

Wellington Waterfront

Wellington, New Zealand

"... the waterfront is the playground of Wellington - a potential to be explored."*



image source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jackol/516092798/>

Wellington Waterfront is a redevelopment project located on the western edge of Lambton Harbour, adjacent to the city of Wellington. Redevelopment is underway and is managed by Wellington Waterfront Ltd., the city council-owned company in charge of the redevelopment process. Projects are based on a framework developed by the Waterfront Leadership Group, which identifies five precincts, each with its own distinctive style and personality. The five precincts include, from north to south, Kumutoto, Queens Wharf, Frank Kitts Park, Taranaki St Wharf and Waitangi. The precincts are linked by a public promenade that defines the edge of the waterfront and is dedicated to non-motorized activities.

Redevelopment focuses on 20 hectares between the Overseas Passengers Terminal and Shed 21. Twelve hectares are devoted to new and improved open spaces, 36,000 sqm of cultural facilities, 29,000 sqm of commercial/office space, 18,000 sqm of retail/food and 240 apartments.

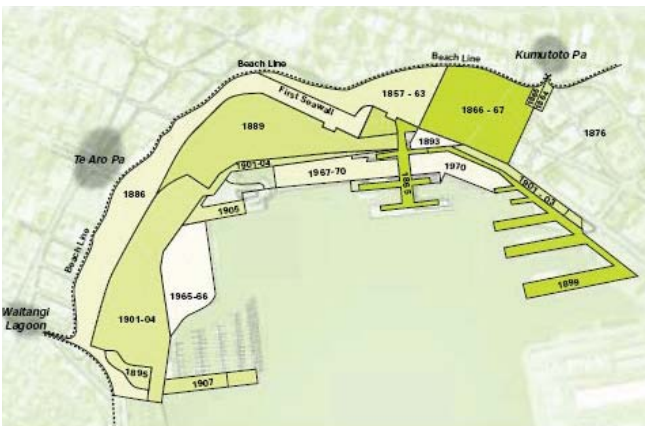


image source: Wellington Waterfront Framework 2001, p11
*City to Waterfront Report, p.27

Large land reclamation projects over the past 170 years have made the original settlement shoreline of 1840 unrecognizable. Private citizens reclaimed the first land in the 1850s. In the 1880s land was reclaimed for railways. The final reclamation was made in the 1960s for new cargo container methods.



image source: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/wellington/discuss/72157619306508728/>

Above: Wellington Water Whirler at night.

Left: View of Wellington Waterfront as it looks today, taken from Mount Victoria.

Below: Map of New Zealand with Wellington highlighted.

Bottom Left: Reclamation map

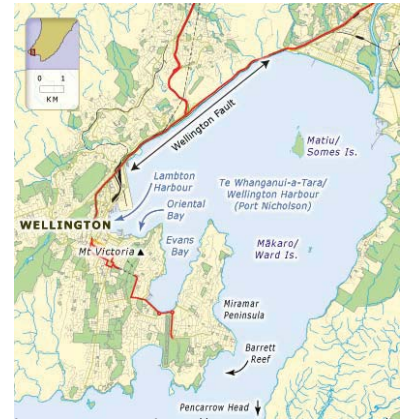


image source: <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-places/7/3>

Wellington (vs Seattle)

Area:

Urban 171.4 sq miles
(142.5)

Metro 536.7 sq miles
(8,186)

Population:

Urban 389,700
(608,660)

Density
2,273.2 / sq mile
(7,361)

image source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wellington>

PLANNING APPROACH & HISTORY

In August 2000 the Wellington City Council decided upon a three-stage process for future waterfront development plans. The first stage involved visioning and defining the principles/values governing development, as well as establishing a framework for urban design. The Waterfront Leadership Group was established to make recommendations that are included in their report, *The Wellington Waterfront Framework*, which was adopted in 2001 and continues as the main guidance document for development today.

Wellington Waterfront Planning: A Time line

Early History

For hundreds of years, the Maori people fished, conducted sea trade, cultivated the land and built settlements along the shoreline. The heart of the waterfront was once called “Te Aro Pa.”

1800s

In the early 19th century, Wellington harbor was settled by Europeans. The area developed as a mercantile center and port trade city.

1970s and 1980s

New interest arose in transforming the waterfront as the port economy changed and industrial real estate became available.

1982

Waterfront planning began in earnest: The Wellington Civic Trust organized a public competition on transforming the waterfront (sponsored by the City of Wellington and the Harbor Board).

