advocate for the retention of neighbourhood character, and encourage development that enhances community.
- Encourage the retention of trees during the re-development of private sites.
- Consider reduced vehicle speeds and resident-permitted parking arrangements on the small streets of the neighbourhood.
- Explore with the community opportunities for The Commons and Hangi pits to be better utilised.
- Encourage / facilitate the provision of accessible neighbourhood-based services (e.g. a supermarket, veggie shop and/or butcher in walking distance).


Residents Points of Interest


The following spaces were some of the main points of interest on the walk led by a local resident of the Moa Neighbourhood.




Public Space


1  Cranmer Square


2  Victoria Square

3  The Commons

Businesses and Community

4  Knox Church

5  Victoria Street hospitality

6  Dorset House

Key Streets

7  Chester Street West

8  Beveridge Street

9  Peterborough Street

Summarised comments from participants

Insights gained

- “There are some interesting business/housing configurations that the Central City could learn from!”
- “If we expect more people to live in the Central City (without cars) we need local services within walking distance”
- “I really enjoyed visiting other people’s homes and finding out how they lived in the inner city”.
- “Great chance to meet a local and hear about their neighbourhood”.
- “Interesting to learn about the co-housing initiative in the former Dorset House backpackers”.



Likes

- “Quiet narrow streets with a mix of housing types are important for creating a good neighbourhood feel”.
- “This is a good area for raising kids due to being within school zones.”
- “We have a strong sense of community with wonderful neighbours”.
- “Great that the Cranmer Courts development will bring more residents in to the area”.
- “I like that the refresh of Victoria Square tells more of the Māori narrative through sculptures and Whāriki Manaaki”
- “Great place to raise teenagers as they can work in the Central City without the need for a car”.
- “Knox Church is a great facility for community events”.
- “Having housing options that allow for a strong sense of community is great, the location was a bonus”.
- “We know more of our neighbours living centrally than we did in the suburbs”.
- “We need very little space as Hagley Park is right on our doorstep.”

Dislikes

- “We want to maintain our bubble of community and keep out commercial development”
- “There is a lack of affordable homes in this area”.
- “There is little protection for trees meaning we lose trees with every new development”
- “I don’t like that Te Pae cuts off our connection along Gloucester Street”.
- “I don’t think the bridge over the Ōtākaro is needed.”

Other

- “It is important to protect resident’s right to light and privacy”.
- “Put people first. Inner City residents’ views should come well above the concerns of developers.”
- “Promote more 2-3 storey unique mixed developments and ban new buildings over 4 storeys”.

How will the information be used?

Insights and experiences shared by participants on the Conversation Walk will help inform neighbourhood level planning. The walk was a great way to hear from people about the neighbourhood and build relationships. The list of strengths shows the Council what the advantages of this neighbourhood are, and the list of opportunities provides a good starting point to identify elements that could be enhanced. This information may also help shape Council webpages about Central City living.