
AUCKLAND UNITARY PLAN

Report To: Unitary Plan Political Working Party

Report Name: City Centre Issue Paper – Technical Report

Context

This issue paper forms one of six main issue papers that will assist in guiding the development of Auckland's Unitary Plan. An issue in the context of this paper is a problem or opportunity that needs to be resolved or realised to achieve the sustainable management purpose of the Resource Management Act 1991 ("the Act"). Problems and opportunities must be well defined to enable objectives, policies and methods to address the issue. An issue that is defined and measurable in its extent through indicator monitoring is sought where possible. All issues must be within scope of the purpose and functions of the Act.

This issue paper focuses on the core city centre, being defined as the land contained within the existing motorway network and subject to the Auckland Council District Plan (Auckland City Central Area Section) ("District Plan") and the extent of the waterfront managed by Waterfront Auckland.

The issues facing the city centre are wide ranging and cover all aspects of the built and natural environment. As such, there are overlaps with several of the other topic-based Unitary Plan workstreams. This paper draws from the broad issues identified in the topic-based workstream papers and grounds them in the city centre context.

The issues discussed in this paper are ordered under the key headings listed below. The related Unitary Plan workstreams are noted alongside.

Issue Heading	Unitary Plan Workstream Overlaps
Growth and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth Areas• Land Use Activities	Residential Workstream Business Workstream Heritage, Cultural & Community Workstream
Built Form <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Height, Intensity & Skyline• Architectural Quality & Building Design• Building Demolition & Vacant Land	Business Workstream Heritage, Cultural & Community Workstream
Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historic & Natural Heritage• Historic Character	Heritage, Cultural & Community Workstream
Open Space <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parks & Civic Spaces• Streets & Laneways• Private Open Space• Water Space	Heritage, Cultural & Community Workstream Natural Environment Workstream Rural & Coastal Workstream
Movement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Street Hierarchy & Typology• Pedestrians• Cyclists• Public Transport• Private Vehicles, Parking & Access	Infrastructure Workstream Natural Environment Workstream Heritage, Cultural & Community Workstream
Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Network Utilities• Port	Infrastructure Workstream Rural & Coastal Workstream

This paper identifies the possible broad regulatory and non-regulatory approaches available to address the identified issues. This paper identifies where further research is required to identify options in terms of section 32 of the Act later in the plan development process. The broad approaches identified for the city centre are generally consistent with the approaches identified in the other workstream issue papers.

All of the issues and recommended broad approaches are consistent with the strategic direction established in the draft (unpublished) Auckland Plan, draft (unpublished) City Centre Masterplan ("Masterplan"), draft (unpublished) Economic Development Strategy and the draft Waitemata Local Board Plan.

Prior to amalgamation, the former Auckland City Council developed a draft spatial plan for the city centre in 2009/2010 to inform the then impending review of the District Plan. While unpublished, the draft spatial plan has been used to inform many of the directions contained in the draft Masterplan. Together with the draft Masterplan, the draft spatial plan provides useful context for this issues paper. Relevant base information contained in the unpublished spatial plan and draft Masterplan is incorporated in the paper below where relevant.

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Legislative Requirements & Council Policies

The following statutes and Council policies are relevant to the consideration of issues for the city centre:

- Resource Management Act 1991
- Hauraki Gulf Marine Park Act 2000
- Local Government Act 1974
- Local Government Act 2002
- Local Government (Auckland Council) Act 2009
- Local Government (Auckland Transitional Provisions) Act 2010
- Local Government (Auckland) Amendment Act 2004
- Land Transport Management Act 2003
- New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2010
- Historic Places Act 1993
- Reserves Act 1977 (classification of reserves, acquisition & use of reserves, reserve management plans)
- Public Works Act 1981
- National Environmental Standard for Telecommunication Facilities 2008
- Auckland Plan (draft - unpublished)
- City Centre Masterplan (draft - unpublished)
- Auckland City Centre Spatial Plan (draft – unpublished)
- Economic Development Strategy (draft – unpublished)
- Waitemata Local Board Plan (draft)

Issues and Broad Approaches

1. Growth and Development

1.1 Growth Areas

Strategic Outcome

By 2041 it is expected that the city centre will have a residential population of between 58,000-74,000 (35,000-51,000 increase) and an employment population of between 145,000 -160,000 (54,000 – 69,000 increase). This growth must be actively planned for in an integrated and comprehensive manner to develop strong business, residential and mixed use communities and strengthen the character of the city centre.

Issues

1. Growth and development of the city centre is essential to provide for the economic, social and cultural well-being of the Auckland region.
2. There is a need to ensure that growth is accommodated in an efficient and sustainable manner within the city centre.
3. There is a need to manage growth and development in a way that respects and enhances the character of distinctive areas of the city centre¹.
4. There are particular areas within the city centre that require their own unique planning approach to growth and development. These areas can be categorised as follows:
 - a) **Redevelopment Areas:** These areas are able to accommodate significant change in the future and have some character elements that need to be enhanced by new development. An example of this area includes Wynyard Quarter (refer Figs 1 and 2 below).



Fig 1 and 2: Wynyard Quarter is a major redevelopment area. Images show the original state and future redevelopment outcomes for Wynyard Quarter – the area will be almost unrecognisable as Auckland’s liquid bulk storage area known as the ‘Tank Farm’.

- b) **Regeneration Areas:** these areas have distinctive character elements that need to be developed and enhanced. These areas will experience growth and development over time but the function and character will largely remain the same. An example of this area includes the mid-Symonds Street block, which is characterised by education activities, mid-high rise towers, and some historic heritage (refer Fig 3 below).

¹ “Character” is a broad term, which according to the Ministry for the Environment can be defined as *“the distinctive identity of a particular place that results from the interaction of many factors, including built form, people, activity and history”*.



Fig 3: Symonds Street is a regeneration area that needs a more sensitive approach to manage growth if character elements are to be successfully retained.

- c) **Targeted Growth Nodes:** these areas are located around the proposed City Rail Link stations and can generally be categorised as either redevelopment or regeneration areas². There is an opportunity to prioritise growth and investment in these areas to encourage the use of infrastructure.
5. Land subdivision and ownership patterns in the city centre are fragmented and do not enable the efficient and integrated redevelopment of land. The *Le Parc* development in Viaduct Harbour is an example of a complex subdivision that has meant it is unlikely to be comprehensively redeveloped in the future due to the leasehold, strata and unit title ownership arrangements (refer Fig 4 below).



Fig 4: Showing the subdivision pattern of the Le Parc development.

² It is understood that the City Rail Link stations will be in the following locations:

- The existing Britomart station
- Corner of Wellesley Street and Albert Street (behind Aotea Centre)
- Corner of Pitt Street and Beresford Square (near Karangahape Road)
- Corner of Symonds Street and Mt Eden Road (Newton)

Explanation:

There is significant potential for growth in the city centre with approximately half the development capacity under the existing district plan still to be utilised (refer Fig 5 below).

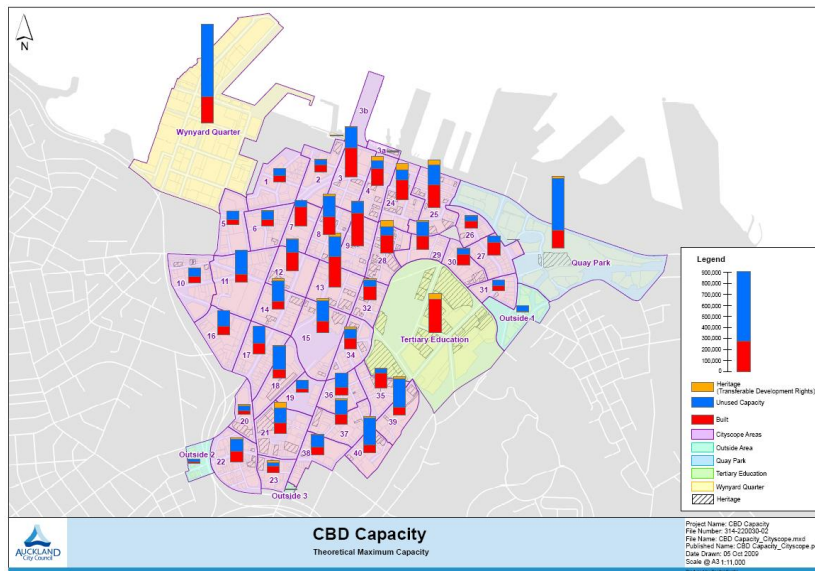


Fig 5: Showing development capacity in the city centre under District Plan rules. Areas with significant growth potential include Wynyard Quarter, Quay Park and Upper Queen Street. The heritage component indicates that there is relatively limited development potential in the lower Queen Street area.