1985

The Lambton Harbor Group was established and wrote the *Lambton Harbor Development Concept*, which emphasized a mix of public space, enhancement and retention of historic buildings, and new development.

1986

Two companies, Lambton Harbor Overview Ltd. and Lambton Harbor Management Ltd., were formed by the City Council and Harbor Board to manage and administer waterfront development. They also established a Special Development Zone and Concept Plan. Waterfront development was intended to be self-funded, but the 1987 stock market crash caused delays.

1987

The Empowerment Act was passed to allow the Lambton Harbor Development Project to proceed.

1989

The Wellington Harbor Board was disestablished as part of a local authority restructuring; the City received port assets.



Maori artwork.
Image source: www.goway.com/dow-nunder/newzealand/coach/

1995

Public involvement in waterfront planning increased dramatically, provoked by unpopular private development proposals for Queens Wharf.

1996

Wellington City and Lambton Harbor Management held public forums that led to a moratorium on new development.

1996

Directed by the city, a Community Consultative Committee prepared a report on waterfront development, reviewed earlier plans, and gathered community input.

1997

The Lambton Harbor Public Spaces Concept Plan was released and garnered much popular support. Public recreation value of the waterfront was prioritized, with development as a second goal. Additional public input was sought.

1998

The city adopted a modified version of this plan, renaming it as the *Wellington Waterfront Public Places Concept Plan*.

1999

The city issued *Variation 17*, a report covering planning rules and design guidelines. It mostly ignored the recommendations from the *Concept Plan*, and public outcry ensued. A public campaign against *Variation 17* followed, with 94% of 2,500 public submissions opposing the plan and requesting modification.

2000

Variation 17 was withdrawn by the City Council. A new process for waterfront visioning began. The Wellington City Council appointed a 10-member Waterfront Leadership Group to develop a *Framework* for development of the waterfront. The group included 3 City Councilors and 7 community representatives. Their task: develop a vision, guiding principles, values, and an urban design framework that would govern future development for the area.

2001

The *2001 Wellington Waterfront Framework* was adopted by the Wellington City Council.

2004

Gehl Architects prepared an analysis of public spaces and public life for the City of Wellington, with over 94 recommendations. This analysis supplemented the ideas put forth in the 2001 *Framework*.

2009

The New Zealand Institute of Architects awards Wellington City Council recognition for its *Framework* document, which continues to guide development today.



Above:
Images of different stages in waterfront development.

Images source: Wellington Waterfront Framework, 2001 p2.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK



Heritage Building Preservation includes 15 historic structures:

- Shed 21
- Eastbourne Ferry Terminal
- Shed 13
- Shed 11
- The Wharf Offices (Shed 7)
- Shed 5
- Dockside restaurant (Shed 3)
- The Bond Store (Museum of Wellington City and Sea)
- The Rowing Club
- Star Boating Club
- The Wellington Free Ambulance building
- Odlins building
- Shed 22
- Herd Street Post and Telegraph building
- Overseas Passenger Terminal.

Image sources, top to bottom:
<http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz>
www.adayoutinnz.blogspot.com
www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz

The *2001 Wellington Waterfront Framework* provides redevelopment guidance, articulating the following fundamental concepts:

Vision Statement:

“Wellington’s Waterfront is a special place that welcomes all people to live, work and play in the beautiful and inspiring spaces and architecture that connect our city to the sea and protect our heritage for future generations”

Waterfront Themes

The Framework identifies a number of interlinking themes for the waterfront:

- historical and contemporary culture
- city to water connections
- a promenade
- open space
- diversity

Values

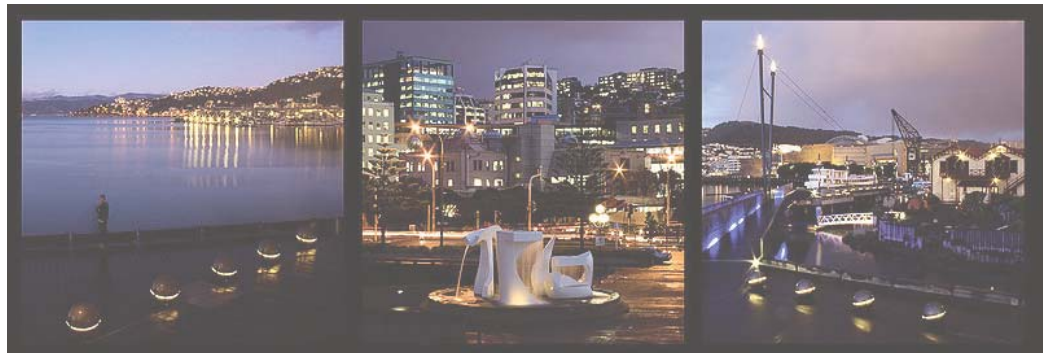
The Framework outlines a seven key principles and values that the overall waterfront development must abide by, including:

- 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

Objectives

The Framework also sets out objectives for the waterfront’s design:

- The waterfront is locally and internationally recognized for its design.
- The waterfront is readily accessible to all people.
- The waterfront is, and is perceived to be, safe at all times.
- The waterfront is seen as an attractive place that draws Wellingtonians and visitors alike.
- The waterfront successfully caters to a wide range of events and activities.
- Significant heritage buildings are protected on the waterfront.
- Activities on the waterfront are integrated with those on the harbour.



WATERFRONT AREA MAP



Wellington Waterfront in relation to Lambton Bay and City.
Image source: *The Wellington Waterfront Framework*, p.7



CITY-TO-WATERFRONT CONNECTIONS

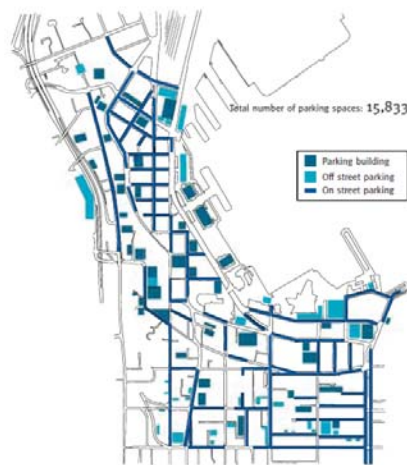
2004 Gehl Studio Analysis of Wellington Public Space/Public Life

The Wellington City Council hired Gehl Architects to conduct an analysis of Wellington's public spaces and public life. Over 94 recommendations were presented to the City, only a few of which have been implemented.

Vehicle Traffic in Wellington: A Major Challenge

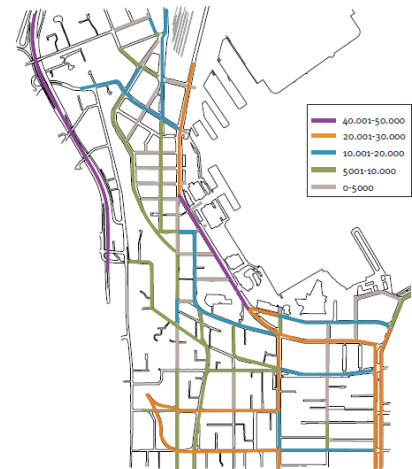
Vehicle Traffic Challenges:

- vehicle traffic flow dominates the streetscape.
- unlimited traffic access to the city center has made it very unfriendly for pedestrians.
- need to upgrade pedestrian, cycle, and public transit infrastructure.
- side streets lack a functional hierarchy.
- Jervois Quay separates the city front from the water.
- there are few and traffic-dominated public spaces.



Parking in the city center

Image Source: City to Waterfront Report, p.12



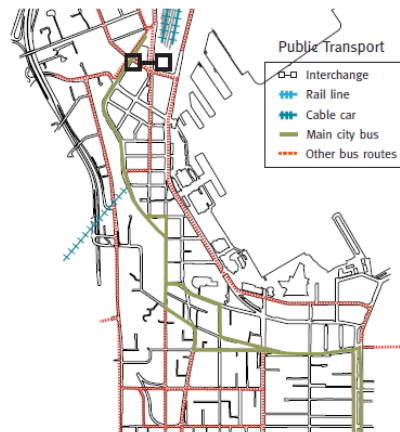
24 hr vehicle flows.

Image source: City to Waterfront Report, p.11

Pedestrian and Public Transit Needs:

- most pedestrian traffic is along the "Golden Mile" inland, which has missing links.
- pedestrian network is undeveloped.
- lack of clear connection signage to Waterfront.
- further expansion of bus lanes, transit networks, light rail and real time information access.
- improve pedestrian connections between RR station and Waterfront.
- create cycle infrastructure in the city center and connect it to the Waterfront.
- connect city cycle routes to suburban cycle routes.

Pedestrian Traffic & Public Transportation: Major Opportunities



Public transportation options.

Image Source: City to Waterfront Report, p.22



Existing Pedestrian Networks.

