

# Disability Accessibility

By Vivian Naylor, Barrier Free Advisor & Educator, CCS Disability Action

The newly refurbished *Ellen Melville Centre* and *Freyberg Place* were officially opened on 15 September and what a delight the new *Centre* is – light and airy. It will be a pleasure to resume our *ADCOS* / *Inner City Network* meetings in the building.

But there could be a downside – the distance parking is from the *Centre* and whether all members will be able to manage the walk when they cannot park close by.

This is potentially an issue for everyone of any age who cannot walk far, whether due to mobility impairments, lung or heart conditions, or stamina generally. Areas within the city are increasingly being made pedestrian-friendly and it is a pleasure having respite from vehicles for a while. But will everyone be able to access

these areas, especially when we will be seeing more shared spaces created? Undoubtedly, no, not as things stand at the moment.



The UK has been pedestrianising much of their town centres for some decades now. In most cities and provincial towns provision is made for people who cannot walk far through a service known as **Shopmobility** ([www.shopmobility.org.uk](http://www.shopmobility.org.uk)).

The service is usually located in a nearby city car park at which users park their cars and chose what mobility equipment best suits their needs – manual and power wheelchairs, scooters, and rollators (walking aids with seats).

continues ➡

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF  
**Shopmobility**



When on holiday in York, I availed myself of a power wheelchair, which was great for exploring the city – the *Viking Museum, Cathedral*, and navigating the cobbled streets. The service is mainly free, or in some towns, incurs a small charge for expenses. What a bonus such a service would be in downtown Auckland – for Aucklanders and visitors alike.

Incidentally, portable hearing loops are also available to reduce background noise for hearing aid users fitted with a Telecoil “T” switch. Ideal if attending a meeting and the room is not fitted with a hearing assistive device. (The *Ellen Melville Centre* is!)



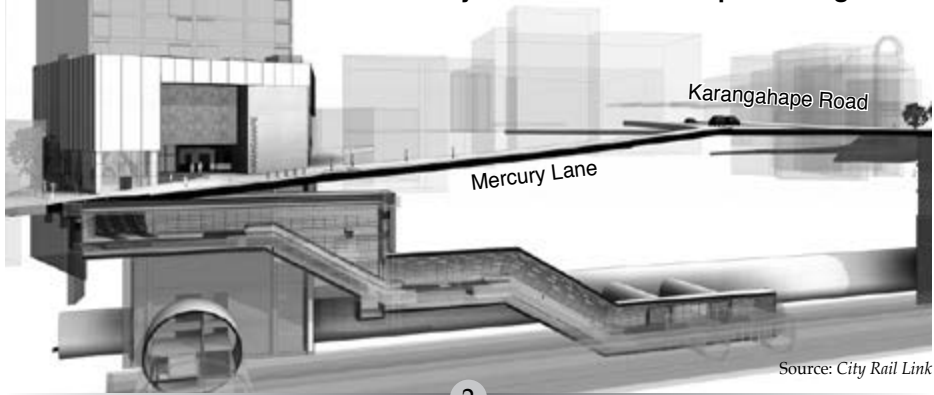
Moving forward in our urban planning, we need to consider ‘walkability’ at the same time as ‘pedestrianisation’.

Our short sighted thinking came to the fore recently with suggested changes to the design of the Karangahape Road station of the *City Rail Link* (CRL). Common sense would suggest that the design would factor in future-proofing, but the proposed design of the Karangahape Road station suggests the complete opposite.

Initially, two entrances were planned, one on Mercury Lane next to the former *Mercury Theatre*, the other on *Beresford Square*. The latter has been removed so now the only route between Karangahape Road and the station is via a steep 1:9-1:10 slope. When this was pointed out

---

### Auckland City Rail Link Mercury Lane Station Concept Drawing



Source: City Rail Link



Concept artwork for *Karangahape Station on Mercury Lane*

Source: City Rail Link

to the CRL's project director, his response<sup>1</sup> was:

**“That’s not a difficult walk.”  
It’s good for you.**

Does this demonstrate *Auckland Council’s* commitment to Universal Design or an Age-friendly City?

On Friday, 1 September submissions closed on *NoR 5 – Alteration to Designation of 1714 City Rail*

*Karangahape Road Station*. I am aware that, fortunately, many people responded opposing the loss of a second, readily accessible entrance.

This could be easily achieved by incorporating a lift near the top of Pitt Street, a solution applied in European cities.

Hopefully common sense will prevail in Auckland.



Article  
Contact



0800-227-2255



info@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz



www.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz



www.facebook.com/CCSDisabilityAction

1. See *Simon Wilson’s* article in *The Spin-off* at [tinyurl.com/ADCOSS-SpinOff](http://tinyurl.com/ADCOSS-SpinOff)