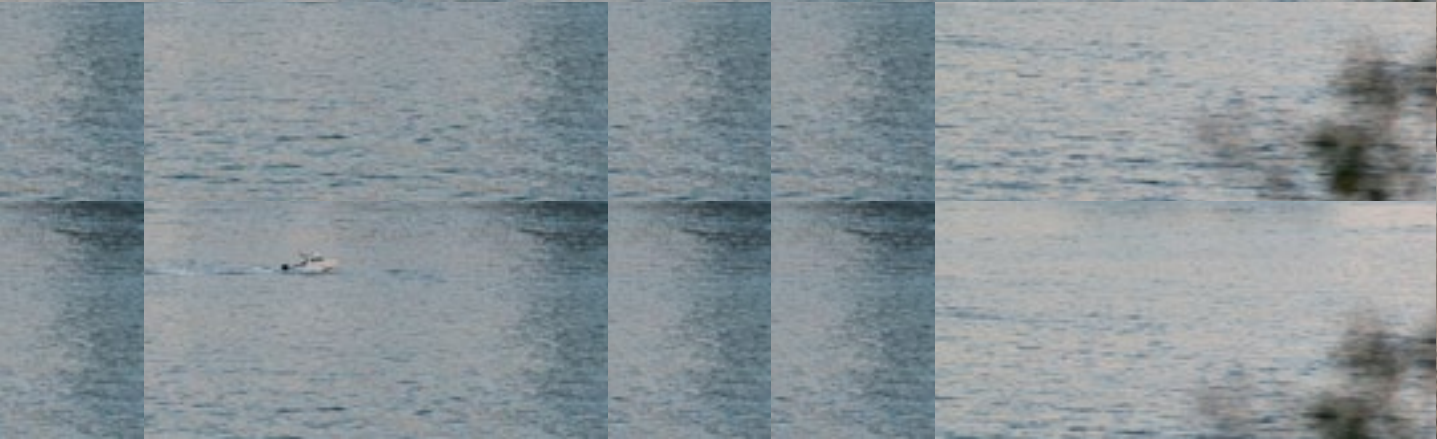
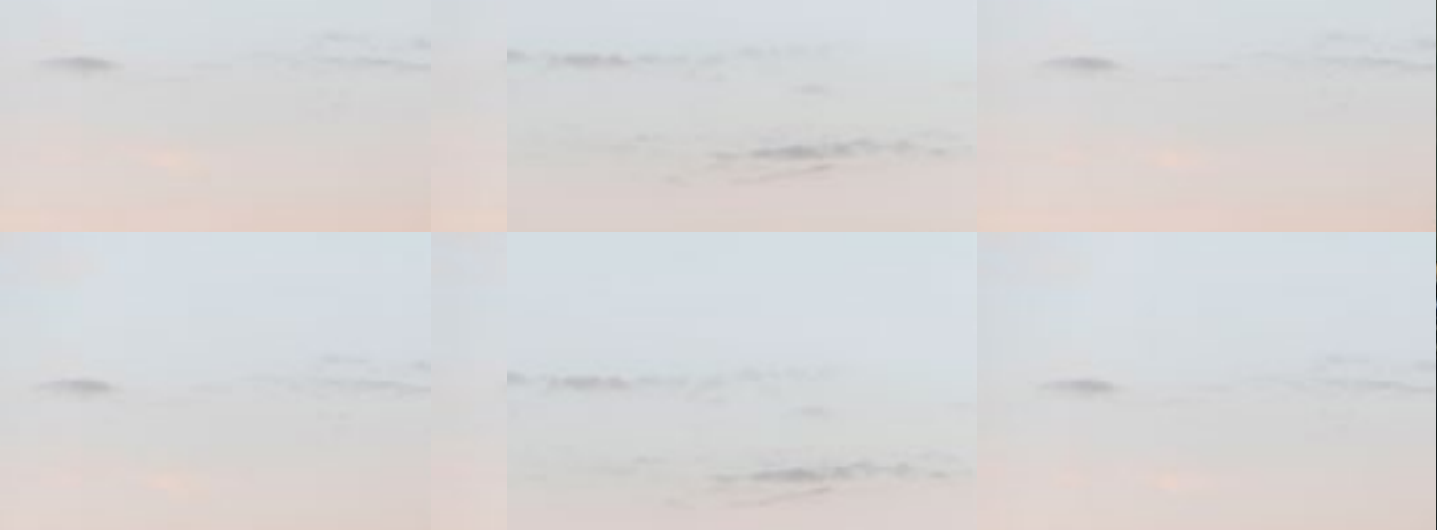


