



Submission to Whau Local Board Plan 2014

Avondale Community Action
1881 Great North Road
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Avondale Community Action submission to the Whau local board's draft plan

Avondale Community Action is a resident-led Charitable Trust working towards a better future for Avondale. We formed in 2012 and have spent the past two years activating and supporting neighbourhood development initiatives including Creative Spaces and our Random Household Survey. We have also been busy engaging and upskilling Avondale residents and encouraging other community led groups to grow including Whau the People and Creative Souls.

We have established and maintained a relationship with the Whau local board and we welcome this opportunity to respond to the draft local board plan which provides a series of pivotal directives for Avondale and the Whau. Our submission responds to the five questions asked by the local board.



Image 1; Some of the 200 residents interviewed so far for ACA's Random Household Survey. August 2014

Regarding Question 1, please find our comments on the six draft outcomes the board is proposing:

- *Great communities across the Whau*

We strongly support the board's commitment to community led place making projects and we feel that this is a particular strength of Avondale Community Action and the people and groups we help mobilise. We continue to plan, promote and participate in place making activities throughout Avondale including public events and creative initiatives.



Image 2; Facilitating Mayor Brown's visit to Avondale. July 2014



– *Outstanding development in New Lynn, Avondale and along our main roads*

We strongly support the draft plan's mention of an Avondale transformation programme which has started to identify the key sites and opportunities for improving local walking, cycling and road connections, creating better public spaces and redeveloping communities. However, Avondale Community Action would like to see greater communication around the transformation programme. Through our public presence at our hub at 1881 Great North Road and elsewhere, we are well positioned to share information about the programme to a great group of stakeholders, Avondale residents. Avondale residents will be more inclined to get in behind and support the transformation programme if they feel they are a genuine stakeholder rather than being shown plans once they've been finalised and informed of decisions once they've been made. From the feedback we have collated so far from over 200 interviews with Avondale residents, Avondale's town centre has been highlighted as a key concern.

We support the board's statement around creating urban living space through robust planning, visionary design and efficient construction. However, in line with our recent letter to Mayor Brown and ACPL, whilst our group welcome urban residential development in Avondale, we do not want this to happen before investment in visionary and quality community infrastructure. Housing development shouldn't proceed until we have the basics to provide for the people who are already here.

Avondale Community Action are concerned that two of the significant initiatives identified as priorities by the local board (building a new Avondale multi-use facility and new major aquatic facilities for the Whau) are currently not funded. In the project plan outline, the local board role is identified as "advocate". Our group would like to know what our community of Avondale can do to advocate as residents, and alongside the board, for these two initiatives to thrive. We understand that the funding of the first of these major initiatives (Avondale's new multi-use facility) will rely on the sale of land in our neighbourhood and we hope that the board is successful in convincing the Governing Body that our community is long overdue for investment from Auckland Council as well as private investors.

The best outcome for Avondale's town centre regeneration relies on collaboration between Auckland Council stakeholders, Housing New Zealand and the owners of the old 3 Guys supermarket. We understand that there is currently no cooperation between the parties and as such the visual town centre plan presented to our community in public forums is not viable. Avondale residents should be presented an honest account of the current situation and up to date visual representations of what the new multi-facility may look like.



Avondale Community Action

- *Stronger local businesses providing more and higher paid work*

We support this outcome and are pleased to see both the Avondale Business Association and Rosebank Business Association identified as key agencies. The board's priority initiative to revitalise Avondale's town centre will require effective collaboration and it will be important for the Avondale Business Association and the Business Improvement District stakeholders to be engaged with community stakeholders in a positive outlook for our town's future as it grows and changes.

- *A healthy Whau River and valued environment*

We support this outcome and all of the local groups and organisations that build the connection between the community and our Whau River. We are concerned that the only initiative that appears to be currently funded is a small, seemingly inexpensive one (promoting cleaner fireplaces) and wish the local board every success in securing funding for these important projects.

- *In Whau, it's 20 minutes to everything we need*

We support this outcome and think that it relates closely to our position that Avondale has suffered from decades of underinvestment. As reflected in the recent Deprivation Index, Avondale's high levels of socioeconomic deprivation correlates with many of our local residents not having cars. Affordable public transport is hugely important for people without access to cars but is currently very expensive for many families with low household incomes. We would also hope that '20 minutes to everything we need' takes into consideration walking and using a bicycle. From the feedback we have collated so far from over 200 interviews with Avondale residents, the lack of practical services (banks, Post Office) in Avondale is problematic and has been highlighted as a key concern.

– *Whau's local arts, culture and heritage are cherished*

We strongly support this outcome. Creative Spaces, coordinated by Avondale Community Action, is a great example of how important it is to support local arts, culture and heritage. The final exhibition of Creative Spaces brought together over 30 creatives all exhibiting alongside each other. Creative Spaces has been a catalyst for the formation of Whau the People and the upcoming four day arts festival in October.



Image 3; Creative Spaces in action. Local performer putting on a puppet show for our community. November 2014

Regarding Question 2, Avondale Community Action submit that the four key initiatives are interconnected and the success of one initiative is going to impact on the other. We sincerely hope to see all four realised. The first of the two initiatives (revitalising Avondale's town centre and community, recreation and aquatic facilities) are the most urgent for our neighbourhood. However, the third (around walking and cycling) and especially the fourth (around the Whau River) initiatives are going to rely on people power and buy-in from the local community. People won't be prepared to commit time and energy into these projects before they've seen some real improvements in our town centre and our community facilities.



Regarding Question 3, Avondale Community Action would like to express our concern about the indicative budgets. The budget lines for Local Parks Services completely dwarfs all of the other budgets. For instance, within Operating Expenditure there is nearly \$7,000,000 allocated to local parks services for 2015/2016 and only \$744,000 allocated to local arts, culture and events services and only \$954,000 allocated to local economic development which includes local street environment and town centres across the Whau. We do not understand the huge differential between the budgets for local parks services and everything else and we are concerned that the excellent key initiatives and outcomes identified by the board do not have the financial investment required.

Regarding Question 4, Avondale Community Action thinks there is something missing from the draft plan; mention of the important role of the Avondale Community Preschool. This not-for-profit preschool must not be left behind as Avondale's development moves ahead. Avondale Community Preschool's future is threatened by the closure of its current premises, which is part of the Avondale Community Centre complex, leased off Auckland Council. We support the Avondale Community Preschool's bid for support in their efforts to remain viable. Governed by a parent committee, the preschool meets a need in our community by providing affordable, quality care and education for diverse children and a supportive environment for parents to connect. The service Avondale Community Preschool closely aligns with the outcome of *Great communities across the Whau*.

Regarding Question 5, Avondale Community Action would like to speak in support of our submission at a public hearing, held between August and September 2014.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Kind regards,

Avondale Community Action