This growth capacity needs to be managed in a way that protects and strengthens the character and amenity of the city centre.

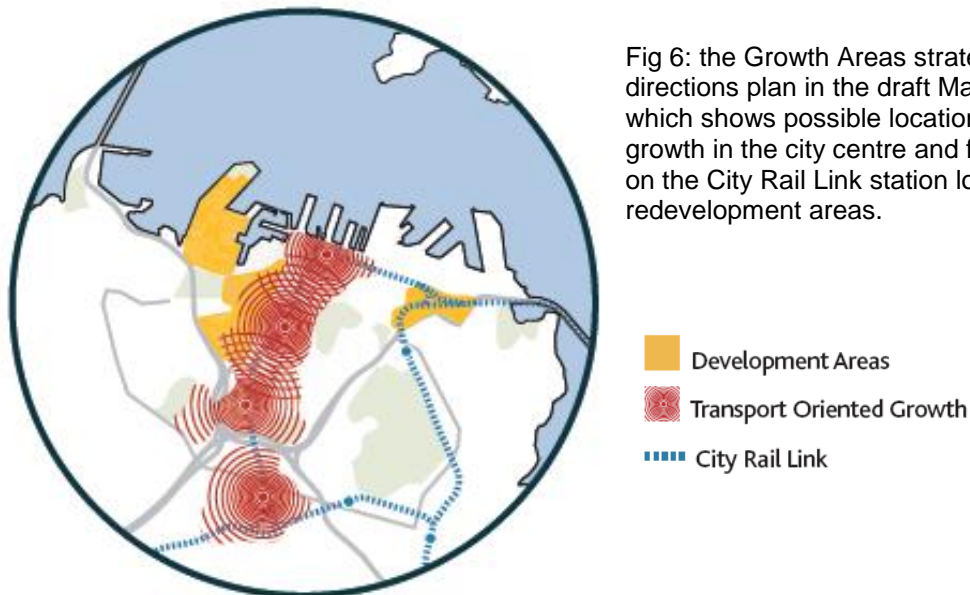
Broad Approaches

1. Use regulatory mechanisms to direct the form and function of development in the identified growth areas and stimulate growth, including:
 - a) Land use controls and incentives
 - b) Statutory design guidance
 - c) Comprehensive Development Plans or similar method to deliver the integrated development of key sites or blocks
 - d) Subdivision and site amalgamation controls and incentives that facilitate the efficient redevelopment of land that is adaptable over time
2. Use regulatory mechanisms and incentives to direction the location and form of development around transport hubs such as the City Rail Link stations (targeted growth nodes).
3. Use of statutory or non-statutory locality statements³ or general outcome descriptions to communicate the desired character of a redevelopment or regeneration area. This is achieved by bringing together all of the elements that relate to an area, including desired land uses, built form, movement patterns and heritage.
4. Investigate the possibility of public-private partnerships, joint ventures or alternative development models to deliver high-quality developments in growth areas.
5. Investigate the possibility of reducing development contributions to encourage high quality development within specific growth areas.

³ Locality Statements are used in the Sydney City Plan to explain the outcomes sought for particular areas within the city. The locality statements are contained within the Development Control Plan, which is a non-statutory document.
http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/development/documents/CityPlan/DraftDCP2010/6_LocalityStatements_Final.pdf

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6. Council investment in the infrastructure needed to support communities in identified growth areas.

The possible locations of several growth areas have been identified in the draft Masterplan. Research is required to test these locations (refer Fig 6 below), and identify the character that needs to be protected and enhanced as growth occurs.



Additional research is required to identify the range of methods available to encourage and manage growth while protecting and strengthening existing character.

1.2 Land Use Activities

Strategic Outcome

The Council's vision is for a city centre that feels like the heart and soul of the region, is internationally renowned for business, research and learning and is a great place to live.

To achieve this vision, the draft Masterplan proposes to focus business and retail activities in the core central business district, being the lower Queen Street Valley and waterfront area to maximise the agglomeration benefits associated with clustering business and retail activities. The Masterplan also seeks a strong innovation and learning area centred around the universities and strong residential communities.

Issues

The issues are discussed below in relation to business, education, retail/dining/entertainment, events, residential, and community.

Business:

1. There is an opportunity to strengthen the CBD in the Queen Street Valley and along the waterfront to maximise agglomeration benefits and public transport access for employees.
2. There is an opportunity to provide for significant growth of business activities in the core CBD and waterfront area. However, this growth potential should be balanced with the need to protect the important heritage and character features of the core CBD and waterfront area, particularly lower Queen Street (refer Fig 7 below).



Fig 7: Showing a group of buildings on the eastern side of lower Queen Street with strong character (with the Deloitte Building in the background).

3. Tensions between residential and business activities need to be better managed particularly in the core CBD, where there is an opportunity to showcase quality building design and a professional business environment to attract international investment.

Explanation

Currently, sites that could be in productive business uses in the core CBD can be 'lost' to residential or other uses under the District Plan, which reduces the opportunity to maximise the agglomeration benefits derived from a consolidated commercial core. This is particularly problematic given that unit titled residential buildings in the core CBD are unlikely to be redeveloped for commercial activities.

Retail, Dining and Entertainment (theatres, art galleries, major tourist attractions):

4. To create a lively and attractive retail, dining and entertainment offering, there is an opportunity to leverage off agglomeration effects by strengthening the areas where these activities are currently concentrated. These activities should also be encouraged in new areas such as along primary pedestrian routes.
5. There is an opportunity to concentrate the location of entertainment activities to reduce effects such as noise and odour on sensitive residential land uses and to increase vitality of particular areas of the city centre.
6. The city centre's retail, dining and entertainment offer is of regional and national significance and needs to be located in areas with convenient public transport access.
7. The retail, dining and entertainment offer needs to be of international standard to attract and encourage visitors and tourists to stay in the city centre. Facilities that support tourists and visitors such as quality short-term accommodation must also be provided for.
8. Aotea Quarter contains many of the region's civic attractions including the Civic Theatre, Town Hall, Art Gallery, Central Library, and Aotea Square. There is an opportunity to strengthen this part of the city centre so that it is the civic heart of Auckland.

Explanation

With some exceptions, the District Plan permits the establishment of retail, dining and entertainment activities throughout the city centre. This may impact on the ability to establish vibrant and successful retail and dining areas in key parts of the city centre such as in the business core and along pedestrian and public transport routes. Further research is required to determine whether the Unitary Plan should regulate the location of retail, dining and entertainment activities.

Events

9. Events create vibrancy and distinctiveness, and help to put the city centre on the international map. However, events can generate effects on the environment such as noise and glare that can reduce amenity for neighbouring residential activities.

Residential:

10. Residential activities are dispersed throughout the city centre, which has lessened the potential for residential neighbourhoods to develop, and exposed residents to noise generating activities. Refer Figs 8 and 9 below.

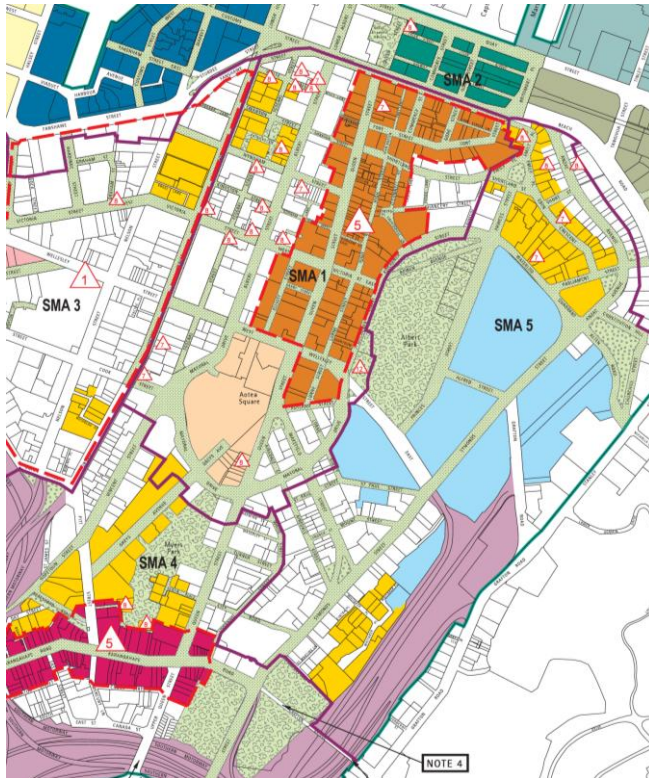


Fig 8: Showing the location of Residential Precincts in the District Plan (shaded yellow).