A CITY OF

UN

1

▶▶ SOUL



A CITY

▶▶ OF SOUL

Since its beginnings the centre of Tāmaki Makarau has been a place of constant evolution in how it is inhabited, visited, and built.

▶▶ TĀMAKI MAKAU-RAU
TĀMAKI HERENGA WAKA
TĀMAKI HERENGA TANGATA

Auckland has been and we hope always will be a place to trade, to work, to gather, and to live. Unlike other New Zealand cities its growth and development is not guided by a Colonial master-plan nor does it radiate out from say the intersection of historical pathways.

Auckland is a port city; with a cultural depth as rich and layered as its topography is complex.

Perhaps because it is at heart a place of commerce, of all our cities the evolution of Auckland's centre seems to have experienced and expressed each era of New Zealand's modern history in the most definitive way.

It will soon be three years since February 2020 when Covid-19 arrived into our collective consciousness, affecting every aspect of our lives. We withdrew into our homes, and to some extent into ourselves. Only in recent months have we been able to fully enjoy rediscovering the life and culture of our city.

Covid hit the momentum of Auckland's centre hard. The city-centre became quiet as workers, students, and visitors stayed away.

Although it is no-doubt a vital enabler of our city's future, the heavy construction activity of CRL meant many simply blocked the centre of our city from their psychological 'map' of where and how to spend their time. The impact on the property sector has been significant, and recent publicity revealing the depth of Auckland Council's fiscal hole suggests Covid will cast a long shadow.

As tourists return and summer begins our city-centre is beginning to come alive again. With this we have an opportunity to re-energise and perhaps reframe ideas around how the centre of our city can develop, including its role in our lives. Auckland has had periods and pockets of unintentional or badly conceived development, and this has led to our centre being unloved or perhaps less loved by its people than it could be. It is vital that we re-engage in debating and defining the future direction of our city.

In late August we assembled a group of 15 leaders to simply enjoy connecting, and sharing in a conversation about the future of the centre of our city, in what will soon be called the Post-COVID era.

This document records that conversation. We hope you enjoy it.

▶▶ JOHN COOP

Managing Director
Warren and Mahoney

Tāmaki Makaurau
Auckland

THE

▶▶ 15 PEOPLE

▶▶ 3 PROVOCATIONS

▶▶ 3 HOUR SPRINT

▶▶ 1 EXPERT FACILITATOR

▶▶ **WORKSHOP**

PARTICIPANTS



▶ **AMELIA LINZEY**

Beca

▶ **SCOTT PRITCHARD**

Precinct Properties

▶ **AMY MALCOLM**

AUT University

▶ **SIMON NEALE**

University of Auckland

▶ **ANGELA BULL**

VHHL

▶ **STEVE ARMITAGE**

Heart of the City

▶ **CALLUM MALLET**

SkyCity

▶ **TIM LAMONT**

Lamont & Co

▶ **IZZY FENWICK**

Fenwick Group

▶ **TOM IRVINE**

Ngāti Whātua Orakei

▶ **MARK LAMBERT**

Auckland Transport

▶ **WAYNE SILVER**

Willis Bond

▶ **MATTHEW COCKRAM**

Cooper & Co

Additional Contributions By:

▶ **NICK HILL**

Auckland Unlimited

▶ **FRANCES VALINTINE**

The Mind Lab

▶ **SAIA MATAELE**

PWC

▶ **KIRSTEN LACY**

Auckland Art Gallery



MICHAEL

11

"Auckland has a compelling story but in a global arms race for talent, it needs to work harder for those who choose to live and work here."

TOM

"Diversity is a fact, inclusion is a choice, belonging is a wonderful feeling. We have an opportunity and an obligation to make the city centre a celebration of culture."

