These are uncertain times. In developing the draft Auckland Plan we focused on the things most likely to bring about a great future for Aucklanders. Working together we can achieve a great deal.

There are, however, other possible futures for Auckland. Especially if we ignore how complex the world is becoming and how fast the landscape is changing.

A plan for Auckland which looks out 30 years will have some definite answers to some issues, but other areas will be far from certain.

This section of the Auckland Plan explores a small number of plausible futures for Auckland. These are not predictions, forecasts, or preferences. They are simply an initial exploration of what could be.

Alongside positive global achievements such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, there are a number of possible situations that are less positive.

Nations and cities are becoming more unequal. Enduring poverty remains. The dislocation of people across borders is unprecedented. Climate events dislodge many more people from their homes. Water and food shortages are more widespread. Trade protectionism and ‘wall building’ is in a new phase. An era of work dominated by artificial intelligence and automation has arrived. Many people feel isolated.

Whilst Auckland may be remote, we are still affected in this increasingly interconnected world. In developing this Auckland Plan, Aucklanders have expressed uncertainty as they see it in various ways.

They have talked about:
- a two-step Auckland of haves and have nots
- the effects of Auckland’s rapidly growing and increasingly diverse population
- Auckland’s perception as a global ‘safe haven’
- the effects and opportunities of innovative and accessible technology
- the move to better reconnect people and place
- the importance of living with nature and climate change.

While global trends are shared, so also is a desire for a more inclusive agenda. One that creates better jobs or lifestyles, addresses inequality, reduces poverty, and begins to mend land and waterways – and neighbourhoods and communities, where solutions are often found.

Deeper and more systematic processes for exploring scenarios are being developed and practiced across New Zealand. The dairy and transport sectors are two local sectors doing this well.

A wide base of wisdom and knowledge is needed to help Auckland citizens and leaders explore:
- what they want to avoid
- the trends they want to follow and encourage
- alternative ways of influencing the future, through a thorough process of scenario testing and discussion.

This will be one way the Auckland Plan continues to develop and refine its response to complex issues, and fast-paced change.
Living with nature

> What might be happening?
> What does Auckland look and feel like?
> How might we be living?

Extreme weather events cause significant disruption to domestic and export food production. This has gone beyond late potatoes and tomatoes, and now limits our fishing exports. Water scarcity in the Waikato means Aucklanders have had to find alternative sources of drinking water.

Sea level rise has reclaimed areas earlier than forecast – Devonport and other new islands have formed in the Gulf.

Tamaki Drive and a number of east coast suburbs are set back to their original solid ground prior to landfilling.

Helensville has reverted to its former estuarine nature – meaning a re-routing of the Main Trunk line northwards.

Storm surges have removed many coastal manmade structures: boat ramps, seawalls, bridges and culverts. Unstable cliffs and shorelines are being fenced off. Havoc on exposed roads is more frequent. Flooding is common, regularly overwhelming waste water and stormwater systems and dumping silt everywhere as riverbank vegetation has been swept away.
Safe haven

> What might be happening?
> What does Auckland look and feel like?
> How might we be living?

In this future, Auckland is one of the world’s safest places, growing rapidly upwards of 3.5 million. About half of the arrivals are citizens coming home. We have welcomed others escaping global tensions and climate change. Auckland is open.

Auckland decided how to grow, what its air and water could support – infrastructure supported rather than dictated growth. We recruited offshore experience and matched it with Kiwis to unblock the infrastructure backlog. To a point.
The people’s network

> What might be happening?
> How might we be living?
> What does Auckland look and feel like?

A bottom-up, community based mobility and connection concept emerged from public road safety campaigns around our schools. It's a green network with an 'off road' status. It's something local people on the Auckland isthmus took on and developed. At its heart was a 50km greenway that circled the isthmus, and other areas across Auckland have followed suit.

It’s a natural by-way with few concrete barriers and little white paint. It’s a deregulated space – for the people. Permits aren’t required for street parties or small neighbourhood festivals on the People’s Network as long as others can get through or are welcome to stop and enjoy.

Any kind of mobility contraption can use the people’s route. With electric ‘vehicles’ of all sorts now freely available for all ages and levels of ability on wheels, the People’s Network is not just for bicycles.
Whose food bowl?

> What might be happening?
> How might we be living?
> What does Auckland look and feel like?

Auckland is determined to be part of the solution to Asia’s food security problem, working with New Zealand’s reputation for safe food. Auckland’s self-sufficiency in food is used as part of its branding.

Auckland’s primary industries sector has become the one to watch. Land is being opened up for food production at a higher value than for houses.

The biotech industry in Auckland grew revenue compounding year on year by 30 per cent fuelled by entrepreneurs disrupting the food industry with meatless meat, synthetic milk and techniques to grow food indoors under LED lights.

Auckland is supplying more protein to Asia through the long standing Free Trade Agreement with China, supplying cheese, and fish and aquaculture farmed in the warm, clean waters of the Hauraki Gulf.
Two speed Auckland

What might be happening?

How might we be living?

What does Auckland look and feel like?

Disparity has stubbornly remained. The equality of the 1970s is a distant memory that shows no sign of returning. There is an obvious divide between those with homes and work, and those without.

The gap between the top and lower earners hasn’t shifted, but the middle income white collar workers, unprepared for the massive technology disruption of the early 2020s, have been hit hardest.

Joblessness has doubled to 1980 levels. This time, the new era dominated by artificial intelligence, augmented reality, driverless vehicles, and 3D printing has hollowed out whole sectors: tourism, legal services, insurance, teaching…

Inequality shows up in all areas, between incomes and work, in housing, in schools and achievement. Areas known for poor health and overcrowding are worse; middle income areas are following this pattern. High income earners remain untouched.