

# **Youth Friendly Space Audit**

## **Victoria Square - June 2015**



Audit undertaken by members of  
**Christchurch Youth Council and the Refugee Youth Council**

# 1) Any space that young people frequent should be **safe**, and when you get it right for them, you've probably got it right for everyone

## Research supports CPTED principles

- Well-lit
- Open space
- Safe toilets & amenities
- Covered walkways
- High visibility

**Appropriately located** – considering surrounding businesses and facilities

**Deliberate and safe spaces to hang out** that are visible but are not in the flow of movement of other people

### Waiting and transition areas

Young people need to be able to safely get in and out. There needs to be information on public transport available. Safe and sheltered bus stops and car pick ups areas.

## Questions

### Do you feel safe when you:

- Arrive and leave? *I'd say so. It's reasonably well lit, and it doesn't seem out of place. I can't see why I'd skirt around it rather than walk through the square.*
- Walk around? *Yep. Whilst the lights are everywhere, it does seem as though their brightness does not travel that far. Some are dim and others don't work at all.*
- Go to the bathroom? *-What bathroom? This question isn't applicable :) but it's an issue that is worth highlighting. We learnt at the Vic. Sq. Group that there is a plan for where all the Council-provided toilets in the Central City are going to be, and it's important that there are some nearby. I'm not a fan of going into businesses to ask for the loo if I'm not intending to have anything else to do with the company....*
- Use the facility for its purpose? *Yep*
- Are there at night? *Yep -that's when we were there!*

**Is this an appropriate location for this space?**

This is where this -----X-----This space is  
this space should be in a weird area

**Is there somewhere for you to hangout here? Do you feel like you're in people's way?**  
*No, there's plenty of space. Unless there was an individual/group of people who I didn't want to be around near the bridge, otherwise one could spend time here or walk through here no problem. Re: hanging out here, having tables would make it easier to use a laptop/eat some food etc.*

## 2) A space is going to be more **appealing** and successful when people want to use it for its intended purpose.

- Socially credible** – young people want to go there to connect with the space
- At arms length but within arms reach** – Young people want to connect with the wider community as well as purpose built youth space, however they prefer areas which are slightly separate
- Engaging** - young people want to be engaged in the space
- Inclusive** – young people are far more likely to use space which has had their input, involvement and investment throughout the design and concept stages

# Questions

**Is this a place you like to go?**

Love this space -----X-----Only come because it's convenient  
*Many in the community have expressed how they love this place, and I've got to admit, it is a wee bit special, because I remember going to events here when I first came to Ch'ch five years ago. Then, I was awed by the big city and the events that were put on. We felt that there should be more made of the fact that the space has great meaning to people who have citizenship ceremonies just across the road - is it an appropriate 'Welcome to being a New Zealander' space?*

**Do you use this space for its intended purpose?**

Used for its purpose ---X-----Not used for its purpose  
*If I was around the city centre more, yes, I could imagine meeting friends here. However, every time I come to the CBD, it's only for a fleeting visit.*

**Do you feel part of the community here?**

*Not currently, but there is no set way of welcoming community into the park, or defining its community at present.*

**Would you come back here?**

Definitely -----X----- Nope

**Were young people involved in the planning of this place? Do you feel like your feedback about this space would be listened to?**

*We hope to be listened to.*

**3) Any space needs to be **accessible** – all young people should be able to use it, even if their circumstances are different.**

**Physically accessible** - good disability access is essential  
Strong connectivity with **good public transport cannot be underestimated**  
**Reasonably priced** – activities, services and goods on offer should be affordable for young people  
Low-cost **food options** close at hand  
**Connectivity to key youth spaces** such as public libraries, malls, sport facilities, community centres

## Questions

**Disability access and use**

- Disabled parking *None*
- Disabled toilets *None, but then no normal toilets either*
- Can disabled young people use this space? *With a bit of a tidy-up, I'd think so. In places there are random holes in the ground, cracks in the paving, rails and bridges to be painted and made more clear. Also the ramps in the auditorium area are unsigned and hard to spot at night. The steps drop off, and could do with a white line or warning for wheelchair users.*

