




## 2016 McGredy Winder SOLGM Local Government Excellence Awards®

<p>Entry Category (please tick one only for each entry – refer to the information on categories <a href="#">here</a>)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Innovation in Organisation and People Development</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transforming Service Delivery</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Innovation in Council-Community Relations</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Government Action</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Innovation in Policy and Regulatory Development</p>
<p>Name of Organisation submitting entry</p>	<p><b>Wellington City Council, New Zealand Transport Agency, Memorial Park Alliance</b></p>
<p>Name of Project</p>	<p><b>Victoria Street Transformation</b></p> 
<p>Project Summary (word limit – 150)</p>	<p>Victoria Street in inner city Wellington was a place most people passed through on their way to somewhere else, usually by car. It was unfriendly to pedestrians with narrow footpaths and a misalignment between buildings and street. Consequently the street offered little attraction for property development.</p> <p>Council believed it could be so much more and had a vision of a tree-lined boulevard and two new inner city parks where people would want to spend time. The area's infrastructure would be future-proofed so developers could confidently proceed with educational, commercial and residential initiatives.</p> <p>When Council recognised a potential clash between the planned urban transformation and an NZ Transport Agency project on Victoria St to unclog the adjacent State Highway, a collaboration began which led to a mutually acceptable design and, even better, a delivery partnership that saw the whole project built in approximately half the normal timeframe, and with a minimum of fuss.</p>



When preparing the Wellington Central City Framework strategy in 2012, it became clear that there was a challenge for accommodating the capital's growing population in a "liveable" way that enhanced the city's great qualities. The framework identified that the 600m length of Victoria St between Dixon St and Abel Smith St had capacity to accommodate significant development with its proximity to work places and entertainment enabling residents to walk as their primary mode of transport. With the area significantly underdeveloped, Council saw that quality intensive development could be encouraged by first creating an attractive pedestrianised environment.

Meanwhile, NZTA had identified that the addition of an extra lane at two locations within this portion of Victoria St (totalling 120m in length) could bring significant improvement to the efficiency of the state highway route, and improve journey times for buses.

From Council's perspective, the key risks to the Victoria St project were:

- Timing – if the upgrade occurred too late, developers would progress low quality development
- Funding – annual plan funding was limited to a small amount each year making it difficult to commit to the project as a whole
- Stakeholders – the work had potential for major disruption during construction, particularly if it was drawn out
- Service providers – if underground infrastructure was not upgraded, future disruption would occur.

Council saw an opportunity to mitigate these risks by forming a co-alliance with the established Memorial Park Alliance (MPA). MPA (comprising NZTA, HEB Construction, Tonkin & Taylor, Downer and Aecom) was established to deliver a package of works including the Arras Tunnel and Pukeahu National War Memorial Park.

MPA had a track record of positive community relationships, early delivery, and ability to work effectively with service providers and also had the capacity to take on the Victoria St project. In response to the project, developers have created proposals to meet the enhanced environment.

The co-alliance agreement set a clear focus on the objectives to be achieved, including the tight deadline of 30 June 2015, a timespan of 12 months from starting design work to completion of construction on a project that would normally take twice as long. The project adopted the existing systems and processes of MPA.

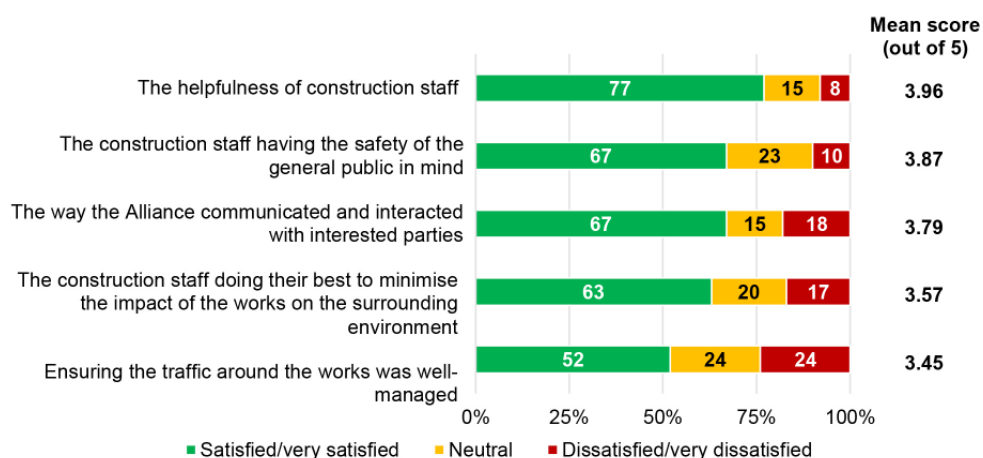
A Governance Team was formed from existing members of the MPA Board and Management Team along with a Council representative. This team was charged under the co-alliance agreement with ensuring the project stayed on-track and was required to do so by consensus decision making.