Image Source: City to Waterfront Report, p.16

Gehl experts focused on shifting Wellington's transportation emphasis from vehicles to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport such as buses. While there already are several public transit options, the systems need to be improved to be more efficient and popular with the public. Pedestrian connections to the waterfront exist, but are generally unpleasant and dominated by vehicles.

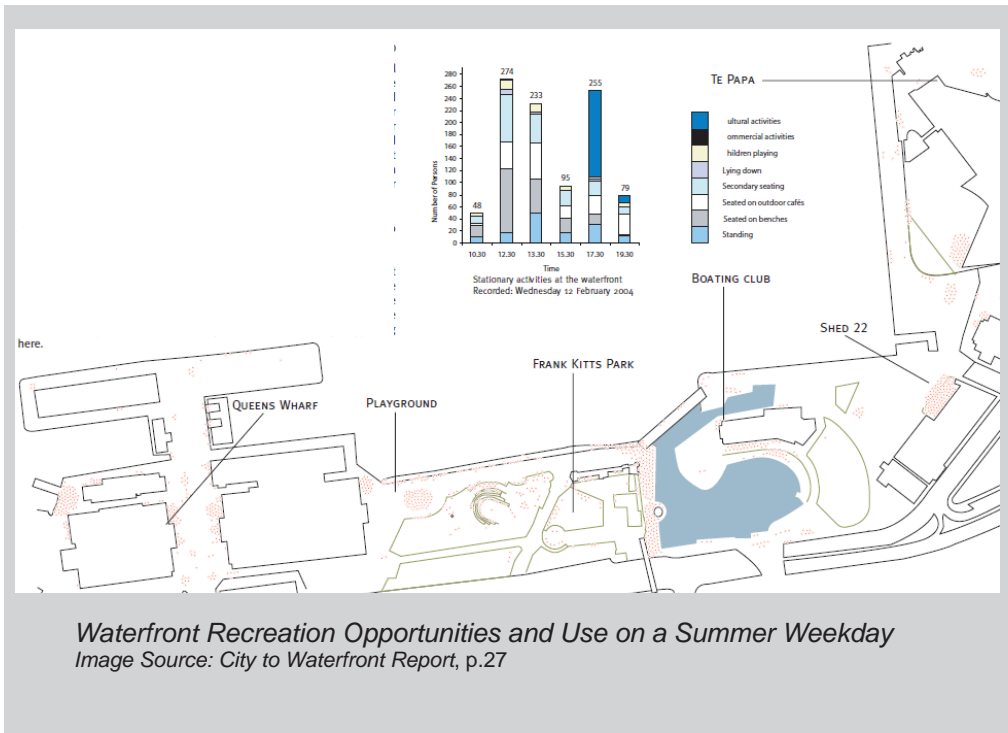
GEHL RECOMMENDATIONS

Wellington Waterfront Opportunities and Challenges

Gehl experts recognized the opportunities inherent in the existing waterfront. According to their research, the Waterfront is the single most visited place in Wellington for recreational activities. Identified challenges included poor accessibility, a poor relationship to the surrounding city, lack of activities along Jervois Quay at city and waterfront sides, and lack of spatial definition. The major challenges to overcome: Taming vehicular traffic, supporting alternative transport modes, creating an integrated waterfront, upgrading public space quality, stepping up pedestrian priority, creating a lively city, improving the City Squares and integrating the Parliamentary Precinct.

“If you want to see how the world goes round... take a wander around the Wellington Waterfront.”

<http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz>



Waterfront Recreation Opportunities and Use on a Summer Weekday
Image Source: City to Waterfront Report, p.27

Recommendations to achieve a more integrated Waterfront:

- more pedestrian-focused activity needs to take place in the side streets leading to the water.
- better crossings to the Waterfront are needed.
- Jervois Quay should be narrowed from 6 lanes to 4, a treed median should be added, or tolls imposed to reduce traffic flow.
- incoherent planning leaves the Waterfront in unconnected bits.
- clear communication of vehicle/bike/pedestrian spaces is needed.
- Waterfront facades are unattractive at eye level.
- parking occupies important spaces and blocks views.
- More direct access to the water is needed.
- Encourage outdoor cafe culture.