▶ IRVINE



12



FENWICK

IZZY

"70% of Auckland's Central residents are aged 15 - 35, yet the voice of young people is absent in so many conversations about how the city should function."

SCOTT

"The role of a city centre continues to evolve. For Auckland's centre to succeed long-term, it needs to offer compelling spaces, be it spaces to live, spaces to work and spaces to be entertained."

▶ PRITCHARD

16



FIVE IDEAS FOR

We crunched the
conversation into five
themes that provide
a north point for
Auckland's future.

▶▶ **A CITY WITH SOUL**

STIR THE

▶ WHAKAARAARA I NGA TAIRONGO

24

The great cities of the world are melting pots of history, whereby influxes of different travellers and cultures have generationally left their imprint on a place through their charisma and necessity to survive the only way that was known at the time.

▶ SENSES

The streets wear their scars and stories, of which there are many left by trade, revolutions, evolutions, and war. It was common for people to reside in the claustrophobic foundations of the city as they were the people that serviced it and provided the entertainment to its visitors. Whether it be the red-light districts or the markets, these places were and still are the epicentre of activity in the depths of the city's soul, if not the beating heart, the very stirring of the senses. Often, a city benefits from a presence of narrow streets and dark alleys, some of which are only accessible on foot, with a tightness of space which confines the sounds, smells and intensity of the atmosphere, they are rife to be turned into a modern adaptation, just look at Melbourne.



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Auckland has a chequered past of its own, yet it seemingly has been gentrified to the point of eradication. Any semblance of debauchery and decadence is found on Karangahape Road, which as it turns out is rated as one of the 'coolest' roads for this very reason. Our inner CBD street network has lost its balls, the red lights of fort street and fort lane are sanitised, the bubbling industry of high street with its alternative stores and music venues gone.

We are left with vacant stores and overpowering rent requirements pushing away the service and entertainment community of the city. And where have all the youth gone? Music, art, and commerce, the three primary reasons to come to a city are missing. Commerce is thriving for the wealthy, but the second-hand stores, the markets and the hustle is absent. Without hustle, we have no energy and no youth, without youth there can be no future. We need to reprise the once evident spirit of the working classes and feed their souls, allowing organic and spiritual growth, accepting the good and the ugly - especially the ugly.



▶ REPURPOSE THE BRUTAL, MAKE IT BEAUTIFUL

There is an age that has recently been whereby the answer to a solution was to 'knock it down and start again' on the premise that it will save time and money. To have any chance of climate change we can ill afford to keep destroying and replacing, we must refurbish and renew at all scales. There are an abundance of creaking buildings and structures from the 80's and 90's in the CBD that do not need to be replaced but to be reconsidered.

Carparks are littered along the northern axis of the city and in a world of serviceable public transport, these are primed to become sheltered spaces for alternative activities - they could easily hold markets for instance. They could also become interesting spaces for performance and art, a blank canvas such as the railway arches have become in London and Berlin.

Alternately, they can become green spaces, if the highline in Manhattan has taught us anything is that inner-city gardens can capture the heart of the inner-city residents. A car park could be one big urban allotment over the six stories, literally teeming with plant life and edible greenery to support the community.

▶ WE BRING THE SOUNDS OF THE ENLIVENED CITY BACK

There is nowhere on earth like Soho in London on a summers evening. You can hear it the moment you pop your head out of the tube; the hustle, bustle and brimming energy of the theatrical district practically wins you over before you have seen it. People can stand on the streets, sing in the basements and swing in the clubs and it is an all-encompassing freedom. People live there too you know.

It is the bohemian heart of the city, and it is forever encouraged to be so. Film, theatre, music, LGBTQIA+ epicentre of all things magical. Where our youth comes together to learn to be themselves. We have a chance to bring this to our city centre, we just need to consider the density and population scale of the spaces.

▶ PERFORMANCE DISTRICT

Identifying High Street as a key connector and offering subsidised / lowered rents, changing restrictions to enable performance spaces to occur, be it venues or street performance. Somewhere to entertain the new residents of the Queen Street neighbourhood. The old tenancies could be dance studios for our future generations to learn the kapa haka or ballet.