Day to day, the project was run by the Alliance Management Team, comprising representatives from design, construction, stakeholder communications, project controls, NZTA and Council. Like the governance team, the Alliance Management Team would carefully canvas opinions and seek out information to enable consensus decision making.

The Governance Team developed a set of Key Results Areas (KRAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were reviewed monthly and assessed in detail twice during the project. These included actively seeking feedback, with interviews of pedestrians and cyclists every month and internet surveys for stakeholders. An independent research organisation was contracted to undertake three satisfaction surveys during the life of the project, ensuring an objective view.

This feedback enabled changes and improvements to be made, such as finding ways to share updates with apartment building tenants, and identifying areas where cyclists felt uncomfortable around the work site. Programme and financial performance were reviewed weekly and monthly respectively, and a full suite of management plans enacted to control the development and delivery of the works.

*Q4. Overall, how satisfied are you with the following aspects of the Alliance's work?*





This project grew out of good relationship management, from when the two organisations first realised they had mutually exclusive intentions to use a piece of road space. The approach taken was for each party to diligently listen and seek to understand the other's point of view, and then put forward ideas for how the difference could be overcome. The first challenge was overcome by changing the road alignment and rearranging the park design, and this set the tone for relationship management throughout the project.

Relationships included professional relationships within the alliance organisations (including Council and NZTA), with key external organisations such as telecommunications companies with infrastructure to be upgraded, and relationships with the community (residents, business owners, passing cyclists etc).

For the community, flyers were frequently hand-delivered to letterboxes and handed out in business premises and on the street with the aim of collecting responses, including email addresses. Posted flyers, an expensive method in bulk, were used initially and at intervals thereafter to reach people in high rise apartments where front doors controlled by security codes prevented access to letterboxes.

Difficult relationships were carefully tracked and given high attention. Rather than ending conversations that were seemingly going nowhere, the project team would focus on these stakeholders and keep meeting face to face and talking until either a resolution was agreed, or the stakeholder indicated their

Other measures included:

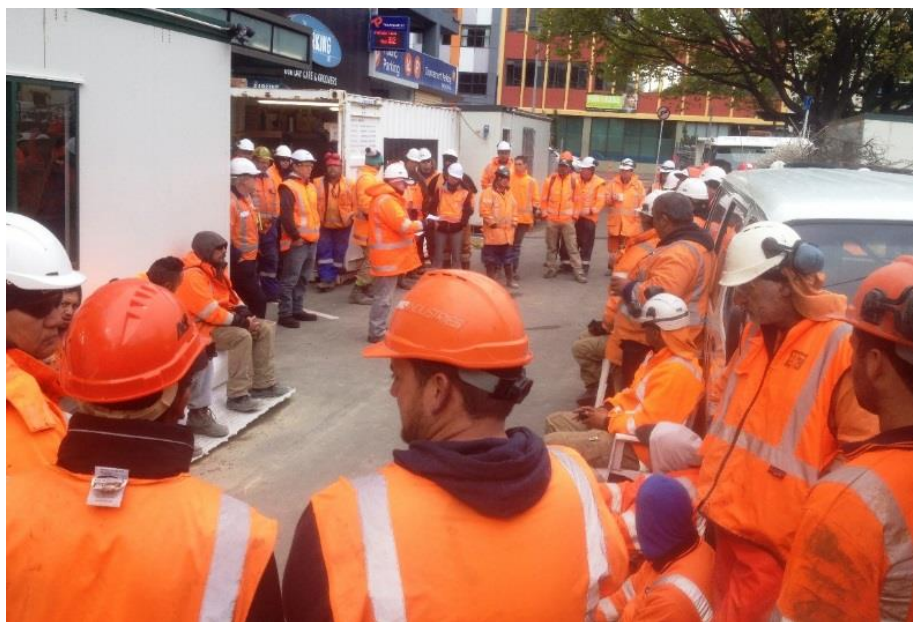
- Involving stakeholders in the regular site health and safety audits
- Surveying pedestrians and cyclists on their perspectives rather than just auditing work sites as normal best practice requires. This allowed passersby to become part of the team and enabled continual improvements to the construction process.

