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To Wellington City Council

Please find attached DPA’s submission on Golden Mile Detailed Designs

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

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Introducing Disabled Persons Assembly NZ

Disabled Persons Assembly NZ (DPA) is a pan-impairment disabled person’s organisation that works to realise an equitable society, where all disabled people of all impairment types and including women, Māori, Pasifika, young people are able to direct their own lives. DPA works to improve social indicators for disabled people and for disabled people be recognised as valued members of society. DPA and its members work with the wider disability community, other DPOs, government agencies, service providers, international disability organisations, and the public by:

* telling our stories and identifying systemic barriers
* developing and advocating for solutions
* innovation and good practice

## United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DPA was influential in creating the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), a foundational document for disabled people which New Zealand has signed and ratified, confirming that disabled people must have the same human rights as everyone else [[1]](#footnote-2). All state bodies in New Zealand, including local and regional government, have a responsibility to uphold the principles and articles of this convention. There are a number of UNCRPD articles pertinent to this submission, including:

### Article 9 – Accessibility

“States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications.”

New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026

Since ratifying the UNCRPD, the New Zealand Government has established a Disability Strategy to guide the work of government agencies on disability issues. The vision is that New Zealand be a non-disabling society, where disabled people have equal opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations, and that all of New Zealand works together to make this happen [[2]](#footnote-3). It identifies eight outcome areas contributing to achieving this vision, including:

### Outcome 5 – Accessibility

“We access all places, services and information with ease and dignity.”

# The submission

DPA is providing this submission for the Wellington City Council on its proposed Golden Mile detailed designs.

DPA supports moves towards greater pedestrianisation, especially in this very important part of Central Wellington. We believe that this will contribute to the goals of both central and local government of decarbonisation as a means of addressing climate change. We are aware that disabled people will be one of the population groups most severely impacted by climate change (and in many respects we already are).

DPA also welcomes any move to improve the accessibility of central cities and we have backed similar projects in other centres throughout New Zealand. For example, our Dunedin members recently supported the re-development of their central city into a more pedestrian and cycling friendly area and construction is currently under way there.

Generally, pedestrianisation has many positives for disabled people by enabling people with mobility impairments, blind and low vision people, neurodiverse people and people from other impairment communities to enjoy more accessible, navigable, and safer streets.

Our main recommendations in this submission will cover some further improvements to ensure full accessibility by everyone, including disabled people, to this development.

**Mobility parking**

DPA notes the proposal that mobility parking will be removed from all streets on the Golden Mile and onto the side streets surrounding it. In order to enable easy access by mobility card holders to the area, it is vitally important to have at least two mobility parks placed on every side street along the Golden Mile.

**Public transport reliability and accessible transport infrastructure**

DPA is pleased to see that public transport in the form of buses will be permitted to use the Golden Mile to enable ease of public access. This will benefit many disabled and older people who use public transport.

However, there have been concerns expressed by Wellington members around the reliability of the capital’s bus service. Hopefully, the Golden Mile re-development will assist in easing some of the congestion pressures that have contributed to the poor service received by Wellingtonians over the years.

Nevertheless, having access to reliable, frequent bus services both to and from the Golden Mile will be important for both disabled and non-disabled people in enjoying the many benefits that the new development will offer. We hope that the Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington Regional Council plus Metlink will work collaboratively to address these issues.

Associated with the need to have good bus services on the Golden Mile is the availability of good supporting transport infrastructure including accessible bus stops. Therefore, DPA recommends that all bus shelters should be safe, covered, well-lit, and have tactile indicators installed at both the crossing and heads of stops to enable safe mobilisation and way finding by blind and low vision people. They should also be large enough to accommodate wheelchair and mobility scooter users.

**Pedestrian accessibility, safety and lighting**

DPA welcomes the greater pedestrianisation of Central Wellington and hopes that the Golden Mile development will meet its every objective of enabling both Wellingtonians and visitors alike to enjoy the central city in order to make it not only a place where people work and conduct business but also socialise and enjoy themselves. Making the CBD more of a destination, and an environmentally friendly one at that, is something that we applaud.

We acknowledge as well the Let’s Get Wellington Moving programme’s objectives of making the city more accessible for people of all ages and abilities. To meet this objective, DPA believes that the accessibility needs of disabled people must be fully met so that members of our community can also easily access the area.

Accordingly, DPA recommends that there be clearly defined footpath walking areas with no obstacles. Any walking areas should be wide enough to enable, for example, at least two wheelchair or mobility scooter users to pass each other safely.

Furthermore, DPA recommends the removal of street-based obstacles in terms of bins, signage and seating which should all be positioned well away from the footpath area. It is not acceptable for a wheelchair or mobility scooter user, blind or low vision person or anyone pushing a children’s stroller to have to navigate around refuse bins, sandwich boards and other un-necessary obstacles.

DPA recommends that when it comes to pedestrian crossings that colour contrast and tactile differences are placed between the footpath area and any seating, eating, or entertainment spaces in order that blind and low vision people can safely navigate these spaces.

DPA recommends that level crossing points should be inserted along both the side streets and, indeed, the entire Golden Mile.

DPA recommends that improved lighting be installed across the Golden Mile to improve safety for everyone who accesses the area. Any improved lighting should be at a level which assists Deaf and hard of people to see both sign language and people’s lip movements. Improved lighting would also be of assistance to blind and low vision people and for anyone else who has difficulty seeing at night.

# DPA’s recommendations

The Disabled Person’s Assembly recommends:

* **Recommendation 1:** That there be at least two mobility parks placed on every side street along the Golden Mile
* **Recommendation 2:** That all bus shelters should be safe, covered, well-lit, and have tactile indicators installed at both the crossing and heads of stops to enable safe mobilisation and way finding by blind and low vision people. They should also be large enough to accommodate wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
* **Recommendation 3:** That there be clearly defined footpath walking areas that are wide enough to enable at least two wheelchair or mobility scooter users to pass each other safely.
* **Recommendation 4:** Theremoval of street-based obstacles in terms of bins, signage and seating which should all be positioned well away from the footpath area.
* **Recommendation 5:** Pedestrian crossings should have colour contrast and tactile differences are placed between the footpath area and any seating, eating, or entertainment spaces in order that blind and low vision people can safely navigate these spaces.
* **Recommendation 6:** That level crossing points be inserted along both the side streets and, indeed, the entire Golden Mile.
* **Recommendation 7:** Thatimproved lighting be installed across the Golden Mile to improve safety for everyone who accesses the area. Any improved lighting should be at a level which assists Deaf and hard of people to see both sign language and people’s lip movements. Improved lighting would also be of assistance to blind and low vision people and for anyone else who has difficulty seeing at night.

1. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 13, 2006. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Office for Disability Issues. (2016). *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016 – 2026*. Retrieved from https://www.odi.govt.nz/assets/New-Zealand-Disability-Strategy-files/pdf-nz-disability-strategy-2016.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)