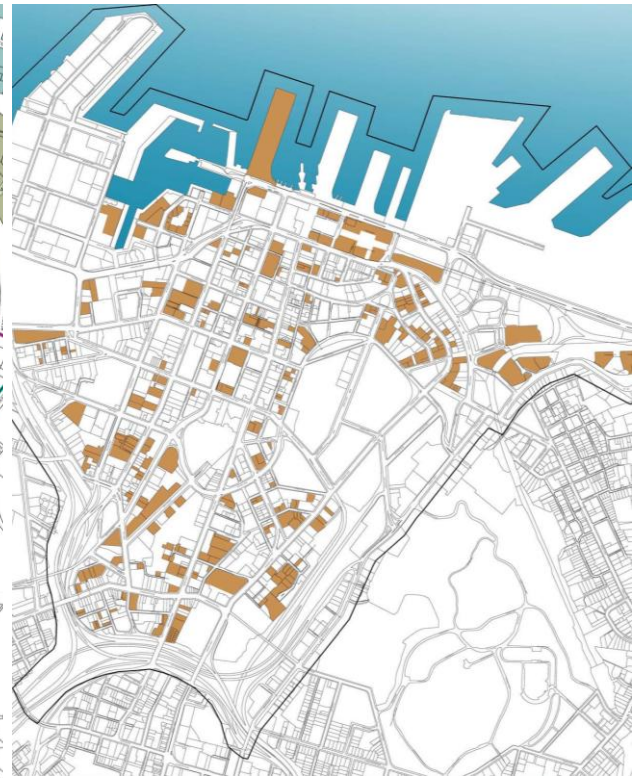


Fig 9: Showing the actual spread of residential activities in the city centre.

11. There is a need to improve the quality and amenity of existing and new residential buildings in the city centre. Many residential buildings in the city centre were constructed prior to 2005 when minimum apartment standards were first introduced through the District Plan⁴. Many of the residential buildings constructed prior to 2005 offer low levels of on-site amenity (refer Fig 10 below).

⁴ Plan Change 2 to the District Plan introduced minimum apartment standards for all new residential developments including, minimum apartment sizes and light and outlook requirements.



Fig 10: Shows how light and ventilation in existing apartment towers (constructed prior to 2005) can be severely compromised by adjacent site development under current District Plan rules.

12. There is a lack of housing choice for children, young people and families in the city centre as most apartments are studio or 1-2 bedroom.

Explanation

The map showing the dispersal of residential activities across the city centre demonstrates that the District Plan has not achieved its objective for Residential Precincts, which is to:

“provide for and encourage the establishment of residential neighbourhoods within which the range of activities and the development controls reflect the level of amenity appropriate to attract and retain a significant resident population.”

While the District Plan identifies residential precincts, the supporting policies and rules do not adequately provide for the needs of residents in terms of housing choice or amenity.

Community (childcare, education, libraries, health, recreation/play, gathering, worshipping):

13. The city centre needs to provide sufficient community and education services in the future to service the needs of a growing residential, business and visitor population.

14. There is a need to strengthen the Learning Quarter as a centre for learning and innovation.

Explanation

Further research is required to determine the city centre’s community needs and identify how they can be provided, taking into account that they may be different to those in traditional suburban areas.

Broad Approaches

The current laissez-faire approach to the management of land use activities in the city centre should be reviewed to ensure that good environmental outcomes are achieved and the opportunity to maximise agglomeration benefits generated by the consolidation of activities in the business core, residential precincts, and retailing/dining/entertainment areas are realised. The city centre will continue to be a vibrant mixed-use environment, but positive interventions are required to encourage like activities to co-locate. To this end, the following broad approaches are available to achieve the strategic outcomes:

1. Enable mixed use to continue in the city centre while providing regulatory and non-regulatory incentives for business and retail/dining/entertainment activities to locate in key areas of the city centre. The possible locations of these areas are identified in the draft Masterplan and research is required to test these locations (See Figs 11 and 12 below).
2. Use regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to support, encourage and manage events in the city centre in appropriate locations.
3. Use a mix of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to protect and strengthen residential precincts. The possible locations of residential precincts are identified in the draft Masterplan and research is required to test these locations (See Fig 13 below). Mechanisms to protect and strengthen the precincts could include:
 - a) Incentives such as floor area bonuses for residential activities to establish in residential precincts
 - b) Potentially remove residential floor area bonuses in other areas of the city centre
 - c) Potentially remove the Permitted Activity status for residential activities outside of residential precincts
 - d) Council upgrades of streets and parks in residential precincts to improve amenity
 - e) Further limit entertainment activities in residential precincts



Fig 11: the entertainment strategic directions plan in the draft Masterplan, which shows possible locations for retailing, dining and night-time activities.

- Cultural Hub
- Retail, Dining and Night-time Economy
- Retail and Dining



Fig 12: the events strategic directions plan in the draft Masterplan showing existing and future event places and spaces in the city centre.

- Outdoor
- Indoor

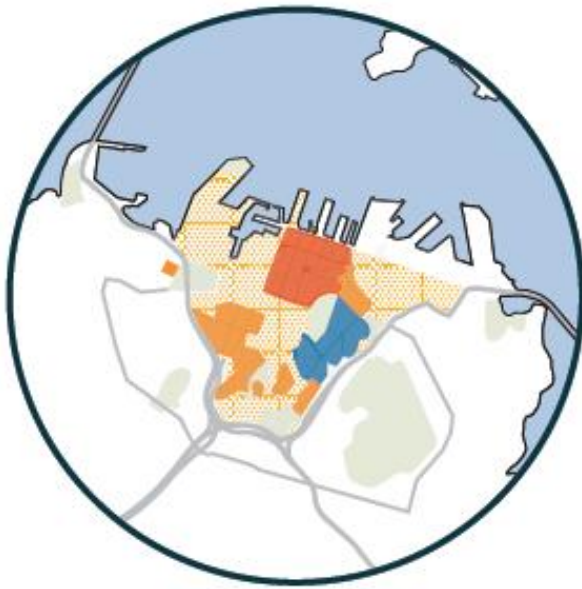


Fig 13: the land use strategic directions plan in the draft Masterplan. The red area is the possible location of the business core and the orange areas are the residential precincts. The hatched area is mixed use.

- Residential
- Learning
- Business Core
- Mixed-use

4. Use regulatory mechanisms to improve residential amenity and the quality of existing and new residential developments, which could include:
 - a) Extending the existing outlook provisions of the District Plan to include consideration of neighbouring sites that are flexible enough to respond to specific site characteristics (refer Fig 14 below)
 - b) Introducing transferable development rights to off-set any loss in development potential as a result of any additional controls