*"From the stakeholder perspective, the strongest areas of the Alliance's performance on the Victoria Street Transformation project were the helpfulness and safety-consciousness of construction staff, and the way the Alliance communicated and interacted with interested parties; at least two thirds of respondents said they were satisfied with the Alliance's performance in these areas (see Figure 1 below). Perceptions of the helpfulness and safety-consciousness of construction staff have improved considerably since the initial survey in late 2014." **Research NZ***

The project KRAs and KPIs were written to encourage continuous improvement. The KRAs were: Strong Relationships, Proud Legacy, Early Delivery, Responsible Traffic Management, Healthy Environment, and Sound Financial Management. More intensive stakeholder engagement than normal was undertaken. By talking to people on regularly basis, preferably face-to-face, concerns were identified early and addressed, avoiding the need for senior managers and councillors to spend time on issues.

An example is the win-win relationship with a natural health centre whose consulting rooms were beside Volunteer Corner where some of the noisiest and prolonged work was done. The owner explained the detrimental impact the work was having on consultations. On examining the building, MPA saw an inexpensive method was possible for sound-proofing rooms. Wide interior windowsills allowed perspex sheets to be installed to the MPA noise advisor's specifications, reducing noise while maintaining light levels. The sound-proofing solution benefitted MPA's schedule by freeing the team to work at full productivity throughout the day and achieve deadlines.

Another continuous improvement was provision of temporary carparks for disabled parkers when works encroached on two dedicated mobility parks. Ongoing assistance to disabled parkers generated goodwill while allowing MPA to bring the work programme forward by a week. The parks were used heavily because of the Disabled Persons Assembly office beside the works. The relationship began with an apology from MPA – a personal visit with a bouquet – for blocking access one day. It developed into the Assembly having ongoing contact with site staff who would phone to give advance notice and would make temporary parks available in the site compound nearby. In one instance, MPA arranged a taxi when there was no carpark available.



*"The staff were unfailingly polite, pleasant, helpful and friendly. Although it seemed that there was recreational digging outside my office for the whole summer, it was great how tidy each individual task was kept, and how clean and organised the worksites were kept. Also the massive population of road cones keeping workers safe and separated from traffic." Survey respondent*

In just 12 months, Victoria Street was transformed from a dull and unpleasant street with a single sketch of an idea for improvement to a renewed environment including:

- A boulevard with 62 specimen trees – retaining significant elms while adding Italian alder street trees – that will become a leafy refuge in summer and let the full sun through in winter
- 2100m<sup>2</sup> of urban park space, including revamped Volunteer Corner and new Te Niho Park
- 600m cycle lane, including the first protected kerbside cycle lane in Wellington – a trial lane which could lay the foundations for future cycle lanes throughout Wellington City and suburbs
- Targeted addition of 120m of extra traffic lane resulting on the removal of peak hour congestion for buses and cars – a 70-second time saving
- 9000m of underground ducting installed for infrastructure services, including future-proofing ducts for electricity, gas, and Citylink, plus a full provision of the UFB duct network for Chorus
- Accurate GPS mapping of existing and new underground services so they can easily be found for future property development
- Future-proofing for pavement: tree roots protected in tree pits of recycled plastic cells while being prevented from lifting the pavement
- Innovative solutions, including a steel grille walkway over the roots of the established elm tree at Volunteer Corner.

The project's completion has paved the way for a thriving inner city community.