Quality Criteria for waterfront connections

- a) Views, visual connection
- limited obstacles



- b) Traffic regulations
- speed limits
- limited vehicular traffic
- limited turning options
- limited on street parking



- c) Walking quality
- room to walk comfortably
- level surfaces
- no obstacles
- access for all



- d) Prioritised crossings
- short waiting periods
- clearly marked crossings
- short distances to cross
- footpaths taken across minor side streets



- e) Activities at street level
- prioritise shops at ground level
- avoid first floor shops
- encourage outdoor cafes
- restrict service areas



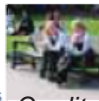
- f) Ground floor frontages
- small units at ground floor
- a diversity of functions
- no closed or passive units
- transparent frontages
- high quality of materials and detailed design



- g) Design quality
- design the street as a whole
- provide good quality lighting
- use consistent street furniture
- provide good quality paving



- h) Resting options
- opportunities for public seating
- encourage outdoor cafes



Quality of city to waterfront connections.
Source: City to Waterfront Report, p.60

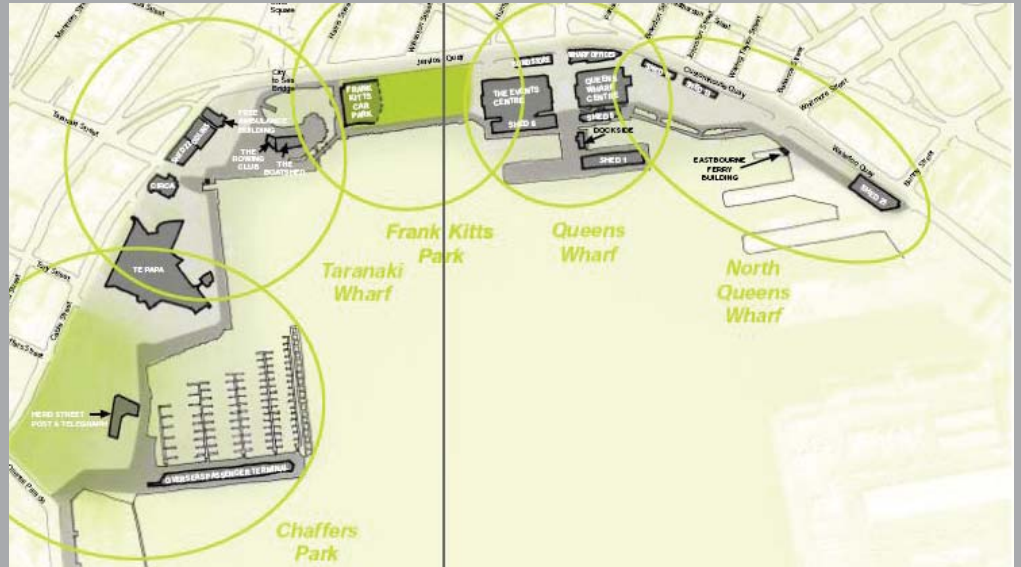
WELLINGTON WATERFRONT: AN INTEGRATED WHOLE?



“Wellington’s Waterfront is a special place that welcomes all people to live, work and play in the beautiful and inspiring spaces and architecture that connect our city to the sea and protect our heritage for future generations.”

Vision statement,
Wellington Waterfront
Framework, 2001.

Wellington Waterfront has five districts within the larger region, each with unique characteristics and identity. They are connected by a waterfront promenade as well as surface streets.



Overview of 5 waterfront precincts. Image source: *The Wellington Waterfront Framework*, p.26-27



Promenade

image sources, top to bottom:
(wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz)
<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-places/7/3>

	Predominant use/ Physical character	Water’s edge Characteristic	City/quays edge Characteristic
Waterfront	Diversity, mixed use, variety of spaces.	Continual promenade, different land-water edges and access points.	Better connections to the city, safe edge along the quays and Cable Street.
North Queens Wharf	Connection to CBD, small buildings, squares + lanes, mixed use, paved surfaces	Two-tier promenade, Tug Wharf, covered walkway, building colonnade, rocky coastal garden edge.	Buildings define edge of quays, pedestrian access via building colonnade.
Queens Wharf	Wharf, space for leisure activities, paved surfaces.	High working wharves, service shipping.	Main city-to-sea connection, Queens Wharf Gates.
Frank Kitts Park	An urban waterfront park, soft (green) surfaces	Wide promenade, improve low level access to water, breakwater.	Improve safety, pedestrian access, parking.
Taranaki Street Wharf	Lagoon access to water, Maori presence + civic connection	Wharfs, coastal garden, small boat access, waka house at the lagoon	City-to-Sea bridge, Taranaki St. Gate, building edge to Cable St.
Chaffers area / Waitangi	Large park, recreational focus, soft surfaces	Boat access, increased water in park	Improve safety, pedestrian access, parking

Main Characteristics of Precincts. Source: *The Wellington Waterfront Framework*, p.40