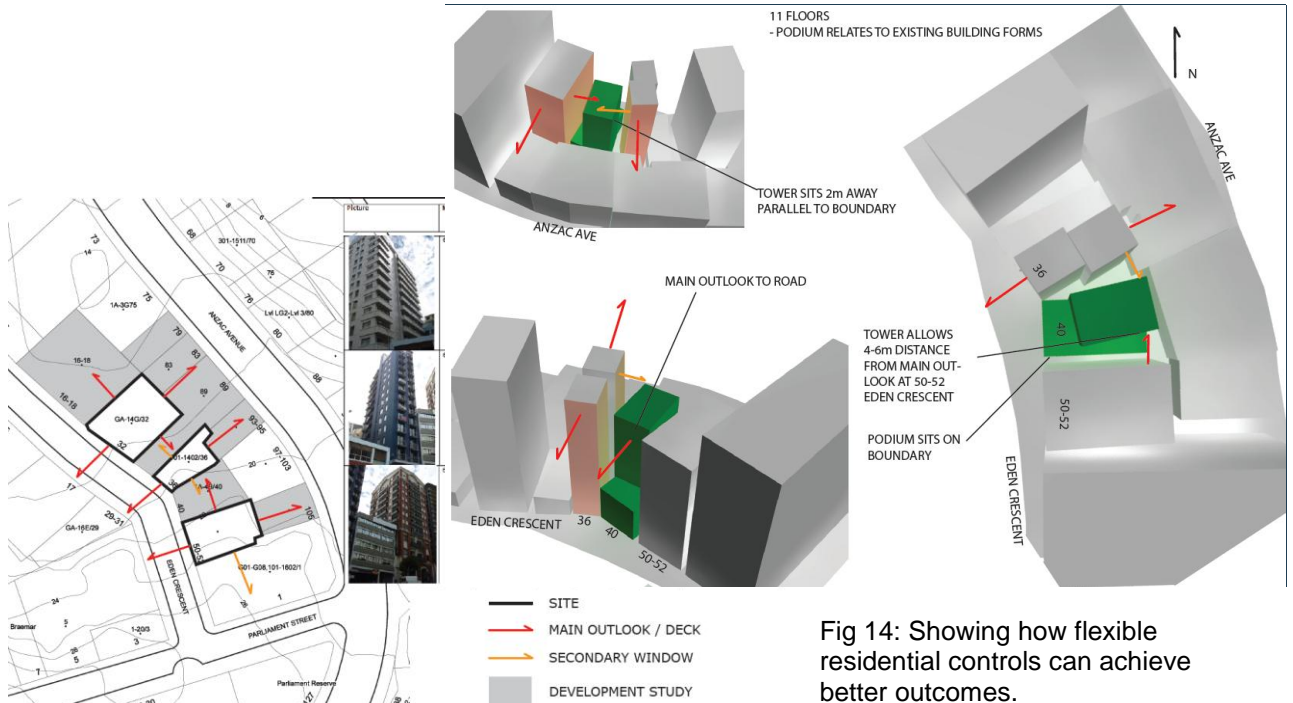


Fig 14: Showing how flexible residential controls can achieve better outcomes.

5. Use regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to improve the range and affordability of housing in the city centre.
6. Use regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to assist with providing community and education facilities, including bonuses, development contributions, public and private investment, and designations. The type and location of community and education facilities

that might be needed now and in the future were identified through the city centre spatial plan work (see Figs 15 and 16 below). Research is required to test these plans.

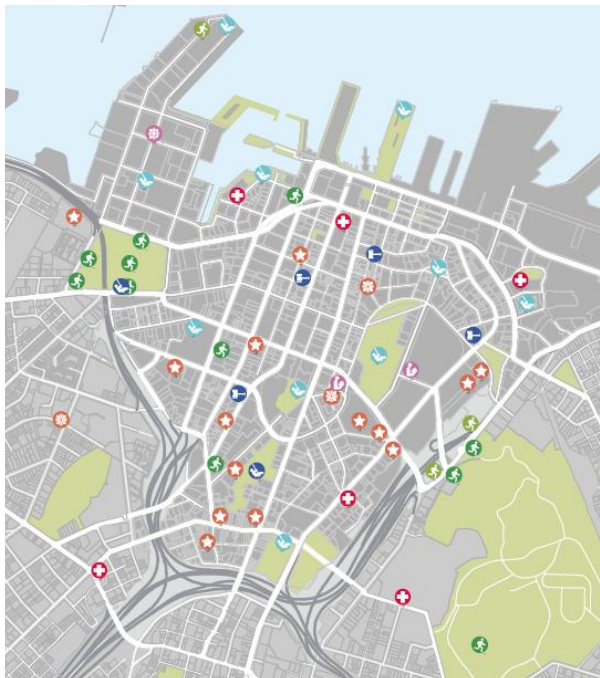


Fig 15: identifies existing and future community facilities within the city centre.

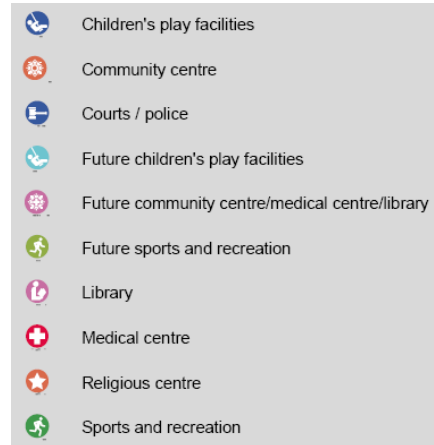
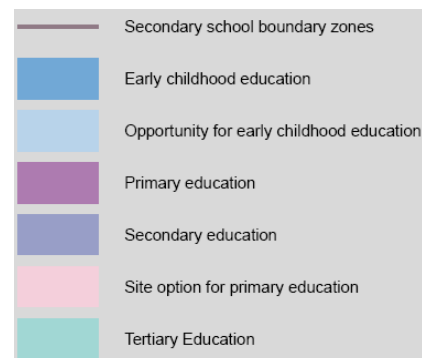


Fig 16: identifies existing and future education facilities within the city centre.



7. Use regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to strengthen the Aotea Quarter as the civic heart of the region.

The possible locations of the business core, retail/dining areas, residential precincts and mixed use areas are identified in the draft Masterplan. The boundaries and extent of these areas need to be tested to ensure that they are in the optimum location. Further research is also required to investigate the detailed regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms needed to deliver the strategic outcomes for land use activities.

2. Urban Form and Design

2.1 Height, Intensity and Skyline

Strategic Outcome

An international city centre and fringe is a top spatial priority of the Auckland Plan. As the pre-eminent business centre and civic and cultural heart of the region, the city centre must have a distinctive built form and skyline that is identifiable from the harbour and beyond.

Issues

1. Important views to volcanic cones, landscapes and public buildings within the city centre need to be carefully managed as the city grows (refer Figs 17 and 18 below).



Fig 17: showing the views that the View Protection Planes contained in the District Plan protect. The planes restrict building height in certain areas to ensure views to Mt Eden and the Auckland Museum are protected.

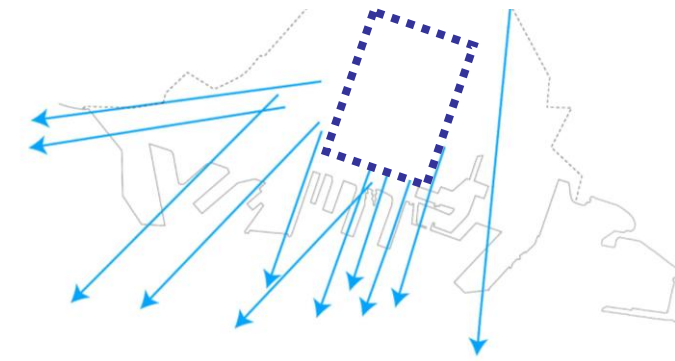


Fig 18: showing existing views of the city centre from the harbour.

2. There is an opportunity to better manage the relationship between built form and the coastal environment.
3. There is an opportunity to protect sunlight admission to existing and new public and private spaces, which influences the height policy for the city centre in particular areas (refer Fig 19 below).⁵

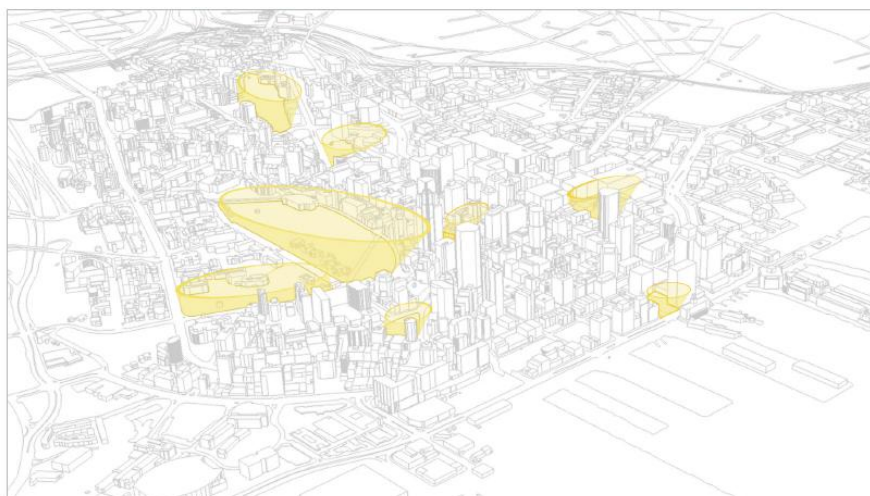


Fig 19: showing the existing location of the sunlight admission cones in the city centre.

⁵ The existing sunlight admission controls in the District Plan work together with the view protection planes to form the “special height controls” that apply in areas where there is no general height control.

- There is an opportunity to improve the relationship between building bulk and height. Some buildings in areas of the city centre exhibit a poor relationship between height and site intensity. This is particularly evident on the Viaduct basin/Hobson Street area where building heights are restrictive relative to site intensity, resulting in a compressed built form that does not contribute to the distinctiveness of the skyline (refer Fig 20 below).



Fig 20: showing the influence of the Mt Eden protected view shaft coupled with prescriptive height limits and intensities that inhibit variance in built form along Hobson Street and in Viaduct basin.