- The street design encourages pedestrian activity, which enables residential development and commercial activity.
- The accelerated project programme, that took advantage of the growing momentum on Victoria Street, has aligned with property development plans without a lengthy period of disruption.
- Underground infrastructure is now future-proofed to reduce development costs.
- Applications have already been received for commercial activity on the new wide footpaths and park spaces, bringing the street to life.
- The 1000-student Whitireia/WelTec campus is underway and the St Peter's apartment complex is selling now



*Te Niho Park*



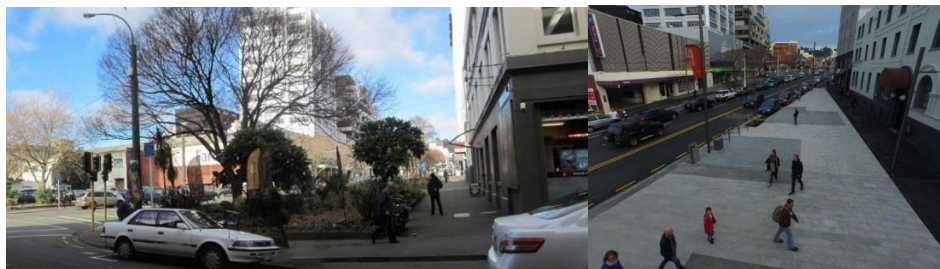


*Aerial view - Te Niho Park turns carpark into an urban park with seating for leisure with scope for restaurants and bars to spill out as development occurs. The dedicated cycle lane, while marked, has yet to be painted green in this photo.*

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

Volunteer Corner was a difficult part of the project to approach. It was planted by the Wellington Volunteer Trust in 2001 and was clearly important to them, but had fundamental flaws with narrow paths around it, poor lighting that encouraged crime, and no space for people to sit and relax. Early discussion with the Volunteer Trust identified the elements that were important to them, and the benefits they saw in providing more space for the events they like to hold there.

The garden could therefore be completely remodelled, but another challenge came from the clash between the desired new widened footpath and the roots of a large elm in a raised planter. To preserve the tree, and develop a wide inviting path on the pedestrian desire line, an innovative steel walkway was constructed over the roots.



*BEFORE – narrow path beside large disused garden bed AFTER – room to move*







*Volunteer Corner innovation with steel grille walkway protecting tree roots. In the background, Wellington on a Plate pop-up doughnut container takes advantage of the open space created by the remodelling of Volunteer Corner into an urban park.*



*Volunteer Wellington representatives were involved in decisions around the revamp of Volunteer Corner. Pictured here planting the special Volunteer Camellia cultivar are past and present Volunteer Wellington representatives with Deputy Mayor Justin Lester. From left, Ann Hodson, Justin Lester, Charlie Devenish and Pauline Harper.*



## CYCLEWAY

Wellington is by no means immune to the polarizing effect cycleways can have, but the 600m cycle lane, including the protected section in one block, was introduced with relatively little fuss.

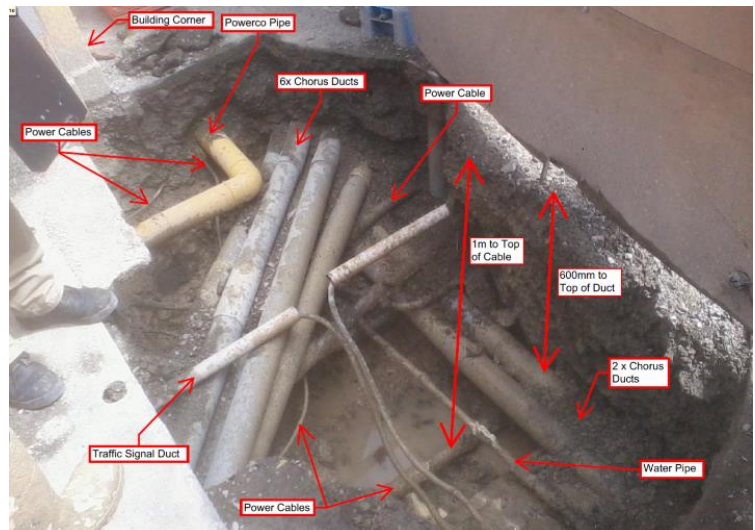
An early challenge occurred when some cycle advocates formed the view that the project was solely about making improvements for motor cars with no concern for cycling. A conversation with them began with a cycle ride through Victoria St as it was followed by the first of three meetings to talk through the project and the design challenges for the cycle lane.

A very positive outcome was achieved with a strong sense of agreement, and none of the “them and us” banter that normally seems to fill letters to the editor pages. This occurred against the backdrop of removing 34 parking spaces, which went through unopposed.