KUMUTOTO (NORTH QUEENS WHARF) PRECINCT



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/getting_around/Waterfront_map/

- Above - Kumutoto Precinct.
 At left, from top, clockwise:
1. Google earth plan of Kukumoto Precinct
 2. Meridian Energy Building
 3. Proposed Master Plan
 4. Shed 11 - Heritage Bldg
 5. Meridian Energy Building

Features

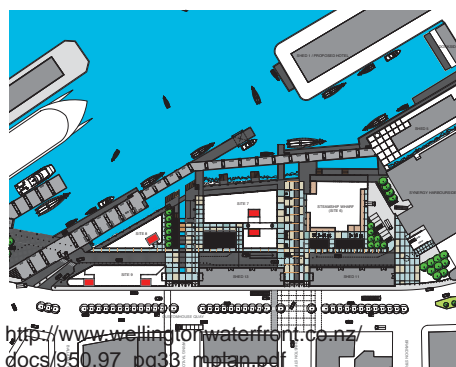
- City streets are view corridors to the precinct
- Divides the promenade into two paths: one path along the Tug Wharf and a more sheltered path incorporated by new buildings along the inner water's edge
- Access to water for fishing and pleasure boats
- New buildings in scale with heritage buildings enhance and define the open spaces
- Meridian Energy building built on Site 7 in 2007 has a 5Star rating from NZBGC
- Sheds 11 + 13 are Heritage buildings that have been preserved, reinforced for earthquakes + given new retail uses
- One of the more dense precincts with the most new building construction
- Planned underground parking to preserve open space



<http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/development/meridian-energy-building/>



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/development/kumutoto/sheds_11_&_13/



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/docs/950.97_pg3B_mplan.pdf

QUEENS WHARF PRECINCT



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/getting_around/Waterfront_map/

Above: Queens Wharf Precinct.

At right, front top, clockwise:

1. Google earth plan of Queens Wharf Precinct
2. NZ Academy of Fine Arts
3. View of Queens Wharf
4. Restaurant District
5. Shed 5 Restaurant



Features

- Heart of the waterfront, reflecting working wharf and mercantile history
- Outer-T wharf is a special + unique site
- Used for Cruise ships and other vessels
- Re-use of Shed 5 as retail activates the promenade; Shed 6 could do the same
- Home to the New Zealand Academy of Fine arts
- Populated with existing structures; more dense than the other precincts
- Structures house offices and apartments



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/getting_around/Waterfront_map/queens



www.teara.govt.nz/en/wellington



<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-faces/774>

FRANK KITTS PARK PRECINCT



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/getting_around/Waterfront_map/

- Above: Frank Kitts Park Precinct.
 At left, from top, clockwise:
1. Google earth plan of Queens Wharf Precinct
 2. Concert at tiered green space
 3. Lagoon Bridge
 4. The Albatross (1986)
 5. Len Lye's Water Whirler



image source: <http://www.panooramio.com/photo/34311851>



image source: <http://www.panooramio.com/photo/34311851>



image source: http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/experience_art_and_design/index.html#writerswalk

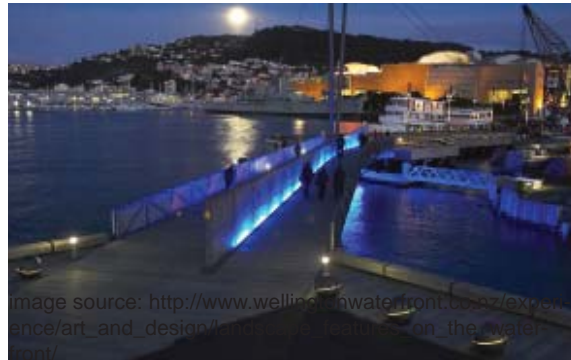


image source: http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/experience/art_and_design/index.html#writerswalk

Features

- Large green park that is the center for outdoor activities both on + off the water
- Part of green space is tiered to provide seating for concerts
- Water activities enhanced by creating an “intermediate harbour” with a break water, pontoon or alternative
- Home to iconic art work pieces such as the “Water Whirler”, the Albatross and the Writer’s Walk
- Bridge across lagoon is LED lit to enhance night activity

TARANAKI STREET WHARF PRECINCT



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/getting_around/Waterfront_map/

- Above, Taranaki St. Wharf
 At right, from top, clockwise:
1. Google earth plan of Queens Wharf Precinct
 2. Light Balls representing wharf bollards - Te Papa entrance in background
 3. Timber Garden
 4. Waka House
 5. City-to-Sea Bridge