▶ ARTIST / DESIGN QUARTER

Fort Street and surrounding streets could repurpose old tenancies and encourage discounted rents for artists and small design businesses to take up leases. Bringing our creativity into our city, concentrating and supporting each other, all within walking distance of the bohemia above.

▶ GLAMOURISE GRIT

We should approach our urban planning and architecture to embrace youth culture, be it street art or skateboarding. Rather than designing to prohibit it, design to enable it. If you look at the success of the Southbank in London, it achieves both the gravitas of being a national home of film while also a magnet for the next Tony Hawk in its bowels.

In Auckland, focussing on Aotea Square would be a start. Instead of a giant wind-swept public square, it could be an epic bounce park and skating park, flanked by large freestanding walls for street art to appear. Basketball courts and ball sports encouraged, bringing our love for outdoor activity to the urban heart. This is a micro economy, supporting the trials and tribulations of a maturing but increasingly inactive teenage population.

There's something energising,
and a little bit rebellious
about using a building in a
way it wasn't intended.



LONG LIVE

▶ WHAKATIPUORA A HOROTIU

On July 10, 1858 Auckland suffered its first large-scale fire. Estimates suggest around 50 buildings and £30,000 of property on High Street were destroyed.

Queen Street - with its wider carriageways that facilitated better firefighting - was largely spared. As a result, it became the de facto hub of commercial activity we know today.

▶▶ THE QUEEN

Stretching over three kilometres from Newton Road in the south to the waters edge in the north, Queen Street has long defined Auckland's city centre.

But its function is changing. New commercial development in Britomart, Commercial Bay, Viaduct Harbour and Wynyard Quarter has pulled Auckland's centre of gravity in an east-west direction. This makes sense, stretching along the waterfront utilises one of Auckland's great assets. However, this development in conjunction with the disruption caused by City Rail Link has left Queen Street in need of a renewed purpose and identity.

A clue for Queen Street's future role might be found in census data. Queen Street's resident population more than doubled between 2006 and 2018 - this aligns with anecdotal evidence that central city living has found new resonance.

So there's demand, but if we're honest, Queen Street isn't set up for residential success. A proliferation of one and two bedroom apartments hasn't created the diversity of accommodation or amenity needed to attract a wide range of people. For Queen Street to become a vibrant, mixed use neighbourhood it needs more three and four bedroom apartments, that support a diverse residential population.

We have simultaneous housing and climate crises. The two are inextricably linked and as a result there are very few opportunities to make meaningful contributions to both at once.

That makes the opportunity to undertake a large-scale, coordinated conversion of the existing B and C grade commercial buildings on Queen Street's mid and uptown unique.

Many of these buildings are nearing the end of their useable life. Covid and the shift to work from home has changed the economics that supported these buildings. Creating a diversity of accommodation options will provide a catalyst for more amenity and attract a more diverse range of residents.

This is critical because communities who operate on different schedules create passive safety because there's always eyes on the street.

In addition, adaptive reuse provides a significant advantage in embodied carbon. By reusing existing concrete and steel structures we can create a suite of net zero carbon apartments that will stand as a beacon for Auckland's city centre future.