*“What impressed me was the way that the Alliance listened to the needs of cyclists. I think the raised platform round the southernmost bus stop is quite an innovative solution to the problem of the existing street configuration, given its busy traffic.” Survey respondent*

## UNDERGROUND SERVICES

Telecommunications, gas, and water service providers all came on board to upgrade and future-proof their services. The strong relationships formed with them also enabled rapid resolution of clashes when unmarked services were encountered underground.



*Utility companies collaborated with the team to future-proof underground service ducts and pipes.*

## KEY LEARNINGS

This was the first alliance for Wellington City Council. An opportunity presented itself to achieve a step change, and Council took the opportunity setting an extreme target, which was achieved with the correct culture and the right incentives. Four key learnings emerged that can be transferred to others:

- Have a relationship with your construction team – help them out whenever you can, and they'll pull out all the stops to help you achieve your objectives.
- Don't skimp on resources to engage with the community – keep talking and answering questions and you'll soon build trust with even the most unlikely of characters.
- Explain the good side – make sure the community knows why you're spending their money and disrupting their lives, and why it's good for them.
- Keep telling good news stories – people do actually like to hear them. They help Councillors deal with any negative issues that reach them, and the media will often use your material if you're doing their job for them!

*"The newsletters were very good and the staff all had a good idea of what was coming up. If they didn't, they passed you on to someone who did. Fantastic staff on the ground at all levels." **Survey respondent***

## LAST WORD

“I just wanted to pass on my congratulations and thanks for the fantastic job Wellington City Council have done on Victoria Street upgrade.

I have lived in the area for almost 2 years (but in Wellington for around 10) and was really pleased when work started in this area. It's great to see the council being proactive about continuous improvement, rather than letting areas get completely run down before prioritising them. I have really enjoyed seeing Victoria Street come to life over the last few months and think it's already made a significant difference to the area.


I was really disheartened to see the Dominion Post had used a purposely misleading title on the front page article today. It was a shame that they felt the need to turn a generally positive article into an opportunity to imply the opposite.

As a resident of the area, I was subjected to the noise and general inconvenience of the upgrade. However, in my opinion it has totally been worth it and everyone involved should be celebrated!!!

Could you please also pass on my appreciation to the construction workers involved? I walk to work through the city every day and they were extremely respectful at all times of the project. On many occasions I saw them going out of their way to help pedestrians cross safely, clearing pathways and just being generally very happy and friendly. I think they did a fantastic job, in a very busy and difficult area. Thanks again and keep it up.”

***Email from local resident in response to negative newspaper headline***



Support Material	<p>✓ Link to a 2–3 minute video uploaded on YouTube  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rG6Dlb94F3c&amp;feature=player_embedded">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rG6Dlb94F3c&amp;feature=player_embedded</a></p> <p>✓ PowerPoint Slide in the correct 16:9 widescreen format</p> <p>✓ An electronic file of your Organisation's Logo (in a format suitable for print, preferably an EPS with transparent background)</p> <p>✓ Confirmation that a ticket has been purchased for our Gala Dinner</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):</p>
Requesting a space at The Marketplace (please note that space is limited – SOLGM will advise if the requested space is available shortly after entries close)	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Please tick if your organisation wishes to book a Booth at The Marketplace to showcase your project. The booth must include at least one representative from your organisation being available at The Marketplace from 12pm to 6pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April (allow extra time before and after these times for set up and pack up) to talk about your project. The booth measures 2.4m wide and 1.2m deep and the surrounding panels can be used to for displaying project collateral. The booths will come with power, a small plinth and a stool.</p>
Contact Details (The person to contact at your organisation in respect to this entry)	<p>Name: Anna Harley  Phone: 021 247 8733  Email: anna.harley@wcc.govt.nz</p>
Signature of your organisation's Chief Executive or Nominee	<p>Signature: <u></u></p> <p>Name: <u>KEVIN LUNDY</u></p> <p>Title: <u>CEO</u> Date: <u>3/2/2016</u></p>
Entry Instructions:	<p>Once completed please print, sign, scan and email this Entry to <a href="mailto:Raymond.horan@solgm.org.nz">Raymond.horan@solgm.org.nz</a> to reach him no later than 5pm on 3 February 2016. Please also attach to the email your support material as noted above. If you have not already done so please purchase at least one ticket (required as a condition of each entry) to the Gala Dinner.</p>