Features

- Access to water from lagoon for a range of recreational users
- Great Maori presence in open space between Te Papa museum and water
- The Te Papa opened in 1998 and attracts thousands of tourist everyday
- Circa Theatre
- Landscape features create an exciting space for both day and night activities
- City-to-Sea bridge connect the city to the harbor over Jervis Quay
- Timber garden is made from salvaged timber cutouts. The timber can be laid down for seating during events
- Waka House is ceremonial boat house with retail and multifunctional space



Designed by Wraight Associates and Athfield Architects



image source: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/36233205>



image source: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/34311851>



image source: <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=512736&page=6>

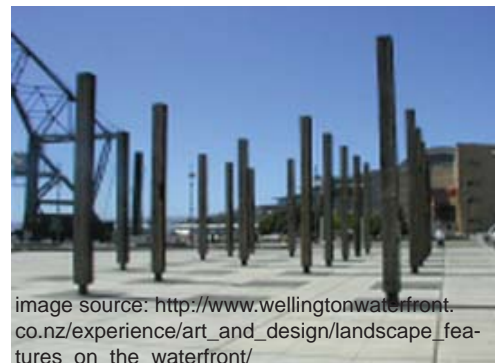


image source: http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/experience/art_and_design/landscape_features_on_the_waterfront/

WAITANGI (CHAFFERS PARK) PRECINCT



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/getting_around/Waterfront_map/

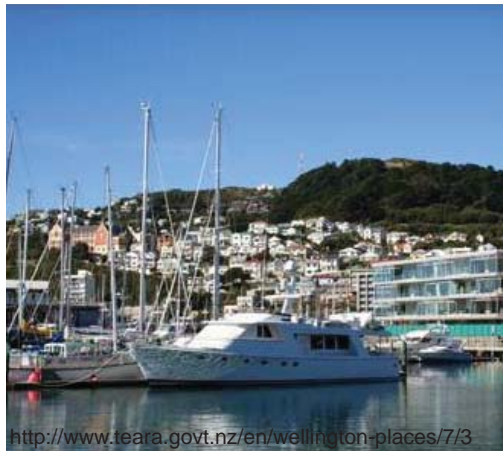
- Above, Waitangi Precinct. At left, from top, clockwise:
1. Google earth plan of Queens Wharf Precinct
 2. View of Marina
 3. Children's Playground
 4. Skate Park
 5. Graving Dock and Wetland

Features

- Both active and passive recreation opportunities for all age groups
- Extensive skate park and children's playground
- Open ground floor public spaces support the park and promenade
- Chinese Garden
- Connections to water activities such as kayaking
- Large marina space for boat users
- Discreet parking areas for park and facility users
- Promenade is main link from the park and buildings to Oriental Bay
- Unique Urban Wetlands design with reeds and gravel beds to clean and control stormwater along with 'bio-pits'
 - Daylit the Waitangi Stream



image source: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/34311851>



<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-places/7/3>



image source: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/34311851>



http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/development/waitangi/waitangi_park_introduction/area_one/state_of_the_art_playground/

ANALYSIS

Personal Recommendations:

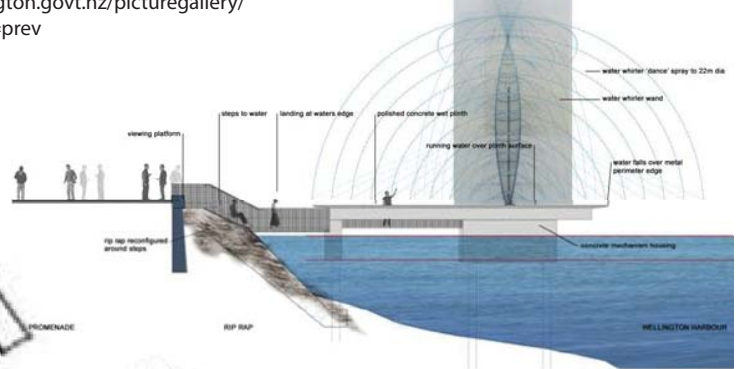
- Increase greenery, particularly trees.
- Continue to include ecological considerations in future design
- Address problems with Jervois Quay (the street still acts as a barrier between city and waterfront)
- Improve side street connections between city and waterfront
- Continue waterfront design elements into the city
- Continue to implement Gehl Recommendations, as follows:

Gehl 2004 Recommendations for city-wide improvements:

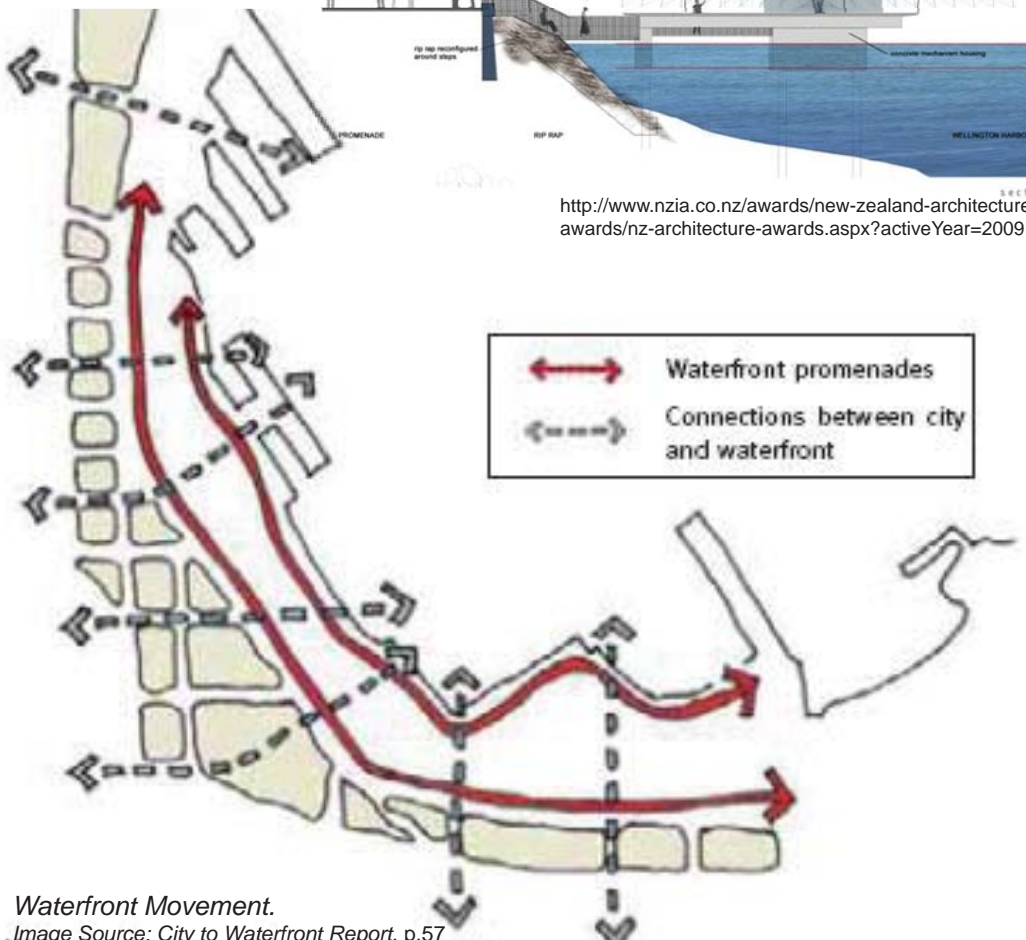
- Tame vehicular traffic
- Step up pedestrian priority
- Support alternative transportation (light rail)
- Improve links to water front, including improving existing view streets
- Jervois quay is now 4 lanes but still a barrier
- Convert main thoroughfares into "city boulevards" with low speeds
- Improve pedestrian crossings
- Create cycling infrastructure



Image Source: <http://www.wellington.govt.nz/picturegallery/display-image.php?g=2&i=10&d=prev>



<http://www.nzia.co.nz/awards/new-zealand-architecture-awards/nz-architecture-awards.aspx?activeYear=2009>



Waterfront Movement.
Image Source: City to Waterfront Report, p.57

RESOURCES



Print

Gehl, Jahn. *City to Waterfront: public spaces and public life study: Wellington*. Wellington: Wellington City Council. October 2004.

Wellington City Council. Waterfront Leadership Group. *The Wellington Waterfront Framework*. 2001.

Wellington Waterfront Limited. *Annual Report 2010: A Year in Review, Lambton Harbour Development Project*. Wellington City Council. 2010.

Websites

"Story: Wellington Places." *Te Ara*. 11 Oct <<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/wellington-places/7/1>>

"Wellington". *Wikipedia*. 11 Oct. 2011. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wellington>>

"Wellington Scenes; Picture Gallery." *Wellington Government Website*. 11 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.wellington.govt.nz>>

"Wellington Waterfront." 11 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.wellingtonwaterfront.co.nz/>>