Explanation

Tall buildings are a feature of Auckland's city centre and symbolic of a New World international city centre. This distinctive concentration of tall buildings is highly visible from across the region and represents Auckland's city identity nationally and internationally.

The location of tall buildings is established by the constraints of two view protection planes between Mt Eden and the North Shore, and the Auckland War Memorial Museum and the North Shore. These view protection planes suppress height in the eastern and western areas of the city centre but not in the Queen Street valley where there are few height limits and therefore the primary location for tall buildings. This has led to the distinctive urban form and skyline of the city centre.

Broad Approaches

The District Plan uses a combination of height and site intensity controls to manage built form, which provides the necessary certainty for valuers and developers and promotes investment in the city centre.

Areas where increases in the existing height controls might be appropriate were identified as part of the city centre spatial plan work (refer Fig 21 below). Research is required to test these proposals and consider alternative methods for managing built form in the city centre.

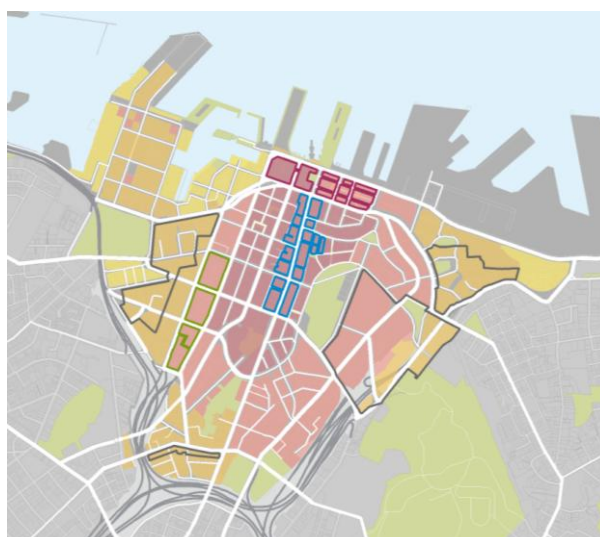


Fig 21: identifies where potential changes to height and daylight controls could be appropriate.



2.2 Architectural Quality and Building Design

Strategic Outcome

The draft Auckland Plan states that buildings should be well-designed and high quality to achieve a 'quality-compact city'. As an international city centre, buildings should showcase distinctively Auckland architecture that responds to its urban, historic and natural context.

Issues

1. Poorly designed buildings detract from the quality and amenity of the city centre at a citywide, street and individual site scale.
2. Few buildings in the city centre showcase outstanding New Zealand architecture. While the quality of development has improved over the last four to five years, there is an opportunity to ensure that all developments achieve high quality architectural and urban design. (refer Figs 22 and 23 below).



Fig 22: showing two carparking buildings and poor street interface on Durham Lane.



Fig 23: showing a residential building on Wakefield Street with an inactive and unattractive ground floor frontage.

3. The long life of buildings in the city centre and complex ownership and management arrangements has resulted in poor building maintenance (refer Fig 24 below) which detracts from the quality of the city centre.



Fig 24: showing a vacant building on the corner of Federal and Wolfe Street.

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- There is a need to ensure that new buildings appropriately respond to the character of the surrounding environment. Some recent developments in the city centre achieve this while others do not (refer Figs 25 and 26 below).



Fig 25: showing the recently completed Ironbank development on Karangahape Road, which integrates well with the character of the area.



Fig 26: showing the recently completed Chatham Apartments on Pitt Street which does not positively respond to the character of upper Pitt Street.

- Safety is cited as one of the key issues for visitors, residents and workers in the city centre. Many buildings in the city centre do not incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (“CPTED”) principles and present a safety risk (refer Fig 27 below).



Fig 27: a building with a ground level frontage that is devoid of activity negatively affects a person's perception of safety when walking in the street.

- There is a need to ensure that building signage is well integrated with the design of buildings. Poor quality signs and billboards obscure architectural details of buildings and detract from the amenity of the street (refer Figs 28 and 29 below).



Fig 28: showing a block of shops on the southern side of Victoria Street West.

The ground floor frontages are cluttered with signs of all shapes, sizes and colours, which reduce the attractiveness of these buildings.



Fig 29: large billboards can dominate the character of the city centre.

7. There is a need to ensure buildings are future-proofed for the provision and maintenance of building services (e.g. ventilation ducts). The inappropriate location of utilities within buildings can adversely affect the quality of public spaces (refer Fig 30 below).

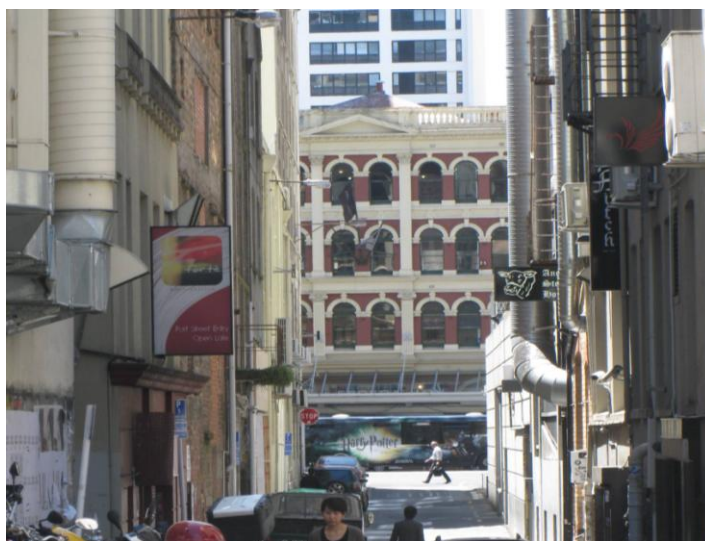


Fig 30: looking north on Fort Lane.

The prevalence of exterior ducting on the rear of these buildings degrades the quality of the laneway.

Broad Approaches

The following regulatory approaches may be used to address architectural quality and building design:

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1. Statutory design guidelines for high density commercial, residential and mixed-use developments.
 2. Incorporate CPTED principles in the Unitary Plan and potentially require CPTED audits for new developments.

The following non-regulatory approaches may be used:

1. Architectural Review Panel (distinct from the Urban Design Panel)
2. Design Competitions for large scale developments (e.g. Sydney model)

Further research is required to determine the appropriate mix of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to address architectural quality and building design in the city centre.

2.3 Building Demolition and Vacant Land

Strategic Outcome

The efficient use of land for productive activities is required to deliver the Auckland Plan's vision for an international city centre that is a real destination for Aucklanders and visitors.

Vacant lots are not an efficient use of land and detract from the quality of public spaces and should therefore be discouraged.

Issues

1. There are many vacant lots in the city centre that would be better utilised with more efficient land uses.
2. Many vacant lots are occupied by carparking and billboards that detract from the quality of public spaces. These lots are often poorly maintained. Figures 31 and 32 below shows the vacant site on the corner of Elliott and Victoria Street West (Elliott Street carpark).



Fig 31: showing the Elliott Street carpark from Victoria Street.



Fig 32: location of carpark as seen from the corner of Victoria Street West and Queen Street.

Explanation

Demolition of buildings to use sites for carparking or billboards can be seen by some property owners as financially more attractive than adapting a building to new uses or maintaining a building. Some buildings have been unnecessarily removed causing the loss of character buildings, eroding the quality of street frontages and creating safety problems.

Broad Approaches

1. Notwithstanding that regulations cannot compel a landowner to construct a new building, it is possible to use regulatory mechanisms to better sequence the demolition of old buildings and the construction of new buildings on sites in the city centre by requiring demolition and redevelopment consent applications to be lodged concurrently.
2. If a building is demolished and a site is vacant, regulatory mechanisms can be used to require high quality landscaping and strongly discourage the use of the site for carparking, whether temporary or permanent.

3. Heritage

3.1 Historic and Natural Heritage

Strategic Outcome

The Council's vision is for a city centre that values its heritage and has a strong sense of identity.

The protection of historic heritage from inappropriate subdivision, use and development is a matter of national importance in the Act and the Unitary Plan must reflect that status. Historic heritage in this context includes:

- Built heritage
- Archaeological heritage
- Cultural heritage
- Waahi Tapu

Natural heritage in the city centre includes:

- Significant geological features
- Notable trees
- Generally protected trees

The Unitary Plan must protect and enhance the city centre's historic and natural heritage.

Issues

1. The intensification of the city centre and the high value of land places significant development pressure on historic heritage.
2. There is a need to identify areas of historic heritage in the city centre and develop an integrated management response.
3. There is a lack of understanding about the definition of historic heritage as distinct from concepts such as character, historic character and amenity. These concepts must be clearly defined to provide sufficient direction to the public on how the built environment should be managed.