**Can you get here from home/school easily? Are there enough public transport options**  
*It looks as though there is no proper bus stop, although there is a tram stop.*

**Can you safely bike/walk here?**

*There wasn't anything particularly dangerous in the streets around that I noticed, though the roadwork situation changes every day. Gravel in the NW part of the site is a nuisance for bikes, but not a safety hazard. The ramps, too, are great, but there needs to be more signposting - and also bikes painted on the ground. There isn't a machine to alert pedestrians when to cross on the pedestrian crossings at the NW crossing. Also, there should be a 'barn dance' crossing here to allow for easier movement by pedestrians and less walking.*

**Is this place reasonably priced? *It's free! Yay!***

- Are there discounts for young people? *N/A*
- Can you afford to eat here? Or near here? *In the central city? Coffee maybe, but meals out would be overpriced. The hot food on the Commons should be signposted better.*

**Is this place near other key spaces you visit?**

Heaps of stuff near here -----X-----Nothing else around  
*Well, if you can be bothered to come to the Central City, then I suppose it's near things like Cathedral Square... but the cinema, affordable shops, pleasant parks, libraries, recreation centres etc etc are all in the suburbs.*

4) A space that is well-**resourced** with young people in mind is one that will be well-used

Easy access to **relevant social services & support functions** such as Youth Workers and medical professionals

**Free wifi** or internet access

**Low cost** or free pricing **structures**

**Multi-use** – functional spaces with more than one purpose that are well-used

**Appropriate amenities** for what the space will be used for

**Questions**

Could you get information about other services for young people here? Do you feel like you could go and talk to the staff here if you had questions?

N/A

How well-priced is this space?

Affordable -----X-----Expensive

Is there more than one thing you can do here? Could you stay here for a long time?

*I don't know why you'd want to...? But if you did, it would be nice to have seating and areas that encouraged people to stay for a while - such as not having old, tatty seating all in a line, making conversation difficult. Picnic tables would be good!*

Does this place appeal to lots of people?

Appealing to many -----X----- Appeals to few

*It's convenient, and lots of people like (and need?) a green, public place away from all the traffic. It would appeal more if the amphitheatre wasn't ruined by being a puddle and often a weird lake!*

Does this space have?

- Internet? *No - but it should have!*
- Drinking fountains/somewhere to get a drink? *No*
- Food or places to eat? *Not that's affordable, the Commons are not properly linked and all other food places are too expensive - we had to walk a long way to find one then gave up! We did like the fact there are lots of inconspicuous bins in abundance.*
- Safe toilets? Unisex toilets? Safe showers (if needed)? *No*
- Safe bike stands? *No*

5) You can tell a **youth-friendly** space by the feeling you get when you walk in – young people are wanted here!

**Vibrant and alive** – a tidy, contemporary and colourful space that reflects young people and their sub-cultures

**Welcoming** – staff specifically trained to deal with young people (strong preference for Youth Workers over security guards)

**Embraces Young People** – a place where young people feel they are wanted and valued

**Prioritises Youth Participation** – a space that includes young people as much as possible in its development

## Questions

**Does this space feel youthful?**

Very youthful -----X----- Not at all youthful

*No, but nor should it. It feels like a good ol' generic public place.*

**Does this space reflect your culture?**

Yep -----Nope

*Not all cultures are reflected here, and they should be. There should be more art and colour, though in keeping with the character of the place. Also, why is there tape around the trees?*

**Do you feel comfortable and valued here?**

Yeah ----- Nah

*A strange question in this context, but currently, not applicable. It is a space, but it could be a great space.*

**Do you feel wanted? Are you treated well by staff and other people?**

Everyone here is cool ----- Everyone here is mean

N/A

**Do young people help make decisions here? Are they involved with how this space runs and looks? Are you able to give suggestions/feedback about this space?**

*No, but wouldn't it be fantastic if they could be?*