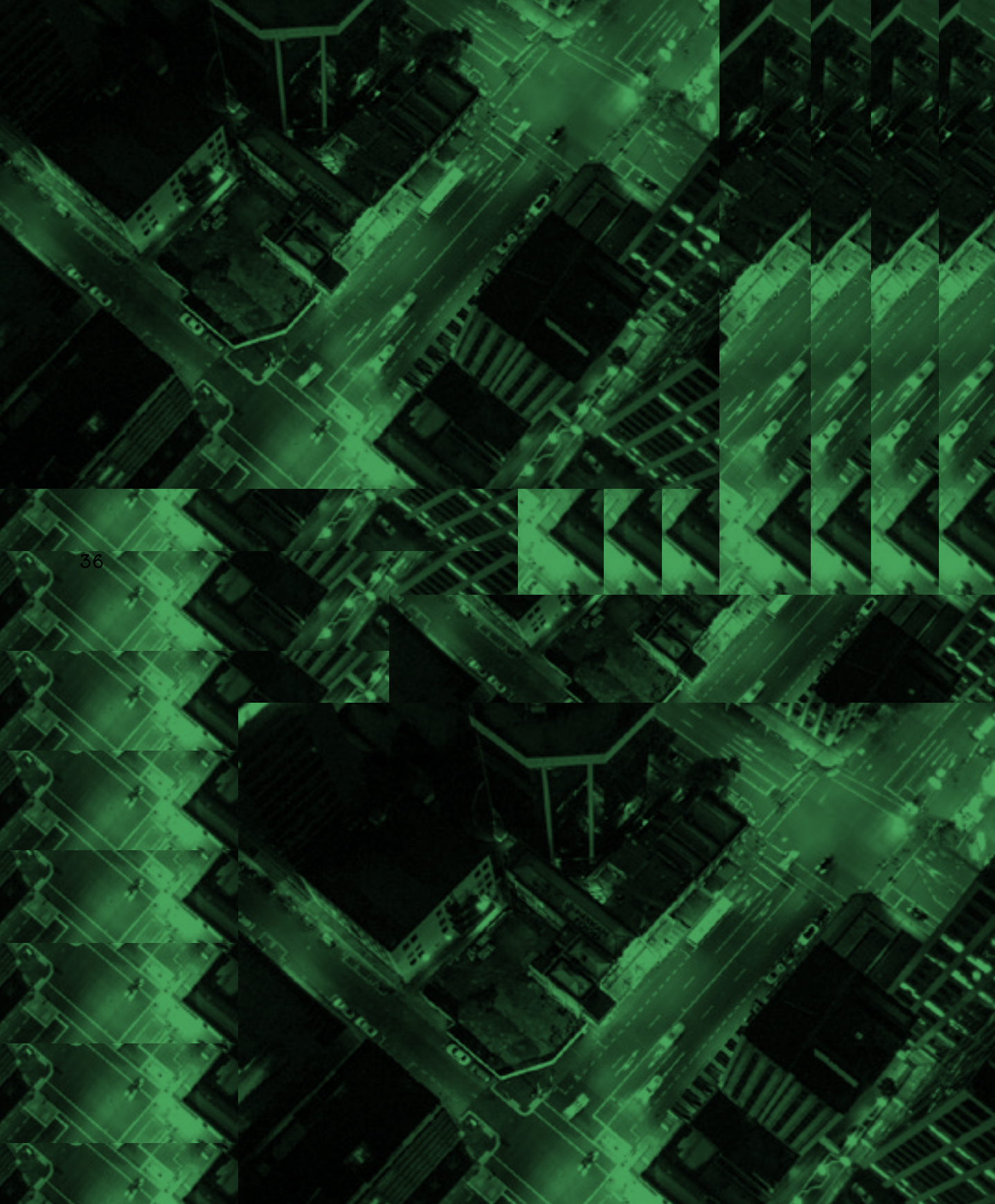


What if we converted, at scale, the existing B and C grade commercial buildings on Queen Street's mid and uptown to residential - providing a thriving, affordable inner city community.

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AUCKLAND IN A

▶ ITEHAU TAHI

Great cities have symbols
and rituals. These compact
experiences make you feel
like you belong, if only
for a minute.

▶▶ SINGLE SERVE



In New York it's taking a yellow cab to Central Park, in Rome it's people watching around a piazza, in Bangkok it's stopping for late night street food. These distinct rituals form the powerful images that create wanderlust and represent Auckland's brand on a global stage.

When you visit Auckland, if only for a day stopover on a ship or an evening after a conference, our rituals aren't immediately clear. For a city with so many assets on our doorstep, we perhaps can be forgiven for neglecting the welcome mat. Auckland's welcome mat is Te Komititanga - Lower Queen Street. Sitting at the intersection of commuters, retailers, leisure seekers, commerce goers and tourists, Te Komititanga should be Auckland in its most intense and most compact form.

Auckland is a hub for Pacific people, with two thirds of Pacific residents, and over half of Pacific business owners located in the region. Auckland has earned its 'mana' but there's more we could do to amplify and intensify this position.

With the return of the first cruise ships to our port and the soon to be completed New Zealand International Convention Centre now is the time to consider the type of guest experience we want to create and the impression we want to leave behind.