Explanation

The city centre contains the highest concentration of built heritage in Auckland and some of the region's most significant heritage buildings. Buildings and other items or places of heritage value could be lost if not identified and protected.

Broad Approaches

The historic heritage issue paper outlines the thematic approach to heritage management. Carrying this approach forward in the Unitary Plan will be a significant shift from the current planning approach. A strong evidence base will be required to support such a change and further research is required to determine how it could be applied in the Unitary Plan.

The broad approaches to manage historic heritage will need to be developed as part of the plan development process, but may include:

1. Identifying areas of historic heritage in the city centre and developing a strong evidence base to support any new management approaches.
2. Ensuring the Unitary Plan clearly defines terms such as character, heritage character and amenity as distinct from historic heritage.
3. Better use of regulatory incentives such as transferable development rights.

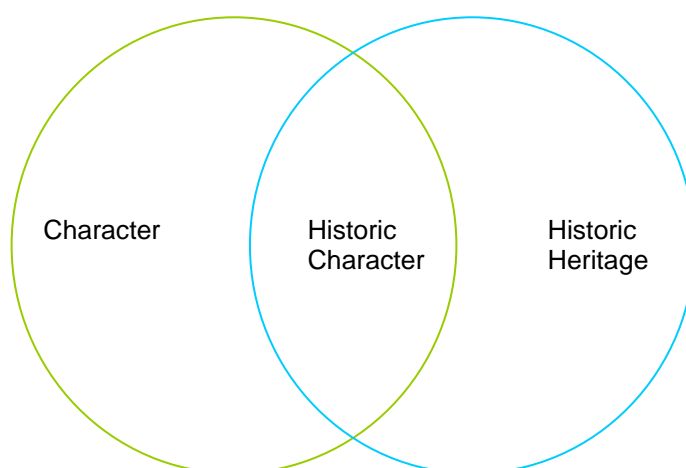
4. Non-regulatory mechanisms to promote the protection of historic heritage in the city centre.

3.2 Historic Character

Strategic Outcome

Valuing the city centre's heritage requires recognition of both historic heritage and heritage character. The city centre's historic character contributes to its uniqueness and sense of place and should be celebrated.

As discussed in the heritage and character direction setting paper, recognising historic character denotes that historic heritage recognition changes over time with changing values and new information and may be different for different communities. Historic character may sit outside the historic heritage sub-set depending on the significance and nature of this character.



Issue

1. There are buildings and areas within the city centre that have historic character and may warrant protection.

Explanation

The District Plan recognises historic character by applying additional demolition and design controls to all buildings constructed prior to 1940 in the Queen Street Valley and Karangahape Road precincts and other specific buildings and groups of buildings outside of these areas. The controls are more flexible than those applying to scheduled heritage buildings but are more restrictive than those applying to buildings neither scheduled or identified as having historic character.

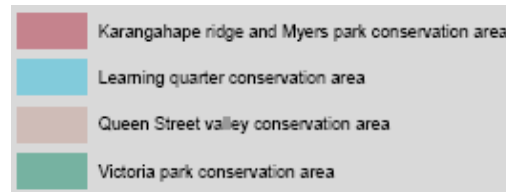
While the District Plan does recognise historic character as a general concept, the emphasis is on buildings as opposed to the range of landscape elements that contribute to the historic character of the area.

Broad Approaches

Recognising that historic character is distinct from, but related to historic heritage, an appropriate management response needs to be developed, which is supported by a robust evidence base. Areas with historic character were identified as part of the city centre spatial plan work (see Fig 33 below). Research is required to test the locations of these areas.



Fig 33: identifies potential historic character areas in the city centre.



Building on the work already completed, the following broad approaches are available to address the identified issues:

1. Testing the historic character areas identified through the city centre spatial plan work and develop a strong supporting evidence base to support any new approaches to managing historic character.
2. Ensuring the Unitary Plan clearly defines historic character as distinct from historic heritage, character and amenity and applies the best management approach to each.

4. Open Space

4.1 Parks and Civic Spaces

Strategic Outcome

Parks and civic spaces that are well designed and maintained will contribute to the social, cultural and physical health and well-being of the community and improve the environmental and economic performance of the city centre. Parks and civic spaces are necessary to provide for the recreational and amenity needs of a growing resident, visitor and business population in the city centre and will provide opportunities to cater for the needs of children and young people.

Issues

1. Open spaces in the city centre are necessary to support the amenity needs of a growing resident, worker and visitor population.
2. The compact nature of apartment living in the city centre means the role of parks and civic spaces is important in meeting the recreational, social and amenity needs of residents.⁶
3. There is little affordable land available for new parks and civic spaces in the city centre. It will therefore be a challenge for the Council to provide an appropriate amount of public land for parks and civic spaces to meet the recreational needs of a growing population.
4. Because of this, there is a need to make full use of existing public spaces and to improve the accessibility, safety and overall design of these spaces so that they can assist with meeting the needs of existing and future residents, workers and visitors. The interface between buildings fronting open spaces such as Myers Park need to contribute to the quality and safety of the park (refer Fig 34 below).



Fig 34: this view from Queen Street shows two levels of security fenced car parks in the building fronting Myers Park that erodes the quality of the park and contribute to a sense of unsafeness.

5. There is a need to improve the natural values and biodiversity of parks and civic spaces to improve the environmental performance of the city centre.
6. There is a need to improve the cultural values in parks and civic spaces as they contribute to local identity.

⁶ Auckland's 'CBD into the Future' – A plan for CBD Public Open Spaces - DRAFT

7. There is a need to maintain sunlight admission to key public open spaces in the city centre.
8. There is a need to recognise and respect the historic heritage values of the city centre's parks and civic spaces.

Broad Approaches

The draft Masterplan identifies the locations for existing and future green and urban spaces in the city centre (refer Figs 35 and 36 below). This provides a starting point for developing the open space network for the City Centre that could be applied in the Unitary Plan.

Regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms will be required to deliver this network, including:

1. Developing policies and guidelines that identify the qualities and outcomes that need to be achieved for open spaces as and when they are upgraded.
2. Council-led upgrades of existing parks and civic spaces to improve their accessibility, safety and functionality. Council-led upgrades would also provide the opportunity to improve the natural and biodiversity values of existing open spaces.



Fig 35: the Green Space strategic directions plan in the draft Masterplan, which shows existing and future green spaces in the city centre.

- Green Space
- Green Links
- Ecology Improvements
- Ecology Improvements



Fig 36: the Urban Space strategic directions plan in the draft Masterplan, which shows existing and future urban spaces in the city centre.

- Urban Space

-
3. Retain and potentially extend the existing sunlight admission controls in the District Plan to ensure that the amenity of the city centre's important existing and future public places is protected.

Research is required to test the locations of the future open spaces identified in the draft Masterplan and determine the appropriate regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to deliver a high quality open space network in the city centre.

4.2 Streets and Laneways

Strategic Outcome

High quality and accessible streets and laneways are critical to developing a city centre that feels like the heart and soul of the region and is walkable and well connected. The draft Auckland Plan mirrors this by seeking to achieve a street environment that is designed for people and creates a high quality urban experience for all.

Issues

1. Some streets and laneways in the city centre are not inviting to people who pass through and are dominated by cars, which fragments and lessens their quality as an environment for staying, wandering around and experiencing the city.⁷ Fig 37 below shows a typical situation in city centre streets.



Fig 37: This building on Nelson Street has built a private tennis court over the small public lane which has negatively affected the quality, legibility and safety of the pedestrian walkway to Hobson Street

2. Many buildings in the city centre are closed off from the street and there is a lack of activity, especially at ground and first floor levels, which detracts from the attractiveness, liveliness and safety of public spaces. Fig 38 below demonstrates this.



Fig 38: showing the eastern façade of the Westin Hotel on Viaduct Harbour Ave.

The frontage is closed off and does not provide any activity or architectural interest for pedestrians.

⁷ Gehl Architects 2009, *Auckland CBD Public Realm Health Check*.

-
3. The multi-function role of some streets has been poorly managed in the past and has resulted in some streets being cluttered with utilities, signage and street furniture.
 4. The city centre is characterised by steep topography that can make it difficult to achieve fully accessible streets and laneways.
 5. Trees contribute to the quality of streets and open spaces; however, there is increasing pressure for space in the street to support transport functions, utility operations and other activities, which reduces the space available for trees (refer Fig 39 below).



