AUCKLAND’S LOCATION GIVES THE CITY CENTRE SOME WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITIES, MANY OF WHICH ARE RIPE FOR REALISATION.
OPPORTUNITIES – THE CITY CENTRE’S ATTRIBUTES

BELOW ARE THE CITY CENTRE’S MAIN OPPORTUNITIES, BUT THE LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE.

1. A FANTASTIC NATURAL SETTING
   Auckland’s location offers a unique landscape and beautiful natural surroundings. Its waterfront position is the city’s greatest asset.

2. A WONDERFUL WATERFRONT WITH AN ACTIVE HARBOUR
   The foreshore and harbour offer great potential for promenades, living space and recreational activity. Auckland also benefits from an active harbour, which creates a special atmosphere. Our marinas accommodate many yachts and host international maritime events. The upgrade and subsequent success of Viaduct Harbour, Silo Park, and North Wharf are perfect examples of the potential that the harbour holds for the city.

3. A CHARACTERISTIC TOPOGRAPHY
   Auckland enjoys a fantastic and challenging topography that gives the city a unique character. The volcanic field in which the city centre lies lends a distinct flavour to its streetscapes, and occasional views of the water and the landscape from the steep streets are fascinating and alluring. The topography is a blessing, but also a challenge for pedestrians and cyclists in places.
4. A STRONG SENSE OF PLACE, HERITAGE AND CHARACTER

Areas within the city centre and city fringe have a strong sense of place and character that come from heritage, open space, city views and activities. Many of the heritage buildings and places of historic character are not protected, but a proactive approach to managing our heritage places will unlock their full potential. It will add to the popularity of these areas as places to live, work and play, and help define what is unique and distinctive about Auckland.

5. A HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE PLACE

Rail and motorway connections to the city centre make it highly accessible and an efficient location for business. Over the past 10 years, peak-time car volumes in the city centre have dropped slightly and most peak-travel growth has occurred in public transport, walking and cycling. The results of continued efforts to improve interconnections between buses, trains and ferries are encouraging, and reinforce the city centre’s role as a transport hub. The city centre’s accessibility to private motor vehicles remains comparable with similar-scaled cities elsewhere.

6. A MAORI IDENTITY AND EMERGING ECONOMY

Māori culture and identity is celebrated by Aucklanders and is our point of difference in the world. Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) is recognised with Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau exercising their rangatiratanga (self-determination). The mana of Tāmaki Makaurau iwi and hapū is empowered in their customary kaitiaki role. Māori values must be integrated with city centre planning and decision-making.

The Treaty settlement process is a key means of improving the economic and social well-being of Māori. Emerging public and private sector partnerships will further enhance Māori capacity to drive economic growth in the city centre and beyond.
7. MORE PEOPLE LIVING IN THE CITY CENTRE

In the past two decades, the number of residents in the city centre has increased remarkably, and the city is now home to more than 24,000 people. This number is expected to rise to more than 45,000 by 2032. This offers great potential and the need to develop a lively and diverse 24-hour urban realm to support them.

8. A UNIVERSITY CITY

About 60,000 students and more than 9,000 staff work at the city centre’s universities. With many international students living in the city centre invigorating the city lifestyle, there is a reciprocal value of export education, research and innovation. This promotes the identity of Auckland as a university city – ‘town and gown’ – and fosters hubs of development and research that interface with commercial Auckland.

9. THE CITY CENTRE AS A WORKPLACE AND TOURIST DESTINATION

Every working day about 90,000 people come to work in the city centre. They have the potential to promote a lively and active city centre, especially around lunchtime and after hours. The centre’s continued growth will require a further significant step change in public transport provision in the form of the City Rail Link.

Auckland is the gateway to New Zealand, and each year over two million visitors arrive in Auckland by air or cruise ship.
The lack of affordable unit-titled, owner-occupied housing opportunities and the size of residential units in the city centre reduce its appeal to many.

High amenity levels, education facilities and more green and accessible urban and play spaces need to be provided if families with children and older people are to be attracted to city living.

Vacancy levels in the current office stock are considerable. With short- to medium-term growth likely to gravitate towards the waterfront or the Engine Room, the rest of the city centre risks being ‘hollowed out’.

The retail sector is underperforming in relative terms. Most workers and students leave the city centre after office hours, which reduces the night-time economic activity.

Due to their width, layout and high traffic volumes, Quay and Fanshawe Streets represent both a physical and mental barrier between the harbour and the city centre. There are a number of large-scale development opportunities along the edge of the waterfront and city centre that would enable the two to be better 'stitched' together.
A large-scale street layout accommodating a high number of cars dominates the city centre. For pedestrians, this means poor-quality walking environments, inconvenient routes and inefficient travel times.

Britomart has reached its operational capacity and bus congestion will affect the provision of bus service improvements needed to meet population growth.

Additional private motor vehicle capacity on roads is limited, and the provision of a connected and dedicated cycle network is also constrained.

The City Rail Link, along with other public transport measures, is required to relieve these pressures.

Open spaces or green rooms are scattered throughout the city centre, yet lack the attractive pedestrian links between them that would help define an open space network.

The overall pedestrian environment is of poor quality and does not encourage people to walk across the city centre.

Visitor destinations are scattered across the city centre and poor-quality streets and buildings discourage people from walking between them.

As a destination, the city centre lacks depth and coherence, and as a result fails to hold visitors for extended periods.

Some parts of the city centre’s built environment fail to excite and do not create an experience sought by visitors and residents alike.
Some parts of the city centre have an exceptional, high-quality environment, but too many others suffer from a legacy of ill-conceived development, poor management and maintenance, and inadequate investment. There has been significant loss of historic heritage in the city centre over the years, and a number of heritage places continue to suffer from neglect, decay, under-use or insensitive new design.

The city centre is home to a diverse residential community. While for many it provides a city-living lifestyle of choice, for others it can be a hard place to live, particularly those who are in poverty. Improved social infrastructure is required to support current and future residents, with more emphasis on securing an improved minimum standard of accommodation and amenity for the most disadvantaged.

The Auckland Plan lays the foundation for Auckland’s low-carbon, energy-resilient transformation through a focus on green growth. This requires a transformation from a fossil fuel-dependent, high energy-using, high-waste society to a more ‘liveable city’ based on:

- sustainable resource use (including waste minimisation and recycling)
- a quality compact form, (building retrofits, more local energy production)
- an eco-economy and the pursuit of green growth
- efficient transport and energy systems that maximise renewable resources, and minimise reliance on fossil-based fuels.

Aucklanders will be asked to help prioritise which projects should be carried out first, through the Energy and Climate Change Mitigation Strategy. Funding will come from public and private sources.
Auckland is a polycentric region; it is made up of urban centres serving their own communities. But as the focus for economic, cultural and entertainment activity, the city centre is important to the whole region’s success.

Investing in the city centre is an investment in the region’s future prosperity. The economies of scale of a successful city centre will lead to agglomeration productivity gains for Auckland’s businesses’. We must support this economic case by making the city centre more relevant in cultural and entertainment terms.

We need Aucklanders to fall in love with their city centre again, and for going to town to be a part of everyone’s Auckland experience, as it was for previous generations.