As a group we discussed how we can better acknowledge and celebrate Tāmaki's natural beauty - its maunga (volcanic cones), its moana (harbours), its awa (waterways), and its benign climate that supports abundance, wellbeing, and connection to nature. Here are some of the ideas we came up with:

THE
MARKET PLACE
THE CITY
MARKET PLACE

Does commerce
in a cultural way.

Does commerce
in a cultural way.

Connect land
+
water

RESTORE THE MAURI
(LIFE FORCE) OF THE WHENUA

EMBRACE
STREET FOOD
CULTURE

Wai Horotui
as our central
park...

Horotui
central

Wai Horotui





Reveal the whenua beneath the city, experience the Wai Horoitū that still runs beneath Queen Street to the harbour through a series of regenerative landscape episodes that trace the valley's origins.

A vision of Queen Street/
Wai Horotiu
from Chris Dews

A PLACE FOR

▶▶ HE MAHI TAMARIKI

Across the world, city populations tend to skew young. And they're getting younger. Research by UN-HABITAT predicts that by 2030, 60% of urban populations will be under the age of 18. Auckland is no different, 58% are aged 15-29 and 70% aged between 15-35.

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▶▶ THE NEXT GENERATION



We have made significant improvement in the engagement and design processes that capture diversity and inclusion, but there is more to be done. One of these areas is capturing the voice of young people in policy making, design conversations and city development. For a group that is so prevalent in population data, their voice is significantly under-represented.

What would our city look like if it was designed by our bright, tolerant, ambitious youth? They are our next workforce and future leaders. Young people who grew up in the digital age. Who will ask brave questions that are unhindered by prejudice?

45



How do we shape the next iteration of co-design so that it can include schools and universities in a two-way exchange of learning? Could this inspire a new generation to engage with their city's urban heart? Could it create thinkers and dreamers who see the built environment not as something that has always been, but something they can proactively shape for the better.

What would it do for young people to know their city cares about their voice and their opinions and is willing to invest in the physical infrastructure required to make it happen? Could that be the antidote to the pandemic of anxiety and self-esteem gripping youth culture?

What if the future of Auckland's city centre was designed by our bright, tolerant, ambitious youth? They are our next workforce and future leaders.





LEARNING IN

► HE AKORANGA A ROTO

Over 2,000 school-age children leave the city centre everyday as there are no state schools in the area. This creates an impediment to building a strong inner-city community because many social ties are formed when children attend local schools.

► THE CENTRE

Children play together, parents and caregivers connect and school life operates on a different schedule to work life, activating streets and spaces throughout the day.

The need for an inner city school has long been identified. In 2017 the Ministry of Education began planning for a typology called a Metro School. Recognising that space is at a premium, metro schools differ from our conventional understanding of a school in a number of important ways;

- » Located on compact sites they are typically vertical structures spread over multiple floors. They can potentially be leased space within an existing building.
- » They make use of community amenities such as fields, gyms and pools, rather than having their own. Given the typical school schedule, these uses can be complimentary to current uses. For example, Victoria Park is often busy before work, at lunch times and after work hours, but relatively empty during periods of the day when a school would look to utilise it.

- » They draw on their location to enrich the educational experience for students, e.g. through access to museums and libraries, and connections with local businesses which can lead to work placements the same way many of Universities function.
- » They have safe integrations with public transport to avoid additional downtown vehicle congestion





Proximity counts. Research has shown that when students attend a school near their home, families can more easily connect with teachers and contribute as school volunteers and leaders.

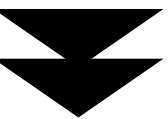
The closer a student lives to their school, the more access the parents have to the resources at that school. Families who did not previously have the time or resources to travel to their children's distant schools, now have the ability to participate in their education. With increased access to the schools, parents will become more involved. Studies have shown that parent involvement in their children's education is strongly linked to academic performance enroll in higher-level programmes, pass their classes and earn credits, attend school regularly and have better social skills among many other benefits.

▶ A CALL FOR COLLABORATION

Conceptually then, vertical or metro schools solve many challenges, but it's a concept not without its limitations. For example, we need to ensure pedestrian connection to parks and transport are safe, deal with noise spill, provide soft surfaces for play, greenery for calm and create school identity and pride within a building that may be shared by other tenants.