Fig 39: looking east on Shortland Street

Tree growth is hampered by the verandah of the Vero centre. Better design solutions are required to provide for trees in city streets.

6. There is a need to use streets and laneways in the city centre as recreational spaces that supplement the function of public parks and civic spaces and provide high quality linkages between them. The introduction of shared spaces in the city centre has gone some way to achieving this (refer Fig 40 below).



Fig 40: showing a photomontage of the new shared space in Fort Street that makes better use of the street as public space

7. The height and density of tall buildings in the city centre present a challenge to maximising sunlight access and minimising the adverse effects of wind and rain in public spaces.

-
8. There is an opportunity to protect sightlines within streets as they contribute to the distinctiveness of the city centre and assist with navigation (refer Fig 41 below).



Fig 41: the image above shows the sightline down Princes Street to the harbour that was 'built-out' by the Scene Apartments on Beach Road.

The image to the right shows the view down Nelson Street to the harbour that is protected in the District Plan.



9. There is a need to recognise and respect the historic heritage values of the city centre's streets.
10. Many buildings in the city centre have limited facilities for storing waste, which results in waste being left in streets risking public health and safety and degrading the quality of streets and laneways (refer Figs 42 and 43 below).



Fig 42 and 43: a range of regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms are required to improve waste disposal and prevent this situation of occurring in city centre streets.

Broad Approaches

The following broad approaches are available to address the identified issues:

1. Prepare a street typology plan that identifies the qualities and outcomes that are needed for each street so that they contribute to creating a high quality and vibrant public realm in the city centre. This is discussed further in the Movement section below.
2. The pedestrian activity plan (refer Fig 44 below) included in the draft Masterplan could be used to determine a range of pedestrian related outcomes for key areas in the Unitary Plan, such as the location of active building frontages and verandahs and where vehicle crossings could be restricted.



Fig 44: is the Pedestrian Activity strategic directions plan in the draft Masterplan, which shows where high levels of pedestrian activity are likely to be in the future.

- High Pedestrian Activity Areas
- Highest Pedestrian Activity Area
- 3
9min
 Number of minutes' walk from the CBD/Engine Room

3. Use regulatory mechanisms to improve the relationship of buildings to streets and laneways such as:
 - Streetscape design guidelines
 - Improved design policies and controls for buildings and activities fronting the street
 - Incentivising private investment in public spaces
4. Potentially extending the sunlight admission controls in the District Plan to some streets or parts of streets to improve amenity.
5. Improve internal Council road management processes to ensure that good design outcomes are achieved and there is sufficient space to meet amenity and infrastructure needs. Auckland Council will need to work closely with Auckland Transport to achieve the desired outcomes.
6. The Council can improve the amenity of public spaces by continuing to undertake capital works programmes such as streetscape upgrades/shared spaces.
7. Use regulatory mechanisms to protect sight lines in city centre streets, taking into account the sight line controls contained in the District Plan.
8. Use regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to ensure the storage of waste does not adversely affect the quality of streets and laneways such as:
 - a) Improving regulatory mechanisms to require new activities to provide on-site storage for waste
 - b) Improving waste collection processes in inner-city areas (e.g. High Street)

Further research is required to determine the location and management of street sightlines. Research is also required to investigate mechanisms for improving the quality of the street environment (for example street typologies), improving the relationship of buildings to public spaces and how waste should be managed in the city centre.

4.3 Private Open Space

Strategic Outcome

The Council's vision is for a city centre that is internationally renowned for business and is a great place to live. Meeting the demands of businesses and a growing residential population will require high quality on-site amenities, including open spaces.

Issue

1. There is limited land available for new public open spaces to service a growing residential and business population. Therefore, private open spaces need to complement public open space to meet the community's recreational and amenity requirements.

Broad Approaches

In determining whether regulatory mechanisms are the most appropriate means to address this issue, research will be required to determine whether the market will provide the private open space required by residents and businesses.

Should it be found that a regulatory approach is appropriate, close liaison with the development contributions team will be required to ensure that the contributions payable for public open space reflect the open space provided within developments.

Notwithstanding this, the following broad approaches may be used to address the issue:

1. Introducing regulatory mechanisms to require and/or incentivise the provision of private open space in all new developments that are sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of the proposed activity. This could include introducing a minimum requirement for private open space in new residential developments that enables the space to be provided in a variety of forms (e.g. pools, gyms, balconies, shared outdoor areas / green roofs).
2. Allow the market to provide private open space within developments as the District Plan currently does.
3. Introducing mechanisms to offset a lack of private open space in a new development through investment in public spaces where appropriate (e.g. contribute to the upgrade of existing public open spaces where no private open space can be provided).

Further research will be required to identify the appropriate regulatory mechanisms to achieve high quality private open space in the city centre.

4.4 Water space

Strategic Outcome

The city centre waterfront will be a regional public attraction and support a strong economy through its working functions and business development.

Issue

1. The success of the city centre waterfront relies on using water space for many of its activities. Reclamations, structures and buildings need to accommodate a range of public and private activities located on the coastal edge over water space.

Broad Approaches

1. Incorporate elements of the Coastal Management Area/ Coastal Plan if possible.

-
2. Identify and appropriately provide for sites where reclamations, buildings and structures may be required.

5. Movement and Transport

The draft City Centre Masterplan states that creating an easily accessible, attractive and enjoyable environment will be key to attracting talented employees and improving economic growth in the city centre. This outcome will be achieved by delivering a high quality, legible street network, supported by an efficient public transport system and road network.

The draft Auckland Plan and Masterplan express the need to have a network of streets that puts pedestrians first, followed by cyclists, public transport and motorists. Policies and actions that put pedestrians first will ensure that city centre streets have a quality and scale that make them inviting to people and provide a memorable city experience.



A network of streets that put pedestrians and cyclists first

Fig 45: From the City Centre Masterplan Discussion Document

Private vehicles and short-term visitor carparking will continue to be important to the functioning of businesses in the city centre, particularly during normal office hours (inter-peak period), but there must be a focus on limiting commuter carparking to reduce congestion and improve the amenity of streets. The CBD Rail Link will be integral to delivering the high quality and reliable public transport system needed to support a reduction in private commuter traffic.

Auckland Transport is responsible for the operation of the region's transport services including roads, ferry wharves, cycleways and walkways. As such, Auckland Transport is a key stakeholder in delivering high quality and accessible streets, public transport and road networks.

5.1 Street Hierarchy & Typology

Strategic Outcome

The city centre will have a network of streets that is accessible, provides a memorable experience for pedestrians and serves the transport needs of businesses.

Issues

1. There is a need to integrate urban design and traffic objectives in the Unitary Plan to achieve well designed streets that meet the needs of pedestrians and motorists.
2. There is a need to provide better guidance on the form, function and design of streets.

Explanation

The city centre has developed around a roading hierarchy that promotes cars as the preferred mode of transport in a number of locations. Putting pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users first will require a holistic approach to the management of streets, incorporating traffic and urban design objectives.

Broad Approaches

Innovative approaches will be required to create a city centre that genuinely gives priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Some broad approaches include:

1. Developing an integrated street hierarchy and street typology plan that speaks to the transport and design outcomes expected for the city centre's street network.
2. Using the integrated street hierarchy and street typology plan to inform the maximum parking controls and access requirements in the Unitary Plan.
3. Develop statutory or non-statutory design guidelines to inform the design of streets based on their function identified in the street hierarchy and street typology plan.

Further research is required to investigate the feasibility of these approaches in the Unitary Plan.

5.2 Pedestrians

Strategic Outcome

The Council's vision is for a city centre that is walkable and well connected. Because of this and reflecting the mode hierarchy above, pedestrian movement and safety needs to be a priority on all city centre streets.

Issues

1. Vehicles have priority on many streets resulting in poor quality and unsafe walking environments, inconvenient routes and inefficient travel times for pedestrians. Figs 46 and 47 below show Jellicoe Street before and after its recent upgrade, moving from a traditional road layout suited to cars to a more pedestrian focussed street.



Fig 46: showing Jellicoe Street before the recent upgrade.

Angled carparking and the wide road width create an unattractive, car-dominated environment.



Fig 47: showing Jellicoe Street after the recent upgrade.

The addition of landscaping and the use of continuous paving for the footpath and road create a successful shared space, encouraging cars to slow down and pedestrians to take priority.

-
2. The pedestrian network in the city centre is illegible and incomplete. Recent work undertaken by Gehl architects (refer Fig 48 below) shows that high quality pedestrian routes in the city centre are limited and are predominantly located in and around Queen Street and the Viaduct Harbour.