All these challenges are possible to overcome with design innovation and a collaboration between many of our local agencies working in partnership. It simply requires us to see the provision of local schools as critical to our city's future.

IN SUMMARY



**LIVE
THERE**

**WORK
THERE**

**PLAY
THERE**

**EAT
THERE**

**INVEST
THERE**

**CREATE
THERE**

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**LEARN
THERE**





BE BORN THERE



RAISE YOUR FAMILY THERE

GROW OLD THERE



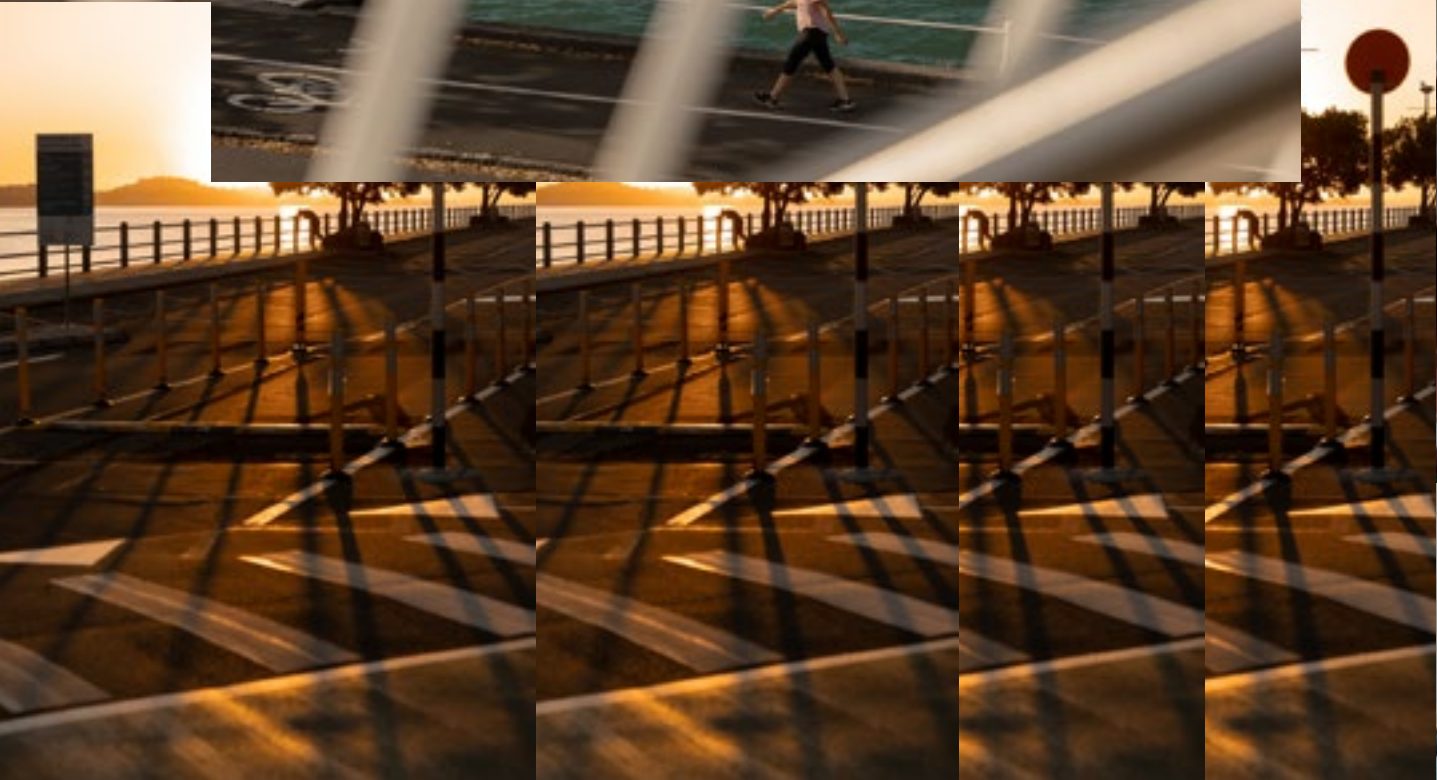
BE PART OF A COMMUNITY THERE

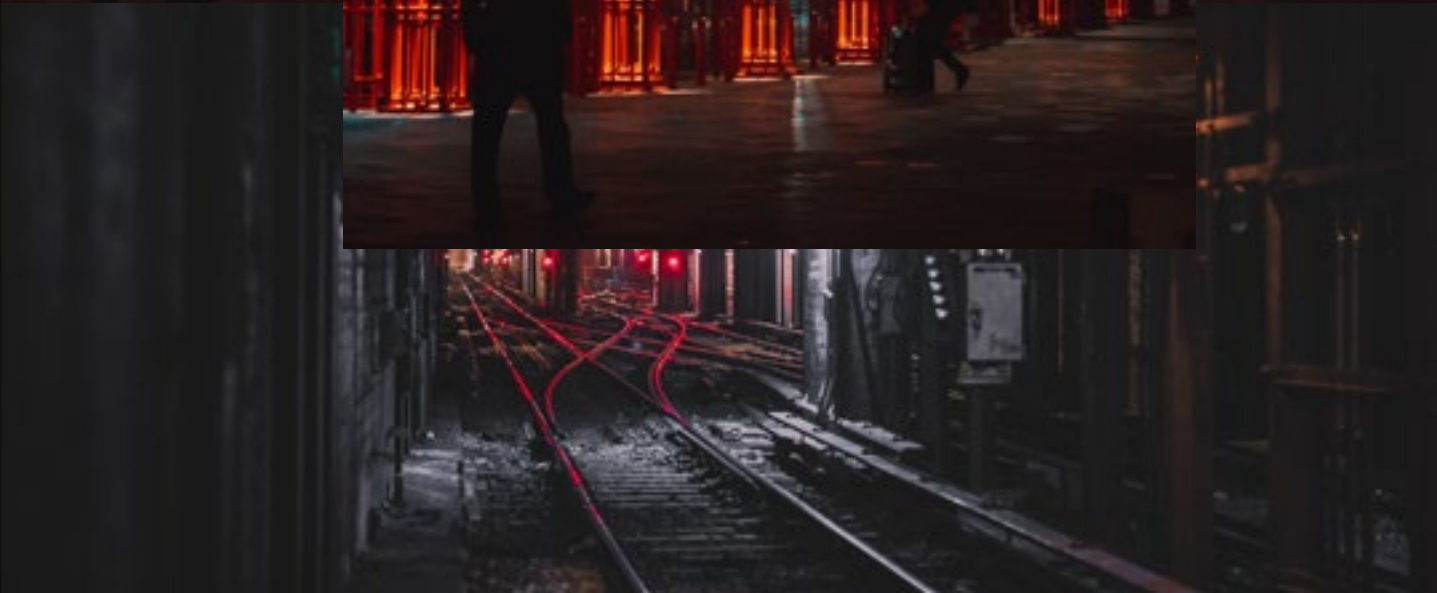
**A PLACE YOU CAN
LIVE A WHOLE LIFE IN**

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▶ A CITY WITH SOUL







► CONTRIBUTORS

Adrien Olichon
Amelia Linzey
Amy Malcolm
Angela Bull
Annebell Dogger
Barry Tobin
Blair Johnston
Callum Mallet
Cameron McLaren
Chris Dews
Dev Benjamin
Fiona Feng
Frances Valentine
Gabrielle Gatt
Izzy Fenwick
Jannis Lucas
Jayson Urlich
John Coop
Jono Parker
Joseph Nguyen
Juan Roldan
Justin Crook
Katie Scott
Kirsten Lacy

Kishan Modi
Leon Li
Mark Lambert
Matthew Cockram
Nick Hill
Oliver Haydon
Richard Archbold
Rod Marler
Saia Mataele
Sam Harris
Scott Compton
Scott Pritchard
Simon Neale
Steve Armitage
Te Ari Prendergast
Tim D
Tim lamont
Tom Irvine
Tristan Dixon
Vajini Pannila
Wayne Silver
Whare Timu
Zack Brame