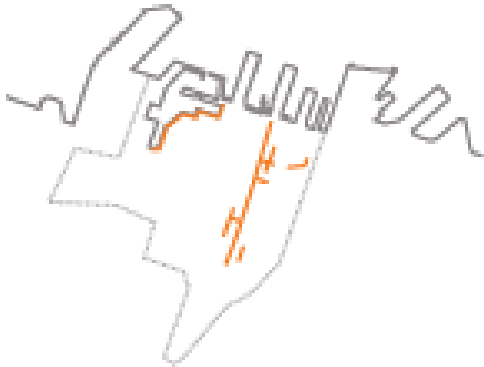


Fig 48: showing the existing (but incomplete) high quality pedestrian network

3. The ad-hoc provision of pedestrian through-site links is eroding the legibility of the pedestrian network and the quality of street frontages.
4. Existing civic and entertainment destinations are scattered across the city centre and poor quality streets and buildings discourage people from walking between them. Fig 49 below show the pedestrian network plan that supports connections to existing destinations and Figs 50 & 51 show the poor quality of the street environment that connects them.

Broad Approaches

The following broad approaches are available to address the identified issues and achieve the strategic outcome:

1. Establish a pedestrian network that includes streets, public spaces and through-site links to connect streets, key destinations and transport hubs. Include the network plan in the Unitary Plan to inform the location of streets, public spaces and through-site links in new developments.
2. Use regulatory mechanisms to incentivise the delivery of a high quality pedestrian network such as development bonuses.



Fig 49: showing part of the future pedestrian network plan (from the draft City Centre Masterplan) and some of the destinations that the network will connect



Fig 50 & 51: showing the poor quality street environments that connect the destinations shown in Fig 49.

5.3 Cyclists

Strategic Outcome

To encourage the use of sustainable transport modes the city centre needs a safe, efficient and enjoyable cycling network with an appropriate amount of cycle parking and facilities within buildings and public spaces. High quality end of trip facilities will attract more people to cycle to, from and within the city centre.

Issues

1. There are inadequate cycle facilities in existing buildings.
2. There is a need to identify the city centre cycle network and ensure that it meets the needs of cyclists.

Broad Approaches

1. Use regulatory mechanisms to improve the consistency and quality of end of trip facilities for cyclists such as requirements and design standards for cycle parking, showers, lockers etc.
2. Identify the cycle network in the city centre and investigate non-regulatory mechanisms available to ensure it is safe and accessible.

5.4 Public Transport

Strategic Outcome

The draft Auckland Plan places transport, in particular public transport as a top infrastructure priority⁸, including the proposed City Centre Rail Link. The Link is a public transport initiative that will be a major catalyst for positive change in the city centre and provides a significant opportunity to integrate transport and land-use planning outcomes.

Other forms of public transport such as buses will continue to play a fundamental role in encouraging a mode shift from private cars to public transport.

Issues

1. Road space in the city centre is dominated by private vehicles, which compromises the ability of buses (and future light rail) to operate efficiently. The capacity of the road and the dominance of cars are influenced by the amount of carparking provided in the city centre (refer discussion on private vehicles below).
2. There is a need to actively plan for intensive development around the City Rail Link stations to better integrate land-use and transport planning (refer above to the discussion on growth areas).
3. Bus stops and other facilities that support public transport are often poorly located and designed (refer Fig 52 below).



Fig 52: showing a bus stop of Wakefield Street positioned in the middle of the footpath.

Broad Approaches

1. Use regulatory mechanisms to direct the location and design of public transport facilities such as bus stops.
2. Incentivise private investment in public transport facilities on identified public transport routes.
3. Use regulatory mechanisms and incentives to direct the location and form of development around transport hubs such as the City Rail Link stations.
4. Increase capital expenditure on public transport infrastructure.

⁸ Over the next 20 years it is expected that bus-journeys will double and rail and active modes of transport will increase five-fold in the city centre.

5.5 Private Vehicles, Parking and Access

Strategic Outcome

The draft Auckland Plan embodies the vision for Auckland as an eco-city by promoting sustainable modes of transport such as bus, rail, ferry and active modes. The use of sustainable modes of transport will also improve the accessibility of the city centre, which is critical to attract business and investment.

A move to more sustainable modes of transport will require a fundamental shift from reliance on private vehicles for our primary mode of transportation. While private vehicles will still be necessary for the efficient functioning of the city centre especially for businesses, the Unitary Plan will need to prioritise sustainable transport options over private vehicles.

Issues

1. Traffic congestion caused by private vehicles reduces accessibility for all modes of transport.
2. The availability of carparking (private and public) encourages commuters to use private vehicles, which contributes to traffic congestion and reduces accessibility.
3. The environmental effects of vehicle traffic such as noise and reduced air quality degrade the amenity of streets for pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport.
4. Carparking buildings and areas in the city centre are unattractive and degrade the quality of the city centre (refer Fig 53 below).



Fig 53: showing the above ground ancillary parking provided within 'the Scene' apartment complex. The parking is poorly screened, unattractive and detract from the amenity of the street.

5. There is a need to comprehensively plan for the servicing of each block in the city centre to provide for waste, loading and other servicing requirements. This will reduce the number and width of individual vehicle accesses that can degrade the quality and safety of the footpath for pedestrians (refer Figs 54 and 55 below).



Fig 54: showing the porte cochere for the Westin Hotel on Viaduct Harbour Ave, which occupies the majority of the street frontage.



Fig 55: showing the vehicle access for the Metropolis Building on High Street.

The access erodes the quality of this building frontage in the high pedestrian area of High Street.

Explanation

Roads in the city centre are at capacity with 37,000 vehicles congesting roads during the city in the morning peak hour. There is very limited capacity to accommodate any further vehicle increases. The city centre is only half built and there are already over 50,000 on and off-street car parks.

Broad Approaches

1. Use regulatory mechanisms to discourage carparking as the primary activity on a site and encourage the re-development of existing carparking buildings.
2. Review the parking standards contained in the District Plan in line with anticipated growth and road capacity.
3. Use regulatory mechanisms to ensure carparking buildings are adaptable to new uses in future.
4. Use regulatory mechanisms to require travel plans for significant developments.
5. Work with Auckland Transport to develop a comprehensive parking management plan for the city centre to inform detailed options for public and private parking.
6. Incorporate detailed design standard for vehicle access and loading.
7. Do not require on-site loading spaces to be provided.
8. Investigate whether regulatory mechanisms could be used to agglomerate carparking in residential areas rather than provided on every redeveloped site.

Further research is required to assess the impact of any change to the parking standards in the District Plan.

6. Infrastructure

6.1 Network Utilities

Strategic Outcome

The draft Auckland Plan recognises that efficiently operated infrastructure is essential to the functioning of the Auckland region. The city centre in particular, needs a sustainable and high quality utility infrastructure network to support the growing needs of its business and learning sectors as well as its residential communities.

Issues

1. There is a need to manage the road network so that it meet the needs of network utility operators and other competing street elements such as trees and street furniture that serve an important amenity function.
2. There is a need to secure the supply of services to the city centre including broadband, electricity and water.
3. Sufficient infrastructure must be provided to manage stormwater in the city centre and improve overall water quality.

Broad Approaches

1. Regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to direct the location and maintenance of network utilities.
2. Ensure compliance with all relevant National Policy Statements and Environmental Standards.

Collaboration with the infrastructure workstream is required and further research is necessary to determine the planning methods available to address the issues identified above, taking into account the array of legislation governing network utilities.

6.2 Port

Strategic Outcome

The draft Auckland Plan states that the Ports of Auckland is fundamental to achieving a business friendly and well functioning city⁹. The Unitary Plan must enable the port to operate efficiently and ensure it is a good neighbour.

Issues

1. The operation of the port is vital to the economic performance of the region and the nation but it has the potential to adversely affect its neighbours (e.g. noise, glare). There is a need to manage these effects while ensuring the efficiency of port activities.
2. Port land needs to be used efficiently to reduce the need for future reclamation.
3. The outcomes of the Coastal Plan and the District Plan components of the Unitary Plan in relation to the port need to be consistent.

Broad Approaches

1. Use regulatory and non-regulatory mechanisms to enable the efficient operation of the port and manage its adverse effects.

⁹ Together with the Auckland Airport, the ports account for 61% of the nation's imports and 32% of its exports. The draft Auckland Plan states that the Ports of Auckland will need to handle the projected increase in freight volumes – the last 20 years saw a doubling of import and export tonnages, and this trend is projected to continue.

Consultation with Ports of Auckland is necessary to understand their requirements and inform the overall planning approach.

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